

2017-2018 Q Comp Annual Report for **Sebeka School District**

Core Component: Career Advancement Options

Implementation

Are the teacher leader positions that were implemented this year the same as those outlined in the approved plan (approval letter and subsequent plan change approval letters)? **Yes**

Impact

How did the work of teacher leaders through coaching, observing, mentoring, facilitating learning teams and performing other responsibilities impact classroom instruction?

When surveyed, teachers continually commented that they grew professionally from their Professional Learning Community (PLC) work on Higher Level Thinking and Questioning, which was the schoolwide/district-wide focus (PreK-12). The following are direct quotes on the survey in regards to the impact their PLC work had on their instruction.

- “At first, I had the idea that my students were not capable of answering higher order questions but as the year went on, I discovered that they were.”
- “I started asking students to share their thinking with me of how they got to their answer/conclusion. I also started asking students what their reasoning was for picking an answer when they were doing things that could have had multiple options.”
- “It impacted my instruction by giving me additional resources and strategies to try with my students.”
- “I used strategies such as working on vocabulary words in math class to help with both reading and math.”
- “It made me aware of what higher level questions are and gave me a group to help guide me in learning about what makes a question a higher level question and how to use them. I sat down with a group member and wrote in my lesson book questions to use that I can continue to use every year.”

How did the work of teacher leaders impact student achievement?

The following quotes from teachers on the survey clearly illustrate the impact their implementation of this year’s professional focus, Higher Order Thinking and Questioning, had on students, and thus, their achievement.

- “It has improved my performance in several of my classes and has also improved my students’ reading and questioning skills.”
- “I feel it has pushed my higher level kids to continue to grow and ask the deeper questions, but for some of the lower students, I did not see any growth.”
- “Our HLQ work was instrumental in pushing our students to think deeper and apply what they are learning.”
- “Throughout our discussions and learning this year I feel that the greatest impact was in conversations about our learners. We had many changes for our 7th grade this year and having the time to discuss students we were worried about and strategies we were using to reach them was invaluable as a teacher.” (This was the reason the Principal initiated some changes in our group formations this year, to help teachers with a very challenging group of 7th grade students, with a very large percentage in Special Education included in most classes.)

In Sebeka’s Q Comp Plan, the Peer Coaches facilitate the PLC groups every other week and observe their and another Peer Coach’s group members together as a team. The above quotes are in regards to the PLC sessions, with the research articles and Google slide presentations with quotes from research and video clips from Teaching Channel and Edviation created by the Q Comp Coordinator, another Teacher Leader position. Professional Development (PD) sessions are held every other week, opposite the PLC sessions, and led by certified staff and administrators.

Review Findings

How did the training teacher leaders received impact their ability to fulfill the responsibilities of the position and meet the needs of the licensed staff members?

The responsibility of researching the district's annual focus (strategy) was changed from individual Peer Coaches to the Q Comp Coordinator. This person researched Higher Order Thinking (HOT) and provided research articles for some of the beginning PLCs and later created Google slide presentations in which she had quotes from research, questions to discuss, and clips from Teaching Channel and Edviation of teachers instructing using Higher Order Thinking Strategies. This was a very positive change in that all the PLC groups had the same research and in the same form. It made it easier for the Peer Coaches and meant that they had deeper discussions since questions were in the slide presentations.

Training for coaches/leaders helped them to keep their PLC groups more focused and respectful of one another. It helped them with the coaching of peers after observations at the Post meetings.

What did the results of the evaluations of the teacher leaders in their leadership roles demonstrate about the impact they had on the effectiveness of the licensed staff members?

Certified Staff were very positive about the evaluations and leadership during PLCs of their Peer Coach. They wrote that their Peer Coach kept the group focused during PLCs and on task, and the deep discussions they had. Teachers wrote that their Peer Coaches were positive, helpful, and gave good suggestions after their observations.

Recommendations

How will the district use the review findings to improve the effectiveness of teacher leadership?

