Developing a Competency-based System

Adams County School District 50

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Overview

- Who are we as a District?

- What is our educational model for all learners?

- What do the data say on our progress so far?

- Our challenges

- Questions

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Who Are We?

- Snapshot
  - 10,124 total students
  - 12 Elementary Schools
  - 3 Middle Schools
  - 2 High Schools (one alternative)
  - 1 Charter School
  - 1 Early Childhood Center
  - Day Treatment Program (ISC)

(See Facts and Figures 2011 – 2012)

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Motivation for Systemic Change

- Low static achievement
- Persistent achievement gaps
- Poor graduation rate
- High post secondary remediation rate
- Accredited as "Turnaround"
- Increased learner challenges
- Sought Comprehensive Appraisal for District Improvement (CADI)
- State conversations about 21st Century Learning
  - *SB07 -053 (Integrated P-16 Education System)*
  - *HB 07-1118 (HS Graduation Requirements)*
  - *SB 08-212 (CAP4K)*
- Moral Purpose *"**Proficiency for ALL**"*

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Learning for All – What Does It Take?

"We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that.

Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far."

Ronald Edmonds
1935 - 1983

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What we needed…

- Systemic approach that ensured continuous rigorous learning and demonstrated performance (proficient or better) within and across all schools from the time our learners first entered preschool through graduation.

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Learning Matters Most
(Learning is the Constant)

- Learners are taught at their instructional level (Performance Level) in all content areas.

- Curriculum is "guaranteed and viable" where the Learning Targets (standards) and supporting materials are made explicit and available to teachers, students and parents.

- Evidence toward proficiency for all Learning Targets is measured and recorded over time where the learner must score proficient or better prior to beginning the next Performance Level.

- Learning progress is scored and reported on a proficiency scale from 0.0 through 4.0. There are no traditional letter grades.

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Time Matters Least
(Time is the Variable)

- Learners move to the next instructional level (performance level) in a content area once they have demonstrated adequate performance (proficient or better).

- Progression can occur at any point during the course of the year for any content area.

- At the beginning of the traditional school year, learners resume their learning at the point where they left off the previous year (continuous flow). There is no social promotion.

- Learners are typically in different Performance Levels for different content areas.

- Multiage classrooms are the norm not the exception

- Developing "blended learning" opportunity (Gates Foundation)

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Personalized Delivery

- Learning is personalized through goal setting, choice and voice with appropriate instruction.

- Learners progress purposefully not only at their own pace but with teacher guidance based on demonstrating proficiency or better on the Learning Targets.

- Multiple opportunities over time are provided to demonstrate and verify competency of Learning Targets (standards).

- Support and scaffolding for any struggling learner is provided through the Blended Services Model to meet the area of need. There is no retention per se.

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Systemic and Systematic

- Creation of a shared purpose and vision across all levels and departments.

- Common classroom practices, expectations, and instructional language across all schools for educators and learners.

- Universal structures, support systems, and standard operating procedures across the district.

- Collective SBS reform support by the staff, Westminster Education Association and the Board of Education.

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Competency-based System Model

Shared Vision	Leadership
Learner-centered Classrooms	
Continuous Improvement	Standards-based Education

