

System Assessment Documents: School Focus on Collaboration

School Focus on Collaboration: We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose of learning for all students. We cultivate a collaborative culture through the development of high performing teams.

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<p><i>BUILDING SHARED KNOWLEDGE AND LEADERSHIP: MISSION, VISION, VALUES, GOALS AND STRATEGIES: The identification and communication of common organizational purpose, clear direction, collective commitments, measurable targets and focused action plans that represent the priorities and core beliefs of the organization</i></p>
<p><i>Clarifying the “Big Picture”</i></p>
<p>1. How do you develop vision, mission, values, and goals? What systems are in place for leadership to set direction? Is there a strategic or improvement planning process? What is the process for setting direction? Attach a copy of your improvement plan to include mission, vision, values and goals if you have one.</p>
<p>Our vision, mission, values, and goals are developed in a committee of volunteers that included teachers, administration, community and students. The administration creates the committees by teacher volunteers or invitation. To set direction the administration collaborates on a retreat and analyzes data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Each school GAN is related to the District Strategic Plan. ● Clarity is needed between the many plans such as action plan, strategic plan, SMART Goals, and GAN.
<p>2. How were the goals determined? Who determined the goals? Are there targets for each of the goal indicators?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goals (GAN) for the year are determined by the administrative team during the administrative retreat. ● Each school then aligns it’s goal to the district goal. ● Each grade level sets a GAN relating to the school goal.
<p>3. Does everyone know where you are headed with a clear pathway of what you plan to do to get there? How do you know?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goals are addressed at the beginning of each Professional Learning Day (PLD) by the superintendent. ● Grade levels meet three times a year for Data Days to discuss progress of all students (with an

emphasis on those students needing support for reinforcement and currently - now also those needing acceleration & enrichment) and our grade level progress towards our GAN.

- Big Team Plans have been created to discuss where we are headed and how we are going to get there. The upcoming unit is examined especially in terms of differentiation.
- We feel the pathway is clearest for students needing reinforcement versus those needing enrichment/acceleration. This needs to be addressed, as our GAN currently relates to the higher achieving students.

Communicating the “Big Picture”

4. How would you describe the “BIG PICTURE” of where you are headed and how change initiatives connect with this picture? How does that picture align from grade level/department teams to school to district? How do you know?

- We are high achieving district which may be why we feel we have various “Big Pictures”.
- “Big Picture 1” at Spring Avenue this year, is for the high achieving students to meet their projected growth for their RIT reading scores on the MAP test.
 - An emphasis on guided reading, questioning techniques, and discussion methods has tied into our big picture. Reading resource teachers at the 4 elementary buildings have been revisiting balanced literacy with the classroom teachers. Our reading resource teaching at Spring has led workshops on each of these topics.
- “Big Picture 2” district wide - which we feel all schools support, so it must be another big picture for Spring Avenue is to close the achievement gap between high achievement and low achievement - in particular based on low socio-economic status.
- At Data Days we identify students in need of interventions/RTI
- “Big Picture 3” focuses on building a strong, respectful and safe learning environment and overall school community for all stakeholders.
- District supports teacher training and integration Responsive Classroom in their school day. This focus is also commutative to support staff.

5. What systems are in place to communicate the goals, measures and targets as well as progress toward the goals, measures and targets to:

- Faculty and staff
- Parents and students
- Community

- One system in place is Data Days- this for each grade level occur 3 times per year in which goals, measures and targets are discussed by classroom teachers, resource teachers, the principal and other support staff such as the social worker. O.T., etc.
- Goal setting occurs in classrooms between the teacher and student- we are not clear subjects goals are written for across grade levels and how it is addressed. We think they are shared with parents - for the most part.
- Parents are given information through Curriculum Night, conferences, progress reports, report cards, classroom websites and further supported by teacher emails and phone calls to parents

regarding student progress. School and district goals (dashboard) are posted on the website, as well.

- Big Team Plan
- GANs/SIP updates with district in the Round table- a new opportunity for grade level representatives to share updates on our GANs & SIP with a few district administrators three times a year. Reps also share what they need from administration in terms of assistance to make more or continued progress.

Reinforcing the “Big Picture”

6. Do the behaviors and actions of all staff support the “BIG PICTURE”-- mission, vision, values, and goals? Is there a high degree of staff engagement in implementing your improvement plan? How do you know if the improvement plan is being implemented with fidelity?

