Needs Assessment Proposal

Intervention 101

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High stakes state standardized testing has put a great deal of pressure on school districts, teachers, and students. What do schools do when some of their students don’t perform at the levels that are set by the state? At Chester Area school we have students that perform below the proficient levels set by the state and we need a way to improve the student’s skills in the areas of reading and math. We also have students that are at the proficient level but are close to dropping below that proficient level, it would be important to intervene on these students as well to build skills so these students don’t fall below that set proficient level. South Dakota elementary students in grades third through fifth are tested over state standards every year in the areas of reading and math. After the students have taken these standards based tests they are graded and grouped based upon their performance. These groups are advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic. To meet annual yearly progress schools need to have students in the proficient or advanced categories. In order to get these students in the advanced or proficient levels it requires a great deal of involvement from parents. Teachers work hard to teach their students the necessary standards so that students can perform well on these tests, the students below the proficient levels are going to have to work hard with the extra help of teachers to build the missing or gapped skills. At Chester Area we have a large population of open enrolled students, for being a small school these open enrolled students have helped our enrollment numbers in turn helping our state funding. Any time a student enrolls into a new school there is a gap from the scope and sequence that needs to be taught and those skills mastered so students can perform well on these standardized tests. The Chester Area elementary school is in need of an intervention program that helps students build skills in the area of reading and math so they can perform at advanced or proficient levels on the state’s standardized tests.

What did our 2011 data show us and why would we want to start another program that would take teacher time and planning? In our elementary grades three through five we had 88% of our students that were proficient or advanced in the areas of math. Out of the students tested in reading our third through fifth graders had an advanced or proficient percentage of 94%. In comparison to other schools in the state’s report we did very well but we are missing kids in both areas and have students that were proficient but within a couple of questions from being basic. With this data we recognize that we have a need to help the students that have score basic, below basic, and that have scored on the “bubble” of proficient going to basic levels.

The state of South Dakota requires for funding and adequate standards purposes for students to be in the advanced or proficient areas for reading and math, every year Chester Area elementary school have students that do fall below those levels. As an elementary school we have to have a way to reach those students and build their skills in both reading and math. So we are going to implement an Intervention 101 program. This will be a program that goes above and beyond school hours and other programs that a child may be in.

There will be a variety of different students that will be able to utilize this program. Students that are under the proficient range in the state testing areas of reading and/or math will be recommended for this program. With scores from the previous year teachers will be able to look at those students that were in the basic or below basic range in either or both areas and recommend them for this program. If we have students under the testing age (Kindergarten through 2) that are testing at lower than grade levels on the STAR reading or math test or in SuccessMaker they would also be able to take advantage of this new program. If a teacher notices a student that is having trouble on a particular concept or something that is being taught in class, that teacher would be able to recommend that student for some extra help in that new area. With the help from our reading specialist and Title teachers we could also help students that have scored “at risk” or “strategic” on the Dibels reading tests. The STAR tests, SuccessMaker, and Dibels can also be used for guidelines when referring an older students for the intervention program as well. These students will be able to work on assigned areas and specific skills in both reading and math so that they can work at grade level in specific standards.

Parents will also have an important role in this Intervention 101 program and to the progress of their students as they work towards grade level. In the past we have had parents that have declined some extra school services. For the intervention 101 the parents will have to give permission for their students to be a part of this program. Unlike others they won’t necessarily have the option of not having their student in the program. We will have options on the intervention referral sheet that allows them to select a time they can have their student at the program or to have a meeting with the classroom teacher prior to attending this program. Because being at a proficient or advanced level in reading and math for the standardized Dakota Step test is vital for the school and the students themselves we find it very important that the students that are in need extra assistance be involved in this program. If the parent has concerns or problems with possibly getting their child to or picking their student up from the intervention program they will have the option of meeting with the teacher to figure out ways to make it happen. If the student needs to be involved in the program for what they teacher thinks is three times a week and the parent can make transportation for only one, the teacher and the parent can work on some ways to help the student at home.

