STRUCTURE FOR DISCUSSING STUDENTS OF CONCERN

Whether in formal Multi-Tiered Systems of Support meetings or informal staff team meetings, educators spend a lot of time discussing students of concern. Use the following protocol to ensure that conversations are strength and solution oriented.

The windows of time are suggestions and can be adapted to suit the length of your meetings and the number of educators present.

1. **Identify strengths (4 minutes):** As a team, discuss the strengths of the student. These might include strengths in academics, conflict-resolution, and social-emotional skills. This list could also include personal interests that might motivate the student.
2. **Identify concerns (3 minutes):** The educator(s) who expressed concerns about the student should identify their concern. Concerns should be supported by qualitative or quantitative data. The educator(s) should also share interventions that have been attempted. Take care to separate the student from the behavior.
3. **Discuss root cause (5 minutes):** The educators will discuss, based on their knowledge of the student, the root cause of the behavior. In this space it is particularly beneficial for adults who interact with the student but do not see the concern to share what they might be doing differently.
4. **Brainstorm interventions (2 minutes):** Educators should brainstorm potential interventions for the student. At this time, the goal is to share a wealth of ideas, not to criticize or evaluate the suggestions.
5. **Select an intervention (3 minutes):** Educators will evaluate which intervention (1) most directly targets the root cause of the concern and (2) best builds upon the strengths and interests of the student. Note, this may be a combination of some of the suggestions previously presented.
6. **Identify the process for measuring success (5 minutes):**
   a. Data to be collected: How will you measure the success of this intervention? What data will be collected? Where will it be entered?
   b. Point-person for the intervention: Who will take the lead on this intervention? Who will hold others accountable for implementation and data collection to inform next steps?
   c. Length of time for intervention: How long will the intervention be implemented? Schedule a time to revisit this concern in three to six weeks to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.
7. **Inform any impacted parties (2 minutes):** Review the action plan with the student, their family, other educators, behavioral health supports, academic interventionists, and others who interact with the student regularly.

Guiding Questions for Talking about Students

When frustrated with a student, educators may resort to using deficit-based language. Post these questions in spaces where educators discuss student concerns (eg, Staff Lounge & Copy Room) to promote the use of asset-based language.

- What skills and character traits are present that we can build upon?

- Where does the student thrive? How can we transfer that to the classroom?

- How are we acknowledging the student when they perform well?

- Have we talked about what might be motivating the student's behavior?

- How can we work together with the student's family to support the student in reaching their full potential?

- Are our expectations for the student age and developmentally appropriate?

- What individualized supports have we provided for the student to reach their full potential?