From Cacophony to Coherence – Orchestrating and Leading for System Success

Heritage University & School District Partners

AWSP/WASA Summer Conference
June 29, 2015
Why focus on SYSTEM COHERENCE?

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Our Session Agenda

- Introduction/Framing
- District Presentations
  1. Selah School District - Focus on Culture/Identity
  2. Grandview School District – Developing Units of Study in Mathematics
- Highlighting Themes
- Panel Q&A
- Implications for Practice
- Wrap Up
“Every organization is perfectly designed to get the results it is getting.”
Advice from every section of the orchestra
The skillful superintendent or principal
System Coherence
The Result of System Coherence

1. Build a Cohesive Leadership Team
2. Create Clarity
3. Over-Communicate Clarity
4. Reinforce Clarity

From: Patrick Lencioni: The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else In Business
Our Panel Presenters

• Questions –
  – 3x5 cards will be available
  – Back-channel via Twitter:
    • #WASACoherence
Selah School District: Intentional Focus on Culture/Identity

Shane Backlund, Superintendent
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Troy Tornow, Executive Director for Teaching and Learning
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Grandview’s Journey to OER

Kevin Chase
Wilma Kozai
Why did we create our own units?

- Published materials did not meet common core requirements
- Wanted to revise on a yearly basis.
- Units to meet the needs of our students and support the teachers
- Common assessments
- Equity
What was our rationale for creating our own units in literacy?

Balanced literacy approach

Spanish and English with English language proficiency standards

Written in phases

Supports embedded – charts, sentence frames, samples of work
What was our rationale for creating our own units in math?

- Continue implementation of key strategies of formative assessment including complex instruction group work to ensure equity for all students.
- High cognitive/group worthy tasks.
- Review repair, routines and number talks as an integral part of the units.
- Math practices embedded in all the units.
Concerns/Issue with going this route

- Teachers wanted a “book” to use and have the entire curriculum.
- Units often written just before having to teach them.
- Professional development was/is often difficult to schedule and was mostly about rolling out the units this year.
- High level of rigor for teachers’ own learning.
- Extensive amount of time required as well as limited people to write units, revise and create assessments.
Benefits of writing our own units

- Units are written with our students’ needs in mind and teacher supports
- Units can be revised. Teachers have an opportunity to give input and in some cases co-create.
- Units reflect our vision of good teaching and learning.
- Learning targets and success criteria for most lessons.
- Some assessments aligned to Smarter Balanced.
- Build capacity through involvement of teacher leaders.
Elementary and Secondary Literacy units

- Balanced Literacy Approach and Gradual Release of Responsibility Model
- Diagnostic assessments, formative assessments and unit assessments (performance tasks) with a rubric or continuum
- Complex texts
- Charts, academic vocabulary, sentence frames
- Some inclusion of team tasks with use of group roles (complex instruction)
- Interactive writing for primary and Spanish Units
- Phases - Cyclical Processes to provide students with multiple opportunities to engage in the learning
- English Language Proficiency Standards and ELL accommodations
- Routines for a literacy classroom - meeting area
- Annotated texts
- Reading and writing units connected
Elementary and Secondary math units

- Use of Rational Number Project 3-8 before CCSS
- Scope and Sequence from Dana Center
- Progressions documents and Flip Books with each unit
- Math Practices in units and lessons
- High cognitive tasks and group worthy tasks when appropriate
- Classification of Clusters in each unit: major, supporting or additional
- Learning targets and success criteria for each lesson
- Manipulatives, materials, resources
- Supporting comments
- Support for equitable discourse
- Vocabulary
- Lessons in a launch, explore, summarize Some assessments and routines and/or review/repair
Lessons Learned

- This is a difficult process – not sure if it would have been better to roll out two grades per year.
- Need more curriculum, assessment, and intervention writers.
- Growing and deepening content and pedagogical knowledge takes time but is critical.
- Some levels/teachers want the units handed to them and some levels want to co-create.
- As difficult as it was/is for our writers, we have progressive units K – 11 in math and literacy.
- Systemic PLCs at the district and school level are critical.
- While content knowledge has increased, still need to move the pedagogy forward—difficult to do both well at the same time with math and literacy for elementary.
Sunnyside School District: The Role of Central Office Leadership in Supporting the Work of Principals

Dr. Rick Cole, Superintendent
rick.cole@sunnysideschools.org

Heidi Hellner-Gomes, Executive Director of Instructional Leadership
heidi.hellner@sunnysideschools.org
Highlighting Themes

Take a moment to reflect on the presentations you just heard.

➢ What are some of the themes or key ideas that cut across multiple stories?
Panel Q & A

• Questions –
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Implications for Practice

Take a moment to reflect on our time together today:

➢ What are the implications for your own leadership practice?

➢ What ideas do you want to take with you?
Where do I find information from this session?

Today’s session materials will be available for download at:
Heritage University Educational Administration page:
THANK YOU!

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