



NORTHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS Northville, Michigan

District Continuous Improvement Process NCA District Accreditation Summary Report to the Northville Board of Education April, 2010

“Northville Public Schools honors the purpose of District Accreditation by aligning the work of the district and its schools through a continuous focus on student achievement and improvement. A systematic and systemic approach to continuous improvement is demonstrated through the establishment and implementation of the District Improvement Team (DSIT). This creative option provides for system-wide communications among stakeholders and fosters a climate of collaboration and trust among stakeholders. School staffs share their progress with pride and request ideas and suggestions for furthering and expanding their improvement efforts. A climate of trust and respect has been clearly established in the Northville Public Schools. This climate allows stakeholders to continually seek and engage in quality improvement efforts.”

*–NCA Quality Assurance Review Team **COMMENDATION**, December, 2009*

History

In the late 1980's, Northville Public Schools engaged in an extensive strategic planning initiative. One of the outcomes of this process was the adoption of the NPS Mission, Vision and Belief Statements as well as the Graduate Profile/Adult Roles, which are reviewed periodically and continue to guide decision-making. The Strategic Planning process served Northville well initially, and furthered a tradition of broad stakeholder involvement in the school district. Over time, however, came the realization that the strategic planning process was to a great extent removed from the classroom and from a focus on student learning. It also became clear that individual school improvement teams were not only more connected to student learning, but were also the source of a great deal of innovation.

Paradigm Shift to District Continuous Improvement

In 1998, after no small amount of dialog with various stakeholder groups and the willingness on the part of the school district community to take a leap of faith, Northville Public Schools moved to a District Continuous Improvement Cycle with building-based school improvement teams serving as the building blocks for this process.

Now in its 12th cycle, the District School Improvement process continues to grow and evolve into a powerful, district-wide initiative that enhances and sustains student learning with the ultimate goal ensuring success for all students, at all levels and abilities.

School improvement team representatives (teachers, parents, principals and students when possible) from across the district convene annually over the course of two days for District School Improvement Team (DSIT) presentations. As early childhood, elementary, middle school, high school and center program teams report their progress on school improvement goals, share successes as well as challenges, and exchange ideas, we continue to learn with and from one another in very powerful ways.

The District's overarching goal focused on student learning states, "All students will successfully complete each grade level and/or course taken, demonstrating proficiency on local and state assessments." Further, the District goal document reads, "In order to help achieve the overarching District Goal, the following critical questions will guide curriculum, assessment, and intervention in every school and school improvement plan:

- ***What is it we expect learners to learn/be able to do?***
- ***How will we know if they've learned it?***
- ***How will we respond if they haven't?***
- ***How will we respond if they've already learned it?***

The focus on student learning, and an emphasis on these guiding questions is evident in each school improvement plan, and in the presentations given by teams. Regardless of the age of the students served or the differing student and/or parent needs, there is a shared focus on learning and giving consideration to what students need as they enter the world beyond school. Beyond growing in our awareness of these common threads is the opportunity to learn from those who bring a variety of perspectives and unique approaches to the challenges of responding to the guiding questions.

The attached "District School Improvement Team Feedback" details the survey results from DSIT participants. The results demonstrate high degrees of agreement that NPS has a District-wide focus on continuous improvement, a collective focus on student learning that is evident in each school improvement plan, and the fact that this process helps "spread" good ideas that have subsequently taken root in other schools. We are improving in the meaningful use of data to inform instruction and improvement efforts, while recognizing that this is an area for continued improvement.

Seventy percent of participants "strongly agreed" and 29% "agreed" that the process provides positive feedback that helps to reinforce building school improvement efforts, while 54% "strongly agreed" and 45% "agreed" that the process provides constructive feedback that helps to improve/increase progress toward goals. It's interesting to note the comment that more constructive feedback is needed - and reflects our progress toward a more authentic process. As we begin the process of moving to the more structured format for school improvement plans required by MDE by June, 2010, we have the opportunity to develop additional processes for targeted feedback and closer alignment of school and district goals.

The Next Evolution

Northville's commitment to the NCA/AdvancEd District Accreditation now provides the added dimension of an external review process and a more systemic approach to evaluating the extent to which we adhere to standards of quality as a district. NCA has defined seven standards which describe the quality practices and conditions that research and best practice indicate are necessary for school districts to achieve quality student performance and organizational effectiveness.

