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Cohort 7

Internship Experience Proposal
ALS 825 – Critical Analysis of Issues in Education
July 19, 2008

Topic/Project: The school district has had a math study completed. This study looked at the math curriculum and math instruction in grades K-12. The math study team members were made up of a former school Superintendent from an Allegheny County School, math teachers from other local school districts and private schools, a math professor from the University of Pittsburgh, and a researcher from the Rand Corporation. The math study group spent a year examining the math program of Fox Chapel Area School District. Team members interviewed Administrators, teachers, students, and parents. They examined the K-12 math curriculum and textbooks, and observed instruction. The math study team presented their findings and recommendations to administrators, school board members, teachers and community members in May of 2008. During the 2008-2009 school year, district administrators will decide how to address the recommendations in math study report.

Description of Activities to be Completed:

- A team of administrators will meet to review the math study report and recommendations.
- Based on the review, administrators will devise a plan of action to address the recommendations in the math study report.
- Committees will be formed to address each recommendation the district feels is necessary to address. Committees will be made up of administrators, teachers, parents, and in some cases students.
- Committees will formulate a plan of action for implementing the team recommendations. The plan of action will include:
    - Description of how the district will address the recommendation.
    - Timeline for implementation
    - Explanation and plan for informing school board members, administrators, teachers, parents, students, and the community
    - Resources needed
    - Staff development needs

Rationale: The math study team presented recommendations for improving math instruction in the Fox Chapel Area Schools. The district needs to review the study and decide how to address the recommendations.

Mitigating Circumstances: Some of the recommendations will be difficult to address because they require changing procedures and programming that are ingrained in the culture of Fox Chapel and parents, teachers, and administrators are very comfortable with them.

Timeframe: September 2008-May 2009

Completion: This project will be complete when the district has responded to all of the recommendations of the math study team.

Hours Involved: Est: 20

Topic/Project: Along with the Coordinator of Elementary Instruction and the Coordinator of Instruction/Staff Development/Secondary Curriculum, I will plan professional development activities for district teachers.

Description of Activities to be Completed:

- Meet with the Coordinator of Elementary Instruction and the Coordinator of Instruction/Staff Development/Secondary Curriculum to review professional development needs.
- Along with the Coordinator of Elementary Instruction and the Coordinator of Instruction/Staff Development/Secondary Curriculum, devise the staff development calendar for the district.
- Share the staff development calendar with the staff of Fox Chapel Area School District.
- Along with the Coordinator of Elementary Instruction and the Coordinator of Instruction/Staff Development/Secondary Curriculum, plan an inservice presentation.
- Notify necessary presenters.
- Identify resources needed for the presentations.
- Conduct the staff development session.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the inservice by conducting a staff survey.
- Review the surveys and condense the results in a one page summary.
- Share the survey summary with the Coordinator of Elementary Instruction and the Coordinator of Instruction/Staff Development/Secondary Curriculum.

Rationale: The Fox Chapel Area school district has already made the decision that a district-wide focus for professional development would be beneficial. The teaching staff of Fox Chapel Area Schools has also expressed a desire to have more preplanning completed so they would know what activities were going to take place throughout the year.

Mitigating Circumstances:

Timeframe: June-October 2008

Completion: This project will be complete when the staff development calendars have been shared with the staff and when the staff development survey summaries have been shared with the Coordinator of Elementary Instruction and the Coordinator of Instruction/Staff Development/Secondary Curriculum.

Hours Involved: Est. 10 hours

Topic/Project: Student progress will be assessed in the area of math across grade levels 3-8 and grade 11. Student progress will be assessed by using PSSA scores. A narrative and graphs will highlight progress in each of the assessment anchors and eligible content. Presentations will be made to teachers, school board members, and parents.

Description of Activities to be Completed:

- Meet with Alicia Hutchings, Data Analyst for Fox Chapel School District. Review the math scores on the PSSA math assessment for grades K-8 and grade 11.
- Based on the data, create graphs showing the number of students scoring in each reporting category for each assessment anchor and write a narrative that corresponds to each graph. The graphs will show math progress for the district.
- Share the information with administrators, teachers, school board members and the community.

