Engaging Families in High School Success: A Continuous Improvement Approach

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IEL Family and Community Engagement Conference
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Are you too busy to improve?

No thanks!

We are too busy

Created by Håkan Forss @hakanforss http://hakanforss.wordpress.com
The Goal

How can we improve our work in family engagement so that more students enjoy success?
Goal of Session

Participants will:

• Experience the process of applying a continuous improvement framework to a problem of practice in family engagement

• Be able to begin applying this framework to their own work in their own professional context
Pair-Share Question for Table Discussion

What is one new thing you have learned over the past year about how you can be more effective in engaging families of high school students?
Thinking about Continuous Improvement

• What is the problem we want to address?
• What are some causes (drivers) of that problem?
• What is a specific change/intervention we could make to address problem?
• What happens when we introduce this intervention?
• What do we learn from what we observe after trying out a specific change idea?
• What conclusions do we draw about what to do next?
Problem of Practice

High rates of chronic absenteeism and course failure in 9\textsuperscript{th} grade

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Negative impact on graduation rates and postsecondary success
“This is the year that will set the stage for whether high school students will graduate and whether they will be ready for college.”

Chicago Consortium on School Research, 2007
Family Engagement Goes Down Right at the Critical Juncture for Students

But research shows that at this critical transition to high school, School efforts to engage families tend to go down.
Can increased family engagement during the transition to high school help to prevent at least some of the attendance and course failure problems common in 9th grade?
Family Engagement Logic Model

PD will equip school teams for more effective family engagement planning and implementation.

Improved family engagement practices will equip families to provide improved support to their students.

Improved family support will lead to higher attendance and course passing.

Higher attendance and course passing will yield improved student outcomes.
Partnership for Continuous Improvement in Family Engagement Efforts During the Transition to HS

Seattle Public Schools

- Had already organized district Family School Partnership work around NNPS and Dual-Capacity Building principles
- Family Engagement a key component of district strategic plan

National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University

- Eager to address challenges in expanding family engagement work to high schools
- Linking work to improve 9th grade indicators of college-ready high school graduation
The Intervention

- Professional development for school teams to encourage increased efforts in engaging 8th and 9th grade families during the critical transition to HS

- Regular coaching to school teams in planning, implementing and evaluating their family engagement efforts, reflecting on data and connecting this work to other school efforts aimed at promoting 9th grade success

- Bring schools together in a networked community to learn from each other in this process
Cycle of Inquiry

PDSA Cycle

- Plan
- Do
- Study
- Act
Example from the Field: The Cycle of Inquiry Process at Cleveland High School
Cleveland STEM High School
Real world preparation for real world success in personalized, relevant and rigorous small learning communities.

- Catherine Brown – Assistant Principal
- Francesca Castaneda-Barajas – Attendance Specialist
- Seattle Public Schools
SAVE THE DATE!

CLEVELAND STEM HIGH SCHOOL

BRIDGE NIGHT
FOR INCOMING FRESHMEN & FAMILIES
Thursday, May 18, 2017
The Big Three: How Families and School Can Work Together for College Readiness

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Bridge Night 2017-2018 Agenda
Thursday May 18th

6:00-6:30  Dinner/Sign-In/ Information Pick Up
6:30-6:35  Link Crew takes all incoming Cleveland students to the gym
6:35-6:40  Principal Brelan Welcomes families
6:40-7:00  PBL Activity Pratt/Shaw—Marshmallow challenge
7:00-7:35  Introduction of key staff
7:35-7:45  Closing—Admin Team
7:45-8:00  Parent feedback (lanyards), mingling, continued tabling.

Bridge Night Feedback 2016-2017
(Please complete at the end of the evening and staple to pathway/length)

1) After going to this event I know who/where to go to when I have questions:
   ☐ Yes ☐ Sort of ☐ No

2) What was helpful about tonight?

3) What could be improved?

4) I better understand what Project Based Learning (PBL) is:
   ☐ Yes ☐ Sort of ☐ No

   Some things I learned about PBLs:

   Some questions I still have:

5) What are some ways my student’s middle school served my family well?

6) What are some ways Cleveland could best serve your student?

7) For future family events, important topics to my family are:

Thank you!
Bridge Night – Cleveland High School – Seattle Public Schools
Cycle of Inquiry

PDSA Cycle

- Act
- Plan
- Do
- Study
Practicing the PDSA Process

Think of a recent family engagement initiative or activity in which you were involved.

If you are together with colleagues who also were involved, please reflect as a group.
What did you plan?

What was the goal?
DO

What did you observe?
What did you learn?
Did you meet your goal?
What did you conclude that will influence your planning in next cycle?
What is missing from this process?
We need a team to reflect well and hear all the important voices!
Team Members Needed for Regular (Monthly) Meetings

- Parents
- HS Students
- Teachers
- Administrators
- Counselors
- Other School Staff

Family Engagement Team From Denny Middle School, Seattle, Circa 2012
Next Steps

How can I apply this process in my professional setting?

• Who are the team members who will be part of this process (or how can I recruit them)?

• What is the specific problem of practice we want to address?

• What are the barriers to doing this, and how will we address them?

• What help do we need, and where will we seek it?
Stay Tuned for Findings Over Time
The Goal: Closing the Graduation Gap!