

Albuquerque Public Schools

Designing and Implementing a Continuous Improvement Process of Standard-Based Classroom Instruction

Research indicates that student achievement gains are made by strong leadership with specific changes and improvement made in a student's classroom. As a large, urban district, initiatives do not always make it to the classroom teacher/student level. After several years of implementing standards-based instruction in the Albuquerque Public School district, some schools were implementing standards and some were not. Much of the efforts that were made were dependent on the strength of the instructional leadership at that site, with some principals being more knowledgeable about standards than others. This inconsistency of implementation and understanding left the district unsure as to what professional development and support should be delivered and to whom.

Albuquerque Public Schools used collaborative practices to design, develop, and implement a continuous improvement cycle for assessing progress toward standards-based instruction for two purposes: (1) to determine what teachers and schools needed in terms of professional development and training in order to implement the various components of Standards-based education with fidelity and high quality, and (2) to hold principals accountable for this implementation. District leadership from the areas of instruction and assessment, collaborated with district, cluster, and the school support staff responsible for delivering training and professional development as well as for improving teacher instruction, to develop a comprehensive observation tool. District and various school support staff used a systematic process to ensure an equitable and systemic examination of every classroom and school observed.

The extensive data that was collected by this process has been used in by a variety of role groups to support school improvement in the area of standards implementation. The district has utilized the data to determine direction for district-wide professional development, and schools/principals have used their data to design specific professional development and training in their growth areas. This data is incorporated into every school's individual school improvement plan. This model enhances leadership capacity and creates job-embedded professional development tools focused on improving standards-based learning in the classroom.

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