

FHS Focus Group Approval Form 2018-2019

Goal of Focus Groups: Collaborative effort to promote positive change at Festus High School.

Creation of Focus Groups

- Groups can continue from previous years
- Two people can create their own group but it must be approved by administration
- Once two people get approval for their Focus Group, other people may join

Initial members:

Main Points:

- Literacy & Reading Focus Group
 - Identify critical needs & affected areas:
 - We cannot distinguish between if our instructional practices are ineffective regarding grade level skills and standards OR if EOC & other scores are due to low reading / literacy levels
 - Affects student success in History, Business, Science & other courses where reading to know & do are critical components of course learning
 - Create a plan of action
 - Identifying what interventions are available at present in all buildings (across district)
 - Are these directly targeting reading skills, strategies for independence in reading or creating learned helplessness?
 - Identify students & categorize needs (disability vs lack of knowledge & experience)
 - STAR reports for both 6 & 8 grades to track progress & share report with ELA I instructors & freshman guidance
 - Obtain STAR licenses for target students to continue tracking for at least 2 years or until they are reading no more than 1 grade level behind.
 - What plans of action in place when students are 2 or more grade levels behind in reading?
 - At what point do we determine that a student is too far behind to move on (PREFERABLY before high school)?
 - Affect:
 - At best: in high school these students cannot keep up, spend too long completing assignments (hours of homework because the process of reading & re-reading / comprehending is impeded) & meeting

with teachers to recover grades or re-do assignments /formatives

- At worst: in high school these students fail courses & do not graduate on time, potential drop-out (at-risk); behavioral issues - ISS/OSS

- **Can a plan of action for incoming freshman be a required summer reading course for those who are 2 or more grade levels behind?**

- Strategies

- Identify students behind in reading: STAR, Readtheory.org, TABE
- Develop & propose a summer reading course for incoming freshman who are 2 or more grade levels behind in reading (Coming in at 6 or below)
 - May continue summer after Freshman year, moving into Sophomore year for those who need more time (still below 8th grade)
- Instructional practices **training** (more intensive) [PD]
 - For grade level reading instructors [earlier grades] **AND** core course instructors of reading intensive courses (ELA, History, Science, Foreign Language)
 - Read aloud to an adult for accountability purposes: assign school buddies
 - Students who fall behind may not have someone at home who reads well or who is simply available for accountability
 - To build relationships within the school community with these “at-risk” students as well as to assist them in progressing in reading, it is imperative they have a trusted adult “buddy” to whom to read aloud on a regular basis (weekly for 15-20 minutes) & with whom they can hold book discussions
- Identify & target the specific skill set requirements for each “change-level”
 - 2nd grade moves beyond decoding & sight reading into “What does it say?” identify: who did what when, where...Can you follow a basic plotline without the help of pictures?
 - 4th grade moves from “What does it say?” to “What does it mean?” text interpretation / infer / predict
 - At what point do students move to text integration / cross-connecting?
- Consider a STOP! At what point do we determine a student should NOT move forward in order to ensure success in high school?
 - The effect of being “held back” in the earlier grades is not as impactful as students NOT being held back then failing core courses, not graduating on time, & potentially dropping out. Additionally, these students affect EOC scores & other critical measures of teaching-learning in the district

- Course scheduling: focus on essential core courses, utilize electives for support
 - Struggling readers should not be doubling up in reading intensive courses that they did not pass
 - Should not be taking ELA I & II at the same time if reading level is at the core of the issue
- Course proposals / district proposal
 - Summer Reading Strategies & Support course for entering freshmen students who are 2 or more grade levels behind in reading
 - 2 Reasons this is ESSENTIAL:
 - Studies prove students fall further behind in reading level over the summer as they are not focused on reading
 - We can stop that drop in reading level over the summer AND potentially assist students in continued development & progression towards reading on grade level, specifically **before** they get to high school!
- Parent/Community involvement piece
 - The parental component of this plan is VITAL, but parents may lack the skills and knowledge to know just what to do or how to help their students
 - **Propose a “reading strategies” parent seminar**

Purpose/Goal:

Using STAR, Readtheory.org, TABE (or other reading assessment); we will identify, provide interventions for, and track the progress of incoming Freshman students who are 2 or more grade levels behind in reading in order to move them closer to GLE in Reading. Adequate yearly progress needs to be an increase of at least 1.5 GLEs per year. Optimal target goal is to have students reading on grade level, but 8th GLE is functional for life.

Vision 2020 Goal Alignment:

- I. Student Performance Objectives A & B
 - A. This course & plan proposal will specifically target students who may be “at-risk” of dropping out due to poor performance resulting from low reading abilities
 - B. This proposal will also serve to assist students who are not at “proficiency” due to lower reading abilities to move towards proficiency in reading intensive core courses
 1. With the addition of the Parent Seminar (see Goal IV), even proficient readers can benefit & move to the next level of mastery / advanced
- II. High Quality Staff Objective B
 - A. The professional development training component of our plan supports obj. B of this goal
- III. ...
- IV. Parent & Community Involvement Goal Objective B

- A. Design a parent Reading Strategies seminar to help parents understand brain research regarding learning to read & how they can best assist their students
 - 1. This seminar would be made available to ALL parents of students at every level, but strongly recommended to parents of struggling readers
 - a) Rationale - same reading strategies are applicable to reading at every level in all reading intensive courses

Meeting Notes:

9-26 Notes provided in link <https://goo.gl/dqyTXm>

10/31-Notes provided in link:<https://goo.gl/RVtcCR>

11/28-Notes in link: <https://goo.gl/xehxJx>

1/30-Parent Seminar plan

2/27 - Communicate/discuss scheduling (no doubling up in reading intensive courses)

3/27- Professional Development ideas? Workshops / training needed [areas?]

4/24- Final product/proposals