

## **New York State Race To The Top Initiative - Key Impacts:**

- Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) for Teachers and Principals
- Common Core Curriculum Standards
- Assessments; 3-8 ELA & Math (Social Studies and Science soon to follow) and NYS Regents Exams becoming Common Core Aligned, State-required Interim Assessments, State-required Student Learning Objective Measures, and State-required Local Assessment Measures
- NYS Data reporting system upgrades– highly involved student, teacher, and district demographic data collection

## **How the Plattsburgh City School District has responded:**

### **2010-11**

Plattsburgh City Schools originally joined 4 other New York State schools (Albany, Hempstead, Marlboro, North Syracuse) along with a few Rhode Island schools in the Educator Evaluation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (E3TL) Consortium to explore and develop a rigorous and comprehensive performance-based teacher evaluation system. This also included designing & implementing a Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) process establishing the highest standards on tenure attainment in the state. In addition to the administrators and teachers who worked collaboratively on Plattsburgh's design team, the North Country Teacher Resource Center and SUNY Plattsburgh's Education Department have been included every step of the way. The primary reason for involvement was to seek a robust evaluation system tied to nationally recognized teaching standards, which could inform future district professional development measures. Secondly, the district became involved in anticipation of forthcoming state regulations and the potential for New York to pursue federal Race to the Top funding.

- Prepared and submitted draft teaching standards to NYSED using the HEDI (Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, Ineffective) rubric. Also identified specific data collection methods for each subcomponent: observation, self-report, evidence binder/portfolio, student survey, artifact analysis, video, student test data, etc
- Studied Peer Review systems across the nation with Dr. Susan Moore, Harvard School of Education – designed a model program that utilizes the collective aspects of each
- Studied comprehensive teacher evaluation systems from across the nation to begin assembling a series of best practices for a model system to become piloted

NEW York State awarded federal Race To The Top, however the award was not received until October with ambiguous guidelines and regulations resulting in no real opportunity to initiate efforts until July 2011. As the flurry of requirements began – most were unclear even for SED officials to relay consistently - yet included:

- Establishment of Network Teams
- Quarterly reporting system to SED through the business portal and other required District filings
- APPR plans submitted to and approved by the State Education Department by December 2012

- Testing (3-8 and Regents) to be influenced by Common Core starting 2013

## 2011-12

Initiated study of New York State Education Department guidelines and requirements for Principal Evaluations

- Plattsburgh formed a partnership with Saranac Central to locally investigate Principal evaluation systems in anticipation of successfully filing that portion of the required APPR plan by December 2012
- SED-approved rubrics and SAANYS (yet to be approved) proposal for evaluation and ISLLC standards additionally reviewed
- Via a Mentoring Grant, Plattsburgh established a Principal mentoring program from non-tenured administrators – complementing the above mentioned partnership developed with Saranac Central

Continuation of the E3TL Consortium Project – developing a comprehensive Teacher Evaluation System

- Administrators and Consulting Teachers participated in Standardized Evaluation Training “Boot Camp” for evaluators – selected administrators and Consulting Teachers additionally participated in Master Scorer training to assist with future evaluator re-calibration
- Piloted new teacher evaluation system (60% - observation of teaching standards) with faculty volunteers – one of 5 schools in New York State to do so
- Initial purchase of My Learning Plan/OASIS APPR tracking software and teacher artifact archive system
- Participated in the TELL Survey (teaching and learning conditions) for baseline data – we anticipate follow up data once the project is complete and evaluation/professional development systems are in place
- Began consideration of evaluation system/standards for those professionals not captured in state regulation (consistency in approach – OT, PT, Speech, Psych, Library, Advocates/Counselors, Nurses ...)
- Peer Assistance & Review Panelists trained on the PAR process and understanding the new evaluation system – Consulting Teachers also received additional training on their role
- Began discussing linking evaluation with professional development and the validation of student surveys in teacher evaluation (MET Study)
- I3 Innovation Fund extended the original E3TL grant to continue project
- Teaching Standards – Teacher Practice Rubric was reviewed with slight modifications recommended – clarity in language

Additional New York State RTTT requirements

- Champlain Valley Education Services named as Plattsburgh's Network Team liaison – training on state expectations, testing requirements, and student growth scores within the State's Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) requirements
- Superintendent trained via Regional BOCES in Principal Evaluation practice/requirements
- School based team (principals and teachers) investigated and formed a recommended approach to Student Learning Objectives and State-provided student growth scores to be included in teachers' composite score (20%)
- School based team (principals and teachers) investigated and formed a recommended approach to Local Assessment Measures to be included in teachers' composite score (20%) including rigor accountability measures
- Began using Engage NY website to stay current on APPR and Common Core developments
- Additional training on emerging State data systems – Chief Information Officer and District-based NERIC Data Warehouse support

## **2012-13**

### I3 Consortium Project - continued develop of a comprehensive Teacher Evaluation System

- Fully Implemented Teacher and Principal Evaluation systems as required by the State Education Department incorporating: new teaching standards, multiple observations, teacher artifacts/evidence, and student growth/achievement scores
- Teachers specifically trained on APPR modules: Artifacts & Evidence, Observation, examining student work, and goal setting & Professional Learning Plans
- Re-calibration of evaluators previously trained
- Trained administrators & faculty in full implemented of the MyLearningPlan/OASSIS software
- Design Team suggested modifications to begin streamlining evaluation forms and procedure for the next school year – changes made to MLP by September.