Rationale:

- The district has recently had an outside evaluation of the K-12 math program. This information will be helpful in deciding how to address the recommendation of the math study and communicating needs to the community.

Mitigating Circumstances:

Timeframe: Data analysis will begin in September of 2008 and be completed by the end of October 2008. Presentations to teachers, school board members, parents, and community members will be made throughout the 2008-2009 school year as information about the recommendations of the math study are shared.

Completion: This project will be completed once the information is shared with all of the stakeholders.

Hours Involved: Est: 10 hours

Topic/Project: The K-12 guidance and counseling program will be assessed. A written report regarding the findings will be shared with district administrators and guidance counselors to determine strengths and weaknesses of the program.

Description of Activities to be Completed:

- Meet with Howard Bullard who has been contracted to work with the guidance department on diversity issues.
- Research interview questions and survey documents previously used by other school systems to assess K-12 guidance and counseling programs.
- Together with the guidance department chairperson, the Coordinator of Instruction/Staff Development/Secondary Curriculum, and the Coordinator of elementary Curriculum, devise a set of survey questions and interview questions to be asked of guidance counselors, principals, teachers, and students.
- Interview guidance counselors, principals, teachers, and students.
- Analyze the information and write a narrative of perceived strengths and weaknesses of the program as reported by each group interviewed.
- Share the results with administrators and guidance counselors.

Rationale: Student needs are constantly changing. The Fox Chapel Area School District is becoming more diverse, culturally and socio-economically. Graduation requirements and college admission requirements are always revised. As a result, the guidance and counseling programs need to change to best meet the needs of students.

Mitigating Circumstances:

Timeframe: This project will begin in early November 2008 and will be shared with administrators and guidance counselors by the end of April 2009.

Completion: This project will be completed when the results of the study is shared with administrators and guidance counselors.

Hours Involved: Est. 20 hours

Topic/Project: I will review policies related to the role of the Superintendent 's responsibilities regarding new construction projects, renovations, implementing the construction of a new building, etc.

Description of Activities to be Completed:

- Meet with the Superintendent and the Director of Ancillary Services to examine the enrollments, enrollment projections, enrollment trends, and building projects going on in the Fox Chapel Area School District.
- Examine how the Superintendent makes decisions about the need for renovations, construction projects, and new building projects.
- Summarize what I learned from the Superintendent about the construction/ renovation process.
- If the district decides to conduct a feasibility study, become involved in all steps of the process.

Rationale: The Fox Chapel Area School District is beginning to experience an increase in housing plans being built in the district. All elementary schools are beginning to notice increased enrollments or are projected to have increased enrollments in the near future. Some schools are approaching maximum occupancy, and decisions are going to have to be made about how to address the projected enrollment increase.

Mitigating Circumstances:

Timeframe: October-February 2008

Completion: This project will be complete when the summary of my experience is completed.

Hours Involved: Est. 5 hours

Topic/Project: Assess the impact of two community agencies that provide services in the Fox Chapel Area School District: All of Us Care and Fox Chapel Area Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education (FCAPAGE).

Description of Activities to be Completed:

- Research the goals and mission statements of each organization.
- Devise a set of questions to ask agency personnel.
- Meet with key personnel from these two agencies and talk to them about their goals and relationships with district personnel.
- Meet with district staff and talk to them about the agencies effectiveness at addressing their goals.
- Write a narrative describing the impact the two agencies have on Fox Chapel Area School District.
- Share the program evaluations with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Fox Chapel Area School District.

Rationale: The mission of All of Us Cares is, "To prevent youth crime and substance abuse by providing positive programs for children and teens." As the Fox Chapel Area School District become more culturally and socio-economically diverse, the programs of All of Us Cares will be even more important and may even need to be expanded. The community of Fox Chapel Area School district takes gifted education very seriously. State guidelines for determining if a student qualifies for gifted education are changing and are not very clear. This project will assess how FCAPAGE is working with the district to support gifted education in the district.

