

Restructuring Whole Group Meeting
Review of Recommendations
January 5th, 2009

In attendance: Karen Schreiber, Brenda Carter, Deb Heater, Kevin Erlinger, Patrick Russell, Nancy Clinton, Donna Oakes-Novak, Jean Korder, Lisa Monda-Amaya, Jason Pound, Judith Pece, Priscilla Kron, Deb Tamimie, Dionne Webster, Natalee Steffen, Elizabeth Scherer, Angie Schoonover, Gayle Jeffries, Jan Hari, Meagan Welch, Melani Ferchow, Jennifer Rohn, Bruce Rummenie, Ericka Uskali, Carolyn Jenkins, Don Barbour, Erin Lodes, Leslie McClintock, Chris Bazell, Tracy Welch, Ashley Hackstadt, Catherine Hunter, Kathy Barbour, Preston Williams, and Don Owen

Introduction (Don Owen)

- This restructuring plan is a living document
- Don wants to take a group of UMS teachers on a few site visits to restructured middle schools

Review of Recommendations: Governance Subcommittee

- Difference between the School Improvement Team and task forces
- Make up of School Improvement Team: 13 positions voted on at large (posted on the USD116 website)
- School Improvement Team will be responsible for the “care and feeding” of the School Improvement Plan; the decisions that they make are academic ones
- How will we get the word out to parents (for them to serve on the Parent Advisory Committee)? Recruitment at Centralized Registration and PTSA
- Is this group in addition to Leadership, Curriculum Coordinators, etc? The meeting will replace the Leadership meeting, but will have a different focus; curriculum coordinator and team facilitators will still be there
- How did we address the essential question of making decisions using data?
- Is the School Improvement Team a decision-making body and how does it work? Yes, on decision-making; PLC and consensus
- We will “become a PLC” not “do PLCs” or “have a PLC meeting;” the system changes with a PLC
- Did the subcommittee consider having other members (parents and community members) on the School Improvement Team? We talked about the size of the committee; stronger voice from the parent advisory committee; concerns about faculty outnumbering parents; concerns about best use of parent time and participation; School Improvement Team would be looking at a lot of student data
- What will be the parameters for the School Improvement Team? A focus on the School Improvement Plan
- Does research support these recommendations? There is lots of research to support PLCs; the plan for the School Improvement Team is a way for UMS to quickly implement Professional Learning Communities
- Preston: There will be a great deal of change involved in making the shift to Professional Learning Communities; “this is a major, major undertaking;” please take the opportunity

to research and learn about this; don't just give it a glance and say that we will try this for a while; we need to bring others on board, otherwise it is just another strategy on a piece of paper

- Timeline for change to a Professional Learning Community... we will start this year with support from Ericka Uskali from ROE

Review of Recommendations: Climate Subcommittee

- This committee covered a wide range of topics
- Main point: we want to establish school pride and have them be proud of their building; we want students to take pride in their school and feel connected so that they want to be here; students who are proud of their school will try harder on ISAT
- Elementaries host monthly recognition ceremonies and the high school hosts many events like that as well
- Students who participate in concerts and sports are more engaged in school; we want that for all students
- What can we do to bring in parents who aren't always at school? How can we transform the relationship that we typically have with students?
- How do we value all of our students? (Cultural awareness) How do we bring in non-transitional parents?
- Parent/student/teacher contract with expectations
- Parents coming to school before the school year starts; computer access for parents
- How will students be involved? Perhaps in a survey
- Who is going to make these changes and how will they be funded? Much of this work is on administration's plate; not much planning in terms of funding (time more of an issue than funding)
- PBIS and RtI training will require funding and ROE support
- How can we go above and beyond for families?
- Climate issues might go through a task force... starting with student surveys (and perhaps surveys of staff and families)
- Clearinghouse for community resources; involving community organizations in the August expo
- We need to see how other middle schools handle parent and student advisory committees
- Preston: It is about the people in the building, not the building itself; is the climate warm and nurturing? The bottom line is relationships; "the essence of climate is relationships"
- These recommendations will cost money, but the focus of improving climate is relationship-building
- Parents and students need avenues to express their appreciation to teachers and administrators
- Creating a positive learning environment has to include what happens in the classroom; we need to keep training and supporting teachers in positive classroom learning environments
- Continue Lego Robotics, Science Olympiad, etc
- The large list is not going to be in the plan itself, but many of the ideas can be carried through as part of the process.

Review of Recommendations: Core Instruction Subcommittee

- Focused research on 90/90/90 schools
- The subcommittees compliment each other and the recommendations overlap nicely
- Some of the core instruction discussion focused on how to celebrate academic achievement (overlapping with the climate subcommittee)
- Gifted students? AP classes? Need to work on differentiation; lots of examples of differentiation
- Peer observations here and by visiting other schools
- Core groups in connections classes who could use a whole different level of instruction; what can be done to reach out to those students
- Preston: It is important for us to keep all the students (high achieving, middle achieving, low achieving) in mind when we make plans for our students; differentiation used to be about gifted students; now it refers to students at all academic levels; “we can’t afford to lose any of our students”
- Preston: We are in a competition. We have to prove that we can meet the needs of all of our students. And we need to do that without segregating.

Review of Recommendations: Struggling Learners Subcommittee

- Talked a lot about a flexible schedule; differentiation is best done with a flexible blocks of time to schedule
- There are recommendations to move SpEd off of team in to a full department, that focuses the skills and training of the SpEd teachers to best meet the needs of the students.
- Starting in January and February, we will be visiting other schools to see how they use scheduling and implement PLCs

Can we support the recommendations from each of the subcommittees? Yes.

Don will present the plan to the staff on Wednesday, January 14.

Thanks from Don for our service. He is impressed. This plan goes in front of the BOE on January 20th at 7:30. Any and all support is appreciated.