

Title of Best Practice: Grade-Level Data Teams

School: East Technical High School (CWA)

District: Cleveland Metropolitan School District

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Position of the Submitter: Principal

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My Superintendent/Principal is aware of and approved the submission of this "Evidence-Based Best Practice?" Yes No (Yes or No)

1. How many students did this Evidence-Based Best Practice impact? 240
2. Which component of the identified intervention model does this Evidence-Based Best Practice align? Check any that closely align.
 - Replaced the principal (all models)
 - New evaluation system using student growth as a significant factor (transformation)
 - Use locally-adopted competencies to rehire no more than 50% of staff (turnaround)
 - Identify and reward staff increasing student outcomes (all models)
 - Strategies to recruit, place, retain staff (all models)
 - Select and implement instructional model based on student needs (all models)
 - Job-embedded professional development (all models)
 - Continuous use of data (all models)
 - Increased learning time (all models)
 - Social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students (all models)
 - On-going mechanism for community and family engagement (transformation)
 - Operating flexibility (transformation)
 - New governance structure (turnaround)
3. Describe the situation before the Evidence-Based Best Practice was implemented. Explain why the improvement was needed. Provide summary of data to illustrate the need.

In 2010, Cleveland launched its Transformation Plan, a comprehensive reform strategy that aimed to improve learning conditions for its 10,000 high school students by breaking its comprehensive high schools into research-based “academies.” At East Tech, one of the models introduced was the Community Wraparound Academy, a school designed to address students’ myriad needs through the use of a Response to Intervention (RTI) model.

The decision to implement an RTI model at East Tech was driven by the building’s grim statistical profile. Officially, the entire student population falls below the poverty line, and with a student mobility rate exceeding 50 percent (and a shelter/homeless population pushing 10%), the staff often felt overwhelmed by the issues that students brought into the classroom. The building’s discipline record reflected this sense of helplessness as the school logged 2,200 days of suspension in 2009-2010 (according to ODE data) – approximately three days of suspension for every student in the building. Moreover, in the five years leading up to the Transformation Plan, the special education population at East Tech had ballooned, increasing by more than 50% (from 23.4% in 2005-2006 to 37.1% in 2010-2011).

Due to the large number of external issues impacting performance at East Tech, many teachers felt isolated in their classrooms and operated on academic “islands.” This was reflected by a consistently-low performance index (according to ODE data, the average PI at East Tech from 2006-2010 was a 67), and proficiency rates hovering around 40% on standardized tests. Eliminating the academic “silos” and allowing teachers to collaborate on best practices and interventions was an effort to improve these numbers and to bolster the climate in the building.

4. Describe the process of implementing the Evidence-Based Best Practice, including a basic timeline of events leading to full implementation, any troubleshooting or course corrections you made, and the evaluation of the Evidence-Based Best Practice.
 - *Fall 2010 – Staff introduced to RTI concept and practices through literature review and presentations from administration.*
 - *Winter 2010 – Professional development through the Learning and Leadership Center began to take place on monthly basis. Presenter introduced data team concept as “next step” in development of functioning RTI model.*
 - *Spring 2011 – Administration and vendor developed a data team model that would “fit” at East Tech; began to run practice meetings – with on-site support from vendor – using existing data from standardized tests (NWEA and OGT).*
 - *Summer 2011 – Academy Leadership Team met off-site for several days at staff retreat, and outlined a master schedule that would allow grade-level teams to meet on weekly basis.*

- *Fall 2011 – Attempted to launch Data Teams at start of school year, but teams struggled to implement model with fidelity. Two PD sessions held to re-introduce Data Team concept, and to assist teams with development of assessments that could be used to monitor student growth.*
- *Winter/Spring 2012 – Data Teams began to meet on weekly basis using a five-step process adopted from vendor (and closely mirroring state’s five-step process for TBTs). Vendor continued to visit on monthly basis to sit with teams and provide feedback.*
- *Summer 2012 – 10th grade team created a Data Team video to share with rest of staff; Leadership Team decided that enough progress had been made on Data Teams to close contract with PD vendor.*
- *Fall 2012-Spring 2013 – 10th, 11th and Elective Teams met from September-May, using the five-step Data Team process with fidelity. Teams met every Wednesday, with a different member of the team presenting each week. Team members were responsible for bringing copies of the assessment, disaggregated data, and a completed RTI pyramid. During the meeting, the teams walked through all five step of the process, outlining SMART goals and intervention strategies before leaving. Along the way, the teams decided to revise the meeting template and create a “week on, week off” schedule that allowed for two weeks between the initial sharing of data and the follow-up meeting.*

5. Share the data indicating that this Evidence-Based Best Practice has increased achievement, increased attendance, reduced discipline incidents, or increased graduation rate.

Since implementing RTI/Data Teams, we have experienced dramatic gains in both our NWEA scores (an OGT predictive exam) and our OGT results. Three years ago, our students had a projected PI of 57.1 on the Fall NWEA exam. This winter, our students scored an 80 – the largest increase in the district over that span. The increase in OGT scores has been less dramatic – the PI has only increased from 57 in 2011 to a projected score of 66.0 in 2013. However, these gains have accelerated over the last year (three points from 2011 to 2012; six points from 2012 to 2013), reflecting the internal improvements made in our Data Team processes and practices.

6. Briefly explain how this Evidence-Based Best Practice will be sustained once SIG funding is no longer available.

For the last two years, common planning time was built into the master schedule to allow our Data Teams to meet on a weekly basis. The new contract negotiated by the district and our teacher’s union makes this even easier by providing an additional 100 minutes/week for planning, conferences, interventions and teacher meetings. Through our school planning document (AAP), we

will earmark part of this time for weekly Data Team meetings. The time has already been paid for through the negotiated pay increase, and all teachers are obligated to participate (ensuring that all staff members take part in these critical meetings).

7. Briefly share any lessons learned and/or advice to other schools wishing to implement this Evidence-Based Best Practice.

Data Teams take a lot of time and patience to implement. Our staff needed an entire year of training, modeling and practice before the practice became self-sustaining. It's also an ongoing process of refinement and revision. In the middle of this year, our staff asked to change the forms that we use to capture the work being done by Data Teams. As an administrator, I needed to be flexible in creating a structure that worked for not only our leadership, but also for the teachers that need to implement the process.