Mitigating Circumstances:

Timeframe: This project will begin in October of 2008 and be completed by December 2008.

Completion: This project will be completed once the program evaluation is shared with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Fox Chapel Area School District.

Hours Involved: Est. 5 hours

Topic/Project: Asses how well the Fox Chapel Area School District addresses multicultural concepts of race relations, gender issues, inclusion, and economic equality.

Description of Activities to be Completed:

- Meet with Howard Bullard who has been contracted to work with the guidance department on diversity issues.
- Meet with the high school assistant principal who is in charge of student diversity committee.
- Continue to work with the Educational Leadership Team to conduct activities to assess and create awareness about diversity issues in the Fox Chapel Area School District.
- Summarize the projects done to address multicultural concepts in the Fox Chapel Area School District.

Rationale: Fox Chapel is a diverse school district, both culturally and socio-economically. "In Fox Facts 6" Dr. Stephens, Superintendent of Fox Chapel Area Schools writes: "For the past two years, one of our goals in the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) has been to help our students understand and value the diverse population in the Fox Chapel Area School District. Children enter our schools from many walks of life and we want each student to feel valued and accepted. The district leadership team (ELI – Education Leadership Initiative), has been involved in several activities that have helped increase awareness about diversity issues and foster a proactive approach that will lead to cultural proficiency throughout our district. This is a big challenge. We know that students, as early as preschool, have begun to make friends with other children who mirror themselves. Our elementary schools are community schools, so the diversity experienced is generally what children are accustomed to from birth until school age. We have found that the greatest adjustment begins at the middle school level as our students come together from the four elementary schools. They quickly see that the Fox Chapel Area School District is quite diverse culturally and in the socioeconomic makeup of our families. What they find at the middle school is "the real world." Our challenge is to help our students acknowledge differences and understand the value of working with one another to reach specific goals."

Mitigating Circumstances:

Timeframe: June 2008-May 2009

Completion: This project will be completed when I write a year-end summary of the projects completed to address multi-cultural concepts in the Fox Chapel Area School District.

Hours Involved: Est: 15 hours

Topic/Project: Work with the Superintendent /Assistant Superintendent regarding School Board relations.

Description of Activities to be Completed:

- Meet with the Superintendent /Assistant Superintendent to prepare monthly board agendas and board booklets.
- Attend all school board meetings.

Rationale: Relations between the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and school board are very good in the Fox Chapel Area School District. It is important for me to learn how this relationship was established and how it remains strong through excellent communication and collaboration.

Mitigating Circumstances:

Timeframe: September 2008-May 2009

Completion: This project will be completed when the internship is complete.

Hours Involved: Est. 25 hours

Topic/Project: Work with the Superintendent /Assistant Superintendent /business manager to outline the duties and responsibilities of the Superintendent s presentation of the district's budget.

Description of Activities to be Completed:

- Meet with the Superintendent /Assistant Superintendent to discuss budget priorities for the 2009-2010 school year.
- Meet with the Superintendent /Assistant Superintendent to establish timelines for budget submissions.
- Notify administrators and department chairs of budget submission deadlines.
- Meet with the Superintendent /Assistant Superintendent to review budget submissions and note any areas needed to be cut.
- Along with the Superintendent /Assistant Superintendent, meet with administrators to review their budget submissions.
- Along with the Superintendent /Assistant Superintendent, notify PDE as required.
- Present the 2009-2010 preliminary budget to the school board.
- Put the 2009-2010 preliminary budget on display for the public.
- Present the 2009-2010 final budget to the school board.
- Put the 2009-2010 final budget on display for the public.

Rationale: The school district must create an operating budget each year.

Mitigating Circumstances:

Timeframe: September 2008-June 2009

Completion: This project will be approved once the final budget is presented to the school board and put on display for the public.

Hours Involved: Est. 15-20 hours