Distributive Leadership

TARGETED INDICATORS

READING AT GRADE LEVEL BY 3RD GRADE

HIGH ATTENDANCE

FEW OR NO DISCIPLINARY ISSUES

9TH GRADE ON TRACK TO GRADUATION

ENGAGEMENT

DESCRIPTION OF THE STRATEGY

Distributed leadership helps schools become strong organizations supporting student success while at the same time promoting strong relationships and partnerships with members of the school community.

So, what is distributed leadership and what does it look like when it is embedded in a districts and or schools?

Richard Elmore (2007) defined distributed leadership as "…the job of administrative leaders [being] primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations around the use of those skills and knowledge, holding various pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result" (p. 59).

Further, Anthony Bryk and his colleagues found that leadership that is inclusive and creates a sense of community in the school, was an important indicator of how likely a school was towards preparing students be successful in math or English Language Arts.

Once in place, distributed leadership, can then lead the way towards trust and collaboration where the end product can be a collective understanding of a common goal towards supporting student succeed.

- Strong collaborative professional learning communities and teams
- Purposeful collaboration
- Don't forget students, families, and community partners. Leaders from these areas have much to offer toward school success.

OREGON EXAMPLE

East Gresham Elementary is a K-5 Title I school with 380 students. All students have access to free breakfast and lunch and are invited to afterschool activities in our onsite program.

Key factors for success

Develop culture of trust where teachers' strengths and knowledge is honored and recognized.

Provide teachers with professional development on evidence-based teaching and student learning strategies.

Use data team process to measure the impact of instruction on student learning.

Provide time for teachers to collaborate and plan instruction together.

Monitor student learning and celebrate every success.

Regularly communicate our school improvement story with our families.

WHY WAS THE STRATEGY CHOSEN?

Trust and distributed leadership was chosen to prioritize because it has been shown to help produce equitable student achievement.

EVIDENCE THE STRATEGY IS EFFECTIVE

It is important to note that distributed leadership has had a strong impact in schools and can be one of the important contributors to positive change and transformation (Elmore, 2004; Fullan, 2006; Spillane, 2006). Alma Harris (2006) while considering empirical evidence that highlights a relationship between distributed leadership and organizational outcomes, found the following three implications: first, those in formal leadership needed to create cultural conditions and structural opportunities for distributed leadership to take hold, develop, and evolve. Second, school leaders needed to consider how they could maximize and harness untapped leadership potential within the school. Third, it was important that the school had a flatter organizational structure where new professional relationships and collaboration could emerge without top down direction.

FUNDING OF THE STRATEGY

The school was strategic in allocating its Title 1 resources to allow for regularly scheduled leadership and grade level team meetings for collaborative decision making.

THE STRATEGY IS WORKING IN OREGON

The staff at East Gresham Elementary School (EGES) is focused on building a culture of trust with positive relationships. They are:

- Developing shared ownership in a learning environment that demonstrates commitment, collaboration, and celebration of equitable student growth and achievement.

- Focusing on implementation and impact of our instruction and assessment practices.

- Engaging in ongoing evidence informed decisions to measure our effectiveness and next steps.

The students at EGES are appreciated and valued for their strengths and individual qualities. They are:

- Showing perseverance and effort as they show progress towards their goals.

- Learning to be mindful of making positive choices for themselves and others.

- Engaging and developing ownership of their learning to demonstrate new knowledge and skills.

Together EGES are continuing to be innovators in our teaching and learning journey.

From the student side, it is important to note that student performance is increasing school-wide.

From the faculty side, it is important to note that evidence based instructional practices are being implemented consistently towards an equitable and viable curriculum so that all students get and have access to these strategies.

For more information, visit www.oregon.gov/graduation.

LINKS TO RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Argyris, C. & Schon, D. (1974). Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Leppescu, S. & Easton, J. Q. (2010). Organizing schools: Lessons from Chicago. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Hallinger P., & Heck, R. Distributed Leadership in Schools: Does System Policy Make a Difference? in Harris, A. (2009) Distributed Leadership: Different Perspectives. Netherlands Springer Press.

Harris, A., (2008). "Distributed leadership: according to the evidence", Journal of Education Administration, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 172-188.

Robinson, V. (2011). Student centered leadership. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Leithwood, K., & Mascall, B. (2008) Collective Leadership Effects on Student Achievement. Educational Administration Quarterly, 44(4), pp. 529-561

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS

Kimberly Miles, Principal, East Gresham Elementary School

miles16@gresham.k12.or.us