- There is confusion between SMART goals, GANS and the Strategic Plan, thus creating uncertainty of what to truly focus on as our Big Plan.
- Overall we believe there is a high degree of staff support and engagement in the Big Pictures for our school.
- Being classroom teachers, we do not know if ALL staff is implementing our improvement plan, however, from our interactions with staff, we feel everyone is on board.
- Our teacher surveys demonstrate 90% of our teachers believe quality work is expected of all adults

7. Do employees see how their improvement work connects with the “BIG PICTURE” of where you are headed? How do you know?

- Employees see a connection between their improvement work with students to where we are headed as a school.
- Improvement is noted in School Improvement Plan (SIP) and in teacher collaboration meetings.
- However, there is a discrepancy between how we are measuring improvement and student progress between what and how MAP measures improvement and it’s alignment with CCSS and DOK progress in guided reading groups and our GAN.

Living the “Big Picture”

8. How do you manage new initiatives so as not to overload and confuse the system?

Our district is very proactive and highly regarded as evidence by our recent “Blue Ribbon” award. We have become accustomed to managing new initiatives and stress.

We are fully supportive of our teaching responsibilities and participate in extra curricular and extra duty activities when able.

This being said, we feel the large number of recent initiatives is unmanageable. We see the value of the new initiatives and how they can foster improvements for our district and student learning, however

due to the volume of simultaneous change (see list below) our staff feels overwhelmed. Some initiatives are state mandated, most are initiated at the district level and a few at the school level.

As dedicated professionals we are struggling to find a balance between internal and external pressures as we desire to perform all the initiatives with high integrity. This has been a source of frustration for teachers at least 2 years.

Many teachers have shared they are feeling pressured to participate in the “extracurricular” initiatives like lunch recess duty, Teacher Academies, Summer Connect, After 3, Foundation D105 Activities and Donations (\$) towards the Foundation. Evidence~We were contacted several times to participate in each of these activities.

Major Initiatives:

1. Common Core State Standards
2. Changed from quarters to trimesters with new progress reports to be completed mid-trimester
3. Development of post and pre-assessments
4. The creation of curriculum on an ongoing basis due to CCSS

Minor Initiatives (that take less time, but are still stressors):

5. Additional health tutorials- State
6. Removed “pull out” program (grades 4-6) for advanced reading program. In place is team planning with specialists. Additional time is needed to find resources to support learning, differentiation.
7. Behavior Screener-State
8. Next Step Reading Assessment - useful addition, however implemented at the start of the school year without prior teacher training
9. Round Table Meetings
10. Big Team Plan- *common plan time with each grade level*

Other initiatives that aren't mandated but we feel pressured to be a part of:

11. District 105 Foundation
12. Teacher Academies
13. Book Studies- Reading in the Wild
14. Summer Connect Program
15. Black Belt- *training to increase Common Core understanding*
16. *SMART GOAL Training*

9. Provide examples of the long-range improvement goals. How you measure progress toward attaining those goals.

We are not clear on if we have different long-range school improvement goals or if they are the same as our D105 goals.

They are:

- college and career ready

- common assessments - by our developed units/teams
- an increase in students who attend LT are enrolling in advanced classes
- close the achievement gap - by our data
- safe and supportive learning environment
- district surveys
- enhance learning environment by connecting schools, families, and communities
- recruit, retain, and develop a high quality, collaborative staff
- make effective use of resources

10. What strategies (new initiatives to change the status quo) is the organization implementing this year? Do these strategies extend from the long-range goals above or are they separate? How do they impact the work of:

- Students
- Teachers
- School Leaders
- District Leaders

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- Students- Feedback through email/phone conversation shows an increase in frustration with inability to garner assistance from parents with CCSS math homework, frustration with students over number of pre/post tests in all areas
- Teachers - With so much to focus on, it is difficult to implement the programs with integrity and there is little time for self-reflection on the implementation.
- School Leaders- We think the strategies apply to long-range goals but this has not been identified or connected with the staff. Additional stress trying to manage staff frustrations and anxiety
- District Leaders- Juggling demands of state mandates and the drive to excel as a district.

11. Are there action plans to implement the strategies (timelines, resources, training)? Provide examples of action plans. Was there any training to ensure a consistent action planning process? Describe such training.

Unclear about timelines. Training in DOK, writing assessment and some additional training at Teacher Academies on writing questions and unit development.

MAKING APPROPRIATE DECISIONS THROUGH HIGH PERFORMING, COLLABORATIVE TEAMS:

The team “hardware” work of creating collaborative structures and processes – how teams train themselves to be functional, purposeful teams

Setting Expectations for Team Function

12. What are the guidelines / expectations for the use of collaboration time? Do teams work to accomplish common goals? Do teams set norms? Do teachers feel collaboration time is productive? How do you know?

