School-Wide Literacy Plan – Middle School

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Need for School-wide Literacy Program

We need to implement a school-wide literacy program because reading is a fundamental skill that students, especially those who are about to enter high school, must possess. The Reading Next report, published in 2006, reports that the 2005 NAEP found less than 70% of students entering ninth grade were reading at grade level. Additionally, Carnevale (2001), reports that students who enter ninth grade in the lowest 25 percent of their class are twenty times more likely to drop out of high school than the highest-performing students.

State reading data from 2008 shows that 25% of the students at our school did not meet the reading benchmark. This has serious implications for their future learning.

However, beyond meeting state reading benchmarks, students must become literate in content areas. Students who have effective literacy strategies tend to experience more success in all academic areas as evidenced by other local school's experience.

This foundational goal will focus our energy, resources and learning in a 'collective pursuit' towards student achievement (Sparks, 1999).

School Characteristics

Category	
Enrollment	488
Economically Disadvantaged	173 (35%)
Limited English Proficiency	7 (2%)
Students with disabilities	79 (16%)
White	344 (70%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	23 (5%)
Black	22 (5%)
Hispanic	33 (7%)
American Indian/Alaskan native	7 (2%)

Options to Consider

| Option	Implications
Purchase commercial program (i.e., Read 180, Read Write)	Increased cost ($60,000 - $90,000)
Implement increased reading instruction in Language Arts classes	Reading skills are necessary in ALL content classes
Pullout classes for remediation	Students miss other classes
Refer struggling readers to special education	Not all struggling readers qualify for SPED services
Do nothing	Students do not receive needed support
Content area literacy instruction	Students receive reinforced skill and strategy instruction across content areas

Essential Elements

To improve middle and high school reading achievement the Reading Next Project (2006) identified 15 elements, to be used in conjunction with one another. Professional development is foundational to this effort along with ongoing formative and summative assessment (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Karhanek, 2004). Instructionally, defining literacy strategies and methodology is part of providing direct, explicit comprehension instruction that is embedded in all content leading to a transfer of learning from one context to the next (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2003 and creating a 'culture of learning' (Brown, Collins & Duiguid, 1989).Teacher teams will be essential as learning communities working together to learn new strategies. Strong leadership is necessary for staff to become aware of the urgency of implementing these elements and to maintain adherence to the vision of a school-wide literacy plan.

XXXX school has chosen to focus on the following elements:
• direct, explicit comprehension instruction across content areas
• effective instructional principles embedded in content
• strategic tutoring for students below the 20th percentile
• ongoing formative assessment (using easyCBM, Informal Reading Inventory)
• extended time for literacy (daily, additional 30 minute period)
• professional development
• teacher teams
• leadership
• comprehensive and coordinated literacy program
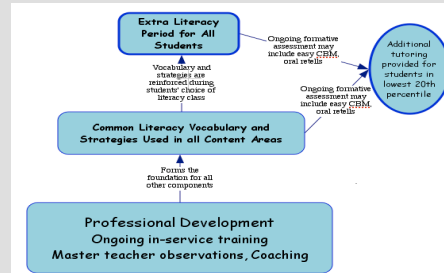
Program Overview

Staff training will draw from two texts, Support our Students, and Teaching Reading in the Content Areas and will be provided by the literacy liaison staff member. The literacy liaison will be available to provide model lessons and assist staff in incorporating literacy strategies in their curriculum.

An additional thirty minute literacy period will be created by reducing each class by five minutes. During this period, each student will choose an area of interest to read about and will be grouped with others of similar interests (i.e., fantasy, science fiction, motocross, horses). Literacy skills and strategies will continue to be emphasized. Students may journal, blog, create visual representations. Formative assessment will be ongoing (easy CBM, Informal Reading Inventories, classroom measures) and students who score below the 20th percentile will receive additional strategic tutoring, before or after school, or during the extended literacy period. As appropriate, iPods, loaded with strategic literacy instruction lessons will be used.

Program evaluation will occur throughout the process and necessary changes will be made.

Funding and Staffing

Costs		
Guest teachers to provide time for staff to observe in pilot classrooms	3 days every 9 weeks @ $180.00/day = $480.00	480.00
	4 times per year = $2000.00 per year	2000.00
Materials Support Our Students Teaching Reading in the Content Areas	25 binders @$5.00 each = $125.00 25 @ $27.95 = 698.75	125.00 698.75
iPods for additional tutoring	30 @ $100.00 = $3000.00	3000.00
Literacy liaison training	Conference(s)	$2000.00
Pilot team summer training	4 days x 4 staff members	$2000.00
		$10,305.00
Once a week common planning time for pilot team	Schedule realignment – extra period for 4 staff members	
Revise schedule to allow extra 30 minute literacy period.	Reduce each period by 5 minutes.	
Literacy liaison	School leadership stipend position	

Potential Funding Sources

EEF grants, district literacy funds, Qwest grant, Chintimini grant, fleet funds
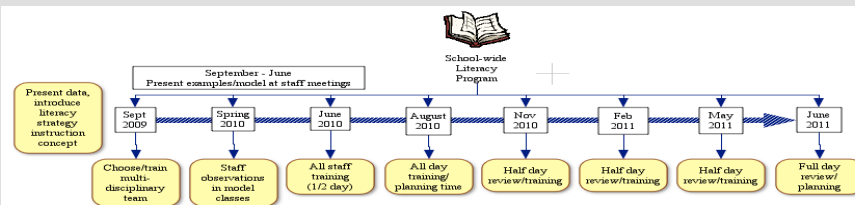
Outcome Projections

Based on best practices as outlined in Reading Next and the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) this comprehensive implementation will result in:

1. Improved reading scores for all students
   1.9 grade level improvement (overall average) (2009, McREL)
   Outcome measured by easy CBM, OAKS testing

2. Reduce the instructional gap among students by providing repeated, consistent literacy instruction across content areas, so students will learn effective strategies that are applicable in all content areas.
   Outcome measured by observation of student practice.

3. Increasing inter-connectedness among content areas with repeated practice and clear expectations (Marzano, 1998).
   Outcome measured by observations of teacher practice.

4. Improved understanding in content area subject (XXXX middle school, 2009 and Jordan, Jensen & Greenleaf, 2001) as evidenced by improved scores on curriculum based measures as well as state benchmark tests (reading, math and science).

5. Increased teacher/instructional effectiveness. By incorporating consistent, effective literacy strategies, teachers will be able to deliver their content in more meaningful ways. Outcome measured by staff survey.

Sources

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Implementation Timeline