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Developing Leadership in Amsterdam

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Call or visit us online for the most current news and program updates.
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Building Teacher Capacity Through Literacy Coaching in Troy

For the past year, CASDA faculty have provided training, consultation and support to five literacy coaches at the elementary and middle school level in the enlarged Troy City School District. John Carmello, now Superintendent of Schools, Natalie Turner, RTI Coordinator, and Linda McHenry, ELA Coordinator, worked with a CASDA team composed of Nancy Andress, Dr. Edna Baker, Angie Camarata, Margaret DiGilio and Patricia Stone to develop the project. The project’s goal was to prepare and support literacy coaches as they began their work with teachers to improve teaching and learning.

Coaches and administrators collaborated to develop a job description which clearly delineated roles and responsibilities. Troy principals were a key ingredient in successfully launching the program. Training offered the coaches opportunities to share work, describe strategies for building relationships with teachers, best practices in literacy instruction, embedded professional learning, collaborative dialogue and ways to work with staff on student learning. The coaching relationship in Troy is supportive rather than evaluative. Coaches are encouraged to work alongside teachers during the school day. They help teachers with planning, assessment and intervention efforts.

The DiSC Model is one of the most popular behavioral and personality workplace profiles. There are 45 million people worldwide who “speak DiSC” to communicate more effectively. The DiSC model is a language with over one million new learners of this “language” around the world each year. DiSC uses four basic styles to describe how people approach their work and relationships.

DiSC training provides an online profile and an Individual Workplace Profile for each participant; Comparison Reports to help build more effective relationships between two individuals; and Group Culture Reports to help improve the effectiveness of working groups such as building leadership teams. Some of the benefits of the DiSC training include learning to understand behavioral strengths and challenges in oneself and others, learning to appreciate the strengths and differences of others, enhancing teamwork and reducing conflict within groups, and developing and furthering coaching and mentoring skills.

Over the past year, many local school districts have taken advantage of this tool through CASDA to optimize communication and relationships between staff. The training can be delivered in a variety of formats.

Growing a Regional Learning Community in Washington County

Seven Washington County school districts including Argyle, Cambridge, Fort Ann, Granville, Hartford, Hudson Falls, and Salem formed the Washington County School District Collaborative to investigate and implement efficient and cost effective models for increasing opportunities for their students as well as in other areas of operation. This collaborative model grew out of a study conducted by CASDA during the 2012-2013 school year. With the financial constraints facing all districts in New York, the study considered the strengths of each of the districts to capitalize on efficiencies.

The superintendents working in concert with WSWHE BOCES District Superintendent, James Dexter, and CASDA Faculty Terry Brewer and Jerry Steele, have implemented two significant ideas that emerged from the study. First, the Collaborative has implemented a Distance Learning Network among and between each of the school districts. These districts will host as well as receive classes from each other. Secondly, many of the districts will be sharing the position of Chief Information Officer for the coming year. Both the DL network and the sharing of the CIO will actually save money for these districts.

The Washington County School District Collaborative will continue to meet regularly to discuss and explore additional cost saving measures that could be realized through this cooperative process.

CASDA Offers DiSC Training

Partnership Brings Hope at the Lincoln Community School

Nine year old Janael bolted across the school yard, making a bee line for the front door of Lincoln Elementary School. It was June 25th and it was two days into summer break. “Hey,” I called. “Didn’t school end last week?”

“I yeah, but I came to sign up for the Summer Academy!” Janael shouted with glee.

And on a scorching day in August, a teacher who was preparing her classroom for the new school year remarked, “The faculty is truly looking forward to the upcoming year. We are hopeful.”

What is generating this back to school excitement? Lincoln Elementary wears a radical new look for opening day this year. The school is transforming into a Community School with financial assistance from a School Innovation Fund and a partnership with CASDA and others. A community school provides a full range of student services to promote academic, emotional, mental and physical health. CASDA offers expertise in the development of community school models, support for education leaders, and professional development in the area of instruction and school climate and culture. CASDA called, “The partnership with CASDA, community agencies, educators and families has allowed us to come together to begin to create and expand supports and opportunities to enable our students to learn and succeed.” states Pedro Roman, Principal of Lincoln Elementary Community School.

School will incorporate the resources and talents of these organizations to support children and their families. In fact, some agencies will have offices in the school building, making it easy for students and families to receive services and to build positive relationships. Planning is the key to success. CASDA faculty, with guidance from Dr. Hal Lawson from the University at Albany’s School of Social Welfare, and Dr. Kathryn Schiller from the School of Education Leadership, have worked with the Lincoln leadership team to create a framework with expected actions, outcomes and a tool to evaluate the work being done and progress being made.

The new Community School offers students the potential to realize their academic potential, expands the opportunities for students to access additional services, and creates a more cohesive environment for students, families, and staff.

CASDA team trained teachers to serve as instructional coaches. A new RTI team was established to address teacher concerns while at the same time determining how to deliver research based instruction to all students. The RTI team blended elements of a school data team and a problem solving team. Team membership included the instructional coaches as well as other necessary staff. Through a unique blending of instructional and intervention practices, students will benefit and teachers will grow. In addition to this work, the CASDA team has been providing the district with other professional development opportunities in the areas of co-teaching and STEM. CASDA consultants involved with this initiative include Nancy Andress, Angie Camarata, Dorothy Donlon and Pat Stone.

Helping schools and their students realize their potential since 1949!

Catalyst, Convener, Connector, Community Builder, Capacity Builder

RtI Program in Mayfield

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