POWERFUL PRACTICE:

Action Details

Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

Indicator 3.1 The school's curriculum provides equitable and challenging learning experiences that ensure all students have sufficient opportunities to develop learning, thinking, and life skills that lead to success at the next level.
Indicator 3.3 Teachers engage students in their learning through instructional strategies that ensure achievement of learning expectations.

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.1

Action Type

Powerful Practice

Statement

Arlington Public Schools eleventh grade honor history students' project to preserve the history of slavery and the Underground Railroad in the United States has been identified as a true Powerful Practice by the team.

Description

Arlington Public School's eleventh grade honor history students have the opportunity to make application to become involved in a seven-year project to preserve the history of slavery and the Underground Railroad in the United States. The students conduct historical research and uncover primary sources to write a history of a site or person and verify its association with the Underground Railroad. In the past six years, the honors history class has successfully nominated 19 sites to the Network to Freedom in Nebraska, Iowa, and Ohio. This year's project is to use the history that the students preserve to create awareness for modern day slavery or human trafficking. Their hope is to abolish slavery today through education and work with students who are susceptible of becoming a victim of human trafficking. In interviews with students, the team could sense the excitement the students felt being a part of this class. This project is an excellent way to prepare students for college and career awareness. It also lends itself to teachers to become involved with cross curricular activities. The students stated that this class is difficult and challenging but well worth the time. Some students have even continued their research into the next grade. This project certainly meets the definition of a Powerful Practice in that it is unique to Arlington Public Schools, and other schools may want to replicate this project at their school.

Action Details

Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

Indicator 1.2 The school's leadership and staff commit to a culture that is based on shared values and beliefs about **teaching and learning and supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students that include achievement of learning, thinking, and life skills.**

Standard 2 - Governance and Leadership

Indicator 2.4 Leadership and staff foster a culture consistent with the school's purpose and direction.
Indicator 2.5 Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.
SF1. Questionnaire Administration Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction.

Primary Indicator

Indicator 2.5

Action Type

Powerful Practice

Statement

The Arlington Public Schools board of education and administration support staff to effectively create a positive learning environment.

Description

During the staff, student, and parent interviews, a tremendous amount of support from administration was heard by the External Review Team. Stakeholder and staff surveys reiterated this deliberate support to create a positive environment. The culture of a district starts with a supportive administration and school board. It is evident that the school takes pride in educating students for the future. This type of support was first noticed when the team entered the building and were met with a warm greeting. This Powerful Practice continued throughout the team's observations and interviews. The communication that happens between the administration and school board is vital for continued collaboration for the future. The External Review Team observed the hiring of the new principals as positive additions to the current administrative leadership. This was verified during interviews with the teachers, students, and parents. Stakeholder and staff surveys reiterated this support of the school leadership to create a positive environment.

Action Details

Standard 4 - Resources and Support Systems

Indicator 4.4 Students and school personnel use a range of media and information resources to support the school's educational programs.
Indicator 4.5 The technology infrastructure supports the school's teaching, learning, and operational needs.

Primary Indicator

Indicator 4.5

Action Type

Powerful Practice

Statement

The students and staff have access to educational technology resources that are supported by a strong technology infrastructure including an effective and engaged technology staff and a well developed and implemented technology plan.

Description

In interviews and observations it was demonstrated that an effective technology plan has been implemented to empower students in their learning. The number of working technology devices is more than adequate to meet the current and future technology needs. The strong technology leadership team positively advocates for valuable learning resources that can enhance the learning capacity of their students. Teachers shared during interviews that they feel much support in the area of technology. This support is both in the area of having access to and maintenance of the most current hardware, and also in the implementation of software. It was noted during interviews that the technology team is very responsive to individual teacher's needs. The effective implementation of a comprehensive technology plan assists in developing skills for life-long and responsible learning for students and enhanced teaching practices for teachers.

OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Action Details

Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

Indicator 3.5 Teachers participate in collaborative learning communities to improve instruction and student learning.
Indicator 3.11 All staff members participate in a continuous program of professional learning.

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Indicator 5.2 Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data sources, including comparison and trend data about student learning, instruction, program evaluation, and organizational conditions.

Primary Indicator

Indicator 3.5

Action Type

Opportunity For Improvement

Statement

Review current collaborative learning communities and professional development processes and implement a systematic professional learning model to guide the staff's professional learning and growth tied to the continuous improvement process.

Description

Arlington Public Schools have a late start time every Friday for the purpose of learning communities work. Through interviews and surveys, it was obvious to the team that even though having this time was beneficial, the use of it was not well organized nor used for the purpose of improving student learning. A systematic and sustainable professional learning model guided by the continuous improvement model would result in a better use of this designated time period. Staff shared with the team that they did not feel that they received direction in the use of this time. The two new principals were taking initiative to establish activities centered on the implementation of a new reading series and/or collaboration between curricular areas. Having this established time is half the battle in establishing learning communities. Not using this time to its utmost potential could lead to a questioning of the late start. Three days per school year are also allotted for professional development. Implementation of this aligned model would also provide guidance, structure, and purpose to these days tied to the continuous improvement process. A well developed and implemented professional learning system will provide opportunities for staff to discuss, analyze, and apply learning from a range of collected data resources which include comparison and trend data. This data application process will support sustainable results for students and guide staff development that are tied to the Arlington Public Schools' systemic continuous improvement process.

IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY:

Action Details

Standard 1 - Purpose and Direction

Indicator 1.3 The school's leadership implements a continuous improvement process that provides clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.

Standard 3 - Teaching and Assessing for Learning

Indicator 3.6 Teachers implement the school's instructional process in support of student learning.

Standard 5 - Using Results for Continuous Improvement

Indicator 5.3 Professional and support staff are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data.
SP2. Test Administration Professional and support staff continuously collect, analyze, and apply learning from a range of data ...

Primary Indicator

Indicator 1.3

Action Type

Improvement Priority

Statement

Review, revise, and implement a documented systemic, systematic, and sustainable continuous improvement process to provide clear direction for improving conditions that support student learning.

Description

A theme that emerged from interviews with the leadership team and staff, artifact reviews (including school improvement meeting notes), and school improvement plans was the lack of a systematic process for the school to implement a continuous improvement process that could provide clear direction for conditions that support student and staff learning. The implementation of a formal systematic process that guides work, resources, and conversations will have a positive impact on conditions that affect students and staff. Arlington Public Schools have a good relationship with Educational Service Unit (ESU) 3, and the team recommends that as the school moves through this process, they use this relationship with the ESU for guidance and support. A formalized, sustainable continuous improvement process that is tied to school data will improve student and staff learning. A systemic continuous improvement process will also improve current collaborative learning communities, the identification of an instructional model process, and guide professional learning.