The teacher will be a vital part of this program, like many things in a school environment the knowledge, ability, and experience that a teacher has plays an important role in the success of students and schools. The teachers will be responsible for evaluating data at the beginning of the year from the previous year’s Dakota Step test. They will start by looking at the students that have tested and are in the below basic and basic levels in the tested areas of reading and math, they will make a list of those students. With this list they will determine the students that will be referred to come to intervention. They will determine what area the student needs to attend intervention for reading or math. When evaluating the data of these below basic and basic students in both content areas the teacher will also look at how the student performed on each standard. If the student has a set area they do really well in the student will not need to attend for that area, on the other hand if a student has a specific area they did poorly on to bring them down to one of these classifications the teacher will address those standards in the intervention plan. By doing this the teacher will be able to address specific skills that the student will work on. After having this list of students the teachers will next dive into the proficient groups in the areas of math and reading, if there are students that are proficient but made it into the groups by a slim number the teachers will get these students onto a list to be referred? Based on the student being proficient there are probably areas of specific need and the teacher can do the same for this students as others that struggled on a certain standard, they can individualize the intervention program to fit the students needs. The state standardized Dakota Step test can give us specific data information about our individual students and allow us to come up with a plan to get all students to proficient or advanced levels in reading in math by individualizing an intervention plan that allows small groups to work on specific skills.

It is important that a school and teachers can go back to previous year’s data to look at the performance of students and to go back and build the skills from the previous year so that students have the scaffolding to continue having success in the next grade. Can this program help students that are having problems with the next year’s content and course work? The teachers will also be responsible for follow their students and giving attention to students that are falling behind of just not getting the new concepts and give them required assistance through this program. If a student is falling behind or need specific attention the teacher can refer the student on these basis as well to get them intervention that is needed so the student can continue to progress. The teacher however will not have the data from the previous Dakota Step test for the referral process, but instead can use data from the STAR reading and math tests as well as SuccessMaker reading and math. If a student shows lower than grade level work on these tests the teacher can refer the student using these forms of assessment. The teacher can also use the Dibels reading assessment for student referral. Along with these three pieces of assessment teacher will also have the ability to use daily work. If a student is having a difficult time catching onto a concept and the daily work reflects that the teacher will be able to use that for the referral process. Dakota Step, STAR testing, SuccessMaker, and daily work are all factors teachers can use to get students additional help through this intervention program.

What types of skills rebuilding and things will the student be doing? Some students will need more extensive intervention then others; in that case they might need additional times to meet each week and possibly both reading and math intervention. In the areas of reading students might need skill building in fluency, comprehension, or non-fiction fact recall. Student will be able to work on any other individualized skills. Students that need help in math might need work on facts, number sense, or a particular concept and with this intervention program they will get the help needed to rebuild or develop skills that were missing. This program will allow for teachers to address specific needs for students in the content area of math and reading.

At Chester Area School we have a large number of open enrolled students, these open enrolled students have made many things possible and have kept our funding and budgetary needs possible, they have also acquired 47% of our basic students in reading and math based on 2011 Dakota Step scores. This program will ensure that these students that are open enrolling into our districts be held as accountable as the students that live in the district. It will also show to the parents that open enroll their children into our district the priority that we place on education. Another aspect that this program will offer for our open enrolled students is the opportunity to close gaps in curriculum that may be there because of leaving one district for another. Many times when students come into the district we will be working on concepts they are unaware of or completely new to them, this intervention program will allow teachers to work specifically on this missing concepts to help student growth. This program is something that open-enrolled students will be able to utilize to fill in missing concepts during a school move or to build skills. At no point in this program be solely for open-enrolled students or be pointed out that that was a reason for coming up with this program, the open-enrolled population is vitally important for the success and funding of our school.

Like any need that a school has, people involved assess the situation and come up with a possible resolution to the problem, after it is finished people involved want to know did it work. We will be able to analyze the Dakota Step scores from the following year in the summer of 2012. After keeping an attendance record of students that attended our intervention program we will be able to follow those students to see how they score the end year. We will also be able to test the students on STAR reading and math to see if there scores increase and at what rate they increased. Along with STAR tests we will be able to do the same analysis of data in SuccessMaker. Having the ability to record and track students with these assessments, we can evaluate the effectiveness of our intervention program.

In conclusion, Chester Area Elementary School has a need to improve and reach students that are at the basic or below basic levels on Dakota Step and students that are missing content gaps in our curriculum. The intervention program will be an additional opportunity to get additional help to these students. Teachers will be required to identify the students that need assistance and set up a plan for them to get assistance during this intervention time period. Our assessment of results will come down to evaluating student assessment progress.