

Honeywell Update- December 7, 2016

Good evening Highland Park. You are aware of efforts to improve district curricula since I talked about the subject in my pre-Thanksgiving Honeywell to the community. Making sure our kids receive a continuous, carefully planned instructional program that is codified by our curricula is one of three areas the school district needs to improve. The other two areas of immediate focus are high quality instruction that fully engages students and an expectation that all school personnel work to be the world class educators I expect them to be (mediocrity is not acceptable). I'll talk more about how we're holding everyone accountable for a high level of professionalism in my next Honeywell.

I walk into classrooms every day and look for the same thing- students in any grade and in any subject area cognitively engaged in a learning experience. Engagement is kids talking to each other about something the teacher presented, making a presentation to show off what they learned, intently watching a teacher describe some fascinating idea making like it was the greatest thing they ever heard. I expect to see all of our students being attentive, curious, interested, optimistic, and passionate about learning when I walk into their classrooms.

The most effective way to ensure this vision for learning is realized is to expect that teachers will implement high impact, high engagement lessons. The leadership team is doing this in at least three ways: 1. Applying the teacher evaluation process rigorously and giving teachers direct feedback about their work after formal observations take place. 2. Informally observing teachers (i.e. walkthroughs) and following up with conversations about student-centered instruction. 3. Facilitating meaningful professional development experiences after school and during the four days scheduled for workshops.

Our teacher workshop "menu" now includes instructional strategies such as project based learning and game based learning. The evaluation framework the leadership team uses to give teachers feedback has been condensed into specific areas that focus on student engagement, and plans are in place to begin more formal instructional rounds that will foster rich conversations among supervisors, principals, and teachers about kids' responsiveness to classroom lessons.

I'll flesh out details about how the leadership team has put certain accountability measures in place to maintain the highest level of professionalism among our school support and certificated staff when I broadcast my December 21 Honeywell.

Have a good night.