The coordination of the Quality Assurance Review with the District School Improvement Team presentations was planned intentionally to reinforce the natural alignment of all of our continuous improvement processes: building level school improvement; the District Continuous Improvement process; and NCA District Accreditation Standards of Quality for School Systems.

On the second day of a three day onsite review, the Quality Assurance Review (QAR) team observed the District School Improvement Team process in action with half of our schools presenting while the balance of the QAR team conducted on-site visits with remaining schools. As a result, the QAR team interacted directly with staff from every school in the district, as well as observing the DSIT process first hand. This provided an opportunity for the QAR team to develop a broader understanding of how the DSIT process is integral to our continuous improvement cycle, as well as to observe the integration of the Standards Assessment process with school and district improvement plans.

The **Report of the Quality Assurance Review Team to Northville Public Schools** provides a detailed analysis of the findings of the Quality Assurance Review team, along with Commendations and Recommendations. The recommendations and suggestions for improvement are, for the most part, consistent with our identified areas of need/focus and District Goals. They will be thoughtfully considered, and acted upon, as we engage in the Continuous Improvement process.

Next steps / Concluding Remarks

The District School Improvement process reflects our continued growth toward systemic, systematic, and sustainable continuous improvement. We are building our capacity to increase and sustain student learning, a process supported by NCA's District Accreditation model and strengthened by engaging in an external review process.

Our challenge is to continue to focus on aligning all of our work—within and between departments and buildings, in each of our District level committees, and from early childhood through Central Office—toward our overarching goal of student learning. Use of the mandated School Improvement template which is noted in the Recommendations of the Quality Assurance Review team will tighten up this process, require a more systematic use of data, and move us toward deeper levels of alignment and coordination than ever before. At the same time, thoughtful attention will need to be given to working within or beyond the confines of the required School Improvement template to maintain a corresponding focus on the needs of the “whole child” and school culture that is clearly valued and reflected in our current school improvement plans.

School Improvement reports from each building are available in the 2009-10 DSIT binder located in the Office of Instruction. The school improvement reports highlight many of the strengths and challenges that were described in this year's school improvement review.

Additionally, we are expanding the NPS website to include detailed information about District Accreditation and District Continuous Improvement processes, including the full Report of the Quality Assurance Review team as well as the shorter Executive Summary of this Report. The Standards Overview presented to the NCA team will also be featured on the website, along with the Exit Report presented by the QAR team. This is an area of strength for Northville Public Schools, and evidence of an ongoing commitment to excellence that only comes with a corresponding commitment to continuous improvement.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the District School Improvement Team,

Mary Kay Gallagher
Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services

Attachment:

- District School Improvement Team / Feedback (Evaluation Results)

Zoomerang Survey Results

District School Improvement Team / Feedback

Response Status: Completes

Filter: No filter applied

Mar 30, 2010 7:30 PM PST

1. Please indicate your role on the District School Improvement Team:

Teacher	36	61%
Parent	3	5%
Paraprofessional/Paraeducator	1	2%
Principal/Asst. Principal	10	17%
District Level Administrator	6	10%
Other, please specify	4	7%

2. Please indicate the program/level you are representing on the District School Improvement Team:

Early Childhood Education & Extended Day Programs	7	12%
Center Program	8	14%
Elementary	27	47%
Middle School	9	16%
High School	3	5%
District Level	4	7%
Other, please specify	0	0%
Total	58	100%

3. How often have you attended District School Improvement Team meetings?

This is the first year I have attended.	19	32%
I have attended two to four days.	18	30%
I have attended five or more days.	23	38%
Total	60	100%

Please rate each of the following on a 1-5 scale, where (1) is "Strongly Disagree," (2) is "Disagree," (3) is "No opinion/neutral," (4) is "Agree" and (5) is "Strongly Agree."

