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Teacher Collaboration: The Key to Student Success?

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**Teacher Collaboration:
The Key to Student Success?**

by

Jennifer L Roe

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**A thesis submitted to the
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Master of Science in Education**

Teacher Collaboration:

The Key to Student Success?

by

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Introduction

Imagine you are about to build your dream house. Could it happen without a design to fit your every desire? Doesn't it also need an architect, construction manager, electricians, painters, plumbers, landscapers, interior designers, and roofers? Your house would not be a success without all of these facets collaborating and working together to make your dream come true. Similar to the components that go into building a house, educators at all levels should work together to create a learning environment that supports learning of all students. The design of the house is similar to the curriculum in that it shows the plan of what is to be completed. The architect and construction manager are the administration that create a vision for staff to follow and a schedule of lessons to occur. The remaining people for building a house can be compared to the teachers, para-educators, librarians, counselors, parents and other staff that support the educational process for students within the school.

It is my intention in this research to describe the impact of staff collaboration within a school to show how it can impact student success. The impact on student success can be measured through comparing students that have been exposed (knowingly or unknowingly) to a collaborative structure versus students that have not been exposed to a collaborative teaching structure. The aspects to be measured are those of communication in the classroom, passing rates, and overall impact on grades (marking period, assessments and projects).

There are many aspects of collaboration that are in addition to co-teaching. With collaboration comes professional development, reflection, communication, mentoring, and resources, among other contributions to be discussed within this research study.

While co-teaching may be one of the most popular forms of collaboration within a school, I intend to show that other forms of collaboration are vital to increasing the mathematical ability of students within a school.

This study is being performed because of the current trends in the workplace. Not only are schools becoming more collaborative, but businesses are also becoming more collaborative. From personal experience of working in offices for a summer job, it was required that I work with others in completing various tasks including payroll, inventory, and proposals. Teachers being prepared and willing to collaborate with other staff within the school are opening their experiences and broadening their competence, content knowledge, and confidence in teaching, thus creating a welcoming environment for everyone willing to learn about collaboration or benefit from collaboration.

With this action research, the significance is to show educators that collaboration works to increase student performance on state assessments, classroom discourse, and passing rates. I chose to study collaboration in particular because of the increase in collaboration at the current school where I work. The administration within the school has created several levels of collaboration within the school as well as educators outside of our building contributing on a regular basis, all to contribute to the common vision of student success. In particular, there are several co-teaching units that support the mathematics and English curriculum, mentors for new teachers, frequent professional development about collaboration, common planning time for subject area teachers, and many resources devoted to creating a supported collaborative unit within our school.

It is from our own personal experience that we have a strong belief that the collaboration within our school has been a proponent to the increase in state assessment

scores and students becoming more affluent within subject areas. Hopefully through studying the collaborative structure within our school will demonstrate the reason behind the success that has been recently achieved within our building. From all of this stems the research question, “How can a collaborative team create a learning environment where students will be successful in their academic endeavors?”

Literature Review

Supportive features include shared leadership and family involvement, a cohesive school vision, comprehensive program planning, adequate resource, sustained implementation, and ongoing performance evaluation and improvement. Collaboration also is cited frequently as contributing significantly to well being and productivity in schools. (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, 1999)

This quote gives summative information about some of the vital aspects of an effective collaborative school and what should frequent collaborative units as a whole. Above all, the most common issues seen within studying collaboration in schools are adequate resources, a common vision, communication, ownership and responsibility, professional development, and teachers wanting to change practice to improve student success.

By far, one of the most important aspects of collaboration is having adequate resources to support collaboration within the school. Without the proper resources to support collaboration, collaboration would not help student success. A large resource to support collaboration is administrative support within the school. Through administrative support, the school will have financial resources that are distributed towards common planning time, tutors, professional development, grants, and partnerships with community businesses (Walther-Thomas, et. al., 1999).

According to Parten Gerla, Gilliam and Wright (2006), financial resources are a downfall to effective collaborative structures. This stems from insufficient administrative

support that does not place financial resources in areas like professional development that give school staff the knowledge on how to run an effective collaborative unit.

