



New York State  
"Essential Elements:  
School to Watch"



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Statewide Network of  
Middle Level Support  
Schools

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### Tiered Professional Development (TPD)

During this past year, Dr. Jamila Blake, Professor at Texas A & M University; Dr. Mary Barringer, Clinical Psychologist; and I began researching the conceptual framework around a professional development strategy called Tiered Professional Development (Turning the Tide on School Discipline: Building Teacher Capacity to Eliminate Discipline Disparities, 2016, in progress). The strategy is analogous to multi-level support systems (MLSS) for students of which Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) and Response to Intervention (Rtl) are a part. PBIS and Rtl are contained within the larger category of MLSS and are the most popular in schools to deal with student behavior and the instructional needs of students in the classroom, respectively. When following the same rationale for using MLSS, it became clear that teachers and administrators can also benefit from MLSS. The same levels apply where Tier 1 TPD addresses the professional needs of all teachers with Tiers 2 and 3 being more specific to the needs of small groups and individual teachers. While research in TPD specific to discipline and classroom climate is scant or relatively non-existent, it does show great promise for meeting the specific individual needs of professionals across entire organizations.

Tier 1 TPD is most commonly used in schools and districts where everyone receives the same training. The objectives of the district is the compass for the direction Tier 1 TPD will take over time. In many cases Tier 1 TPD will address the needs of stakeholders across an entire organization; but, schools can also apply the principles of TPD at the school level. Through observations, evaluations, surveys, and conversations, administrators assess their schools and design specialized training to satisfy the needs of their faculty, staff and students. While Tier 1 TPD addresses the needs of stakeholders across the school or district, Tier 2 and 3 are more specialized and targeted to groups of people and individuals. The training is more intensive and unique to the special circumstances of each teacher. The training can address many issues ranging from discipline in the classroom to the instructional needs used to teach children identified with any one of a number of handicapping conditions.

This school year faculty, staff and administration began engaging in Tier 1 professional development with the specific goal of improving teacher skill in fostering more proactive classroom and school atmospheres. More specifically, the professional development involves "book talks" around specific themes that the District and school are supporting and promoting. I am very pleased that teachers, teaching assistants and administrators have embraced this professional development and began incorporating one or more of the strategies in their classrooms to effect positive change. At Van Wyck, we are never satisfied with the status quo and use the Schools to Watch and NYS Essential Elements of Middle Level Education frameworks as feedback loops for continuous school improvement.

On behalf of our faculty, staff and administration, I wish you a Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Steven H. Shuchat, Ed.D  
Principal, Van Wyck Junior High School  
(Home of the Mighty Griffins)  
Follow us on twitter at: #GriffinPride@GriffinPride2

*"Van Wyck Junior High School's faculty, staff and administration, in partnership with our parents, students, and community, will provide a safe and orderly learning environment that supports the academic, intellectual, personal, and social development of children, while maintaining rigorous standards and embracing curricula that prepares our students for college and careers."*

**Griffin Pride**



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