

HOPE 2.0

February 16, 2018

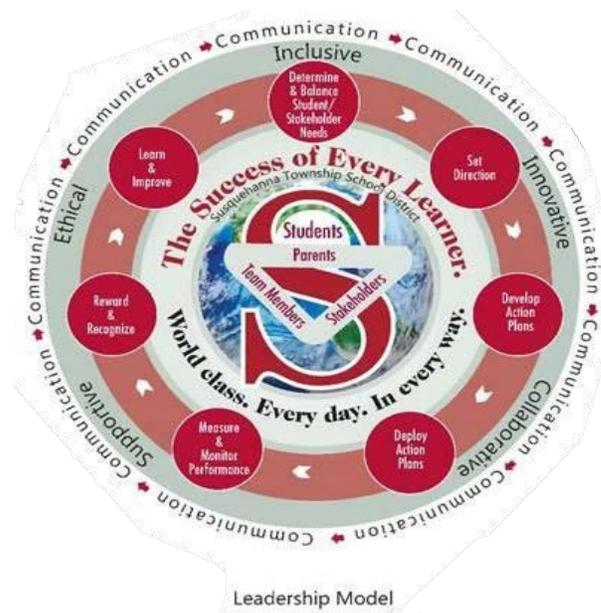
Getting Acquainted with the Elephant

Imagine that your physician walks into the examination room and declares that she has scheduled you for emergency open-heart surgery without first conducting an examination of your specific condition. You would likely respond by asking how she arrived at this decision and be shocked when she responded, “I don’t need to examine you. I’ve conducted open heart surgery for over 20 years. It’s basically the same procedure every time.” Would you be willing to put your life into the hands of that physician?

Imagine a close relative is in need of legal representation and the attorney prepares a full argument and schedules a court date prior to meeting your family for the first time? How would you respond if the attorney simply stated, “I don’t need to be familiar with your case. I’ve handled these kinds of cases for over 15 years and this argument has worked just fine down through the years.” Would you allow that attorney to represent your family?

In either case, you might feel that your situation deserved more time and attention to address. Why? Because root causes matter. Contributing factors matter. Everything matters.

The district has opted to address student behavior using a systematic approach rooted (pun intended) in the belief that adverse behaviors (from students, staff, and parents) are merely symptoms of deeper issues that, if not assessed appropriately, will result in even greater issues. You may recall that I explained how this process is being deployed in alignment to our leadership model and that our first meeting accomplished steps 1 and portions of step 2.



Develop Action Plans. Next week, all HOPE teams will reconvene to review the list of root causes that we developed in our first meeting on January 11th. Following the initial meeting, the leadership team met to refine the root causes by developing over-arching statements that captured the heart of the original list. We are now ready to begin step 3. For those who have not seen the list of root causes, they are listed here:

1. Lack of shared NORMS for behavior and discipline among parents, team members, and students.
2. Lack of a pro-active, systematic process to prevent and address behavior issues impacting all areas of the learning environment.
3. Lack of trusting relationships across the educational community (parents, team members, and students).
4. Lack of effective, two-way communication about available resources, changes, and processes around behavioral issues.
5. Lack of a student-centered educational model.

On the 21st, the team will again break into small groups and begin to identify action steps, resources and processes needed to address each of the broader statements. Additionally, the team will prioritize and sequence our action items for eventual deployment (step 4).

As promised, we are addressing the elephant in the room. As promised, it is a great deal of work. As promised, it will not happen overnight. Nevertheless, together we will tackle this issue *at its root* and reinvent behavioral norms in our district. Hang in there!

Enjoy the long weekend. You've earned it!

Tamara C. Willis, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Piece of the Puzzle



Please join me in recognizing our speech and language pathologists and physical education teachers, Nicole Schwartz (SL/AC), Trista Rhodes (SL/AC), Michael Lupia (SL/AC), Drew Locust (MS) and Susan Kelly (MS). This year the nursing department implemented a plan to increase the efficiency of mandated health screenings while decreasing the disruptions to the educational process. Through collaboration with these teams, the nurses were able to perform most of the hearing screenings at SL/AC in one day and all of the height and weight measurements for students in both buildings. Thank you for providing a safe and supportive learning environment for our students!