Another place where resources need to be adequately placed is through mentoring of inexperienced teachers. Mentoring is a collaborative team where an experienced teacher advises newer teachers with methods of instruction, classroom management, emotional support, understanding of curriculum, pacing, and other aspects of education where under-experienced teachers may need assistance to improve their teaching. Without adequate resources to support mentoring programs in schools, inexperienced teachers may never fully see the benefits of a beginning collaborative relationship (Walther-Thomas, et. al., 1999).

Another invaluable resource that may be overlooked within the educational system is common planning time. This includes planning time within subject area as well as common planning time with teachers that interact with the same group of students. While one type of common planning time may be more accessible for any given school district, it is a vital resource that can often be overlooked during the school day and placed for after school time. Specifically, planning time could be scheduled in many different ways involving frequency, in-person meetings or electronic meetings, compensatory time, etc. (Walther-Thomas, et. al., 1999). During the planning time, many of the issues that contribute to collaboration occur; communication, sharing philosophies, professional development opportunities, reflection, and ownership.

Educators join their field for many reasons. Among these reasons is a vision that students should be successful in obtaining their education. With this success is a trait that students will become lifelong learners and will be supportive of their fellow learners

through collaborating, peer tutoring, and creating awareness of the world around them (Reibman, Hansen, and Vickman, 2006). When students can see educators working together to achieve a common goal, they will begin to gain an understanding that adults must work together and support each other to reach a goal. This, in turn, demonstrates to students that collaboration is a key component to reaching goals and students will begin to collaborate to reach their goals. This idea is expressed by Reibman, et. al, (2006) through teacher-librarian collaboration supporting student collaboration.

In general, educators must share a common vision of student success. In addition to this vision, there must also be flexibility and compatibility of educators where they may have differing philosophies of education, but they share the understanding that they are educators to help students succeed, but at the same time, they are in a collaborative unit to also gain insight for themselves (Bouck, 2007). The vision and philosophies that educators share, or differ, on all revolve around open communication among members of the collaborative team. With open communication, educators are constantly gaining insight on how to improve upon the education they give students every day. The collaboration that occurs on a regular basis and improvement of education comes through teachers being flexible within their respective philosophy to understand that a complete education is the ultimate goal for every student in a seat in front of every educator in the building.

The open communication that happens during collaborative sessions holds one of the biggest impacts on teacher change (leading to student success). Communication can happen as a result of different interactions among teachers; after an observation, discussing issues that arise in the classroom, or through professional development.

Lewis, Perry, Hurd, and O'Connell (2006) discuss how observation leading to discourse among teachers is an effective tool to use when improving instruction (which leads to student success). Supporting this idea is the work of Manouchehri (2002) that stresses the "importance of socialization and social interaction in the development of professional knowledge." With educators discussing each others' work, they are reflecting on practices that are effective and ineffective, which leads teachers to reflect on their own work and how they can become more effective educators in the classroom.

A specific episode was the focus of research by Manouchehri (2002) of which two preservice teachers went through a series of observations and were told to journal their weekly experiences and reflect on the occurrences with what they saw and compare it to their own professional philosophy. In this study, the preservice teachers both benefited from reflecting on their own and each others' practices in that they both grew in their reflective practices and modified their own teaching philosophy.

This leads to the importance of reflection in practice. As a teacher, reflection should happen on a regular basis to continue to be an effective educator so that the education of students always is improving. With reflection, teachers gain confidence in their abilities that what they are doing is aiming towards reaching the vision they have set forth for themselves. (Martin, 2006). Reflecting does not have to be a lonely practice though. It holds great strength when combined within the collaborative team. This creates all members to share and trust each other with the responsibility of improving the education of the students under their influence. While constantly evaluating their practice in the classroom, teachers are focusing on a commitment to improving education which should be their main priority in the initiative of education. According to Martin

(2006), “students’ motivation and engagement are related to their teachers’ enjoyment of teaching, pedagogical efficacy, and affective orientations in the classroom.” (pg. 75)

This efficacy and enjoyment of teaching stems directly from teachers reflecting on their own practices (and the practices of others) so that they may improve upon education.

