

Action Plan for Group Mentoring:

Rationale for Group Mentoring:

Two Colleague Support Groups have been established at Zanetti Montessori Magnet School PreK-8. One group will focus on sharing Best Practices in Classroom and Behavior Management, while the other serves as a Problem Solving Forum. These groups support the emotional well-being of the novice teachers who are trying to balance the responsibilities of the classroom with their own professional development. Both groups foster a sense of equity and build a positive and respectful culture for teacher as well as students.

Based on the article, *Breaking Through Isolation with New Teacher Groups*, we have learned the importance of teacher support groups. New teachers need to feel that they have something worth saying and that members of the community are receptive and willing to listen empathically. "Giving new teachers the opportunity to listen to one another gives them the chance to be taken seriously and to appear adequate and normal at a time in their personal and professional lives when their confidence is shaken and they are constantly questioning their competence." (Rogers & Babinski, 1999, p-40.) We believe that these two groups have empowered teachers and have built a network of collegial support by providing a forum for teachers at Zanetti to exchange ideas and take ownership of their professional practice.

We have mentored a teacher with 2 years teaching experience at Zanetti, to lead the Best Practices in Classroom and Behavior Management group. Research has shown that new teachers benefit greatly when offered opportunities for leadership. (Radford, 2013.) It allows them to contribute to the professional learning culture, feel valued, and establish collegial relationships. Because the Problem Solving Group requires stricter norms and a structured protocol, research has proven that this type of group is most productive when facilitated by mentor teachers who are able to define the problem and keep the group positive and solution oriented. (Radford, 2013)

Best Practice Group:

Description of the Best Practice Support Group

The Best Practice Support group is a forum for teachers to showcase and reflect upon the success they are having with students. From their first month in the profession, new teachers have an opportunity in this group to share their success and realize their value. The group meets once a week for a half hour. During this time, teachers discuss what they are doing in their classroom in order to spark enthusiasm for their practice and build a sense of community with other teachers. The group is facilitated by a new teacher who follows a protocol and that allows for teacher to share and also commit to try a new idea. This group starts from the premise that everyone participating has the desire to teach and learn.

The Protocol for The Best Practices in Classroom and Behavior Management

1. Each participant shares a success story (10 minutes)
2. Teachers who committed to trying a best practice at the last meeting will provide a follow up report. (10 minutes)
3. Two or three teachers who were scheduled prior to the meeting share a best practice. (20-30 minutes)
4. Record names of participants who commit to trying a best practice and reporting at the next meeting. (5 minutes)
5. Facilitator asks participants to make connection between the meeting topics and the standards for teacher evaluation and write reflection upon their new learning. (5 minutes)

The Best Practices in Classroom and Behavior Management Timeline:

August: Edna and Stephanie introduce the groups to faculty.

September: Mentors recruit and begin mentoring process with the identified new teacher facilitator.

- Mentors share the rationale for the group

- Facilitator practices the protocol
- Mentors and facilitator create and publish the meeting times and location
- Mentors and facilitator find ways to promote the group and encourage colleagues to participate
- Mentors and facilitator establish Edmodo as the way of documenting the practices shared
- Mentors and facilitator create an exit ticket for the group meeting

October-June: New teacher facilitator launches the group

- Facilitator schedules and contacts presenters for the next meeting
- Mentors and facilitator review agenda and or protocol prior to the meeting
- Facilitator uses protocol to guide the group
- Mentors and facilitator reflect on the exit tickets and group meeting
- Facilitator creates next agenda
- Mentors find resources needed to support the facilitator
- One member of the team will update Edmodo

Sample Agenda for the Best Practices Group:

OUR VISION FOR 2013-2014: Mentors will support teachers by creating school-wide structures that will improve academic and behavioral outcomes for all students.

OUR MISSION FOR 2013-2014: Mentors will establish and teach school-wide expectations, use empirical data and community feedback to identify areas of academic and behavioral need, build school-wide awareness of these areas, and then provide interventions, lesson plans, and professional development for all staff.

Agenda Item	Desired Outcome	Time Allotted	Person Responsible
Review Norms	Norms and Protocol	1 minute	Team
Old Business	Teachers who committed to try out ideas from the last meeting share.	5 minutes	Teachers who committed to share
New Share	Teacher #1 introduces his/her best practice	10 minutes	Teacher #1
New Share	Teacher #2 introduces his/her best practice	10 minutes	Teacher #2
Connection to Evaluation Standards	Teachers connect conversation topics to evaluation standards	2 minutes	Team
Commit to sharing/Bring new share	Teachers will try out ideas in classroom/Teachers will sign up for next meeting	2 minutes	Team

Norms

- ♥ Live the Six Pillars of Character
 - ♥ Caring, Fairness, Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Citizenship
- ♥ Be prepared
- ♥ Stay on task and focused
- ♥ Begin and end on time
- ♥ Own and solve problems with collaboration and data
- ♥ Celebrate success and risk taking!
- ♥ Honest, kind, direct communication: to, not about, people

Problem Solving Group:

Description of the Problem Solving Group

The Problem Solving Group is designed to allow teachers to discuss and generate solutions to common struggles teacher face in their daily practice. This group is an opportunity for teacher to ask questions, build on each other's experiences and expertise and read current literature in the field of education. They determine their course of study, set their own agenda and get to work on those burning questions. Participants have reported that work is authentic – it is work they feel they need to do develop their craft.

The Protocol for the Problem Solving Group:

1. Each teacher shares a problem recently encountered or success story (10 minutes)
2. Teachers whose problems were discussed at the last meeting will provide a follow up report. (10 minutes)
3. Two teachers, who were scheduled prior to the meeting, will take turns presenting their problem to the group. (2 minutes each)
4. The group engages in problem solving with the presenting teachers. (15 minutes each)
5. Facilitator asks teachers to write a brief reflection (5 minutes)

The Problem Solving Group Timeline:

August: Edna and Stephanie introduce the groups to faculty.

- Share the rationale for the group
- Create and publish the meeting times and location
- Find ways to promote the group and encourage colleagues to participate
- Establish Edmodo as the way of documenting the practices shared
- Create an exit ticket for the group meeting

September-June: Edna and Stephanie launch the group

- Schedule and contact presenters for the next meeting
- Review agenda and or protocol prior to the meeting
- Use protocol to guide the group
- Reflect on the exit tickets and group meeting
- Creates next agenda
- Find resources needed to support the facilitator
- Update Edmodo

Sample Agenda for the Problem Solving Group:

OUR VISION FOR 2013-2014: The Mentors will support teachers by creating school-wide structures that will improve academic and behavioral outcomes for all students.

OUR MISSION FOR 2013-2014: Mentors will establish and teach school-wide expectations, use empirical data and community feedback to identify areas of academic and behavioral need, build school-wide awareness of these areas, and then provide interventions, lesson plans, and professional development for all staff.

Agenda Item	Desired Outcome	Time Allotted	Person Responsible
Review Norms	Norms	1 minute	Team
Reading Article	Participants read/review the article pre-selected by the facilitator.	7 minutes	Facilitator
Discussion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each person shares a sentence or idea from the document that he/she feels is significant 2. Facilitator charts the ideas of participants 3. Group discusses what they heard from their colleagues and share any new insights about the document and the problem 4. Teachers commit to making a change in their practice based on the discussion 	18 minutes	All
Connection to Evaluation Standards	Teachers connect conversation topics to evaluation standards	2 minutes	All
New Topic	Participant decide upon an ideas for the problem for next meeting	2 minutes	All

Norms

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- ♥ Be prepared

- ♥ Stay on task and focused
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