

Dissemination

Part I

Recognizing the responsibility of charter schools to foster and disseminate best practices, LFDCS presented a plan to create an internship program in urban teacher preparation as part of our “Plans for the Next Five Years.” As a charter school, we have disseminated best practices in parent involvement, second language acquisition and implementation of the RTI model at state and national conferences as well as written papers and local presentations. The plan to create an urban teacher readiness program at LFDCS is our commitment not only to improving teacher preparations for the challenges of urban education but also to make a commitment to dissemination on a more public scale and to individuals. These graduate fellows will spend a year of “best practices immersion” with a highly-qualified veteran mentor at LFDCS. The following is an excerpt from our concept paper and resulting Memorandum of Understanding with Merrimack College:

As part of its intent to disseminate best practices, LFDCS specifically seeks a role in preparation and certification of teachers to attain skills and experience in urban education, acquiring competencies in strategies designed for ELL’s (English Language Learners) compatible with requirements of MA DESE SEI Category Training as well as teaching strategies and practices that foster high expectations and high academic achievement for students whose family income and limited English readiness could identify them as at risk from achieving academic proficiency.

LFDCS will work in partnership with administration and faculty of the College of Education to design and implement appropriate classroom experiences for selected graduate students seeking Massachusetts certification in Elementary Education (K-6). Graduate fellows will be assigned to observe, co-teach and teach in classrooms taught by certified, highly-qualified veteran educators at LFDCS who are further qualified by mentor training and experience, have a positive attitude toward urban education, the families we serve and the teaching profession and have data evidence of student achievement.

LFDCS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Merrimack College and will pilot this program in the 2010-2011 school year with five graduate fellows and five LFDCS teachers. The results of partnership, portfolios and practices will be documented throughout the year and will be shared at a public forum at Merrimack College annually. LFDCS will seek to disseminate this partnership at state and federal conferences and in articles prepared for professional publications.

LFDCS has identified the following specific strategies for student growth and proficiency, specific indicators necessary for success in an urban school. These practices will be at the core of internal and external dissemination.

1. **Intentional parent involvement**, understanding cultural and common factors and incorporating a broad range of education and family development.
2. **Attention to language acquisition**, incorporating an academic dual-language program with training and strategies of Sheltered English Immersion and extensive attention to vocabulary development.
3. **Teacher training, professional development** through annual orientation, induction, focused curriculum knowledge and embedded professional development with in-class observation and follow up.
4. **Understanding and incorporating data**, its use in lesson plans and individual student interactions, implementing RTI (Response to Intervention), carefully crafting proven strategies delivered by teacher and paraprofessional staff and specialists to ensure continuity and quality.
5. **Setting goals for achievement by students and staff** and supporting attainment by policies and resources.
6. **Early education as readiness for academic success**, a required two-year structured program with academic and language focus.
7. **Special education**, understanding the delivery system of special education plans.

Part II

Recognizing a responsibility to disseminate and share best practices with the local district, talks have already begun to share the success of our RTI model with teachers in the Lawrence Public Schools. Our school will offer opportunities for teachers from selected schools to visit LFDCS, observe RTI progress-monitoring sessions and see follow-up class sessions in which multiple interventions are implemented by teaching and paraprofessional staff. During the 2010-11 school year, LFDCS staff will begin to create an RTI “How to” manual, a guide for teachers and administrators for implementation of our RTI model.