

Tool Box Activities

Problem-Based Theme Four

These activities deal with daily management and organizational expectations of districts/buildings. The activities are aligned with each ISSL Standard and with the Problem-Based Theme.

- Study various consensus-building strategies with your cohort group. Practice these strategies with staff or in your classroom. Journal most effective strategies.
- With your cohort group, analyze various communications currently used in each of your schools: i.e. grade reports, newsletters, letters to parents regarding low grades, expulsion, tardies, etc. Develop a communication plan that all staff can use, with sample letters, phrases, etc. that should accompany various difficult and congratulatory situations.
- With your cohort group, study the effectiveness of giving all students school letters or awards. Ask students how they feel about all students receiving awards and which awards “count.” Journal your findings.
- With your cohort group, discuss the financial, material, and human resources that are overlooked. Make a list of possible resources your school should use, but is not.
- Study the School Administrators Handbook for School Board Members. With cohort group, discuss how local board receives information and requests information. Journal your list of what you feel is the most effective and least effective strategies used by board members.
- Determine if your school is “invitational” to parents. With your cohort group, devise a simple survey that each member can use at parent conferences. Ask parents to fill out a “mini” survey and leave it in a box that is marked confidential. Ask parents where the school is invitational and where it is not; how they feel about talking to the principal or staff about concerns; and what is needed to feel more comfortable.
- With cohort group, make a list of low-cost or no-cost solutions to support students that community members can contribute in terms of time or resources so that all parents and community members can partner with the school, without asking for large sums or any sums of money.
- With your cohort group, research ways students in Iowa and in the nation are currently contributing to their communities. Make a list of ten possibilities you feel may meet your school and student needs, and share with staff members.
- Many meetings use “ground rules” to help all persons feel safe, to ensure all persons are heard and can participate, and to guide appropriate behaviors. Discuss with your Cohort group a list of ground rules you think do not prohibit good conversation or turn off participants. Form a list of rules you believe are the most necessary. Use the list with your own class during a discussion or ask staff to use at a building meeting. Journal what you learned.
- Working with your Cohort group, generate a dialogue about what collaboration looks like, feels like, acts like, and accomplishes. Arrive at consensus on a clear definition, including all of the components. Journal.