Overall, the surveys/evaluations indicated that certified staff thought their leader/Peer Coach did a good or even excellent, in many cases, job. There are still some areas to work on with one PLC group at least, according to the surveys/evaluations of the Peer Coaches. It was a frustration by a peer, not of the coach, but of the negative attitudes of colleagues during their PLCs. Since this PLC group is remaining the same, as well as the other groups, it will be very important to work individually with some of these "negative" individuals. This is not just happening within the PLC group. An outside consultant (NJPA possibly), the Q Comp Coordinator or an administrator will need to help this newer Peer Coach and/or the group itself. It's a larger group with some strong, negative teachers in it.

Core Component: Job-embedded Professional Development

Implementation

Are learning teams configured and meeting as outlined in the approved plan (approval letter and subsequent plan change approval letters)? Yes with some variations

If no, please explain the changes that have occurred and why? Our learning teams or PLC groups have changed some over the years. We have a small school, and thus, have had different configurations. We always have the learner at the core when thinking of the best way to form our learning groups. This was our eighth year in Q Comp, and we have had several different configurations. Change keeps the professionals learning from different peers and then there is a different emphasis, such as math and literacy groups across grade levels or, like now, Junior High and Senior High groups that focus on REACH (relationships...) as well as the focus strategy, higher order thinking.

Impact

How did teacher learning from learning teams and other job-embedded professional development activities impact classroom instruction?

Specifically, how did the Q Comp Choice PD sessions impact your classroom instruction? Please write in detail, stating if the session was technology, etc. and how it impacted your instruction in a positive way.

- "I learned and applied what I learned in many sessions, such as the technology ones. Janet's sessions on Poverty were thought-provoking and made me rethink some of my methods. Rachel's sessions on School Shootings were very eye-awakening, scary, and relevant. I am impressed with the amount of time and thought those two presenters put into these sessions. Whatever PDs I attend, I think they all impact my instruction because they either directly add to my instruction, such as technology sessions, or they make me rethink how I'm responding to children, such as ACES, poverty, and school shooting sessions."
- "It dramatically improved my use of Google Slides and my students appreciated it."

- The majority of the certified staff praised this year's PD choices: Quantity of PDs, variety, and high quality. They wrote of Professional Development sessions on a variety of areas in technology, mental health, school shootings and safety, ACES, explosive students and their behaviors.
- PLC sessions: "The videos she shared and we discussed were a great way for us to take skills back to the classroom. She (Peer Coach) asked difficult questions that made me think and reflect on my teaching and my point of view on teaching."

How did teacher learning from learning teams and other job-embedded professional development impact student achievement?

The following are from certified staff surveys.

- "I think that having higher order thinking as the main focus for PLC's helped me really try to make sure I created open ended questions before the lesson so that I was prepared. It made me intentionally try to do more higher order thinking activities with the children as well."
- Teachers wrote that they used PLC time to address our focus, Higher Order Thinking, and also "address concerns with students and class issues." This was the dual purpose of the PLC configuration, especially having Junior High teachers together in a PLC due to very high needs in the seventh grade group. Teachers will be able to give each other ideas on how to help specific students achieve. Since it's a small school, staff know all of the students and, thus, input is valuable.

Review Findings

How did the sites or learning teams identify needs and instructional strategies to increase student achievement?

The Sebeka Elementary Literacy Leadership Academy members have been focusing on Higher Level Thinking during their professional development sessions with other school professionals at NJPA, and, thus, it was decided that all certified staff in the district should analyze their own use of Higher Order Thinking (HOT) and Questioning and work on increasing the use of this in their instruction. This became the PreK-12 focus for 2017-2018. Certified Staff read research, watched short teaching videos, and discussed HOTs within their PLCs every other week. Some of the Choice PD sessions were on this topic and all teachers were observed on Higher Level Questioning for their third observation.

How did learning teams use data and implement the selected instructional strategies and follow-up on implementation?

