Shelley Klein's Vision Statement



**Vision For a Successful High School by Shelley Klein**

A successful high school emanates, for all stakeholders, a culture of continuous learning and growth where everyone is engaged in constructing their own knowledge.

My role, as an organizer, is to assist the school leadership in maintaining the focus on student learning through the encouragement and support of content collaborative learning groups engaged in improving curriculum and instruction.

My role, as a relator, is to help build the trusting relationships that allow for open and honest communication, to ask the difficult questions to build common understanding and resolve any conflicts.

My role, as an achiever, is to assist the school and collaborative groups in setting common student outcomes and systematically examining the student results collectively in order to set and achieve improvement goals.

My role, as a learner, is to share the latest research about improving student learning and teaching to allow the entire school community, including parents and community members, to build their understanding.

It is my personal goal, to positively influence the school culture to make Santa Maria High Schools vision a reality – “Inspiring all students to be lifelong learners who can determine their own success” - through

1.     Nurturing open and honest dialogue with all stakeholders,

2.     Developing system processes for gathering, analyzing and sharing meaningful and appropriate data,

3.     Expanding the professional skills of teachers through actualization of content collaborative groups to develop and implement the Common Core State Standards to improve instruction and assessment,

4.     Continuing to encourage and practice reflective learning with the staff and students, and

5.     Fostering real-life problem solving and critical thinking skills with my students.

**Resources:**

Resources available for building knowledge about school improvement including professional learning communities and leadership can be found at:

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R. & Many, T. (2010). Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work

http://www.allthingsplc.info/

Fullan, M. (2010). All systems go: the change imperative for whole system reform.

http://www.slideshare.net/jdellavalle/fullans-power-point

Garmston, R. & Wellman, B. (2009). The adaptive school: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups.

<http://www.adaptiveschools.com/aboutas.htm>

Hord, S. & Sommers, W. (2008). Leading professional learning communities: Voices from research and practice.

http://www.sedl.org/

Lencioni, P. (2005). Overcoming the five dysfunctions of a team: A field guide for leaders, managers, and facilitators

http://www.tablegroup.com/dysfunctions/

Reeves, D. (2011). Finding your leadership focus: What matters most for student results

<http://www.leadandlearn.com/resource-center>

Schmoker, M. (2000). Results: The key to continuous school improvement

http://freepdfdb.org/ppt/results-by-schmoker

Schlechty, P. (1997). Inventing better schools

[www.tcpress.com](http://www.tcpress.com)

York-Barr, J., Sommers, W., Ghere, G. & Montie, J. (2006). Reflective practice to improve schools: An action guide for educators.

<http://www.slideshare.net/jenfen/reflective-practice-presentation>

TedxPhilly – Chris Lehmann, Education is Broken, 2011

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tS2IPfWZQM4>

Ken Robinson: How to escape education’s death valley

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wX78iKhInsc>

Three things that people need for human life to flourish. The first important concept is that peoples are naturally different and diverse. Recognition of these differences and allowing growth in these diverse areas motivates students to learn. Instead, the current culture is one of a narrow focus on the standardized tests. Schools need to allow for a broad curriculum that celebrates students’ extensive and different interests.

Humans also flourish when their curiosity is sparked. It takes the ‘art’ of teaching to ignite that spark. The current climate has de-professionalized teaching and the teachers’ knowledge of pedagogy. Teachers are important to student success and great teachers mentor, stimulate, and engage their students while keeping the focus on the learning, not just on the standards being taught. The NCLB culture is focused on testing. Testing is good, when it is used for diagnostics and help the teacher know what the student have learned.

The third need of humanity is creating and re-creating; that is life. Schools should awaken and develop students’ powers of creativity. Instead, the current climate of standardization has everyone conforming to meet the needs of the test. In Finland, they do well on the tests, yet they do not obsess about the tests. Finland also has a broad curriculum. And, there is no measureable dropout rate, because when students are in trouble, they get the help and support they need.

To change the present culture of testing and accountability, to one of creating knowledge and learning will take leadership and commitment. We need to ‘just do it.’

**Improving Student Learning Research**

Improving student learning involves multiple factors, primarily engaging the students in constructing their own knowledge. (Schletchy,1997; Schon, 1987; York-Barr, et al, 2004).

Research shows that the classroom teacher is the most important, school factor, in improving student learning, and that effective leadership is second (Leithwood, et al, 2004; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005).

So, schools should be focused on designing quality learning opportunities. Garmston & Wellman (2009), believe professional learning communities (PLCs) have the potential to enhance the professional teacher culture in schools through

1.     Building relationships so that the faculty can collaborate, partner, reflect, plan and carry out the shared goals to improve student learning.

a.     Hord (1997) shares the power and excitement of teachers engaged in reflective practice together.

b.     Sharing experiences about implementing common goals both increases teacher knowledge and increases student learning (Firestone, 1996).

2.     Engaging all educators in all levels of the school community in collective, consistent and context-specific learning to improve student learning.

a.     Context knowledge, PLC knowledge, commitment to continuous learning and change process knowledge is necessary for teachers to improve student learning (Fullan, 2010).

3.     Addressing the inequities (without fear), in both the teaching and learning opportunities by supporting teachers who work with the students who need the most assistance.

a.     As PLCs teachers should identify student needs and problem solving, exploring ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning (DuFour, et al, 2010).

4.     Promoting the efforts to improve the school culture including teacher practice and student learning.

a.     Systematic processes, such as data availability, time for collaboration and a focus on student achievement including applying resources to support the quality of learning (Ash & Persall, 2000).

Effective principals support these teaching and learning efforts. The focus of the leadership should be around the professional practices of how knowledge is created and what does the learning look like (Crowther, et al, 2002). Principals cannot be the experts in all content areas. They need to develop teacher leaders to help guide the PLCs in improving student learning.

**What will this look like at SMHS?**

1.     Principals will need to encourage department chairs and capable teachers to lead content collaborative groups during early release days. Support, including open dialogue and transparency, resources and professional development should focus on implementing the Common Core State Standards and building the components of a working team (Lencioni, 2005) and an active PLC (DuFour, et al, 2010). The schoolwide vision, mission and norms have been established and should be re-visited for clarification.

2.     Teachers should use their collaborative time to design quality lessons, with shared goals, that engage students in the practices in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This includes the use of technology in the classroom along with real-world problems solving, team projects and presentations. In math the practices are as follows:

a.     Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them

b.     Reason abstractly and quantitatively

c.      Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others

d.     Model with mathematics

e.     Use appropriate tools strategically

f.      Attend to precision

g.     Look for and make use of structure

h.     Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

3.     In the process of collaborating about creative and engaging lessons, teachers should use current data about their students and current research about how students learn and best teaching practices.

4.     Student outcomes should be collectively shared and analyzed in the collaborative groups with teachers engaging in the reflective practice for improving teaching and student learning. Necessary systems of data collection should be designed and implemented to support the use of student feedback.

5.     All stakeholders, including parents and the community should meet regularly, for open and honest dialogue, to build their knowledge of the CCSS, the assessments, what resources are available and learn how to best support their students’ learning.

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