

## **Mesa Receives Accreditation Site Review Report**

For two days in late January of this year, Mesa hosted a team of seven education professionals. They were here to perform a school site review—this occurs every five years as a part of the State of Colorado school accreditation process. The team observed the school and talked with students, teachers, and parents.

In addition to a general review of the school, the team reports on the progress of the school in achieving its School Improvement Goals. At Mesa, our School Improvement Plan has three primary goals: 1) Achievement: To improve overall student writing performance 2) Equity: To continue improvement of the overall academic performance of special needs students 3) Climate: To continue to improve student climate (fewer incidents of bullying, students feeling safe).

For each goal area, the site review team prepared a long list of commendations and constructive questions to ponder. The Mesa School Improvement Team (parents and teachers) picked some highlights to share with you.

### **What the Team Reports About Student Achievement**

#### **Successes:**

- *Students are engaged. They want to be here. They love learning and they are not afraid to self advocate because their inquiry is strongly supported by teachers.*
- *Teachers care deeply about students and are flexible in their thinking if it means the student will grow in their understanding of a concept.*
- *The staff is very proud of the culture of academic excellence prevalent at Mesa and the staff is deeply committed to developing the artistic side of students as well.*
- *Students at Mesa believe they can and will succeed. Students feel safe and confident sharing their work.*

#### **Questions to Ponder:**

- *How do students know when their work is good enough? (do you provide enough exemplars of proficient work?)*
- *How do you facilitate more articulation between teachers on how they structure and manage writers' workshop? Allow teachers the opportunity to observe each other's workshops and conduct peer observations. . . Teachers also need to discuss how they confer with students.*
- *Consider having teachers go through the Summer Colorado Writing Project so they can experience a writers' workshop from a writer's perspective.*

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## What the Team Reports About Equity in Achievement

### **Successes:**

- *Teachers, administrators, and staff foster strong relationships with students that build trust and respect with students and families.*
- *Students know what's expected of them and work well in groups.*
- *Student engagement and participation is high.*

### **Questions to Ponder:**

- *How can you leverage your students' engagement to involve them in their learning goals?*
- *Do classroom teachers have built in to spend time with their highest needs students in addition to the interventionists?*

## What the Team Reports About Student Climate

### **Successes:**

- *Research-based practice is intentional and is being implemented building wide\*\**
- *Mesa staff embraces parent volunteers and the vital role they play in students' lives. Parents feel that their participation is welcomed and important.*
- *Overall students are excited about and seem to understand the purpose of "caught being good" which will transfer into excitement about following the expectations on the PBS matrix.\*\**

### **Questions to Ponder:**

- *As a staff, you have developed your P.B.S. plan. What are your next steps in this process?\*\*\**
- *"Caught being good" cards are effective—how do you build in norms around their use?*
- *How will you successfully transform your Mustang Code of Conduct into the language of P.B.S?\*\*\**
- *How do you track office referrals as part of your overall climate data—how are they documented and how are teachers communicated with?\*\*\**

## Thoughts From Josh

There are many other "points to ponder" in the report that will inform our work in professional development in the coming year. Many of the points are likely to become our strategies for our next school improvement plan.

\*\*The asterisks in the student climate section are all related to Mesa's plan to implement a school-wide Positive Behavior Support System, officially beginning in August of 2009. There are many aspects to P.B.S. In the April edition of the Mesa Messenger, I will provide a greater explanation of P.B.S., and the positive impact it will bring to our school community.

**Go Mustangs!**