

INSTRUCTION

Learning Improvement Teams

Student learning is at the core of the school district's mission. Since students' learning needs vary and learning is most successful in a highly supportive environment in which school staff, students, parents and others work closely and harmoniously together, it is essential to focus attention on plans for improving student learning at each school. In developing and implementing those plans school staff must work closely with parents, community members and, where appropriate, students.

Learning Improvement Team Responsibility

A Learning Improvement Team (LIT) shall be established and maintained at each school building in the district. The charge of each team is to develop a learning improvement plan for its school that will focus on improving student learning in the school. Each team is also charged with operating within Board approved by-laws. The teams shall operate within the district's policies, unless waived by the board, budget parameters established by the district, the requirements of contracts to which the district is a party and all other legal constraints. The teams' activities, decisions and recommendations shall be consistent with the district's mission statement and shall contribute to achieving district goals.

Once a school's learning improvement plan has been approved by the board, the team shall meet at regular intervals to review progress toward the plan's goals, to develop actions and strategies which may contribute to the plan's success, and annually evaluate and report to the board on the progress of the student learning improvement plan.

Learning Improvement Plan Approved

The learning improvement plan developed by each team shall be reviewed and approved by the building principal before being submitted to the school board. If the principal does not approve the plan, he or she shall work with the LIT until consensus is achieved. The board shall conduct a public hearing on the plan and may refer back to a Learning Improvement Team with recommendations for change. When approved by the board the plan shall be submitted to the superintendent of public instruction as part of the district's application for student learning improvement grants.

Learning Improvement Team Operations

Each Learning Improvement Team shall operate within Board approved by-laws to govern its operations. As a minimum the by-laws shall:

- 1) identify the membership of the team and, as a minimum, include the principal, non-administrative certificated staff, classified staff, parents, members of the community serviced by the school and students (in middle and high schools); provided that, members of any one of the foregoing groups shall not constitute a majority of the team;
- 2) assure that the school's ethnic and educational diversity is adequately reflected on the team;
- 3) an open process for application and appointment to membership shall be established;
- 4) emphasize decision by consensus in order to encourage the development of decisions which have the support of most of the school community. In certain instances voted decisions, while not preferable, shall be acceptable, but the decision making practices of a team shall be one factor in the team's annual evaluation; and
- 5) provide for annual self-evaluation of the work of the team as part of its report to the board;
- 6) identify the communications responsibilities of the team and its members for the purpose of keeping informed all people with an interest in the work of the school.

The superintendent shall establish the interim procedures for identifying the members of the initial Learning Improvement Teams. Such procedures shall be consistent with the above criteria and effective until the by-laws are approved.

Learning Improvement Team Training

The learning improvement plan shall be amended annually to identify training activities for both staff and team members. Training for team members shall provide for understanding the role of the team, for developing the skills to be effective on the team, and for understanding the various educational issues which affect student learning.

Learning Improvement Team Accountability

The superintendent, in collaboration with the Learning Improvement Teams, shall develop evaluation instruments and procedures for the teams which include the following criteria:

- what are the specific results from the student learning improvement plan and other team activities?
- is there evidence of improved student performance, improved school climate, or improved support for the school among parents, students and the community?
- has the team operated within its delegated authority by focusing on plans and strategies to improve learning? Has the team avoided micro-management?
- has the team effectively used consensus decision making?
- is there trust among team members, within the school and with the district?
- does the team act in the best interests of all students?
- are team decisions objectively reached?
- do the team's decisions reflect consideration of the need for consistency and compatibility among schools in the district?
- when considering its options does the team take into account general community reaction and satisfaction?

Annually, no later than June, each team shall assess its own performance and include its conclusions in its report to the board.

Since the Learning Improvement Teams are the agents of the school board, the board remains liable for their actions which are reasonably within the authority granted to them. Therefore, the board reserves the right to review the work of a team at any time.

Communications

The learning improvement plan shall identify specific communications activities that will keep the general community informed about efforts to improve learning as well as keep specific audiences, such as parents, students and staff, informed about the work of the teams. The communications responsibilities of member of the LIT shall be identified in the team's by-laws.

Implementation

The annual reports from the Learning Improvement Teams shall be considered by the board in conjunction with its annual review of the district's goals. The superintendent shall develop procedures or guidelines to implement the provisions of this policy and assist both the board and the teams by making any recommendations which will enhance the success of the teams and achieve the district's goals. The principals shall be both members of their respective teams and technical advisers to their teams and shall assist the superintendent in achieving the purposes of this policy.

Adopted: Feb. 15, 1994