- Administrators have set aside common planning time for grade level teams with the addition of a team plan time with support personnel on each Friday.
- There are set weeks for the reading, math and resource teachers to join that time. Teams work to coordinate the upcoming units.
- Feelings about the productivity of the collaboration times are mixed. How do we know? Evidence- morale of classroom teachers

13. Do staff members have opportunity to provide input to decisions that impact their work? How would you describe the decision-making process?

- Staff members do have the opportunity to give input, but as reflected in a staff survey and morale, when input is given on important decisions it doesn't always seem reflected in the final decision.
- One example is the implementation of progress reports which were developed with little teacher input on the format. Once the format was set, teachers worked within those parameters to establish the standards to be addressed.

14. Describe the leadership system—structures and processes for distributed leadership. Do you have a school leadership team? Are all grade levels/departments represented on the team? When does the team meet? What are the defined roles for leadership team members? Do you evaluate the effectiveness of leadership team meetings?

- Building Leadership Team (BLT) - on the team is a representative from preschool -6th grade, reading specialist, advanced academic instructor, and gym teacher
- There is no meeting schedule for this team. We gathered in the summer to talk about school data and how to share this information with whole staff; we meet as needed and our school leaders consult with individuals on this team as needed
- The role of each member is to bring “expertise” and relay information back to his/her grade level - we are unclear of the “leadership” expectation as this is still being developed..
- We are not at the point of evaluating our effectiveness at this time
- We understand we are on 2 year terms and the group will rotate next year (??).

15. What training and follow-up support has been provided for team members to have the skills, tools and strategies to make teamwork efficient and effective? Do you monitor and report team effectiveness and efficiency on a regularly scheduled basis?

One member was invited to attend a Leadership Seminar (only one could attend), and if others asked for additional training and support, we feel this would be provided. At this time, the we feel the Leadership Team is in it’s infancy - however, we think we the terms are for two years and need clarification on our expectations. Effectiveness and efficiency are not monitored at this time.

Providing Time and Purpose for Teams to Meet

16. When does staff have time to collaborate within the student day? Outside the student day? How does the collective bargaining agreement address collaboration time? What is the difference between personal planning time and collaborative team plan time? How much is allocated or teachers each week?

- Most grade level teams are given three common planning times per week, however teachers feel this is taken from our personal planning time.
- Many teachers do individual/personal planning before school, during lunch, after school, and late at night. Early Childhood and kindergarten teachers do collaborative planning after school.
- We are struggling to differentiate between personal plan time and collaborative time as we are always trying to find time to plan with peers. Maybe....roughly 120 minutes are allocated for collaborative planning each week??
- Our collective bargaining agreement states principals may conduct 75 min. school meeting 2x a month.

17. What methods are used to ensure effective communication, collaboration, and knowledge/skill sharing across grade levels, jobs, other schools? Address grade level or department meetings? Cross grade articulation? Transition from elementary to middle to high to college/careers?

- We think this means between two grade levels~aside from 15 minutes of end of the year

articulation, we do not receive time to meet with grade levels above or below.

- Jobs- Informal

Other schools

- The curriculum director provides a grade level meeting agenda for PLD Days and each grade level,
- Curriculum Corner newsletter biweekly
- Teacher Academies
- Shared drive/google docs
- Superintendent's biweekly newsletter

18. How does the principal support collaboration? How does the district office support collaboration in the schools and at a district-wide level?

- The principal works hard to ensure collaboration time for grade level teams.
- A great deal of time is allotted for district-wide grade level teams at professional learning days.
- Teachers are also able to attend Teacher Academies with pay twice per month to plan grade level units.

Determining Accountability Criteria for Teams

19. What systems do you have for monitoring and supporting team and school improvement work? How do teams communicate and collaborate with teams/ committees to ensure two-way communication and alignment?

Each of the following activities ensure communication and collaboration for the best education for our students utilizing all our staff effectively:

- Data Days
- Friday common planning time
- SIP
- Committee work

20. Who assesses how teams function? What criteria are used? What evidence is provided? What is the team's role in assessing how it functions?

**We are not clear how district teams are assessed at this time. Principals rotate to different grade levels teams during PLD days. We can give feedback to principals or Curriculum Director, and have, if needed. District wide- we have a Team Leader to disseminate District agendas and expectations for our grade level meetings. We also take notes which are shared with our Curriculum Director and grade level.

