

Thursday, June 18, 2009

Lean Thinking at Reeths-Puffer School District

When administrators from the Reeths-Puffer School District in Muskegon, Michigan attended a Lean Thinking for Schools workshop in Washtenaw County, it wasn't long before they realized the processes they were learning would easily fit in with school practices.

"We were very enthusiastic about it. A lot of the practices were an extension of the types of thinking we were already implementing," said Stephen Cousins, superintendent of schools. "For example, we were working with a TPA, or Target-Practice-Assessment, model to determine what we needed to change and assess our progress. The Lean thinking 'think-do-check-act' model takes this process and goes several steps further."

Following the Washtenaw workshop, Cousins scheduled a more in-depth Lean thinking seminar for 10 of the district's administrators this fall.

"The Pawley model is much more detailed and articulate than the TPA model we were using. The fall workshop provided a more specific system of improvement that is very intentional and will be an extremely strong tool for us to meet our goals," he said.

Cousins said since the workshop in March, the 10 administrators have identified projects they will research and implement. The district's plan is for all 22 of the system's administrators to complete the in-depth workshop within two years.

"Lean thinking is a process that embeds value-added leadership into all of the work we do," Cousins said. "It's in every behavior we review, whether it is involved in running the schools or classroom instruction. And the bottom line at this district is that everything we do is directed toward student learning – our number one priority."

Lean Thinking for Schools seminars are available to school systems across the state. For information on upcoming sessions, visit www.oakland.edu/leanschools.

SUMMARY

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Article Start Date: Thursday, December 18, 2008