### Additional New York State RTTT requirements

- Teachers exposed to the curricular shifts related to the Common Core movement (mostly through early release days through summer work via on-line resources) – principals provided the professional development due to lack of other sources available. Use of the newly developed ENGAGE NY website began, however most materials remained seriously underdeveloped with SED officials promising continued developments coming.
- Teachers began purchasing and/or creating materials based on best practice research
- Professional development time used for deconstruction of CCSS in Elementary ELA and Math using frameworks and best practices from Kentucky Dept. of Education (this was necessary since NY didn't, at the time of roll out, have anything to offer). General professional development that focused on elementary Common Core Curriculum shifts and increased rigor; Literacy Without Limits, Open Response Questioning, Critical Thinking Techniques, Student Engagement/Classroom Consensus, Partnership of Assessments for Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC) prototypes.

- Training for teachers on Tri-state Rubric and text complexity formula to assist them with reaching the level of rigor necessary at the elementary level in their lesson planning.
- Charged the District Student Support Team (DSST) with investigating and recommending an approach with interim assessments by mid-winter next year, so future budgets can be considered to support this state requirement
- Summer training via the North Country Teacher Resource Center (NCTRC) for Lead Teachers offering targeted professional development organized through the Professional Improvement Committee

### **2012-2014**

District Student Support Team goal: supporting the State mandate of Data Driven Instruction (DDI) by researching interim assessments, as well as upgrading and specifying our implementation of District Response To Intervention (RTI) plan. This has forced the use of student data/growth to drive instruction and assign tiered intervention. A district wide system of accountability for DDI ensures that all teachers are participating in this initiative.

General PD for 2013-2014 that pertained to Common Core State Standard shifts and increasing rigor in instruction: Data Driven Instruction training and training on Level 1 and 2 test analysis with a focus on item, question and standard analysis.

### **2013-14**

i3 Consortium Project - continued refinement of the Teacher Evaluation/Professional Development System

- Professional Improvement Committee via Lead Teachers & SUNY Plattsburgh Faculty offered robust targeted professional development connected to evaluation data
- Faculty in-service: universal expectations for teachers on the MLP changes and expectation for all teachers to have a professional learning plan related to their prior year's evaluation results
- Cognitive Coaching Training for Consulting Teachers and new Administrators to the evaluation process
- Master Coder Training using the Elevate software platform
- Anticipated to further refine the teaching standards rubric reducing redundancy and directing more student focused language
- A Professional Development Academy as well as a Teacher Leader Academy are planned for the summer 2014

Gates Foundation extension of the i3 Innovation Project

- Differentiated Evaluation approach – piloting with a selected group of high performing teachers – evaluation focus on specifically targeted high leverage indicators
- Student input evaluations of teachers piloted for future development – with cognitive interviews complete (MET Project) process to be piloted this spring

- The overall project is being independently evaluated by the Association Independent Research (AIR) – a cross analysis of teacher performance on high leverage indicators and specific measured student growth.

#### Additional New York State RTTT requirements

- Faculty in-service on use of new School Tools student data system, and BOCES Network Team Training –Understanding State-provided Student Growth Score calculations
- Principals trained in SharePoint/NYSED data analysis availability – despite most of the relevant data promised by SED remains unavailable (test analysis for example)
- K-8 Teachers trained in Common Core Curricular Modules via BOCES, High School focus on ELA and Algebra I
- Continuous training for Chief Information Officer and school-based NERIC Data Warehouse support
- More use of ENGAGE NY materials – some adequate while others less useful – again materials are being developed for schools only a little at a time
- Other Common Core aligned curriculum investigations (NYSED ELA/Math Modules, McGraw Hill, Scott Foresman, etc.) K-5 underway - Publishing companies honestly address lack of material development nation-wide compared to NYSED’s continued push to test students regardless of their limited exposure
- DSST investigation of interim assessments underway – considering if we should switch from current diagnostic approach or to assess curriculum attainment. Above-mentioned curriculum investigations intertwines with DSST assessment work
- Less concern over math curriculum given current material has greater alignment and rigor with common core – deeper review expected in coming years as publishing companies catch up
- Budget implications – ELA Materials, Interim Assessments, Curriculum Coordinator, Data Warehouse, professional development, curriculum alignment/development
- The following teacher proposals for professional learning study groups have been awarded Plattsburgh City Teachers through the NCTRC Teaching is Core grant:
  - Best Practices – APPR
  - Aligning Foreign Language Assessments w/Common Core (County-wide group of teachers)
  - ELA & Common Core – Cross Curricular Connections
  - Erin Jensen Book Study
  - Morning Meeting – Common Core Study
  - Student Questioning
  - Character Strength – 21<sup>st</sup> Century
  - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Social Thinking

In addition – “Teach Like a Champion” – APPR/21<sup>st</sup> Century practices is being offered outside of the NCTRC grant.

**Additional Comments:**

The wide host of accomplishments could not have been achieved without a dedicated collaborative labor/management team with a desire to tackle the issues, take risks, volunteer countless hours and move proposals to practice. In as much as we have responded to state initiatives and accomplished our share, all is not completely fine. Strong concerns continue over stress levels of students, parents, teachers & principals due to the new series of testing pressures (state tests, random state-required piloting of future tests, state-required interim assessments, state-required growth measures (in the absence of a state-provided score), state-required local assessments, etc.). This has caused an unhealthy environment for students, loss in focusing instructional time, and has markedly increased the parental desire for less testing. In addition, the state's intention of sharing individually identifiable student data with private corporations (InBloom is one example) remains particularly disturbing to parents. None of this is a reflection on the respect/desire for high standards or accountability – it is the nature of the current tact.

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