

Minnesota Principals Academy - Action Learning Project

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Teacher Efficacy in the Implementation of a Standards Based Instructional System

Abstract

This Action Learning Project evaluated teacher efficacy in the implementation of a Standards Based Instructional System in a rural high school in northern Minnesota. This work, "Power Standards," was developed because there was a need for alignment of our curriculum and instruction based on poor student achievement, staff surveys, and department feedback. A "shotgun" approach to using standards in our classrooms led to discrepancies in how standards were being met and the amount of time and what standards were covered. Our path centers on a five step approach: choosing our power standards, identifying appropriate learning targets, creating an assessment plan, designing the assessments, and determining student investment. This ALP evaluated the fidelity and efficacy of the two steps of implementation; identification of Power Standards and choosing of Learning Targets and how they impacted teacher planning and instruction.

Vision:

Align curriculum and assessment to a Standards Based Instructional System to increase student achievement.

Background/Context:

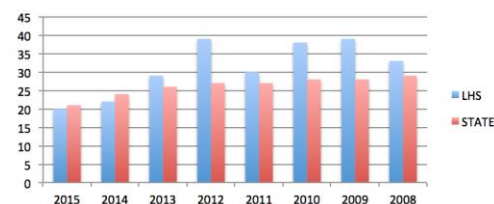
Lincoln High School is located in Northwest Minnesota. Over the past seven years, Lincoln has undergone a significant leadership and culture shift, completed a 24 million dollar building renovation and implemented of a 1:1 laptop program. Lincoln High School is considered a statewide leader in college and career readiness. Staff at LHS are highly collaborative and supportive of one another. LHS has tremendous community support from the school board, the business community, and parents. During my seven years as principal, Lincoln High School has consistently performed below state averages in most every academic category amongst all demographic groups (MCA and ACT).

Lincoln High School has shown a tremendous ability to change and adapt to the needs of our students while developing an amazing collaborative, supportive culture for staff and students.

Why a Change?

Lincoln High School was above the state average in the percentage of its students who had to access developmental education courses in college (costing LHS graduates time and money). At one point thirty-nine percent of our students had to access developmental/remedial course at postsecondary institutions. By 2015 this number fell to twenty percent, below the state average.

% of Students That Access Developmental Education Post-Secondary



What We Did:

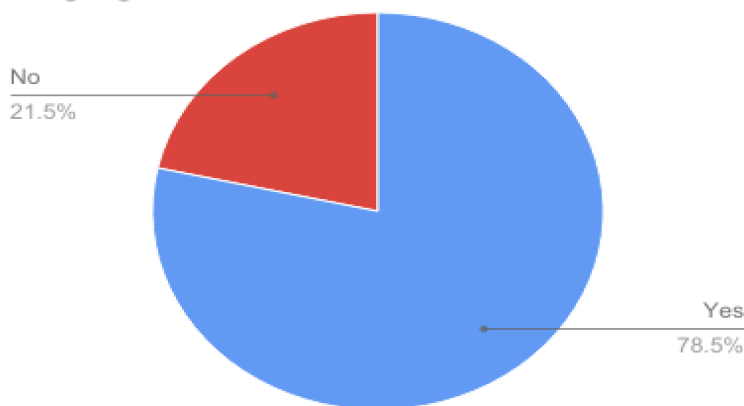
Lincoln High School implemented a Standards Based Instructional System (SBIS) starting in November of 2014. After development of the model that we felt would best address our needs, I became involved with the Minnesota Principals Academy, whose research on SBIS supported our work. We then realigned our SBIS model to incorporate the processes presented by Nicole Dimich Vagle in her book *Design in Five*. We dedicated all of our biweekly Common Prep staff development time to our work with SBIS; our departments transposed their systems and processes around this work; staff development funds were secured for staff work outside of the school day and year; the district calendar was changed to accommodate Nicole Dimich Vagle working in person with our staff throughout the 2016-2017 school year to support LHS staff in with individual and departmental needs in implementation; our leadership team established a multi-year plan to address all of the steps of

the process; and walkthroughs and observations in our teacher development and evaluation plan were modified to gauge teacher efficacy with Standards Based Instruction.

What We Found Out:

This ALP concluded what I perceived was happening: our staff is using the core of Standards Based Instructional Systems to enhance and improve their planning and instruction. SBIS has impacted our departmental systems and processes, changed our discussions, and ultimately changed the culture in which our staff works. Our implementation of SBIS has helped influence the work of the other schools in our district. Lincoln High School will continue its five step approach to the implementation of SBIS, with the hope of increasing student achievement and continuing to meet the goal of lowering the percentage of students accessing courses at postsecondary institutions.

Count of Learning Target/Essential Question Visible for All Students and Written in Student Friendly Language.



Implications For Practice:

1. Impact on planning for student learning.

- a. Clarity in planning and focused direction using standards in planning.
- b. Lesson plans are built around what students should know or be able to do, not activities.
- c. Gaps in teaching standards have been identified and addressed.
- d. Increased teacher confidence.

2. Impact on teaching.

- a. Daily Learning Targets were communicated verbally and visually in the classroom.
- b. Teachers communicated they had a deeper and clearer understanding of standards.
- c. A vast majority of teachers commented on being more intentional in their work with students.
- d. Becoming more deliberate with scaffolding of standards.
- e. Increased teacher confidence.

3. Impact on assessment of student learning in classroom (step 3 of process).

- a. Alignment of assessments to standards and learning targets.
- b. Increased awareness of what assessments include and the types of assessments that meet the standards so they are more meaningful.
- c. Formative assessment is a topic of discussion when designing lessons and how that data can be used to change/enhance instruction.
- d. It is clear this is an area where additional learning and support is needed.

4. The most influential work our department have completed during this implementation process.

- a.** This work has made sure that classes are aligned and covering the same standards and learning targets, regardless of instructor.
- b.** Open lines of communication, increased rhythm of work, student centered, use of common language increased teacher efficacy.