When there's equity, needs are met

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Teachers acknowledge that one of the greatest challenges they face each day is meeting the needs of all of their students. They also express disappointment that their knowledge and skills are insufficient to reach all students. When teachers' efficacy is threatened by the complexity of addressing the needs of all students as it is in issues related to equity, school-based staff developers have a doubly difficult task. They assist teachers to learn how to build relationships with students, create productive learning environments, and design differentiated instruction for students with various learning needs. And they also assist teachers in counteracting an eroding sense of efficacy among their colleagues.

they can more easily integrate examples, materials, resources, and instructional strategies that will engage their students and value them.

School-based staff developers help teachers differentiate instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners including students with special needs, English language learners, gifted students, or struggling students. School-based staff developers adapt the support they give teachers by recognizing their individual needs and exploring how teachers' background and experiences shape their instructional practices. By modeling the behaviors they want teachers to

EQUITY

Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.

Many interactions school-based staff developers have with the teachers they support are related to the Equity standard that includes three dimensions.

1. School-based staff developers provide opportunities for teachers to develop their understanding of and appreciation for all students.

To do this, school-based staff developers may offer training, articles, protocols for conversations, interactions with families and students, or other means for teachers to learn about students' backgrounds, cultures, families, and perspectives so they can respect and appreciate them as individuals. As teachers gain a deeper understanding of students' interests and backgrounds,

demonstrate within their classrooms in interactions with teachers, school-based staff developers reinforce the importance of understanding and appreciating uniqueness. In providing support, school-based staff developers recognize the individual needs of teachers, explore how teachers' backgrounds and experiences shape their instructional practices, and design classroom instruction that honors students.

Another way school-based staff developers develop understanding and appreciation is engaging teachers in courageous conversations about race and poverty. Conversations such as these encourage teachers to examine their own assumptions and beliefs about students and how those assumptions and beliefs influence their instructional decisions.

2. Creating safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments.

School-based staff developers can help teachers examine their classroom and school environments and assess the degree to which they make students feel safe, valued, and capable. Establishing classroom routines, creating constructive, respectful behavior systems, and engaging students in assessing and monitoring their own learning progress are just some ways school-based staff developers can help teachers.

School-based staff developers might also facilitate the development and implementation of schoolwide programs that develop character, celebrate student success and diversity, and support themes of respect, caring, and emotional and physical safety. Creating both a school and classroom environment that protects students' well-being allows students to feel safe both in their classrooms and throughout the school.

3. Holding high expectations for students' academic achievement.

School-based staff developers can support teachers in assessing how their instructional practices convey their expectations of students. The well-known Pygmalion study conducted by Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson in 1968 explored how teachers' expectations of students' ability to learn influenced student learning. Good and Brophy (1984) distinguished between self-fulfilling prophecies and sustaining expectations. "Self-fulfilling prophecies," they suggested, "are the most dramatic form of teacher expectation effects, they involve changes in student behavior" (p. 93). Self-fulfilling prophecies occur when an inaccurate or false definition of a situation contributes to new behaviors that make the false conception become true (Cotton, 1989). Sustaining expectations, on the other hand, occur when teachers fail to see a student's potential and therefore do not provide opportunities for students to realize their potential. Decades of research conclude that teachers' expectations impact students' academic success.

School-based staff developers can explore with teachers ways in which they convey expectations to students either within their classrooms or within the school. These behaviors are exhibited in differences in the way teachers interact with low-expectation and high-expectation students. Behaviors might include types of questions teachers ask, which students are called on to answer higher-order questions, teachers' proximity within the classroom, classroom seating charts, wait time, cuing students, and types and specificity of feedback. Often, teachers are unaware that they exhibit these subtle behaviors. Observing teachers' behaviors toward low-expectation and high-expectation students, gathering data, and facilitating teacher analysis of the data are ways that school-based staff developers can help teachers become conscious about how their expectations impact their teaching practices.

School-based staff developers can contribute to developing teachers' ability to understand and appreciate differences in their students, to create safe learning environments, and to hold high expectations. Their efforts will positively impact teachers' behaviors, their interactions with their students, and their students' academic success. When teachers' actions create positive results for students, teachers have a stronger sense of efficacy, confidence in their ability to meet the needs of all students.

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