

March 28, 2007

Day three of Education week and more to celebrate. This is a story provided by Bendina Miller, Superintendent in School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain). It is good to know good things are happening in that time zone, too!

Bendina writes:

Pegg Davidson, District Principal, Student Services, School District No. 6 (Rocky Mountain), has a long history enabling significant impact on student success. She has been effective in building capacity among educators and student services staff through strong mentorship and leadership with members of the school-based teams. She actively shares her experience and expertise by facilitating professional growth opportunities such as the district autism course, sessions on Mel Levine's 'All Kinds of Minds' and functional assessment.

In addition to the work to build capacity with staff in School District No. 6 schools, Pegg is involved in action research through the Early Development Inventory Team and the Autism Project. Pegg is constantly striving for improvement in services to the most vulnerable children in our classrooms. She facilitates a 'wrap-around' model to support children through development of effective and child-centered communication with outside agencies and medical professionals. While being a strong advocate for inclusion, she clearly understands the inclusive model of education and provides authentic support to classroom teachers, special education assistants and other professionals in the development of meaningful and effective ways to assist students in successfully integrating into their classrooms and schools. Pegg has a respectful, caring working relationship with parents and advocates who are key members of the teams supporting students.

In summary, Pegg Davidson is an invaluable leader who is recognized for the positive impact she has on student success through her thoughtful, innovative and leading-edge professional work which builds capacity with colleagues, parents and community partners.

And another secondary story from Superintendent John Simpson in School District 42 (Maple Ridge- Pitt Meadows)

John's Story

In School District No. 42 (Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows), there has been a focus on improving reading achievement at Grade 8 and 9. The District has funded a portion of an FTE to provide a school based literacy teacher to provide support as a coach to all teachers in Grade 8 and 9. The school based literacy teachers work alongside of the teachers in math, science and humanities to ensure that the strategies taught in English language arts are applied in all subject areas. Teachers of science are now also teachers of literacy. Math is not just about algorithms but includes strategies to better read the problem. The DART assessment is a tool that is helping teachers see the students' strengths and areas that need focus and development. Together with the Principals and Vice-Principals, schools are focusing their efforts based on the information they are reviewing. The School Improvement plans and the schools' literacy goals reflect this work.

The school based literacy teacher (literacy coach) models, provides resources, and assists in analyzing the assessment data (Assessment for Learning using the DART in the fall) with the classroom teachers. The result of this work has been to focus district wide on areas that the assessment has shown as the greatest

need. Throughout our secondary schools, note taking and identifying the main ideas of a passage has been a weak area and therefore has become a focus. Teachers have met to discuss strategies and ways of addressing this in science, math, social studies and English language arts. Opportunities for professional learning are provided to classroom teachers and literacy teachers to continue to dialogue and together determine the strategies and supports that will be most helpful to teachers and advantageous to students.

An opportunity was recently provided to schools through release time to meet as a literacy team from their school with their administration to discuss the next steps and the ongoing ways to continue to build capacity throughout their schools. Schools have reflected on what is working, what needs to change in their schools in order to promote literacy achievement and where their energies and focus need to be for the following year. Working as a group in a strategic way is making a difference to the achievement of our secondary students.

Notice in these stories today how districts are aligning resources with the priority work they are identifying for the district. Whether it is a school based literacy teacher or a district principal, the human resource to promoting change and improvement is critical. Professionals in these roles create professional learning opportunities and move the student achievement agenda forward.

Do you know of a successful practice or story that you would like to share? Can you point to some significant improvements in student learning and tell us about it? Maybe every week should be Education Week. Let me know of your stories.



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Deputy Minister of Education