



NOVEMBER 2014

Upcoming Events

State Education Conference
November 19-21 | La Vista

NASB Board of
Directors Meeting
November 19 | La Vista

NASB Delegate Assembly
November 21 | La Vista

New Board Member Workshops
December 3 | La Vista
December 4 | Norfolk
December 9 | Gering
December 10 | North Platte
December 11 | Grand Island

Legislative Issues Conference
January 25-26 | Lincoln

Education Forum
February 3-4 | Kearney

Presidents' Retreat
February 22-23 | Lincoln
March 1-2 | North Platte

Ashland-Greenwood Soars as Pilot School for Teacher/Principal Evaluation Model

It is no secret, research supports that nothing impacts student achievement more than the quality of the teacher in the classroom.

Knowing this, and working to put in place measurable benchmarks, Ashland-Greenwood Public Schools (AGPS) aspired to build an evaluation tool focused on growth, with a model to assist teachers in developing into master teachers while also instilling accountability by measuring their ability and efforts to positively impact student achievement.



Now in its second year, the model recognizes that all staff are at different places in their professional growth and it allows for collaborative choice when it comes to what staff identify to be the focus of their professional development plan.

The overall framework for teaching and learning at AGPS focused primarily on six steps to positively impact student achievement.

1. Ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum and ensure that ALL instruction is aligned to agreed upon learning standards.
2. Uniformly adopt a common language of instruction. As you will see below, AGPS has committed time and resources to build teacher experts in Marzano's Instructional Framework. The teachers then help lead staff development to build district capacity and pedagogical automaticity.
3. Utilize an evaluation tool that helps increase accountability, helps teachers grow and has a component, student learning objectives (SLO's), focused on student achievement and professional development.
4. Utilize an evaluation tool that increases accountability, helps administrators grow and has components, or action plans, focused on student achievement and professional development.
5. Create a direct link between administrator's building action plans and teacher's SLO's.
6. Create a district professional development model directly linked to the professional development needs in the district, aligning to Marzano's researched based best practices.

Continued on Page 2



"AGPS is very blessed to have strong leaders and a strong, core group of teachers who have tackled the new instructional and evaluation models with professionalism and continued dedication to improving their own skills as well as outcomes for our students. As board members we believe it is essential to give our superintendent and administrators the support and resources that they need to thrive."

- Tom Walsh, Vice President
Ashland-Greenwood Board of Education

Continued from Page 1

Getting Started: Marzano's Instructional Framework

Prior to the start, beginning with the 2012-13 school year, much of the staff had previously participated in Marzano Book Studies and were also familiar with Marzano's 9 Effective Strategies.

2012-13

- Marzano Academy Team I (8 Middle School/High School Teachers and 2 Administrators)
- Middle School/High School – Marzano Framework PLC's and Strategy Sessions at Middle School/High School
- K-12 – Focused on Marzano Strategy – Clear Learning Targets

2013-14

- Marzano Academy Team II (7 Elementary/1 Middle School Teacher(s) and 2 Administrators)
- K-12 – Marzano Instructional Framework Training for all staff
 - Reinforced/Reviewed at multiple in-service days, PLC's, building level meetings during the year
- K-12 – Focused on Marzano Strategies – Clear Learning Targets and Routines/Procedures

One key positive to come from this was a common instructional framework, instructional language, and expectations. This led to richer, more focused conversations about instruction between evaluators and teachers as part of the evaluation process, but also between staff members as part of professional collaboration. In addition, AGPS certainly noticed a positive impact on instruction during Year 1, particularly in the area of clear, focused learning targets, which were also linked and aligned to NESA when appropriate.

On the flip side, there was still work to be done to help staff see the connection and alignment between Marzano's Instructional Framework and the 7 Effective Practices, which is NDE's Teacher Framework. AGPS also recognized that Marzano's Framework most appropriate for classroom teachers needed to be adapted slightly for some specialists, such as counselors, and media personnel.

Year 1: Implementation/Reflections

Right away, one of AGPS' "a-ha" moment's came when staff responded well to the clear instructional expectations and increased feedback from evaluators. Staff also want to learn from each other, and this setup allows for great development delivered by peers, from direct observations, Instructional Rounds, etc.

The SLO component of the Evaluation Model was definitely AGPS's greatest challenge and required the biggest learning curve, but the administration team believes it could be one of the greatest strengths of the model as well, as SLO components represent good, sound instructional and assessment practices.

All in all, Year 1 Implementation was a challenge, with some uncomfortable, anxiety filled moments, but by the end of the year, feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Staff feedback regarding Year 1 Implementation was 90% positive, 8% neutral, 1% negative, and 1% very negative.

Year 2 Goals/Plans

At the end of year 1, staff survey data showed that nearly all teachers fully understood the new expectations and how the new evaluation tool focused on ensuring student achievement. Moving forward for the 2014-15 school year, the administration listened carefully to the feedback from teachers and began refining the process. The district focused on four instructional areas: clear learning targets for every lesson, tracking student progress, rules and routines and student engagement.

2014-2015

- Reviewed Marzano Instructional Framework for all - Led by staff
- K-12- Focus on Marzano Strategies – Clear Learning Targets, Routines/Procedures, Tracking Student Progress (Progress Monitoring), and Student Engagement
 - Increase opportunities for staff to lead PD Increase opportunities for staff self-reflection/analysis
 - All staff required to video/analyze at least one lesson
 - Increase opportunities for peer observations/peer feedback
 - Instructional Rounds & Videos
 - Began to establish an online repository of model instruction aligned to focus areas

Additional Suggestions

AGPS' philosophy is that all educational processes should work together to further their cause. The evaluation tool should not sit in isolation, but instead be part of the overall school improvement process. Good educational pedagogy and good teacher/principal evaluation go hand in hand. To be successful in implementing a system wide approach AGPS believes the following components must be present:

- Common Language of Instruction and Common Instructional Model
- Ensure adequate time within calendar for PD/Staff support
 - Need not be 'large chunks' of time ... just time
- Collect Staff Feedback Often and USE it!
- Don't forget to plan for/include opportunities for PD/Collaboration for Evaluators as well
 - The level of accountability, feedback, and support for staff needs to be consistent – more similar than different

Dr. Kassebaum commended his teachers and administrators for their professionalism and commitment to this process and being life-long learners. "We fully recognize that we continue to learn and grow in this process. It simply could not have been successful without a strong commitment from our administrators and teachers. Our teachers and administrators truly want to be the very best. They know that this process is about growth and doing what is best for students. Time and time again our teachers have impressed me with their professional attitude and with their desire to be leaders and grow in the profession."

Ashland-Greenwood Public Schools is made up of 850 Students, PreK to 12th grade, 66 Teachers, and 4 Evaluators

The administrative team consists of:
Dr. Zach Kassebaum – Superintendent
Jill Finkey – Curriculum Director
Teresa Bray – Elementary Principal
Brad Jacobsen – MS/HS Principal

Randy Wiese – MS/HS Assistant Principal & Athletic Director