

Think Spring!

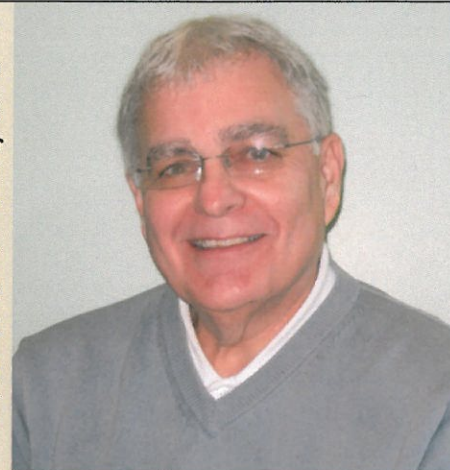


System Change Project Update

On February 8th, teacher leaders and administrators from Bloomfield Hills, Grosse Pointe, and Wayne-Westland school districts refined plans for their district improvement projects. Pictured below, this session was led by Kaarin Averill (left) and Jenifer Michos (right).



This issue of the Galileo Institute *TeacherLeader* is dedicated to the memory of our dear friend and colleague, **Dr. Tom Tattan**. On Jan. 30, 2011, Tom passed away after fighting a courageous battle with cancer. Tom was an OU Assistant Professor in the



Department of Educational Leadership, retired Superintendent of the Waterford School District, and a strong advocate for the development of teacher leaders. His upbeat attitude, passion for education, and very quick sense of humor will be greatly missed.

My Style of Teacher Leadership

Candy Collins, Math Intervention Specialist Farmington Public Schools

Since learning about the International Baccalaureate Program (www.ibo.org) a few years ago, I have become very passionate about bringing this high quality, internationally-minded education program into Farmington Public Schools (FPS). When reflecting back on my experience in doing just that, I realized it was only through my participation in the Galileo Leadership Academy and embracing Stephen Covey's 7 Habits (including his newest 8th habit) that led me to my success. I will be forever grateful for the gift I was given, and am so excited for other teacher leader's to experience these same opportunities. Here is a snapshot of my reflections on my IB journey utilizing Covey's Habits:



Pictured (l to r): Dr. Polly Bachrouche (IB DP Coordinator at Harrison), Candy Collins, and Dr. Catherine Cost (asst. supt. of instructional services).

Habit 1 – Be Proactive – Out of 80 interested applicants, I was selected as 1 of 32 people to serve on the FPS IB committee. The charge of the committee was to develop and bring forth a recommendation to the Board of Education and the superintendent on Nov. 2, 2010. A leadership opportunity arose when I set up a WIKI for our committee, trained them on how to use this, and was ultimately responsible for capturing the minutes each week from all sub-committees to post on our district website. It was the first time the district had used a WIKI for an open-forum means of communication that included community members.

Habit 2 – Begin with the End in Mind – The "end" in this case, was ensuring that the recommendations we collectively brought forth were of the highest quality. This was not going to be the easiest of tasks as our timeline was quite narrow, so everything we did had an exact purpose. We would not have been as successful as we were had it not been for the leadership of our assistant superintendent, Dr. Cost, who served as chair of the committee. Her guidance, experience and ability to keep the group focused on the "charge" were an integral part of our work. (continued on back side)

My Style of Teacher Leadership – Candy Collins, Farmington Public Schools (continued from front)

Habit 3 – Put First Things First – It was time to sort out the “big rocks” from the “little rocks”. The committee followed this habit with the creation of our Guiding Principles. Our ultimate list of principles was narrowed to nine, and served as our vision as the process ensued.

Habit 4 – Think Win-Win – In September, teachers received an email regarding a job posting. The district was seeking an applicant to fulfill the Diploma Program Coordinator role. Oh my gosh, could this possibly get any better? This was my dream job, and what I had been looking forward to even before the formation of this committee. It could have been a great time for a pity-party when I got the call from HR indicating I was not selected, but when I found out who did receive the position I was ecstatic. Dr. Polly Bachrouche, a counselor at North Farmington High School was chosen, and this was the start of my “win-win” experience. Dr. Bachrouche, who was also serving on the district IB committee was the right person for the job. She has been amazing, and has turned me into her own little Girl Scout Cookie; a “tag-along”. Dr. Bachrouche has included me in virtually everything her new job entails; the daunting task of filling out “Application A”, hosting parent/student information sessions, attending IB coordinator workshops, and copies me on all emails pertaining to the program. Not only has she become a great mentor, she has become an even better friend.

Habit 5 – Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood – Maybe one of the hardest habits to master. This was a time to be an active listener within the committee and learn to see through other’s perspectives. Once I was able to do this, it became much easier to share my thoughts/ideas in a way that was productive.

Habit 6 – Synergize – With the committee wrapping up its recommendations, it was time to set the framework for how we would present our plans to the Board of Education. Five members of the committee were selected to present the recommendations and I was fortunate to be one of them. We had to work creatively and cooperatively to capture the passion, deep thinking and vision of the committee. On November 2, 2010 we made our presentation and it could not have gone any better. Two weeks later, the Board approved each and every one of our recommendations.

Habit 7 – Sharpen the Saw – Even though I had this fantastic opportunity to serve on this committee (and saw the process through until the very end), I still could not let my passion for what the IB offers drift away. In December, I went to Cincinnati to become Category 1 certified in MYP mathematics.

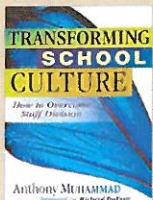
Habit 8 – From Effectiveness to Greatness – This experience has left me feeling empowered and confident in my ability as a teacher-leader. I look forward to new opportunities that will lead FPS to achieve even more great things in the future.



BOOK TALK with Kay Cornell, Education Consultant

TRANSFORMING SCHOOL CULTURE: HOW TO OVERCOME STAFF DIVISION, Anthony Muhammad, Solution Tree, 2009

This little book is a gem, a great explanation of staff division issues and ways to bring people together. He divides teachers into Believers, Tweeners, Survivors and Fundamentalists. What’s unique about Muhammad’s book, is that he provides background into what causes people to fall into these groups. In particular, he divides Fundamentalists into 4 sub-groups--each of whom has their own needs that need to be met in order for them to become productive team members. This book would be a great book study for administrators!



QUESTIONS?

Contact:

Dr. C. Robert Maxfield, Institute Director
Kay Cornell, Program Coordinator
Brad Parks, Graduate Assistant

maxfiel2@oakland.edu
cornell@oakland.edu
bjparks@oakland.edu

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