

Website Newsletter December, 2005

Wallace Grant Principals Crystal Mountain Retreat Success!

The retreat for principals was the first step of the project on data-based decision-making. It aims to help principals to know about leadership that works in school setting, understand how to use data to make appropriate decision and develop high impact strategies about curriculum, instruction and assessment, and finally improve students' performance. The retreat lasted for 3 days, from June 21 to 23, 2005. The activities on June 22 and 23 were the main parts of this retreat. On June 22, the theme of the retreat was *Balanced Leadership and What Works in Schools*. Dr. Cherie Lyons from McREL gave a presentation to principals. The activities on June 23 went on around the theme *Data-driven School Improvement*, including the presentation given by Dr. Deborah Wahlstrom and Mark Wahlstrom from Successline Inc.

What Wallace Principals are said about their training.

The first principals survey was administrated at the end of the retreat on June 22, which intended to investigate principals' feeling about the usefulness of the contents, quality of the presentation, and their comments on further step. A similar survey was administrated on June 23. The third survey was the overall assessment for the retreat. Three questionnaires were designed, which included both closed and opened questions. A 5-level scale, from "Poor" to "Excellent", was adopted for closed questions. 16 questionnaires were turned back for the first survey, and 14 for the second and third ones.

The following evaluation for the retreat session was based on the results of the three surveys. Correspondingly, the evaluation is made up with three parts: evaluation for June 22 and 23, and overall evaluation.

In order to investigate the efficiency of the retreat, the management team of the project conducted three surveys. The first survey was administered at the end of the retreat on June 22, 2005, which intended to investigate principals' feeling about then usefulness of the contents, quality of the presentation, and their comments on future training. A similar survey was administered June 23, 2005. The third survey was the overall assessment of the retreat. Three questionnaires were designed, which included both closed and opened questions. A 5 level scale, from "Poor" to "Excellent", was adopted for closed questions. 16 questionnaires were returned for the first survey, and 14 for the second and third surveys.

The following evaluation for the retreat session was based on the results of the three surveys. Correspondingly, the evaluation is made up with three parts: evaluation for June 22, 23, 2005 and overall evaluation.

Table 1: Principals' Evaluation for June 22, 2005

	Usefulness of content		Usefulness of content	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Average	0	0	1	6.3
Above Average	7	43.8	9	56.3
Excellent	9	56.3	6	37.5
Total	16	100.00	16	100.00
Mean	4,56	4.56	4.31	4.31

Table 2: Principals' Evaluation for June 23, 2005

	Usefulness of content Quality of presentation		Usefulness of content Quality of presentation	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Average	1	7.1		
Above Average	2	14.3	3	21.4
Excellent	12	85.7	10.0	71.4
Total	14	100.00	14	100.00
Mean	4.86	4.86	4.64	4.64

Table 3: Overall Evaluation of Retreat

	Average		Above Average		Excellent		Total		Mean
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Quality of Pre-retreat Communication	1	7.1	3	21.4	10	71.4	14	100.00	4.64
Quality of logistical support on site	1	7.1	4	28.6	9	64.3	14	100.00	4.57
Content of retreat			1	7.1	13	92.9	14	100.00	4.93
Presentation during retreat			4	28.6	10	71.4	14	100.00	4.71
*Opportunity for engaging discussion	2	14.3			11	78.6	13	92.9	4.69
*Quality of conference facilities					13	92.9	13	92.9	5.00
*Degree of meeting expectations			3	21.4	10	71.4	13	92.9	4.77
Possibility to use knowledge			3	21.4	11	78.6	14	100.00	4.79
Overall assessment of retreat			2	14.3	12	85.7	14	100.00	4.86

*Each of these items had one missing data.

Principals provide their opinions about strengths and weaknesses of the retreat in the survey. They thought the retreat provided them with very useful information on data-making decision-making. The conversation and discussion on the retreat was very good. They also favored the collaboration of university, district and schools. However they felt the time was limited. They also gained more detail about data for the next step.

Principals involved in the retreat were asked to reflect on the following on Thursday, June 23, 2005

Among what you have learned on "Data-driven School Improvement," what are the most useful for your work? ... which elicited the following responses:

- McREL website and its information. MI TRACKER updates
- Different elements of data available; pointer data
- Golden package
- Staff development strategies and tools

- The information of the consultants
- Use data to improve student learning
- Using the data to improve instruction
- The documents that focus on my school
- The analysis of individual student and how close they were to passing the assessment
- To use process data to determine whether there is an alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment
- Ability to make the data meaningful
- How to actually look at, interpret, and use the data
- McREL information; information from Successline Inc.

Among what you have learned on “Data-driven School Improvement,” what do you plan to put into practice?... which elicited the following responses:

- 21 responsibility and MI TRACKER
- Pertinent school data
- All of the question student achievement
- The MEAP/AYP questionnaire, charts of conversion to help staff understand services, how to impact student achievement through curriculum alignment / instruction strategies
- Using the golden package to improve student achievement
- Everything!
- Use of GLCE's on MEAP
- Use the documents, but need MORE time
- Share with staff the golden package and the short MEAP quiz (?)
- Using more process data to determine strategies to use to improve student achievement
- Looking at gap and see if it is related to curriculum or test taking skills.
- Working with leadership team to look at the data (differently- more comprehensively)
- Use the information from the proactive protocols