--School collaboration of teams is addressed in our individual evaluations.

21. Describe how individuals and teams set goals aligned to school and district improvement goals. Do goals include targets by which to measure progress? Describe the process used for developing action plans to accomplish goals.

- PGP aligned with our school and classroom GANS/SMART Goal
- action steps/timelines/artifacts
- conferencing

22. Describe how teams assist team members in expanding individual professional growth. List some of the strategies teams use to professionally help improve their team members. Describe how the team accesses new effective practices and research.

Time/Place

- during planning times
- SIP meeting

Strategies:

Informal discussions:

- We reflect on the success of lessons - what worked and how to improve it in the future
- We listen to struggles and offer suggestions
- Conference and share ideas
- Teacher Academies - share ideas from meetings

Access effective practices and research:

- book study

Implementing a High-Performance culture through Collective Inquiry

23. A. Describe staff morale. B Is the climate improving over time? How do you know? C What are the contributors to staff morale? D Is there a high level of trust and respect? How do you know? E How would you describe the relationship between teachers and administration? How would you describe the relationships among grade level/department team members?

- Our staff enjoys each other and working with our school leaders and believe we demonstrate true respect for one another. School leaders can build morale or break it down - we feel ours tries to build morale and celebrate each day.
- We feel the collegial, friendly nature of our staff and our hard working-supportive school leaders greatly contributes to our enjoyment of working at Spring Avenue School. Our professionalism and professional relationships remain intact. Our staff is populated with genuinely happy people, fun is encouraged in and outside of school and we care about one another. This is strongly supported by our school leaders.
- Though we have a strong working relationship with our school leaders, based on survey results, morale and conversations, teachers have expressed improvements are needed in the area of communication.

24. Describe ways in which staff acknowledges and celebrates growth and improvement in their performance. How regular and systematic are such celebrations? Do you celebrate “small” as well as “big” victories?

Our administrator is a strong component of celebrating: small as well as big victories

- Blue Ribbon
- special activities- student based (PJ day, special lunches, movies)

- verbal praise /informally
- data day and student collaboration
- teacher lunches

Celebrations are not regular or systematic.

25. Describe ways in which staff acknowledges and celebrates achievement and reaching the goals and targets in their performance. How regular and systematic are such celebrations? Do you celebrate “small” as well as “big” victories?

Ways we celebrate victories:

- Blue Ribbon
- Data Days-3 times a year- progress is noted
- As a staff we celebrate our friendships and professional relationships with social functions
- Principal buys us many lunches and give us little treats throughout the year to celebrate us as a hard working staff.
- Principal provides a wonderful staff holiday lunch for all staff
- Celebrated in our Weekly Web newsletters (principal’s newsletter) and sometimes to start SIP meetings
- Improvement needed: We need to celebrate the small- yet equally important victories: ie-every day in our classrooms we are noticing growth in various ways in student academic and behavioral achievement and parent relationships is hard, hard, work!

26. Describe how grade level/department teams focus their collaboration time around the four PLC questions.

- What do we want students to know and be able to do?
- How will we know if they have learned it?
- What will we do when they are not learning?
- What will we do when they already know it?

- Teachers use pretests and post tests developed by district grade level teams to address the first 2 questions.
- Our big team planning times with math and reading support teachers help us address the second 2 questions. We discuss how to reinforce skills with those who have not learned the standards, as well as how to enrich those who have mastered the standards on the pretest.
- MAP, Next Step, pre & post tests, enrichment and remediation is analyzed

We examine unit plans as they are created and have high hopes to assess them more thoroughly for further development

27. Provide a list of grade level/department team artifacts and products you *could* share to illustrate their collaborative work.

- Pre and Post tests
- Notes/Emails summarizing work completed from Teacher Academy

- Big Team Plan - notes
- Examples of lessons we used (that we planned together)
- Collaboration meeting notes
- Data meeting agenda
- Unit planning notes

Providing a Safe Data Culture for Effective Team Function

28. Is there a safe climate to report and compare data so as to learn from one another. Provide evidence to support your answer. What has been done to establish a safe data culture?

- Our Data Days promote a safe climate to report & compare actual data.
- These occur 3 times per year in which we examine MAP scores, reading assessments and other data.
- Evidence is a print out of data in colored zones & maybe notes taken (?)
- Based on survey results, there is room for improvement in building a safer climate and culture in terms of collaboration for more effective team function.

29. Is it comfortable for members of a team to share their practice? What has been done to establish a safe sharing culture.