Instructional Strategy chosen for district: Higher Order Thinking and Questioning

- Observation 3 (February): Higher Order Questioning was specifically noted on each teacher's C-1 Observation Form with all questions typed and later analyzed by the 2 Peer Coaches and discussed at the Post Observation Meeting. The teacher being observed always completes a Teacher Reflection Form after their observation and this is shared at the Post Observation meeting.
- Videotaped Observation 4 (April): Higher Order Thinking (HOT) was required to be a focus of this lesson. Teacher Self Reflection form was completed and discussion of all PLC members' lessons took place at an April PLC meeting.

Data from MCAs (Reading, Math, Science for grades 3-12) and Fastbridge (Reading and Math MN Assessment Software for grades K-8) Analyzed and Used; Following are quotes from the survey in answer to the following question. "How did you use data to help increase student achievement? (MCAs, Fastbridge, and all other types of assessments--whatever applies to your instruction)"

- "I used MCA data and tech specs to guide curriculum and make sure the areas students struggled in from last year's results I focussed on more."
- "Students set goals for the MCAs with data and I grouped learners using this data from MCAs as well as Fastbridge."
- "I use Fastbridge Reading assessments to form guided reading groups and reform them, since students' reading fluency and comprehension increases at different rates. I do progress monitoring weekly for fluency (Fastbridge CBM Reading) and individually coach students at this time. I use this data to keep a close watch on growth and benchmarks."
- "I look at the data and look for gaps in my instruction or areas where my classes did not do as well. Then I plan activities that should help comprehension in those areas."

- “I used the MCA data as a guide to set up aspects of my classes. If the students were weaker collectively in reading, I would focus on reading and use reading aloud and have the students follow along as well as their own reading while they worked on class material.”

Recommendations

How will the district use the review findings to improve the effectiveness of job-embedded professional development?

The Sebeka School District will continue to have Higher Order Thinking and Questioning, with an emphasis on the importance of High Rigor in all instruction, as their focus for the 2018-2019 school year. In addition, they will also focus on the importance of building relationships with students, as part of the district’s REACH program.

Sebeka School will continue to have 50 minute Certified Staff Professional Development (PD) sessions weekly, with the current format. One week is spent in small Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) of Junior High, Senior High, and Elementary groups, and the following week in “Choice PDs.” This revised method, that the district has used for approximately six years now, provides exceptional professional development within the building, with minimal cost to the district.

The “Choice PDs” provide differentiated instruction for the professionals, since certified staff chose the session they want to attend that week. This allows someone at a beginner stage in a certain technology session to attend a different session than someone more advanced, so everyone benefits and the interest level is high. A Google Q Comp Calendar is used as well as a shared Google table to alert staff to the upcoming week’s choice sessions.

Choice Professional Development (PD) sessions are led by certified staff or the Principal/Technology Integrationist, or sometimes they are webinars or presenters from educational consultants that teach a specific skill, strategy. There are also sessions on math, reading, and science data. The following are some examples of our 2017-2018 Choice PDs: Teen Killers Part 1 and Part 2, Fastbridge (new assessment software), Mangahigh (new math game learning software), mental health, English Learner webinar, Differentiated Strategies, Vocabulary webinar, Technology Goal learning and worksessions, What’s new with Google Slides?, Progress Report Writing for SPED, Adobe Spark: Let’s Make Some Videos, Symbaloo: Organize Your Websites, and required Data sessions.

Core Component: Teacher Evaluation

Implementation

Are licensed staff members observed/evaluated as outlined in the approved plan (approval letter and subsequent plan change approval letters)? Yes

If no, please explain the changes that have occurred and why?

Impact

What impact did the observation/evaluation process, including coaching, have on classroom instruction?

These are direct quotes from certified staff in regards to this question.

- “I received feedback to help me this year. Even during the observations, I received support during them.”
- “It helped me to focus on planning and development of higher level questioning.”
- “First of all, let me say the observation comments made by the coaches were always delivered in a positive, helpful manner. They made me feel good about my lessons and complimented me on what went well. Focusing on certain areas for each observation made the discussion more focused on certain aspects and not so broad. Any suggestions were taken under consideration for further lessons which were helpful to student learning.”
- It allowed us to look back with insight from peer coaches to improve our teaching.”
- “The observation process provided more direct feedback from additional eyes that are viewing the lesson besides my own thoughts. It gives me more input as to how I can better my instruction to increase student achievement.”

