

Strategic Learning Initiatives: Governance

Although a school can articulate a mission of “all students succeeding” or “lifelong learners,” without buy-in from the staff, families, students, or the community, they remain merely words and not a mission that every stakeholder is committed to pursuing. The Governance of a school is what creates a living and breathing mission and vision.

From the beginning of the needs assessment throughout the implementation of the intervention plan and strategies, the school's mission and high expectations for students will be guideposts. The School Leadership Team, composed of school administrators, teachers, community representatives, and parents/families will have as a key strategy the articulation of high expectations for students and staff through active engagement and monitoring of intervention strategies, assessments of student progress, and visible actions of accountability. Through constant communication, careful strategy alignment, and “walking the walk” of accountability, school leaders will model the vision and mission of the school for teachers, parents, staff, and students. In turn, they will ask the entire school faculty to do the same through active agreement and participation in the turnaround strategies and process.

Along with regular and frequent work with grade/department-level teams, SLI will meet on a frequent basis with the School Leadership Team to provide technical assistance and coaching. The focus of this coaching will be to build the school leadership team's capacity to initiate, monitor, and evaluate turnaround strategies, and to establish a collaborative decision-making process. Student achievement and engagement data, classroom observations, and frequent communication with teachers will become structured tools for the articulation of the school's vision, mission, and strategies for turnaround.

SLI also recognizes that a principal's evaluation must be ongoing, not an activity conducted solely at the onset of a formal assessment process. The FIP model provides for regular data collection and assessment that can be used as a component of the evaluation process. Student assessment scores and teacher evaluations contribute to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the principal, provide feedback for the principal and leads to discussion about how the school's leadership can be more collaborative and inclusive.

Lastly, in order to develop and enhance the skills of the School Leadership Team and principal who will assume responsibility for the design, implementation and monitoring of the process, SLI will establish a system of regular meetings that promotes/enhances shared leadership across the school and shared responsibility and accountability for meeting the needs of all learners.

Reference: Stubblefield, Learning Strategist, Lamphier High School, Springfield School District 186, bstubblefield.k12.il.us (217) 585-0939