Our principal promotes and caring and safe culture for sharing data. Evidence~She asks what teachers need to help students achieve and tries to support the needs of teachers in the classroom as well. Sharing is promoted by our principal in SIP meetings too.

30. Do all teachers/teams expect every student to make substantial learning growth each year? How do you know? Describe how teams monitor and report student learning results and make adjustments when appropriate to improve learning results. Are all teachers comfortable including student learning results as part of their annual evaluation?

Each child is expected to make growth. We constantly assess low achieving students through interventions and RTI. Average and high achieving students are monitored, as well in regards to progress on units covered in class along with MAP scores and reading assessments. We believe teachers/teams expect every student to make substantial learning growth each year.

FOSTERING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS:

The development of internal (staff) and external (parent, community) partners – using collaborative structures and processes to connect different groups around common organizational beliefs and aspirations

Fostering Internal Staff Partnerships

31. What systems are in place for school leadership to empower and engage faculty and staff?

- verbal praise and personal notes
- allow for special celebrations(lunches, small trinkets, etc.)
- BLT Team- in the first phase, no leadership directives yet

- encouragement of professional development, continuing education, etc.
- based on peer support discussions, SIP and BTM observations some teachers feel there is room for growth in this area

32. What evidence do you have to describe the relationship between and among the district office, all schools within the district, and with other benchmark districts?

- The district office camaraderie through social gatherings such as a Back to School gathering the first Friday of school, annual golf outing, etc.
- district participated in CEC network and various reading and literacy seminars with d105 office and school staffs
- superintendent walk throughs of each building
- professional learning days
- district grade level meetings
- Excellence Committee (examines our performance compared to benchmark districts)
- use benchmark districts to help with district initiatives

33. What method(s) do you use to determine student and staff satisfaction and dissatisfaction? How would you describe your staff satisfaction results? What is your evidence? How would you describe student satisfaction? What is your evidence?

End of the Year Surveys for staff, students and parents.

*These are very important to our staff for checks and balances and to have our voice heard. -As teachers, we are privy to the results which helps us understand our culture, positives, delta's, etc.

DELTAS

- There should be fewer qualifiers (ie: in which school do you work, which grade level, do you teach math?, etc) in order to get open and honest responses to impact growth.
- What happens with the results? Does admin see them too? How are the results used to impact change and growth?

Fostering External Family Partnerships

34. Do parents feel welcome in your district? How do you know? What is the level of participation for school academic events? What is the level of participation for the district's extra-curricular events? Describe your system of parent volunteers. Are parents represented on any of your leadership teams? Describe the effectiveness of your parent organization(s).

- We believe parents feel welcome in our school as they are highly involved
 - often 100% parent participation in conferences
 - Curriculum Nights
 - music programs
 - many attend field trips & special events
 - mystery readers
 - help with projects & classroom activities
 - parents teach After 3 classes

- Our PTO is very supportive and gives a great deal of time and money to our school. They are proactive in their support of the teachers and students, as well as any materials needed.

35. What systems are in place for engaging parents as partners in their child’s learning? How are parents involved in decisions that impact them and their child (children)? Describe the formative and summative systems for reporting pupil progress. What are your successes with engaging parents? How do you know? What are your challenges?

- parent teacher conferences
- curriculum night
- PTO
- Parent University
- math/science night
- literacy night
- report cards/progress reports
- classroom newsletters
- class websites

36. What method(s) do you use to determine parent satisfaction and dissatisfaction? How would you describe your parent satisfaction results? What is your evidence?

- Parent survey at end of year (alternate between 5 Essentials and a district survey)
 - 92% of our parents feel their child receives the appropriate academic challenge

Fostering Collaborative External Community Partnerships

37. What method(s) do you use to determine community satisfaction and dissatisfaction? How would you describe your community satisfaction results? What is your evidence?

-Surveys-alternate between 5 essentials and district survey
 -Overall, results are quite positive.

School Climate	94%
Learning	90%
Parent Communication	77%
Parent Involvement	86%

38. How do you partner with community members or community organizations? Provide specific examples. Are community representatives on any (organization) leadership teams?

- Library - writing festival
- First responders - encouragement and building relationships: floor hockey with 1st graders,

- serve lunch, join kids for lunch, play at recess
- Microsoft providing resources and coding training
- UPS provides Junior Achievement training to each grade level
- PTO: science fair with Fermilab, After 3 Enrichment with outside vendors,
- D.A.R.E

ENSURING A FOCUS ON COLLABORATION:

An organization's "alignment constants" – clear, committed organizational support for resource allocation, training, and aligned appraisal systems - embedded within the organization's policies, practices and procedures - that all support a focus on collaboration

Providing Conditions for an Optimal Work Environment

39. Is there adequate support to provide an aligned, consistent **behavior management** program system wide? What evidence do you have to support your response? Are expectations, procedures and consequences systematic? What evidence supports your response?

