EDA 503

NCATE

Curriculum Development Improvement Plan

**Component 1: The need for a Curriculum Improvement Plan consistent with the district mission is documented.**

* The need for a Curriculum Improvement Plan for District X is not readily apparent on a superficial level. The district lies in a predominantly upper middle class neighborhood where the median income is $68,222 according the to 2006 U.S. Census Estimates. However, beneath the surface we find that the district is not meeting the needs of its LEP/ELL population. At the Elementary level, LEP/ELL students are part of the mainstream classroom, receiving targeted ESL instruction anywhere from 180-360 minutes per week depending on proficiency levels according to NYS regulations. If the mission of the District is to create “life-long learners capable of achieving their personal goals as self-sufficient, responsible and contributing citizens of a diverse global community “, then they must revamp their approach to ELL education.
* The U.S. Department of Education measures the effectiveness of each school district’s Title III programs by calculating the percentage of LEP/ELL students that 1) made progress in acquiring English; 2) became proficient in English; and/or 3) made Adequate Yearly Progress. Each year the targets, known as Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) increases while the pool LEP/ELL students continually changes, forcing educators to become ever more efficient in supporting students’ English language development.
  + District X has failed to meet the Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) for the 2011-2012 school year. In total 146 students were tested and:
* Only 60.3% of their tested LEP/ELL population made progress in acquiring English meaning that approximately 88 students made progress, but 58 did not. The AMAO target for this year was 64.2%, which for District X translates into approximately 94 students. This means that they failed AMAO for the 2011-2012 school year because six students failed to make progress. The AMAO #1 target for the 2012-2013 school year the will be 65.3%, and 66.4% the year after. In order to meet these increasing targets District X must change how it approaches ELL instruction.
* Only 13.7% of the tested LEP/ELL population in District X became proficient in English, meaning that approximately 20 students attained proficiency, while 126 did not. District X exceeded the AMAO target of 13.1%, however for 2013-2014 the target will be 13.7% and 14.3% the year after.
* According to the District’s mission, they seek to “develop inquiring, knowledgeable and enthusiastic students who value and demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving.” Yet in the case of LEP/ELL students, their performance is usually a reflection of their assigned pull-out ESL teacher, who delivers a small portion of their weekly instruction. A more efficient model is to train all teachers, especially the mainstream classroom teachers the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model that all students can benefit from, particularly ELLs.
* The Office of World Languages, FLES, Dual Language, and ESL Programs for District X seeks to “provide opportunities for students to develop a second academic language through various programs” through strengthened “instructional delivery” and “rigorous curriculum and classroom experiences”. Unfortunately, those efforts have been targeted at ESL, FLES and Dual Language teachers, failing to address the fact that as much as 90% of a elementary school students’ instructional time is spent with the classroom teacher and not with ESL teachers.
* According to Ingersoll (2003) in the current reform context the schools best able to incorporate effective practice for English Learners are those with a structured leadership that 1) undergo constant collection of formative data on learning, teaching, attendance, behavior, and other important intermediate outcomes; 2) provide administrators and teachers with intensive and ongoing opportunities for peer and expert coaching and information exchange; 3) maintain standards of behavior and effective strategies for classroom and school management; 4) monitors the quality of teaching and learning carefully, holding all staff accountable for student progress. Incorporating the SIOP model would address these four areas because it provides teachers with a combined approach for improving the achievement of LEP/ELL students. By using strategies and techniques that make academic content comprehensible, and academic standards attainable to students, teachers develop students’ academic English skills across the four language modalities: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
* According to Echevarria, Short, & Powers(2006) and Short, Fidelman & Louguit (2009) many features of the SIOP model, such as differentiated instruction and cooperative learning, are recommended for high-quality instruction for *all* grade levels and content areas. Yet the SIOP model goes even further, combining the features of good lesson preparation, delivery and assessment into a vehicle for improving the academic outcomes for English Language Learners.

**References**

Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. (2008) Making content comprehensible for English learners: The SIOP model. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon

Ingersoll, R. M., & Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, S. A. (2003). Out-of-Field Teaching and the Limits of Teacher Policy. *Center For The Study Of Teaching And Policy*

*Short, D., Fidelman, C., & Louguit, M. (2009). The effects of SIOP Model instruction on the academic language development of English language learners.* Manuscript submitted for publication.

**Component 2: The Curriculum Improvement Plan is articulated with identified stakeholders and outcomes, and with essential resources allocated.**

