

RAMP-A

ADMINISTRATOR NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015



Please join your teachers for lunch and to observe their Lesson Study presentations at the May 1 workshop at the NEWESD 101 Conference Center.

How Administrators can support Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for increased student achievement

PLCs that use a Common Priorities approach combine the strengths of teacher-led and administrator-driven inquiry by focusing on coherent, well-connected study of teaching and learning that is more likely to increase student achievement. This Common Priorities approach begins with **designing, implementing, and analyzing common assessments, which leads to collaboration on improving instruction.**

Administrators can support movement of PLCs toward improved instruction and student achievement in these ways:

- **Coordinate** the work of the various PLCs in the school so that teams can build from each other's work and provide a coherent and well-connected learning experience for students
- Help PLCs ensure that their goals and activities for each meeting **build on the results** of their previous meetings
- Help PLCs integrate

professional development focused on improving instruction into their work together.

Administrators who take these steps **honor teachers' expertise** and provide opportunities for them to increase this expertise as they align their efforts vertically and horizontally and use effective practices and strategies in every lesson.

Jacobson (2010) *Coherent instructional improvement and PLCs: Is it possible to do both?* Phi Delta Kappan

May 1 and 2 workshop goals:

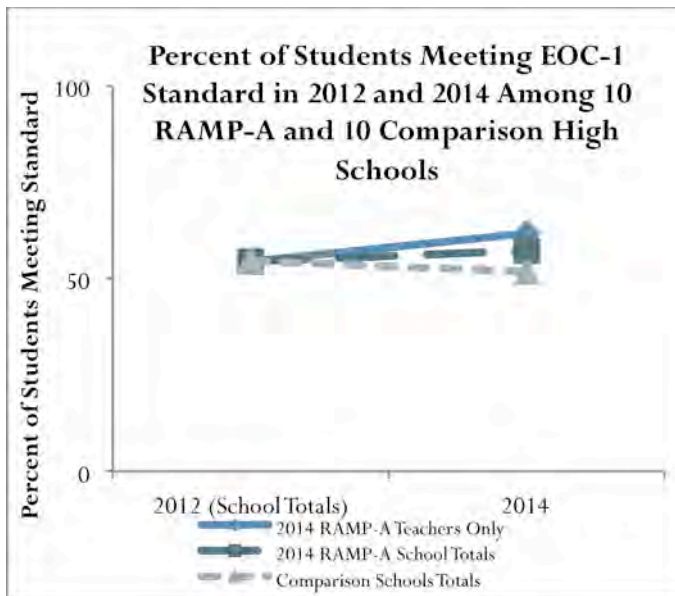
- PLCs present their Lesson Study Experiences
- PLCs discuss how to continue their learning after RAMP-A
- Teachers examine relationships among expressions, equations, and functions, and consider students' learning in light of these relationships.

Summer Institute: June 23, 24, 25 at the NEWESD 101 Conference Center

HIGH- CRITICAL THINKING INSTRUCTION FOR STRUGGLING STUDENTS

Research shows that lower-achieving students are less likely to be in classes that use high critical thinking instruction. “Thinking skills are intimately involved in successful learning of even elementary levels of reading, mathematics, and all other school subjects” (Zohar & Dori, p. 148). High critical thinking instruction includes teaching thinking skills explicitly: in mathematics it means fostering the use of the standards of mathematical practices, where students are engaged in problem solving, argumentation, modeling, looking for patterns and structure, engaging in repeated reasoning, and striving to be more precise. Ask your teachers how they foster *all* students’ growth in the mathematical practices. How do you support your teachers in providing high level thinking activities for disadvantaged students?

NEWS FROM THE EXTERNAL EVALUATOR



From Cathy Kennedy: Analyses of the spring 2012 and 2014 state EOC-1 assessment data indicate a beneficial impact of the program on students of RAMP-A high school teachers. As illustrated above, in spring 2014 students of RAMP-A teachers in 10 participating high schools (the solid line) achieved a higher average passrate than the average overall passrate of the same 10 schools (the dashed line). In addition, the average of the 10 participating schools was higher than the average of the 10 comparison schools (the small-dashed line).¹ In spring 2012, before the RAMP-A program launched, the average percentage of students meeting the EOC-1 standard was 54 percent in both RAMP-A schools and the matched comparison schools. In spring 2014, the average for students of RAMP-A teachers was 62 percent, the average for all students in RAMP-A schools (including students of RAMP-A teachers) was 57 percent, and the average for all students in the comparison schools was 52 percent.



Student Motivation to Learn Math

Middleton & Spanias (NCTM, 2002) described the 5 findings in *Lessons Learned from Research* about student motivation to learn mathematics.

Motivation is learned: Schooling that separates students into slow learners and fast learners teaches and reinforces attitudes that ability in math is innate, rather than through sustained effort. Students who believe that their success is based on their effort are motivated to try harder; students who believe in the presence or absence of a “math gene” are not motivated.

How students interpret their successes and failures in mathematics affects their motivation. When students are successful about 70% of the time, they are most likely to continue putting forth effort. The work of learning must both be challenging enough and easy enough to meet this target.

Teachers matter!!

- By the messages they send,
- By teaching for understanding,
- By focusing classroom goals on mastery or learning goals rather than on performance goals (who can show they are making progress on their learning versus who did better on the test?).