

Honeywell Update- November 4, 2016

Good evening Highland Park. The Whole Child approach I talked about two weeks ago is Highland Park's effort, as defined by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, to transition from a focus on narrowly defined academic achievement to one that promotes the long-term development and success of all children. We can foster kids' personal well-being without sacrificing rigorous academic standards and improvement of the quality of instruction.

We've taken another step toward realizing the Whole Child strategic plan goal (that's Goal G1.1.). A team of teachers and leaders is researching a strategy that promotes positive school community relationships called restorative practices. Thanks to input from Dr. Anne Gregory, respected social-emotional learning, discipline equity and restorative practice expert at Rutgers, our team has zeroed in on two restorative practice models that may be a good fit for Highland Park.

What are the restorative practices? Instead of using punishments and rewards to influence the way students behave, restorative approaches address the underlying reasons for students' hurtful behavior and nurture their intrinsic desire to treat others with care and respect. The restorative practice approach helps the entire school community because it fosters positive relationships among students, school personnel, and parents.

What does a restorative practice approach look like in a school? Some schools that have adopted this strategy build 30-minute sessions into the school day called "advisory periods" during which time kids and adults take a step back from their work and engage in activities and discussions that build personal capacity.

The middle school will pilot the restorative practice model that is eventually identified to be the best fit for our community. Teams from Irving, Bartle and the high school will monitor progress through the school year and plan for potential implementation in 2017-2018.

You can learn more about the two models we're researching by going to the following website: www.morningsidecenter.org and www.iirp.edu.

My next Honeywell will focus on the strategic plan goal dedicated to improving instruction and assessment. Wishing you well; speak with you soon.

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