* The stakeholders involved in this Curriculum Improvement Plan are as follows: District X’s ESL/Bilingual Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, school administrators, mainstream classroom teachers at the elementary schools, content area teachers at the Middle and High School, and Department Heads at both the Middle School and the High School. Additional stakeholders include paraprofessionals who support classroom teachers, and BOCES Staff Developers who can provide embedded coaching and support on a one-to-one basis.
* In the wake of APPR, classroom teachers are responsible for the academic achievement of LEP/ELL students regardless of their proficiency level and the amount instructional time spent with an ESL provider. To support those teachers, a move toward using the SIOP framework would provide them with a clearer understanding of how they can maximize their instructional time to meet the needs of LEP/ELLs. Moreover, SIOP instruction is an amalgamation of best teaching practices that *all* students can benefit from, not just LEP/ELLs. A key feature of SIOP is the emphasis on lesson preparation, particularly in the way of content & language objectives, content adaption, supplementary materials and meaningful activities. Through the implementation of this framework teachers will hone their instructional practice and develop a more diversified “toolbox” of pedagogical strategies and techniques.
* Resources will be allocated for the Curriculum Improvement Plan mostly through district level funding. In addition, a portion of the Title III allocations will be used for contracting with the Center for Applied Linguistics’ SIOP training and the purchase of SIOP professional development texts for the staff to have in their personal libraries. However, since all students will benefit from this new curricular framework, Title III funds will not be exhausted and Title I monies allocated for professional development will also be used. In addition, since District X failed to meet AMAO #1, they will benefit from the professional development services of their local Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network at no cost. Furthermore, since preps are already scheduled to encourage grade-wide planning, school administrators will continue the practice, and use one period a month to establish a schedule of inter-visitation by grade level to see SIOP aligned instruction by Lead Teachers.
* The purpose of this Curriculum Improvement Plan is to align District X’s vision with its daily efforts. SIOP addresses the instructional component of the classroom dynamic, but in order to fully realize our goals of creating “life-long learners” we must identify our own weakest areas. In order to ascertain the extent to which our current practices mirror the SIOP framework, a survey was sent to all teachers at districts schools surveying the range of instructional practice and preparation. The results will be shared with the staff and similarities will be highlighted to demonstrate that adoption of the SIOP framework is not a complete departure from current practice.
* District X will also reach out to parent in an effort to educate them on the instructional changes that will occur throughout the first and second year of implementation. Parents will also be given a tailored workshop, delivered by the ESL/Bilingual Coordinator, during Back-to-School Night, on what a language focused Science lessons looks like.

**Component 3: Steps and elements of Plan implementation are sequenced, including strategies for reducing anticipated barriers to implementation, implementation timeline, and plans for evaluation of effectiveness in resolving the need for improvement of all students’ learning.**

The timeline for the implementation of the plan will be addressed in several parts, with Year 1 serving as a roll-out year and Year 2 full implementation.

**Part One**: Each school building will identify personnel that can serve as in-house specialists to turn-key and provide support to teachers during the first phase of implementation – the focus on Lesson Preparation and Comprehensible Input. Selected personnel should be ideally be Assistant Principals or Staff Developers whose main focus is to support classroom instruction. These “Trainers” will attend a special four-part “SIOP Training of Trainers” conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL). A preference for Dennis Terdy will be stated.

**Part Two**: Elementary School mainstream classroom teachers will be trained separate from content-area Middle and High School teachers on the SIOP framework during a tailored two-part workshop, prior to the school year, by consultants from the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL). A preference for Dennis Terdy will be stated.

The first day of training will provide an overview of SIOP, while the second day will focus on the two elements selected for focused implementation: Lesson Preparation and Comprehensible Input. It will be expected that teachers will adapt their delivery of the curriculum to reflect the best practices embodied in the SIOP model. BOCES Staff Developers will also serve as one-on-one embedded coaches with teachers in grades 3-5 to assist teachers with the transition to SIOP. Staff Developers will visit twice a month and address specific teacher concerns as identified in feedback surveys completed after the first month of implementation.

**Part Three:**  In preparation for the second phase of implementation, CAL trainers will return for a one-day workshop on two additional facets of the SIOP framework: strategies and building background. To facilitate and center discussions around appropriate grade-level activities, elementary school and Middle/High School teachers will once again be trained separately.

**Part Four:** After feedback from teachers is received regarding their ease with and concerns regarding the implementation of the SIOP model, additional trainings/workshops will created as needed. However, during the second year of implementation, additional support will be offered at the building level. The results of the first NYSESLAT assessment since implementation of the SIOP framework will be analyzed and communicated to the staff. A needs assessment will be completed, and teachers will be offered additional coaching as needed to increase their effectiveness.

**Three potential barriers that we might encounter during the Curriculum Improvement Plan and strategies that will be used for barrier reduction are as follows:**

1. *Staff commitment and fidelity to a new curricular framework*

To reduce this barrier, the school administration will begin each semester (Fall and Spring) with an emphasis on a specific portion of the SIOP framework instead of the entire framework, in order to lessen teacher anxiety and feelings of being overwhelmed by new sets of expectations. Each school will begin with an emphasis on Lesson Preparation and Comprehensible Input, which includes the development of content and language objectives for each lesson, create meaningful activities. During the second semester the focus would move onto a second facet of the SIOP framework: strategies. Breaking down the implementation of the SIOP framework in this manner decreases teacher anxiety, acknowledges that adaptation requires time and respects the knowledge and instructional “toolbox” each teacher already possesses.

1. *Staff flexibility and common planning time with the demands of simultaneously aligning instruction with the Common Core Learning Standards could become a potential barrier when implementing the Plan.*

In order to reduce this barrier the similarities between the instructional shifts embedded into the CCLS and the features of the SIOP framework would be made clear. For example, Instructional Shift #6: Academic Vocabulary would be addressed in the SIOP framework’s emphasis on language objectives and the focus on integrating all language skills into practice and application.

1. *Negative attitudes and biases, by teachers, administration and other stakeholders toward LEP/ELL students and the programs that serve them.*

Negative biases may develop due to a sense of low self-efficacy or a feeling unfairness toward the distribution of LEP/ELLs across a grade. To address this issue, the ESL/Bilingual Coordinator will work with BOCES Staff Developers to provide one-on-one embedded coaching to teachers with the belief that as a teacher’s “toolbox” of instructional strategies and practices grows so will his/her attitude toward challenges.

* While several school-level evaluation instruments could be utilized, the best evaluation of the effectiveness of the Curriculum Improvement Plan will be the yearly New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) and the extent to which the district meets the Title III AMAO targets.