What impact did the observation process (including post conferences) have on student achievement?

The following are direct quotes from certified staff on the survey when asked this question.

- “I know the importance of working to increase "best practices" and by having others come into the classroom we are working together as a team to make our instruction better. Our students are being challenged more and are doing a great job of leading or adding to small group and whole group discussions.”
- “The observation process has helped me grow in the area of HOT and in how information is presented to my students.”

Review Findings

How did the feedback teachers received from each observation/evaluation assist in self-reflection and improved instructional practice?

Teachers always benefit greatly from their own self reflection when they complete the required Teacher Reflection Form and share all or parts of it at the Post Observation meeting. The Peer Coaches or Observers provide written and oral information about the evaluation, and, especially with newer teachers, suggestions are generally given on how instruction or class management may be improved.

How did the training observers/evaluators received throughout the year impact inter-rater reliability and their ability to provide constructive and meaningful feedback to all licensed staff members?

- The Peer Coaches/Observers/Evaluators attended a Professional Development session with a consultant Kassidy Rice from NJPA on August 27 that was specific to their level of expertise, questions, concerns, and school district. Kassidy Rice came to Sebek School and worked with just the six coaches/evaluators. The following is from an email she shared with the observers after that morning. It gives an overview of her training. Only one of the six Peer Coaches/Observers was new this year, with 4 of the members having held the position all 7 years that Sebek has had Q Comp.
- **Some highlights from our session together:**
- Importance of creating a non-threatening environment by utilizing non-evaluative feedback
- Importance of a focus on shared goals in your Professional Learning Communities
- Importance of group norms
- Ways to incorporate lesson study into your Professional Learning Communities
- The role of coaching strategies in Professional Learning Community meetings
- The stages of teacher self-reflection and how to differentiate transformational feedback in your coaching
- The video we viewed together reminds us that even the BEST teachers have room to learn and grow!
- The Peer Coaches observe in teams of two, thus, they are able to discuss the observation with someone and give the performance rating together. Since most of the coaches have done this for several years now, it has become easier to have high inter-rater reliability and give helpful feedback. The August training was helpful in the observation and also in leading the Professional Learning Communities.

Recommendations

How will the district use the review findings to improve the effectiveness of teacher evaluation?

We are looking at implementing two suggestions by the August 2017 NJPA Consultant/Trainer that weren't put into place this year. The suggestions came from concerns by administrators, the Q Comp Coordinator, some of the Peer Coaches, and from surveying certified staff annually.

- The Q Comp Coordinator will create a form and system for teachers to observe peers for a specific reason, i.e. observe ENVoY strategies in small group, view the use of technology to engage and assist in Higher Order Questioning with a specific teacher. Tentative Plan: A teacher would set up an informal observation of another teacher teaching a specific skill/strategy, complete a reflection form, and share that reflection in a meeting. The two teachers would receive credit for one Choice Professional Development session.
- From the consultant: One of the concerns that was called out was a level of complacency and/or viewing coaching as an item to check off the list. One way to alleviate this may be to address the scheduling of the coaching cycles. It may be beneficial to spread the observations out more to allow the coaches the ability to provide more timely and effective feedback.

- Plan is to see if we would be allowed by MDE to have one of the three observations be different, or a choice from each certified staff member. With the following options, a Peer Coach would plan their observations so they had less per cycle and thus could see the teachers sooner.
- 3 required observations: All 3 could remain formal (as now), 2 formal + 1 informal/drop in observation, 2 formal + 1 observation by ENVoY Consultant who observes this type of Classroom Management and documents these area. Distinguished: Receive ENVoY Small or Large Group Certification, Proficient: Observed but missed receiving the certification by one or a few areas.