- Our school practices Responsive Classroom and when implemented to it's fullest capacity includes community & esteem building, problem solving strategies and consequences for behavior. The focus is on building UP students, rather than breaking down. However, we do not believe all teachers implement the program fully.
- We also have a daily All School Assembly to build community and share behavior & esteem expectations
- All classes participate in "Boot Camp" at the beginning of the year to align school rules and expectations across grade levels.
- Expectations for hallway behavior, expectations, and RC ideas are not being implemented systematically with integrity.

40. Is there adequate support for all teams to share the core values of the organization? What evidence supports your response? Once a decision has been made, is there adequate support for fidelity of implementation of that decision? What evidence supports your response? When a team member is not supporting core values or decisions, is there a practice to call him/her on it and hold them accountable for adhering to those expectations? What evidence supports your response?

- Do all teams know the core values of the organization?
- Is there a practice to hold staff members accountable for supporting our values?
- When decisions are made, they are clearly shared with staff usually and most staff work hard to fulfill their part.
- There should be clearer expectations for all staff about how to work respectfully and collaboratively with others.
- When issues arise within staff, our principal will intervene and help resolve

Providing Meaningful, Aligned Evaluation Systems

41. What systems are in place to align performance appraisal/ evaluation of all staff members (school leaders, teachers, support staff) with mission, vision, values, and goals? What evidence supports that

the performance appraisal systems for staff are meeting their needs? How do your current evaluation systems address the new state requirements?

-performance appraisal/evaluation of staff members are aligned with our GANS.

42.What systems are in place to align performance appraisal/ evaluation of all staff members (school leaders, teachers, support staff) with mission, vision, values, and goals? What evidence supports that the performance appraisal systems for staff are meeting their needs? How do your current evaluation systems address the new state requirements?

We use the Charlotte Danielson model to align performance for classroom teachers. Our Professional Growth Plans relate directly to either district, school or classroom goals.

43.Describe how staff performance expectations are made clear for:

- Support staff
- Administrators
- Teachers
- Others

- Support staff - They are on the same evaluation system as classroom teachers.
- Paras- Performance appraisals from administration spell out expectations
- Administrators - We are not aware of how their performance expectations are made clear. Teachers have minimal input through an end of the year survey, but we are not sure how that data is used.
- Teachers - Performance appraisals, pre-conferences and post-conferences for observations

Providing Job-Embedded Training

44.Has there been any professional development to assist individuals and teams address goal-setting and action planning?

SMART Goal training for some teachers, Black Belt training for some teachers

45.How has staff been trained to function as effective collaborative teams? To utilize shared decision-making? To use the four PLC Questions to guide team meetings?

- a collaborative atmosphere is encouraged during SIP/PLD learning days with much time for discussion between grade level teams and school teams
- the curriculum director highlights the four PLC questions during her opening remarks at our PLD days

46.How has staff been trained to focus on improved student learning? To assist fellow team members in expanding professional practices?

We have been trained sporadically on increasing student engagement to enhance learning. We have touched on increasing rigor through training on productive struggle and DOK levels, but we feel we have

skimmed the surface and have then moved on to the next initiative, without time to practice or reflect upon our effectiveness.

Organizing and Allocating Resources

47. Provide any examples of how you have allocated or aligned resources of people, time and money to ensure a focus on collaboration.

Big Time Plan periods have allotted time to focus on collaboration, but have taken away from individual plan time and have not always yielded helpful results. Further discussion is needed to improve them.

Focus on Collaboration: Self Assessment

Rating System Explanation:

RATING	RATING DESCRIPTOR
1	NOT YET: <i>There is no evidence that this effective practice is a common expectation throughout the organization.</i> It might be that the organization is not familiar with this practice or that it has other priorities to address before it considers such practice. Or it might be that the organization is at <i>various stages of awareness</i> of the practice. There has been no organizational commitment to this effective practice. (AWARENESS)
2	PLANNING: <i>There is evidence that this effective practice will be a common expectation throughout the organization.</i> There is organizational commitment to this effective practice. The organization is developing an implementation plan. The plan defines the strategies and resources necessary to move from current practice to the new practice. (PLAN)
3	IMPLEMENTING: <i>There is evidence that this effective practice has become a common expectation throughout the organization.</i> Everyone knows this practice is a requirement. The organization has moved its commitment to this practice to action. <i>A few</i> are effectively implementing this practice. (DO-STUDY)
4	PROGRESSING: <i>There is evidence that this effective practice is being implemented with fidelity throughout multiple levels of the organization.</i> The organization is providing support, training and resources necessary for implementation. Many (at least 50%) are effectively implementing this practice. (STUDY-REFINE even deeper)
5	SUSTAINING: <i>There is evidence that this effective practice is sustained and supported throughout all levels of the organization.</i> This practice is aligned to performance evaluations. Most (at least 80%) are effectively implementing this practice. (ACT)