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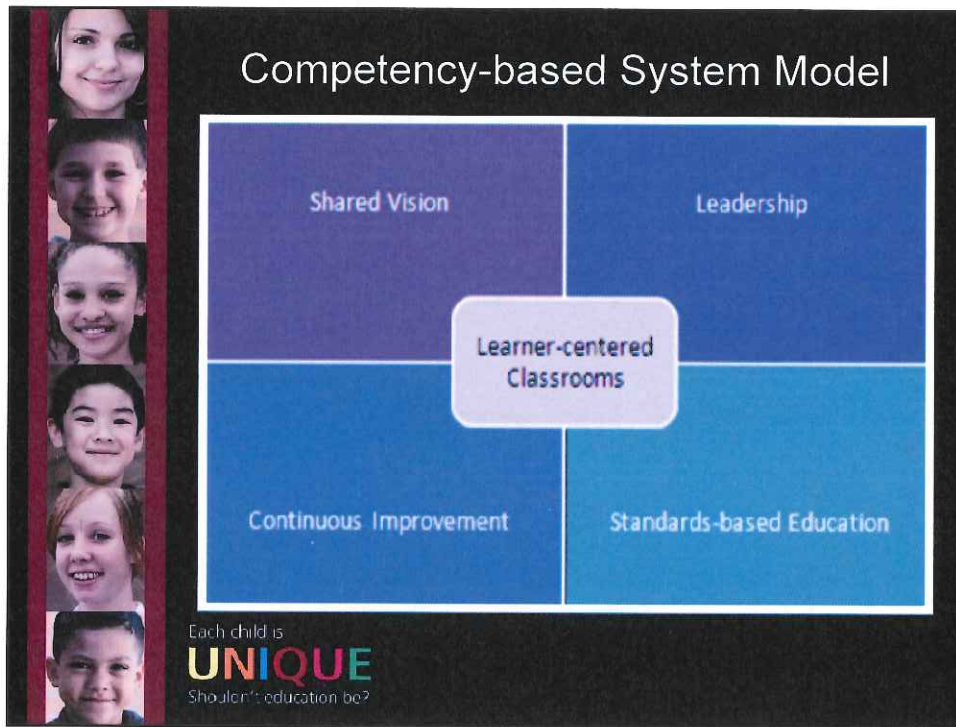
Definition of a Learner-centered Classroom

A true Learner-centered classroom is where "learners and teachers respond to and reflect on progress in order to build ownership and independence by involving teachers and other learners to become problems solvers, move through levels, meet their goals and figure out their own path to success; learners have the opportunity to make choices and demonstrate proficiency throughout the learner-centered classroom.

Teachers instruct and guide individual learners, small groups, as well as the whole class to set high expectations for all learners and determine the most effective instructional strategies for each learner in the classroom."

- Developed by Adams County School District 50 teachers (2011)

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One School's Results…

Summary of Achievement Scores from '10 to '11

3rd grade Reading 9% gain.
3rd grade Writing 6% gain.
3rd grade Math 2% gain.

4th grade Reading 15% gain.
4th grade Writing 10% gain.
4th grade Math 25% gain.

5th grade Reading 1% decrease.
5th grade Writing 8% gain.
5th grade Math 11% gain.

Summary of Growth from '10 to '11

Reading:
Grade 4- 27 percentile increase
Grade 5- 18 percentile increase

Math:
Grade 4- 34 percentile increase
Grade 5- 46 percentile increase

Writing:
Grade 4- 10 percentile increase
Grade 5- 22 percentile increase

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Accreditation Categories

2009 - 2010		2010 - 2011	
Schools	Points	Schools	Points
Sunset Ridge ES	66.7	Mesa ES	71.8
Flynn ES	53.4	Harris Park ES	59.4
Tennyson Knolls ES	51.6	Sunset Ridge ES	58.2
Metz ES	50.6	Metz ES	51.1
Shaw Heights MS	46	Skyline Vista ES	51.1
Harris Park ES	44.5	Hodgkins ES	50.1
Skyline Vista ES	43.8	Tennyson Knolls ES	46.9
Westminster ES	43.8	Shaw Heights MS	45.3
Ranum MS	39.1	Fairview ES	43.8
Scott Carpenter MS	36.8	FM Day ES	43.3
Mesa ES	27.1	Flynn ES	40.3
Sherrelwood ES	26.7	Scott Carpenter MS	37.6
Fairview ES	26.6	Westminster ES	37.6
FM Day ES	26.3	Sherrelwood ES	28.2
Hodgkins ES	26.3	Ranum MS	26.3

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Challenges...

- Number of students not at expected academic level
- Communication with Stakeholders
- Resource Reallocation
- Colorado Academic Standards
- Use of Primary Resources
- Assessing Progress

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Challenges...

- Recording and Reporting
- Special Populations
- High School Transition
- Integration with Other Districts, Colleges and Organizations
- School Structures
- Professional Development

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