Creating and Sustaining Teacher Assistance Teams

Michael J. Boyle, Ph.D.
Center for Catholic School Effectiveness
School of Education. Loyola University Chicago

Terry Granger
Maternity BVM School
Bourbonnais, Illinois
What are the upcoming trends in Special Education that will impact Catholic Schools?
Outcomes

Be able to describe a process to support students that are struggling in school

Give two reasons why a school might consider creating a TAT
RtI

RtI is based on the following principles:

★ We can effectively teach all children
★ Intervene early
★ Use a multi-tiered approach
★ Use a Problem Solving Approach
Assessment by response to intervention:

★ Tier One: provide classroom support
★ Tier Two: provide more intensive support
★ Tier Three: Consider Special education
“When determining whether a child has a disability... a local educational agency shall not be required to take into consideration whether a child has severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability... a local educational agency may use a process that determine if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as part of the evaluation process.”
What is a TAT?

- A collaborative group of professionals who meet in an on-going process to support teachers as they support students.
Why Create a TAT?

- Creates the safety net for students outside the middle
- Creates a systematic forum for collaboration
- Creates a sense of support for teachers so that they don’t have to feel frustrated
- Creates a data-based system to collect quantitative information to document concerns
Benefits

- Helps create a paper trail on interventions so that we are not “re-creating” the wheel
- Helps parent understand the difficulties that their child might be experiencing
- Helps to provide a response to “RtI” approaches, enabling us to speak the same language
Framework for Problem Solving

- Identify Instructional Opportunity with data
- Brainstorm hypotheses
- Pick a strategy
- Implement and Monitor
Major Tasks of the Problem Solving Process

- **Decide**: Make major decisions after data collected
- **Delegate**: Who is going to do what
- **Manage**: Make sure that work gets done on time
- **Document**: To ensure Protection for all parties
Cycle of Inquiry Applied to Teams
Team Formation Tasks

• Establishes Norms
• Start to develop Cohesiveness
• Establish Purpose for being
Active Life of Teams

Tasks

• Focuses on Data collection
• Creates Interventions
• Revises strategies based on the data
Team Maintenance Tasks

- Nurtures Team Dynamics
- Holds each member accountable to norms
- Focuses on the purpose of the team
- Celebrates Successes
Pilot Project
Catholic School Mindset – Days gone by

• Dealing with “Disability” in the Catholic School
IDEA / RtI and Our Public School District

• Initial Relationship – fear of losing some or all of our services – tense relationship

• Leading up to our current relationship in which they take our paper work and staple it to theirs
Reasons why we chose to implement TAT

• Our growth
• Increased population of students with deficiencies
• Relationship with our Public School District and regulations set forth by IDEA
Building the Team

The Process at Maternity

BVM
First Step is Establishing Team

• Members

• Where we will meet

• When we will meet

• Necessary arrangements for referring teacher ie. substitute coverage, after school meetings etc.

• What are the expectations of each team member.

• Confidentiality
Teacher Assistance Team
FLOWCHART

Teacher has a concern about a student

Teacher completes a Signal Card and turns it into the principal

T.A.T. meets with the teacher

Action plan is developed and implemented. Follow up plan with specific dates is determined.

Is plan successful?

Yes, continue strategies

No. Meet with T.A.T. to develop new strategies.

Is the plan successful?

No. Determine if there is a need for a Full and Individual Evaluation.
Next – Establishing our own version of necessary paperwork

- Signal Card
- Parental Consent Form
- Intervention Strategy Checklist
- Educational Modification/Accommodations Implementation Agreement
- Educational Goals Agreement
MBVM TAT Positives

• Gives the child support needed to be successful in the natural learning environment.

• Helps to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the student. This information can then be used to focus on the best teaching methods to be used with the child.

• Collaboration between the TAT and classroom teacher gives the teacher the support he/she needs. – You are NOT alone
MBVM TAT Positives

• Monthly meetings assure that each child’s needs are being addressed. If there are problems or changes needed, they are made at that time.

• Signal cards are used to make the teacher stop and think. – What are the three major concerns at this time. This prevents the long laundry list.

• Established criteria for successful response and a means to monitor progress.

• Brings awareness to all staff that each child is an individual and that all children do not learn the same way.
MBVM TAT Obstacles

• Time, Time, Time
• Large class size makes it difficult to implement modifications into the classroom.
• Teacher resistant to change
• Not enough planning time in our school day to properly prepare for modifications and rethink teaching methods.
• Pull out time – if necessary when and what subject area are the students missing?
Creating Champaign Teams on a Beer Budget
Building Based Coaching

- On-site observation of teams engaged in process
- Provides Feedback and support to each team
- 3 observation cycles
Michael J. Boyle, Ph.D.

Center for Catholic School Effectiveness
School of Education. Loyola University
Chicago

mboyle3@luc.edu

Terry Granger

Maternity BVM School
Bourbonnais, IL

tgranger@mbvm.org