

Strategic Learning Initiatives: Rewards Associated with (Improving Student) Achievement or Graduation Rate

SLI's Focused Instruction Model (FIP) has an immediate and increasingly positive influence on overall culture and climate to create a stable learning environment. This transformation is the result of growing a community of learners, both students and adults, in which high expectations are the norm. Continuous learning leads to the continuous improvement of daily work, which then accelerates the closing of the achievement gap, and develops, shared leadership across grade levels of the building and the district. The project creates professional learning communities, a system that has been shown to be effective in enhancing teacher effectiveness, creating a shared sense of responsibility for student success, increasing staff satisfaction and morale, contributing to a greater likelihood of systemic change, and ultimately impacting student achievement. The following are the primary improvements in school culture that will create a positive and stable learning environment: therefore improving student learning and the graduation rate of students:

- Parents and guardians become more involved in their children's education at home and within the classroom.
- Teachers undergo a transformation in the professional development programming and coaching as they learn to communicate more effectively with parents and students.
- Trust, collaboration and respect among parents and guardians and teachers grow and create a positive climate for learning.
- Retention of teachers increases as a result of the improved environment where students are taught in a way that is measured and reinforces weekly.
- The principal and other administrators are empowered to communicate better, and are perceived by parents/guardians and teacher alike to be "part of the solution".
- Students are transformed in that they experience improved results; many for the first time, and communicate in a more positive manner with their teachers.
- Community members become more involved in the schools and become more impassioned about the school's mission.
- The development of positive behavioral learning and socio-emotional supports, and behavior management that reward positive student behaviors, including addressing students with special emotional needs and those who are the victims of bullying sets the stage for a positive and stable learning environment.

Lanphier High School in Springfield, IL. demonstrates how SLI and the Focused Instruction Process have a major impact on students' academic achievement. Lanphier is an urban high school with 67% low-income families and 39% African American students out of a total population of 1,137. Planning for the project started in the spring of 2011 and the training was delivered in September, October, and November 2011. As more faculty learned about the impact the process was having on student achievement and motivation, additional staff wanted to get involved in the process. By the end of November 2011, virtually the entire faculty, 105 teachers, had volunteered for the training. As a result, Lanphier was implementing a full school English/Language Arts instruction process in all classrooms by mid-December. After only one year using SLI program interventions students reading scores on the ACT increased dramatically from 33.3 meeting to 41.7, an 8.7 percentage improvement. Lanphier had the highest gain in the ACT composite measure of any of the sixteen federally supported School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools.

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