

Weaver Middle School

Professional Development - Friday Focus

2016/2017

Friday Focus - One of the constant struggles we each face throughout the week is battling the enemy of time. There is never enough of it and we always have "stuff" that gets put on the back burner. With that in mind, Sam and I would like to offer a "Friday Focus". What is that? Simply, we will designate four Fridays each semester in which we will offer an open discussion about topics that we would love to have more time to discuss but there is never enough time. Sam and I will designate a location in the Media Center and you just bring yourself and whatever you may be thinking in regards to the Friday Focus topic. Each Monday **we** will post "5 Things to Think About" so we can have a starting point to the conversations.

Come as your schedule permits. We will be there all day, each period. The four Fridays for first semester are:

- ~~**September 16th - Revisiting Rethinking Homework**~~ - Since Sam shared her perspective on this during back-to-school PD, have you had time to think about how you use HW? Come share strategies, ideas and input.
- **September 30th - Bridging the Gap with Parents** - Keeping middle school parents engaged in their child's learning has fallen on Home Access. How can we keep our connections personal in this digital era? How can we leverage the community to be a regular part of the process of teaching and learning.
- **November 4th - Grading Practices** - How is your department, or you, been thinking about your philosophy when it comes to grading? Are you truly standards based? Let's grow together when it comes to measuring the knowledge of our students.
- **December 9th - The Power of Being Connected** - Leveraging the use of social media to engage with our students, parents and community to tell our story is essential. In addition, to grow as educators ourselves we must expand our four walls when it comes to professional development. HCSD has so much to offer but what else is out there that we have time to invest in?

HW Prompts:

1. Since Sam shared her presentation on HW during our back-to-school PD, what has resonated with you when it come to your belief in HW?
2. Hattie's research is clear. Homework has little to no effect on student achievement. Are you buying this?

3. Rethinking HW or banning HW. What is your direction? If it is rethinking, share some specific examples of the old way and the new way.
4. Respond to this statement: Homework prepares students for their future.
5. Think through how you have personalized your students HW experience. Or, if you are still assigning the same task to all of your students, come with an open mind of what that change could look like.
6. Finally, with this global shift in homework, how do we work through generations of past practice?

Communication Prompts:

Dear Staff,

We will once again host Friday Focus in the media center this week. Please stop by as you can to discuss parent involvement and communication. As we are one month away from Parent-Teacher conferences, this topic is timely and critical to our students' success. The following questions will help guide our discussion:

- In what ways do you intentionally connect with parents to share daily and/or weekly events in your classroom?
- In the staff feedback survey we hear that we do not have enough parent involvement. What does parent involvement look like to you at our school?
- While Home Access is a great communication tool, it does not tell the whole picture of a child's day at school. How do we ensure that parents have an accurate reflection of their students' academic and behavioral growth?
- Parent Communication 101: How do we refine our communication skills with our parents?