

Monday, August 11, 2008

First Lean Thinking for Schools workshop hosted at Washtenaw ISD

Running a school today takes much more than reading, writing and arithmetic. It takes the ability to successfully balance limited financial resources with greater demands for high quality student results. Lean thinking can help.

"Everyone is facing a budget crunch, even schools," said Shannon Flumerfelt, assistant professor/Educational Leadership at OU's School of Education and Human Services. "Lean thinking is not only a dynamic resource for global businesses and corporations to use for greater effectiveness, it is an empowering principle that can help schools, non-profits and service organizations reach their full potential, even in challenging financial times."

Lean thinking principles were shared with school administrators from systems across the state at the first Lean Thinking for Schools two-day workshop, held at the Washtenaw Intermediate School District (ISD) in Ann Arbor. Follow up workshops are already being planned in several districts.

"School administrators have a clear vision of what they want to accomplish, but the challenge lies in trying to pull the many elements together effectively and efficiently to accomplish these goals," Flumerfelt said. "Lean thinking is re-thinking what you do in order to create a more effective model."

Flumerfelt stresses that Lean thinking does not necessarily mean cutting programs or jobs.

"One of the fundamental ideas in Lean principles is to set up labor as fixed costs, not as a variable," she said. "Lean thinking is not targeting the easy picks, such as staff cutbacks or removing music or art programs, as cutting these would take away value from the school. Lean thinking is analyzing what you are doing and achieving the best practices overall."

The Lean philosophy focuses on developing excellence by identifying what is of highest value to stakeholders and customers, and then allocating resources to achieve these goals while eliminating waste, she said.

Upcoming Lean Thinking for Schools Seminar dates

Details are available at www.oakland.edu/leanschools

Macomb Intermediate School District
September 23 OR October 14, 2008
8am-12pm
44001 Garfield Rd
Clinton Township, MI 48038
(586) 228-2200

Oakland Intermediate School District
October 17, 2008
8am-12pm
2111 Pontiac Lake Rd
Waterford, MI 48328
(248) 209-2000

For more information on upcoming Lean Thinking for Schools seminars, see sidebar or visit www.oakland.edu/leanschools.

SUMMARY

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Lean Thinking for Schools Seminars

The Oakland University Pawley Lean Institute promotes the proven solutions of Lean through its Lean Thinking for Schools program. At Lean Thinking for Schools seminars, participants:

- Obtain an overview of Lean principles and applications to education
- Learn to study their schools in new ways to create value for all stakeholders through innovation, streamlining processes, and eliminating waste
- Engage in Lean process improvement concepts based on district/institutional goals
- Develop ways to create and sustain meaningful collaboration and engagement from the professional school community
- Discover methods to increase employee performance and satisfaction

The Lean Thinking for Schools program can assist any school official interested in introducing a highly-effective, time-proven business process to their school or district. Superintendents, school administrators, change leaders, and teacher leaders can all benefit from the program.

To learn more about how Lean Thinking for Schools can help you to develop the full capacity of your school, school district or intermediate school district, contact:

Pawley Lean Institute
Oakland University
(586) 263-6242
www.oakland.edu/leanschools



The Pawley Lean Institute hosted its first Lean Thinking for Schools workshop this spring in conjunction with the Washtenaw Intermediate School District (ISD). School systems from the across the state participated, with many scheduling follow up workshops for system administrators.