

ALLA BREVE EDUCATIONAL CONSULTING CASE STUDY

HORNELL CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT FOCUSES EFFORTS THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Located in Steuben County in the Southern Tier of New York, the Hornell City School District experienced a change in district leadership in July 2017. The new Superintendent, Jeremy Palotti, noted "when

***"...this process is just what
Hornell needed."***

- JEREMY PALOTTI, SUPERINTENDENT

interviewing for and being hired, I learned that there were many factions of the district operating seemingly independent of each other and often in a reactive mode with no clear direction and no system in place for guiding the district and/or assessing that what is being done is effective." Palotti acknowledged that there were some shared areas of interest and intentions to make improvements, but there was little to no evidence of continuity on a district level.

To begin the process of bringing the district together and focusing on those things that matter most for Hornell's students, community, and District, Palotti engaged the services of Alla Breve Educational Consulting. Obtaining perspectives from all stakeholder groups in the school community would serve as a foundation for strategic planning and then, action.

Needs Assessment

Dr. Nicole Alioto, Owner of Alla Breve Educational Consulting, used the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools (Shannon & Bylsma, 2007) framework to guide survey, interview and focus group protocols. During the two-month needs assessment phase, data were collected from each stakeholder group: instructional and non-instructional staff, administrators, Board of Education members, students in grades 4 – 12, parents, and community members. In addition, achievement data, current district plans, and other relevant documents were reviewed to develop actionable findings.

Planning

Using Alla Breve's detailed analysis, Hornell CSD Board members and administrative team prioritized district needs based on evidence, not assumptions or a strong voice of one or two stakeholder groups or individuals. "Throughout the process of conducting a comprehensive needs assessment, we were able to hear the voices of many and learn that we wanted the much of the same things, but were approaching the task of achieving those things in very different ways not always knowing or hearing others' perspectives," Palotti shared.

In the months that followed, Alla Breve Educational Consulting worked with the Board

of Education, teachers, and administrators to address the items that needed the most attention and that would impact the instructional program the most. Together, the groups clarified priorities, created building level goals and actions plans, and most importantly, developed a process to evaluate the success of the goals. Palotti noted, "we started small and are digging deeper into this process to establish goals for all priority areas by the end of next year."

Next Steps

In the 2018-19 school year, the district will implement the first phase of action planning for instructional focused priority areas. Action plans for the student engagement focused priority will be created during the year with a districtwide team that will replicate the planning process from 2017-18. Evaluation of 2018-19 activities will be ongoing, and a

summative evaluation will be conducted toward the end of the school year.

Palotti believes that stakeholders, "needed to be fully engaged at the ground level with voices being heard along the way. This process worked so well with our school from an instructional standpoint that we are utilizing much of this concept with an architectural firm in creating a ten-year long-range facilities plan. Upon reflecting on the process and results, I have come to see that this process is just what Hornell needed."

References

Sue Shannon, G. & Bylsma, P. (2007). *Nine Characteristics of High-Performing Schools: A Research-Based Resource for Schools and Districts to Assist with Improving Student Learning. Second Edition.* Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

About Alla Breve Educational Consulting

Alla Breve is the musical term for cut time, and with Alla Breve Educational Consulting LLC, educational institutions can save time (and money) by being more efficient and effective with their data. With 25 years of research experience, Dr. Nicole (Catapano) Alioto, Owner of Alla Breve Educational Consulting, spent the majority of her career working in higher education and K12 to use data for improving student outcomes and institutional effectiveness and that mission continues today.

Alla Breve Educational Consulting LLC is a registered IBM Business Partner and certified reseller of SPSS solutions.

ALLA BREVE EDUCATIONAL CONSULTING LLC

PO BOX 788, DANVILLE, NY 14437
WWW.ALLABREVEUSA.COM
ALLABREVEUSA@GMAIL.COM