Assessing the School's Effective Practices

The Professional Learning Community's vision of a high performing school represents the framework necessary to examine information to **focus on results** and add value to system improvement. The following assessment documents how fully and effectively each is currently being practiced in your district. Please complete the continuum to represent the collective thinking of your district leaders. (School Leadership Team, School Improvement Team, and/or Self-Study Team.

Choose by consensus 1-2-3-4-or 5. DO NOT MARK between numbers.

Focus on Collaboration: We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose of learning for all students. We cultivate a collaborative culture through the development of high performing teams.		1	2	3	4	5
		A W A R E	P L A N	D O	S T U D Y	A C T
Building Shared Knowledge & Leadership: Mission, Vision, Values, Goals & Strategies						
A.	<i>Clarifying the "Big Picture":</i> We develop and deploy mission, vision, values (collective commitments) goals and strategies to establish clear direction. Everyone has a clear understanding of where we are and where we want to be.		X			
B.	<i>Communicating the "Big Picture":</i> We set clear direction by communicating a "Big Picture" so that everyone sees how current and new initiatives connect to that direction and how those initiatives align with district and school direction. Everyone understands how his/her work contributes to the "Big Picture's" improvement planning process.			X		
C.	<i>Reinforcing the "Big Picture":</i> We expect that common behaviors and actions of all staff support the vision, mission, values, goals and strategies of the organization at all levels. Everyone accountable for aligning their behaviors and actions to our mission, vision, values and goals.				X	
D.	<i>Living the "Big Picture":</i> We set strategies and action plans to describe the steps to be taken toward attainment of goals. The improvement planning process serves as the centerpiece for examining how the organization performs. Everyone knows how our				X	

	goals, strategies and improvement actions will get us from where we are to where we want to be.					
Making Appropriate Decisions Through High-Performing, Collaborative Teams						
E.	Setting Expectations for Team Function: We expect work to be done through collaborative teams in which members work together interdependently to achieve common goals. We have appropriate structures and processes to promote shared and distributed leadership.				X	
F.	Providing Time & Purpose for Teams to Meet: We provide time during the contractual day and school year for teams to meet. Team meeting time focuses on improving student learning. Team meetings are effective and efficient.				X	
G.	Determining Accountability Criteria for Teams: We expect teams to be accountable for the decisions they make and the results they achieve. We expect each team to understand its charge and expectations and take responsibility for its actions leading to improvement results.				X	
H.	Implementing a High Performance Culture through Collective Inquiry: We promote a culture/teaching environment of personal growth and high performance. We understand the importance of high morale and professional relationships. We expect team time to be used to engage in collective inquiry on questions specifically linked to gains in student achievement or organization improvement.				X	
I.	Providing a Safe Data Culture for Effective Team Function: We create a safe environment to report and compare data so as to learn from one another and share effective practices.			X		
Fostering Strong Partnerships						
J.	Fostering Collaborative Internal Staff Partnerships: We foster collaborative staff partnerships between and across all organizational levels to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of students. We recognize the importance of acting on staff satisfaction data to improve working conditions.			X		
K.	Fostering Collaborative External Family Partnerships: We foster collaborative partnerships with parents (families) to engage them in decisions about the progress of district, school and student goal attainment. We recognize the importance of acting on parent (family) satisfaction data to improve					X

	home-school relationships to improve student learning.					
L.	Fostering Collaborative External Community Partnerships: We foster collaborative partnerships <u>with the community</u> to engage them in decisions about the progress of district, school and student goal attainment.				X	
Ensuring a Focus on Collaboration						
M.	Providing Conditions for an Optimal Work Environment: We expect all work environments to be safe, respectful, and engaging while supporting a climate of high expectations for student learning. We expect collaboration, commitment and accountability for improving our organization and its results through actions and behaviors.			X		
N.	Providing Meaningful, Aligned Evaluation Systems: We enforce system-wide job expectations and provide meaningful evaluation systems.				X	
O.	Providing Job-embedded Training: We ensure professional development and training is job-embedded and ongoing.			X		
P.	Organizing and Allocating Resources: We organize and allocate resources of people, time and money with a focus on collaboration.			X		

