

Cory-Rawson Staff:

As we push forward through our already fast-paced and hectic school year our District Leadership Team has assembled an informational letter and packet for all staff members in response to the changes that we are working through as part of our school improvement plan. We fully realize that much is being asked of all staff members as we work to meet Race-to-the-Top goals, Ohio Improvement Goals, State requirements, parent expectations, and our own professional goals. Already this year we have seen an unprecedented amount of professional development aimed at meeting several of these goals with the underlying objective of improving student learning. In this time we have learned that two things remain constants throughout our change process – 1) The definition of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) has changed (more about this later) and 2) The staff has been asked to pursue various professional development goals, often leading to goal confusion and a feeling of being overwhelmed. In order to synthesize much of this information into a simpler, more understandable format our DLT team met to discuss and revise our school’s current improvement plans and put together a comprehensive document. This document is designed to improve comprehension and ease the stress of the necessary initiatives we must pursue in order to provide an improved educational experience and environment for all staff and students.

The expectations of our school board, community, and parents have changed. The definition of education is no longer limited to teaching to a class of “regular” students while students who need intervention are served in different classrooms. No longer can we say that we taught the material and it’s the student’s responsibility to learn it (and if they don’t, then it’s solely their responsibility to seek help). The expectation that we must have is that **all teachers are accountable for all students’ learning.** We have the tools and resources before us to facilitate an education unlike any before. Thus, the basis of all of our professional development for the next few years is our Response to Intervention Training. RTI provides us with a structure that will allow us to positively impact all students’ educational lives. If we do not accept the culture that places that responsibility squarely with us then we will have not given our best effort to our students.

While we must change our mindset, we do not necessarily need to “throw the baby out with the bath water”; that is to say we fully realize that our teachers are already doing many great things. We also realize you may already be doing pieces of the professional development that we are working to implement. The frustration that we sense from many staff members is that we are constantly bombarded by legislative efforts that do not take into account the individual character and needs of each community. We’re charged with abiding by the laws, while wrestling with the notion that only some of them allow us to truly improve the educational experience for our students. We must glean what we can from these initiatives and work to develop an excellent educational structure at Cory-Rawson Schools. We must be proactive in our planning and demonstrate a high degree of effectiveness in educating our youngsters.

What you have before you is a revised and simplified plan that details the tools and resources to improve the education you provide each and every day to our students. While we have several simultaneous initiatives, it is imperative that you understand them as integrally linked to each other as part of a structured plan with one common goal – to improve student learning. We hope that by revising and simplifying our school improvement plan you will be better able to see how each piece is linked and how they are integral to the success of our improvement plan. We also hope that after reviewing these documents you will communicate with your Building Leadership Team, District Leadership Team, and Supervisors in order to gain a more thorough understanding of our goals. Without a doubt, our plan is not solely a “prescribed science”; rather, it relies on the “artists” who will analyze and implement its pieces in the most effective way in order to provide a top-tier educational environment for our students.

Sincerely,

Cory-Rawson District Leadership Team Members