

Minnesota Principals Academy- Action Learning Project

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Relationships Make the Difference: Developing a Looping Program

Abstract

The purpose of this Action Learning Project was to establish a looping program at Earle Brown Elementary School in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. A looping program involves the same teacher remaining with a group of students for two or more years. The research collected data to support the theory that looping has a positive effect on reading achievement as well as the overall satisfaction of families. After many conversations and some professional learning the program assigned three teachers to loop with their current classes and four teachers to begin year one of a loop. A survey was given to families to first measure if the families would be interested in participating in the program and to build some understanding of looping. Families were very excited and showed no hesitation to the program.

Grade level reading achievement and students growth data will be analyzed using the STEP assessment at the end of year one and two. STEP (Strategic Teaching and Evaluating of Progress) defines the pathway and tracks the progress of pre-k through third grade students as they learn to read using research based milestones. All teachers have been trained with STEP for three years and receive data coaching quarterly. <https://uchicagoimpact.org/step> All families participating will be given a satisfaction survey at the winter conferences.

Vision: Build strong relationships between families, teachers and students to improve culture and achievement.

Background/Context: A looping program involves the same teacher remaining with a group of students for two or more years.

Looping has been known to:

- Strengthen student-teacher bonds
- Improve test scores
- Expand time for instruction
- Increase parent participation
- Reduce behavioral problems
- Reduce placements in special education programs.

Demographics of Earle Brown's 1100 Students: 87% diverse; 80% FRL; 29% ELL; 10% SPED

Timeline:**Winter of 2014**

Received District support for program for a minimum of 2 years

Built shared knowledge and understanding with teachers

7 teachers decided either begin year two of a loop or commit to year 1.

Surveyed all families had 100% of families asked in the participating classrooms interested in looping with their current teacher.

Fall 2014

2 first grade and 1 second grade classrooms in year 2 of a loop

2 kindergarten and 2 second grade classrooms in year 1 of loop

Winter/Spring 2015

Grade level reading achievement and students growth data will be analyzed using the STEP assessment at the end of year one.

All families participating will be given a satisfaction survey at the winter conferences.

Fall 2015

2 first grade classrooms will be in year 2 of the loop

Principal will decide if any other loops will continue

Discoveries:

Grade level achievement data does not show any significant impact from looping.

This could be for many reasons;

- Teachers need to learn the different grade level curriculums and understand instruction at a deeper level in order to push and challenge students.
- Teachers need more time to build the developmental understanding needed to teach two grades effectively.

Family surveys are extremely positive and prove that the relationship matters to the overall experience of the families.

- How can we continue to build from this need

Teachers participating in the program felt very positive about the program and are all interested in beginning a loop group again The teachers other questions;

- Should an EL cluster be in a looping classroom to better serve the needs of those families?
- The teachers feel empowered and excited to meet the needs of their students and families through this programing.