4. The District School Improvement Team Process supports:

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/ Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A District-wide focus on continuous improvement.	51 91%	5 9%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

A collective focus on student learning that is evident in each school improvement plan.	44	12	0	0	0
	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
Meaningful use of data to inform instruction and improvement efforts.	36	18	2	0	0
	64%	32%	4%	0%	0%
District-wide sharing or successes which has served to "spread" good ideas that have subsequently taken root in other schools.	49	6	0	0	0
	89%	11%	0%	0%	0%

5. Comments:

7 Responses

6. The District School Improvement Team Process provides:

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/ Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Positive feedback that helps to reinforce building level school improvement efforts.	39	16	1	0	0
	70%	29%	2%	0%	0%
Constructive feedback that helps to improve/increase progress toward goals.	30	25	1	0	0
	54%	45%	2%	0%	0%
Appropriate flexibility at the school level to tailor improvement efforts to site needs?	29	25	1	0	0
	53%	45%	2%	0%	0%

7. Comments:

6 Responses

8. DSIT is currently scheduled over the course of 2 days with half of the schools presenting on one day and the other half presenting on the second day, scheduled the following week. Please indicate your preference:

Scheduling the two DSIT days one week a part (current practice).	52	93%
Scheduling a third day to allow more time between presentations, and spreading schools out across three days.	0	0%
Other, please specify	4	7%
Total	56	100%

9. The presentation feedback forms for building school improvement teams were revised to a more open-ended form with comment boxes, based on input from last year's DSIT. Please rate the following statements.

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/ Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The format of the feedback form was helpful, easy to complete.	25	22	4	2	0
	47%	42%	8%	4%	0%
The feedback will be useful to school improvement teams.	22	25	4	0	0
	43%	49%	8%	0%	0%
I could offer constructive feedback for improvement as	22	22	7	1	0

well as positive feedback.	42%	42%	13%	2%	0%
I took time to complete the feedback forms.	21	28	2	0	0
	41%	55%	4%	0%	0%

10. Comments/Suggestions regarding the Feedback Form:

8 Responses

11. What are the strengths of our District Continuous Improvement process?

56 Responses

12. In what ways are we growing/improving as a District?

51 Responses

13. What common issues are we facing as a District?

52 Responses

14. Suggestions for improving the District Continuous Improvement process:

31 Responses

15. Additional Comments:

26 Responses

16. DSIT date

Wednesday, Dec. 2nd (green surveys)	41	64%
Tuesday, Dec. 10th (blue surveys)	23	36%
Total	64	100%

11. What are the strengths of our District Continuous Improvement process?	
56 Responses	
1	Sharing
2	Sharing the different goals from each building. Bringing teachers, parents, principals etc. together from the entire district.
3	I appreciate hearing what is going on in other buildings. Great opportunity to share ideas and find out what works and what
4	Data that supports decision making.
5	- The agenda - 30 min per group - allowing brief breaks - use of PowerPoint
6	Informative Engaging Thought-provoking
7	Time to hear what other schools are doing with school improvement - Share ideas
8	- To share & learn with others - network
9	- Commonalities - Common goals
10	Sharing what is working well & what still needs to be done. Very inspiring to hear what is happening around the district.
11	Allows us to reflect & then continue to grow.
12	- Learn from each other - Share ideas -Organize, well structured format
13	Recognizing & encouraging teachers to be continuous learners & researchers.
14	I enjoy hearing what other schools are doing. It helps me evaluate myself/school on what we are doing.
15	It is always beneficial to hear from colleagues - it is also inspiring to witness the growth in our practices over the past years.
16	The only way teachers are allowed time to see what is happening at other schools.
17	- You get outside your school bubble and can see how you fall in line with other schools - brainstorming, group suggestions
18	Continuity or striving for it.
19	- Encourages cohesiveness - Encourages relationships between buildings
20	Every bldg. is represented.
21	Sharing ideas and successes.
22	Continuity across the district.
23	Provides an opportunity to share specific goals/interventions per school and grade level. Its a wonderful way to collaborate and see what "works" and what needs improving.
24	Allows us to reflect on what we are doing & see others ideas.
25	Communication between buildings.
26	Providing feedback. Its a good way of giving us new ideas to build on.
27	Communications
28	I always go back to my building with new ideas.
29	Student progress improvement as a whole
30	- generally, good use of data
31	Build understanding & support for one another. Gives one a sense of working toward one end - student success.
32	Established and maintained District-wide approval.
33	1. sharing of info within the district 2. feeling safe to share what works & what doesn't
34	The overall sharing raises the bar each year, especially in data gathering, data assessment and in the development data driven
35	It is a great opportunity to hear what is happening in other buildings & at different levels.
36	Site level decision making to best problem solve for needs of specific populations.
37	- Ideas - How we work collaboratively - Reflections - Shared propose
38	Time to share & collaborate
39	- Open sharing - Reflective - Supportive
40	Seeing other schools progress and sharing with one another.
41	Sharing ideas, gaining overall perspective district wide.
42	Seeing teams working together.
43	We are open minded to each others ideas.
44	See Comments
45	Collaboration to intervene.
46	100% participation by all school to continuously grow and improve.
47	- More teamwork with our colleagues. - More sharing - Intentional planning
48	Sharing ideas Sharing struggles Sharing ideas Opportunities to connect with other bldgs.
49	Continuously looking @ data & making appropriate changes.
50	Learning from one another. Sharing the journey.
51	Evaluating data in an effort to develop appropriate goals.
52	Seeing the other wonderful things that other schools are doing. A sharing of ides!
53	share info, strategies, ideas! Focus across the board on student learning.
54	The various ways each school is focusing in on areas to make learning and instruction better is phenomenal!
55	- Feedback from our colleagues - Support & ideas that come out of conversations.
56	allows time for reflection & goal setting - it's a dynamic process that keeps us always growing & moving forward.
12. In what ways are we growing/improving as a District?	
51 Responses	
#	Response
1	We're seeing more consensus on the part of school improvement
2	Using data to drive instruction and to differentiate instruction.
3	Across all 3 levels, the importance of relationships with the student is becoming apparent.