Continuing with this, through their reflection, teachers have to want to change instruction so that they can improve upon the education their students receive. Teachers need to change the way they believe about the educational system before they understand how to change the educational system through collaboration (Breyfogle, 2005). For any teacher, the reason for changing the method of teaching through collaboration should be for one reason; enhancing the education teachers give, thus making students more successful with their education. The curriculum that is posed to teachers is constantly changing because of the standards imposed on education by each state’s respective education department. With the curriculum and standards constantly changing, the only way to improve the educational system is to change the method of instruction. To change the method of instruction alone would be a large task for one educator, which is why collaborating with at least one additional educator will create a smaller task that each person can dedicate themselves to focusing solely on a lesser part of improving education.

Finally, a resource that is vital to creating and improving the collaborative process is that of professional development. Professional development comes in several forms – teachers can belong to professional organizations, incentive based or not, and attend professional development prior to and during the collaborative process (Walther-Thomas, et. al., 1999). Professional development that is supportive of collaboration can aid

educators in proper implementation of a collaborative team, avoiding conflict, and methods of sustaining success as a collaborative team.

Through this research, I can conclude several things. Researchers believe collaboration to be a useful tool to support the educational process that has the ability to lead to student success when properly implemented and supported. Through this though, there is a lack of information regarding other aspects of collaboration, namely, willingness to collaborate, what types of collaborative groups are most successful (inter-subject or intra-subject area), and the actual success stories exhibited by school and students. I feel that through my research, I can find some information regarding the answers to gaps in the current supportive research of collaborative groups.

From this, I can hypothesize several things:

- With appropriate teacher collaboration, state assessment scores will increase
- Students will increase their communication with adults and peers
- Teachers will learn of good teaching practices from each other.

Methods and Procedures

While performing my research, I will focus my attention on Dr. Freddie Thomas High School (FTHS), a small high school from the Rochester City School District (New York). With roughly one-thousand students in attendance, the majority of the population is of minority decent. Specifically, when the school opened in 1995, 95 percent of the population was African-American, 4 percent was Latino/Hispanic and 1 percent fit into other racial/ethnic groups. Since then, the population demographics have changed significantly with approximately 71 percent African-American, 25 percent Latino/Hispanic, 4 percent white/Caucasian, and one percent Asian, Pacific Islander, or

Native American. In addition to this, FTTHS faculty and staff have undergone significant changes as well to their population. In the 2003-2004 school year, the administrative team was rebuilt and put under the direction of Mrs. Sandra Jordan as principal. Following this, the departments began to restructure and in the 2004-2005 school year, ten mathematics teachers were hired to replace teachers not highly qualified to teach mathematics. Not only were these changes seen in administration and mathematics, other departments within the building began to restructure by hiring highly qualified teachers. Within this restructuring, Mrs. Jordan created a vision for her staff that the staff is a family whose motto is, "Thomas Titans to the Top".

With all of this restructuring, teachers were working together to create a positive learning environment where all students can be successful. Within this, classes were scheduled so that teachers could have common planning time so they could plan, discuss, and share ideas of teaching. In addition to this, during the 2006-2007 school year, "marriages" within the school were created between pairs of teachers; ELA/Math, Math/Math, Science/Science, and Literacy/Social Studies marriages were created with a plan to extend these marriages into additional subject areas in the future.

The analysis of the results of the research will demonstrate both a qualitative and quantitative perspective. The qualitative perspective will show the feelings of staff at FTTHS and demonstrate their support for a collaborative atmosphere through results of a questionnaire distributed at Freddie Thomas. Additionally, the quantitative perspective will demonstrate the results of collaboration on student scores, passing rates, and suspension rates. In combination, the qualitative and quantitative perspectives will show the positive effect that collaboration has had on student success at FTTHS as a whole.

