



SAANYS Professional Development Update

Sometimes when we think of professional development, our first thought is of a traditional workshop facilitated by a presenter to a group of professionals. Our next thought might go to a webinar experience where cyberspace connects us to our colleagues and the facilitator. In both cases, whether face-to-face or via the web, we participate as a member of a group. In both cases as well, the lasting value of the experience is often determined by the actual implementation practice with some form of ongoing learning or support.

Wouldn't it be great if you could have completely individualized support over the course of a school year? What if you, as that school leader, regardless of your years and experience in your role, could partner with a fellow administrator who understands firsthand the challenges you are facing in this unprecedented time of change to focus exclusively on your individual professional growth and development?

SAANYS Mentor Coach Service

You may or may not know that precisely that level of professional support to school leaders is offered by SAANYS Mentor Coach Service. The Mentor Coach Service, established by SAANYS in 2008, is a program grounded in research, developed by practitioners, and organized to develop excellence in school leadership for school administrators throughout their probationary period and beyond. Based upon the Ontario Principals' Council's world renowned model, the program is focused on current standards and embedded in the school leader's workday. Based on a reflective model with a priority on the confidentiality between the mentor and mentee, the program also counts toward required professional development hours. Mentor coaches, who must be active leaders or retired for fewer than five years, are fully trained in the model, which is framed by NAESP School Leadership Mentor Standards. The coaches participate in ongoing support to boost their own skills and communicate frequently with SAANYS to share their progress and any questions that may arise.

The Mentor Coach Service runs for 40 weeks, with flexibility of beginning the program well into the school year. In my time as director of professional development, I have received requests from mentees and their districts to extend the Mentor Coach Service beyond the 40 weeks to continue the good work that is in progress.

Systemic Management of APPR: A Vital Step

Opinion piece by Scott B. Crowder, CEO Educational Vistas Inc.

An old adage states: If you fail to plan, then you are in effect planning to fail. Although over-simplified for the complicated world we live in, the core premise is valid. Organizing and planning required elements of APPR and weaving them into the fabric of daily district life is a daunting task. To then institutionalize these mandated acts into your school's culture in a seamless manner is near-impossible for most districts.

A vital step for improved implementation of negotiated agreements is the adoption of a district-wide APPR management system. In my work with NYS schools, I am surprised at the incompleteness of many of the programs now in use to address APPR. I am amazed that most of these software solutions lack the most important requirement for successful management of the law. They are not systemic. They fail to guide users through all aspects of APPR; and worse yet, because they fail to link to all required databases, they are unable to provide the needed efficiency processes districts require. It is unimaginable that in year two of APPR, schools are still treading water instead of implementing sustainable solutions.

As districts are discovering what not to do in regard to the management of APPR, they are gaining the valuable

Currently, SAANYS has mentor coaches partnering with school leaders in every part of the state. In several cases, administrators who had a track record of experience and success in their role were moved to new positions and roles as a result of reconfiguration of staffing in districts. A building principal who finds himself or herself the new coordinator of special education and CSE chair can face a swift and steep learning curve, where individualized support is the key. A new administrator in a small district without the support of a larger administrative team can feel isolated and adrift without the partnership a mentor coach can provide.



For information on any SAANYS professional development event, contact Karen Bronson at KBronson@saanys.org.

At midyear, both mentors and mentees submit summaries of their work together and reflections on the experience to date. As I read these summaries and reflections, I am increasingly more impressed by the level of professionalism and collegiality that exists. Currently, mentors and mentees are working together on everything from building culture and relationships within their districts to establishing their role amongst administrative colleagues. They are talking about balance, decision making, boundary setting, and parent issues, as well as the importance of not neglecting such basics as sleep and exercise in the crushing schedule a work week can bring. **Using time effectively, learning to delegate, implementing standards, and providing effective feedback are all timely topics and all ones that our mentees and their coaches are addressing together.**

Here are some recent comments from current mentees that say it best:

"I've been meeting with my mentor since July when we began to focus on leadership skills. I am pleased to have developed a close professional relationship where I can examine the many challenges I face on a daily basis."

"We have talked about effective resource management, sustaining positive relationships, collecting data, and creating a rigorous and coherent curricular plan. We reflect upon plans, delivery models, and envision what success will look like."

We are living in a time that demands true collaboration of the highest order to support the demanding and complex work we do as school leaders. There's never been a better time to tap into the SAANYS Mentor Coach Service as one of many options to grow professionally! Contact me with any questions you may have and view the Mentor Coach Webinar (see page 4). Stay warm ... spring is right around the corner! ■

Needed:

Certified teachers for spring test scoring beginning April 9, 2014. Kingston and Schenectady locations - great opportunity for recently retired and others. Call Educational Vistas, Inc. toll free for more information:

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insights necessary to seek out new management systems that are both fulsome and highly efficient. The benefits must be immediate and features must improve the educational process for all stakeholders. Essential requirements of such a system may be boiled down to a short checklist: A new program must ...

1. Manage all aspects of APPR.
2. Link to all required databases.
3. Work with all rubrics.
4. Calculate SLOs.
5. Adapt to any HEDI & scoring process.
6. Work in & out of network areas.
7. Store information for unlimited years.
8. Manage any negotiated agreement.
9. Contain complete calendar w/email notification.
10. Allow all teachers and administrators access.
11. Single "click" production of SED upload file.

Finally, the product must be so incredibly inexpensive that any NYS district or BOCES can afford the licensing and training costs. ■

Board of Regents...

continued from page 3

regardless of the number of years he/she has served in such role.)

The State Education Department's ESEA Waiver Application was posted for public comment from January 16 to January 27, 2014. Following the comment period, the ESEA Waiver Renewal Application with related amendments was presented to the board as an action item on February 10, and will be submitted to the US Department of Education by February 28, 2014.

Education Reform Agenda

Also noted at the January meeting of the Board of Regents is the growing propensity of board members to express individual positions that are different than the positions adopted by and pursued by the overall board. SED's education reform agenda, and information pertaining to the senate and assembly hearings that were recently held in regard to the Regents education reform agenda, were not included in the board's January agenda or in the information items that were discussed. Nonetheless, near the close of the full board meeting on January 14, Regent Kathleen Cashin, representing Judicial District 2 – Kings, expressed the following:

"I am here to say a few words about inBloom. ... The vast majority (of parents) do not want inBloom or at the very least, they want the 'opt out' option. And since I think we function of the people, by the people, and for the people, we should be listening very carefully to that dimension. So I recommend that we withdraw from inBloom – we are the only state that is in inBloom."

There was no discussion of Regent Cashin's remarks by the Board of Regents.

For more information regarding the Board of Regents meeting and the Regents education reform agenda, contact James Viola, director of government relations, at JViola@saanys.org. ■

Have questions? Need assistance?

Use the "Ask SAANYS" button at saanys.org.