4	Responding through differentiation. RTI Asking questions - looking forward.
5	I think we are doing a good job collaborating. I feel NPS are more united than other, larger districts.
6	Focus on learning over teaching.
7	RTI
8	- RTI - Clear focus on student learning
9	- the process is becoming clearer' - a clearer focus on how the district goals are expressed in each bldg.
10	We continue to be innovative in terms of how we provide our students with the best education possible.
11	Too many to name! Just a sample...improving academics and characters of our students.
12	Focus on student learning
13	We seem to be improving strategies to help students achieve.
14	Collecting data and ELA.
15	We are much closer to being data driven...our teachers are using the PD!
16	ELA Better collecting & analyzing data
17	1st year
18	We have a focus and working toward it, sharing ideas and adapting.
19	- more schools are on the same page as far as student focus is concerned.
20	Shared vision. District goal.
21	We are creating a more seamless uniform effort in all areas.
22	I LOVE the fact that each building is now approaching school improvement in a way that evaluates the whole child - social, emotional, and academic!!
23	More research based & best practices shared.
24	Use of data becomes more powerful as the years go by.
25	Student learning focus commonalities more refined
26	Not competitive Use each other's ideas
27	Use of data
28	Student centered
29	The use of data was evident this year.
30	Meeting Student Learning for all students we serve!
31	I think we refine the process each year it gets better & better.
32	We have almost completely shifted from "performances" to meaningful demonstrations of school improvement processes.
33	We seem to be better at measuring what our progress is and at using scores to drive instruction.
34	I've been here 35 years - I'm blown away by the level of sophistication evident in their presentations.
35	Love that all staff is on board for our S.I.T - not on certain teams of individuals
36	Focus on student achievement
37	- more collaborative - using data to drive instruction - More cohesive
38	As a first year teacher I see this district is way beyond other districts I've seen. The District School Improvement process shows the districts dedication to the students.
39	Data & student needs driven.
40	Gathering data and using that data.
41	We are definitely improving our intentionality.
42	Sharing interventions.
43	We inspire each other to be our very best...and we're getting better and better at it every year.
44	- Cooperative learning and supporting one another - Data collection driving instruction.
45	Many. More open to sharing struggles more cohesion. sharing common goals.
46	We are becoming more cohesive over time. The district approach to SI keeps us all moving forward together.
47	- expanding home goals into current goals and tying in a common theme. - more relevant reflection and opportunity to learn and share interventions.
48	The biggest growth I see is in the area of at-risk kids. We are doing a good job of identifying them earlier and giving them individual help that meet their needs.
49	Intentionality of goals & plans. Reflection is a big part of the process.
50	- collaboration within schools Resource room teachers with classroom teachers, TC's, etc.
51	Too many to count::: - PBS - RTI - the whole child