Adapted from *Aligning Districts As PLCs*, Van Clay, Soldwedel and Many: Solution-Tree, 2011

Assessing the School’s Core Values

The Baldrige Core Values represent the organizational best practices determined to create a culture for continual improvement. The following assessment documents how fully and effectively each is currently being practiced in your School. Please complete the continuum to represent the collective thinking of your district leaders (School Leadership Team, School Improvement Team, and/or Self-Study Team.)

Choose by consensus 1-2-3-4-or 5. DO NOT MARK between numbers.

Core Values that contribute to a Focus on Collaboration: It is important to recognize that organizational health is imperative to improving performance results.		1	2	3	4	5
		A W A R E	P L A N	D O - S T	S T U D Y	A C T

<p>The Baldrige Core Values or Best Practices are essential for a results-oriented organization focused on performance excellence. These Core Values/Best Practices must be applied and integrated at all levels of the organization. In a school setting, the evidence for Core Values/Best Practices should be demonstrated in daily actions at the school, classroom, and student level.</p>				U D Y	- R E F I N E	
<p>Focus on Collaboration Core Values</p>						
<p>A.</p>	<p>Visionary Leadership: Leadership/ teams set and communicate high expectations with a visible commitment to continuous improvement. Continuous improvement principles and practices are modeled. Leaders value high achievement for all. Shared decision-making is valued. It is clear how decisions are made and communicated. Staff, parents and students have input into decisions.</p>			X		
<p>B.</p>	<p>Organizational and Personal Learning: Staff and teams are engaged as full participants in learning and as contributors to improvement processes. Staff and team performance evaluation is aligned to school and school goals. Staff and team growth and high achievement is expected.</p>				X	
<p>C.</p>	<p>Valuing Faculty/Staff, Students, and Partners: There is investment in the on-going development of knowledge, capabilities, skills and motivation of students, staff and partners. There is a practice of building partnerships internal and external to accomplish goals. The school provides interventions when students do not learn. Parents are partners in the learning process.</p>				X	
<p>D.</p>	<p>Public Responsibility and Citizenship: The practice of the school serving as a role model in the operation as a member of the community is valued. The school is a safe environment. Appropriate behaviors and attitudes are celebrated. Trust and ethics are valued. Social and emotional learning is a high priority.</p>					X

Adapted from *Aligning Districts As PLCs*, Van Clay, Soldwedel and Many: Solution-Tree, 2011

Review your answers to the Worksheet questions and your Self-Assessment of the Focus on Learning Criteria/ Focus on Learning Core Values and then complete this Key Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement Section.

Our Key Strengths and Opportunities for improvement in the First Big Idea: Focus on Collaboration include:

STRENGTHS:

1. Our staff is collaborative and works well together to create a positive, child-centered environment.
2. Overall our entire school staff at Spring Avenue consists of hard working, high achieving and kind professionals. We enjoy working with one another and demonstrate a growing respect for each other. Our staff members are mostly happy people at their core, fun is encouraged at Spring Avenue in and outside of school and we care about one another.
3. Due to our strong commitment to excellence (including all stakeholders), resources and dedication of our staff, Spring Avenue earned the prestigious National Blue Ribbon Award, as well as the Illinois Academic Award of Excellence for several years in a row. Our students are receiving an excellent education.
4. Parents are highly involved and care about their child's education. Overall, they are supportive and we often have 100% parent participation in conferences, Curriculum Nights, music programs, and are welcome on field trips, etc.
5. Our students are growing emotionally as well as academically. The respect for one another and over all behavior is quite commendable. Students are respected when paying consequences and held accountable for their actions. The Responsive Classroom model has helped classrooms build stronger communities in their class and offers structure for teachers to follow.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT:

1. There is an opportunity for growth by evaluating and streamlining new initiatives so teachers can focus their time as individual teachers, grade level teams and as a school staff, on the highest valued D105 programming allowing us to implement each with more integrity.
2. There is an opportunity for growth in the area of awareness of the pressures on teachers to take on more "extra-curricular" activities.

3. There is an opportunity for growth between school leaders and staff to build morale in the area of collaboration.

*Adapted from **Aligning Districts As PLCs**, Van Clay, Soldwedel and Many: Solution-Tree, 2011*