



Core News

A Message to Staff

from

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Superintendent of Schools

The School District of Philadelphia

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Dear Colleagues,

We all recognize that having a collaborative School Improvement Plan is instrumental to the strategic improvement of individual schools and the entire School District of Philadelphia. As a former principal, the merits of a cohesive school improvement planning process is undeniable, as all education stakeholders unite around the single goal of student and school achievement.

School Improvement Plans assess a school's strengths and weaknesses, implement programs and strategies to address the needs of a school, and continually evaluate the school's progress in meeting its stated objectives and goals. Additionally, effective School Improvement Plans support teachers by increasing their participation in school wide decision-making, including them in the planning and implementation of change on a site based level, as well as giving them an opportunity to become advocates of meaningful education reform.

On April 22, 2008, we were delighted with the participation of all School District teachers in a school improvement planning day. This day provided them with an opportunity to share their best practices and insights. Becoming a high performing school is an incremental and systematic process. I am extremely grateful to our dedicated teachers and principals who serve on their current school planning committees.

School Improvement Plans support our teachers by:

Providing teachers with an active voice and meaningful involvement in the school improvement process.

Aligning professional development activities with a common and clear set of expectations as articulated by staff.

Implementing powerful teaching and learning as teachers engage in cross-grade levels and inter-disciplinary conversations.

Refocusing teachers on pedagogical competence that is sustainable and results in a rigorous, student centered, and inquiry based model of learning.

Presenting opportunities for teacher leaders to focus on lesson planning, research based practices, assessing students, problem solving, mentoring and education innovation.

Creating safe, healthy, fun, and intellectually dynamic learning environments, as teachers feel respected and connected to the overall success of their school.

Collaborating with families and the extended community to improve learning outcomes.

School Improvement Plans emphasize the critical role that teachers play in the organization and improvement of a school. Thank you for sharing in a common vision that fosters academic achievement, and a sense of community and belonging for all stakeholders.

Respectfully,

Arlene C. Ackerman, Ed. D.

Superintendent

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