13. What common issues are we facing as a District?

52 Responses

#	Response
1	Assessment & diagnosis problems
2	Keeping current programs in place with decreasing funding to schools. We need to think out of the box.
3	Diversity of learners in our classrooms - Time - Money - Class Size
4	Funding - Resources to meet many different needs
5	Class size & funding.
6	increasing class size and changing curriculum.
7	- Common assessments - Maintaining program integrity through budget cuts.
8	- money - time
9	- Time - money
10	More & more demands/expectations of our classroom time & how to balance this.
11	writing goals
12	Budget cuts Need for Character Development Respect Focus

13	Making learning meaningful for all students in new and sometimes unconventional ways, while being in tune with our diversity throughout the district.
14	so much to do with so little time.
15	Prioritizing our focus - so much to do....
16	Higher expectations with less resources. Not enough time!
17	- How do we assess? - How do we use those scores/data to reach/set our goals? - ELA/Math/Science - Whole child
18	- Monetary - Trying to figure out where the problems lie and attacking them.
19	- how to measure improvement across the board in data
20	I would like to see the district consider a character building program that the whole district can adopt - too often the elementary & middle schools use programs that are different and the message is lost.
21	Continuing innovation in difficult economic times.
22	I believe the continuity of instruction within grade levels and building levels is an issue. Also, the diversity of learners and emotionally needy students Teacher "buy-in".
23	How to implement new programs & to keep current programs that helps students lie the NHS 15)
24	Constant programming changes. - Character development.
25	Helping children of so many levels all in one classroom to meet their different needs
26	Money Program changes
27	- Behavior/Respect/Social skills - Looking at the whole student not just skill level
28	Money Economy
29	Need for common assessments, so we are evaluating over students using similar criteria. More work on Formative
30	Uncertain funding from state
31	- budget issues - data-meaningful, relevant
32	Time, Money, Resources
33	The ever changing environment in state expectations & budget.
34	- Change! Curricular & clients
35	Money Administration & central office relations with staff & vice versa.
36	Time Money
37	- Changes in student population. - Finding ways to provide intervention & enrichment.
38	- Accountability for student learning - Creativity in intervention - Money and Time
39	Student needs Money Cutbacks Intervention Student Focus
40	Money Time
41	How we are going to continue our progress while facing the financial crunch that is upon us?
42	Money Resources
43	Meeting the needs and documenting interventions for students.
44	- Teamwork if it's cuts (1st support) - Assessing @ the K-level without support
45	Collecting & using data to drive instruction (although this could be a success tool) Collect Budget issues.
46	Continuous improvement. we are doing great things, how can we do it better.
47	- Writing - Character traits - RTI - supporting ALL learners.
48	- how to differentiate consistently for all students with limited resources. - encouraging all teachers to get on board.
49	Funding
50	Money Resources
51	- meeting needs of whole child - data: collection, usage, making instruction decision based on the data.
52	Writing

14. Suggestions for improving the District Continuous Improvement process:

31 Responses	
#	Response
1	Provide seminar time on deeper topics. If we knew the topics we could bring items to share with colleagues.
2	May I suggest reading the book "Creating Magic" by Lee Cockerell. The "Disney" way of thinking could be very powerful for all of Northville Public Schools. This is to make sure Northville continues to maintain a high level of instruction and achievement among its staff & students despite decreased funding.
3	A dance break or singing break. An opportunity to brainstorm resources for a specific idea/topic (i.e. writing, character building)
4	Possibly a day for DSIT to focus on and share in predetermined topics.
5	If the district implemented 1/2 days for students, the entire staff could spend a quality chunk of time on school improvement.
6	Not sure how but maybe "uncomplicating" it for more teacher buy-in & ease of implementing strategies.
7	So much paper! Cut down on the amount of copies brought to the meetings.
8	More caffeine.....
9	none
10	The day is very long. Any way to do 3 1/2 days? Could we fit all bldgs. in this time slot?
11	Move the location - too uncomfortable.
12	none
13	have schools share how their programs could be used at other levels.
14	- These are the most uncomfortable chairs to sit in! Replacing these with the pink plastic ones with back support is preferable.
15	School climate goals
16	None right now