Analysis

In this section of the study, I will display the results of the research performed. Specifically, how collaboration leads to the success of students at FTTHS through teachers' perception of and willingness to collaborate and collaboration's impact on student achievement and passing rates.

During the 2006-2007 school year, Freddie Thomas High School showed its dedication to teacher collaboration by having specific teachers at the seventh and eighth grade levels collaborate on a daily basis with the ELA and mathematics curricula. The ELA teacher would infuse literacy into the mathematics curriculum while the mathematics teacher would infuse mathematics into the ELA curriculum. Upon the conclusion of this partnership, participating teachers were issued voluntary questionnaires regarding their experiences. In addition to these teacher responses, the remaining staff was invited to respond to the survey about their experiences with collaboration. In total, twenty questionnaires were returned and analyzed for content.

The questionnaire consisted of five questions that addressed subject area, grade level, professional development, and beliefs about teacher collaboration (see Appendix). Most respondents had experience collaborating in the mathematics or ELA curricula and also taught in the middle school grades (seventh or eighth grade).

When responding to the question, "Do you believe staff collaboration leads to student success? a) Why or why not? b) If so, do you have personal experience to support your reasoning? In what area(s)?" 100 percent of respondents responded "yes" that staff collaboration leads to student success. In addition, there were many positive responses with their experiences to support collaboration at FTTHS. Several respondents

described that collaboration is a “unified force” and a “united front leading to strength”. Also, there were many responses regarding best teaching practices, teamwork, exchanging ideas, more attention to student needs, raising expectations, and creating meaningful activities to support learning. These responses show that the staff at FTTHS is supportive of a collaborative climate within the school. While looking through the questionnaires, it can be seen that not one staff member out of the twenty respondents had a negative comment about collaboration and its impact on student success.

The final question on the questionnaire pertains to staff receiving professional development about collaboration. When analyzing this question, greater than 50 percent of staff surveyed received professional development on collaboration. The professional development received was either through courses attended at the college level while seeking degrees or offered through the Rochester City School District. The professional development sessions offered through the Rochester City School District were given by Lily Stone (a district representative) to share her expertise regarding collaboration. She helped teachers learn to incorporate different teaching techniques into their classroom such as parallel teaching or cooperative learning. Comments regarding this question also had a positive tone since staff that had not received professional development were open to attending professional development regarding the aspects of collaboration.

Through the survey, it can be seen that staff at FTTHS are supportive of collaboration in and outside the classroom. With the positive attitude regarding collaboration at FTTHS, it can be predicted that there will be much support for more collaboration in the future, as teachers create a positive learning environment where students can be successful in every classroom. Furthermore, it can be assumed that as

long as staff is supportive of collaboration, it will continually increase and positively impact the learning community at Freddie Thomas High School.

With this learning community continually growing at FTHS, student scores have been climbing the ladder as well. A major focus of a school's performance is based on how well students perform on state assessments. In recent years, scores have been recorded for both the middle grade assessments and high school Regents exams. Figure 1 below demonstrates the percent of students meeting standards on the respective state assessments (students scoring a 3 or 4 on the exam).

**Middle School Exams
(Percent scoring 3 or 4)**

Year	NYS Math 7	NYS Math 8	NYS ELA 7	NYS ELA 8	NYS Science 8	NYS SS 8
2003-04	No Data	14.5	No Data	13.6	34	7
2004-05	No Data	22.8	No Data	12	14	4
2005-06	11.9	27.8	17.5	33.3	14	10.2
2006-07	43	35.1	26.3	24.3	No Data	No Data

(Figure 1)

At FTHS, the current focus of collaboration at the middle school grade levels has surrounded mathematics and ELA where two teachers, one from each discipline, team teach during two blocks, to infuse the curriculum with literacy and mathematics skills. This collaboration of teachers was most prominent during the 2006-2007 school year, where eight pairs of teachers teamed together with this goal in mind. Since Mrs. Jordan became principal, there has been a steady increase in state assessment scores as well as an increase in the amount of collaboration that occurs on a daily basis. The data displays the significant improvement in the mathematics scores of students at the seventh and eighth

grade level. The increase, as shown above, points out the dramatic increase in student achievement.

