



Audio

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Asking the Right Questions: Using District Goals to Assess Program Effects

School District of the City of Erie, Pennsylvania • January 2010

Topic: Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day
Practice: Evaluate Program

Highlights

- A district-level program supervisor, Lorri Bland, describes how district goals guide the implementation and evaluation of an after-school program designed to enrich and to support academic improvement of students.
- The interview highlights the importance of a structured and comprehensive evaluation that collects information from multiple sources.
- Results from focused evaluation help program staff identify opportunities for professional development and program improvement.

About the Site

John C. Diehl Elementary School
Erie, PA

Demographics

44% Black

39% White

13% Hispanic

4% Asian

86% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

John C. Diehl Elementary School operates on site the district's CHAMPS after-school program to help students from an economically disadvantaged background succeed in school and become responsible citizens. The following strategies contributed to the program's success:

- Alignment of after-school programming with school-day goals and curricula,
- Classroom teachers staying after school to teach in the after-school program,
- Identification of students for the after-school program based on their academic and behavior records,
- Communicating to parents the importance and expectations of the after-school program,
- Incorporating physical, social, and academic components in educational activities,
- Maximizing attendance by following up on absent students and providing supports,
- Using data to evaluate and continually improve the program.

Full Transcript

Hi, I am Lorri Bland. I am the program supervisor at the CHAMPS Afterschool Program, in the Erie School District, which is located in Erie, Pennsylvania, just off of Lake Erie.

As a district administrator for the CHAMPS program, I coordinate the CHAMPS requirements with the district benchmarks and I also develop the staff development collaboration with community organizations and the development implementation of component activities. As a school district program, we have access to all student records and technology resources and our school, as a district, just implemented a new districtwide data system this past year, which is just phenomenal. And myself and other administrators of the CHAMPS program have full access to that to see what all the students' records are and to create reports on that.

The evaluation of an after-school program is in many ways like creating a logic model or a rubric for a class. Before you develop the plans, you need to know what your end goals are. You need to know, are you meeting the student needs to help determine what practices are effective? You can look at some that might look engaging and fun, but is it teaching the students, to determine the professional developmental needs. And we do a lot of staff development within our program with our site managers as well as our teachers, and we would not know what to develop for that if we were not looking at our evaluation of the program.

We really look at our reports on an annual basis, sometimes on a monthly basis, to see if we are, in a sense, asking the right questions. We have a monthly site report itself that tells about the components, special events, best practices, any concerns. So that communicates to us what's going on with the program activities. We have the student attendance that is reported on a monthly basis and that includes both school day attendance as well as program attendance. Then, of course, you have the hard evaluation, or

the hard data, which is the student attendance, the student grade, both report card and state reports, and that shows us, have we been effective? Are students improving in school attendance and their performance measures? Because it can all look good from the program stance, but are we being effective? And so then we look at that hard data and say, “Okay, even though this school looked like it was doing a really great job, they seem to be losing a lot of kids or the kids are going down in grades. What do we need to do? And that’s when we may talk to the principal or the curriculum directors in order to determine what steps do we need to take at a particular school to help improve whatever challenges they may be.

Teachers also take ownership of specific components or activities, and along with the activity plan that they have to complete to tell us what they are planning to do, we know that things don’t always go as they had hoped they would. And so this year we also require that they complete a component report at the end of the month, and that component report tells us, did you meet the goals for that month?

Our little logo is that we engage, enrich, and educate. And so I guess that’s how I can sum up CHAMPS in those three words, and this new evaluation piece really shows that the activities are doing just that.