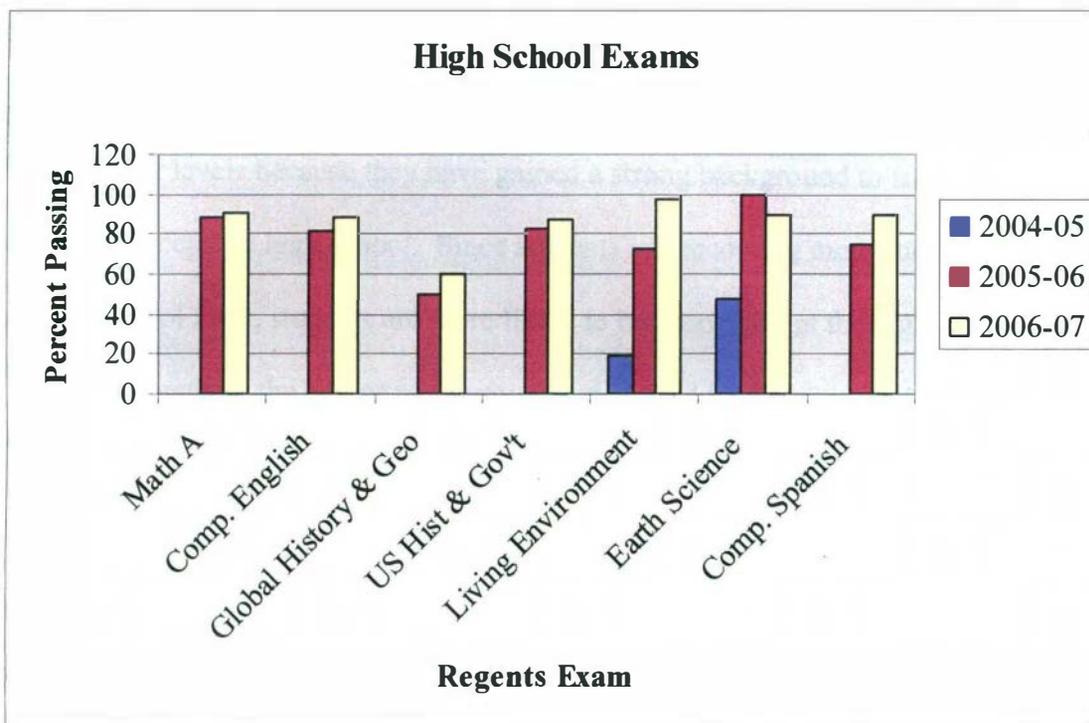
Further analysis of the middle grade state assessment data shows that there has been a decrease in the percentage of students scoring a level 1 on NYS Mathematics 7 and 8 exams; thus further representing the significant improvement of student ability.

It is significant to note the scores of the NYS Social Studies and NYS Science exams. There has not been a significant increase, at times even a decrease in the scores. With this, it is important to acknowledge teacher response to the questionnaire. While there has been collaboration outside of the classroom for these disciplines, there has not been the constant collaboration of having two teachers in the room at all times as was the case for mathematics and ELA. When speaking to staff in the building, there is a passion to work with others inside the classroom and this has been seen by administration, thus plans are in place for creating collaborative teams to help increase these scores as well.

Figure 2 demonstrates the passing rates for students at FTTHS on the New York State Regents Exams for the past three school years. Upon observing the data, it can be seen that of the seven Regents exams given at FTTHS, six have seen improvement in recent years. (Data for Regents exams does not exist prior to 2004-2005 school year because FTTHS did not have any students enrolled in Regents courses due to it growing into a high school from a middle school and adding courses as it grows.)

Collaboration at the high school level is not as prominent at FTTHS as it is at the middle school level. Teachers and staff work together and support each other throughout the school year, though not every subject area shares common planning time or has the ability to work with multiple teachers in one room as is seen in the middle school

classrooms. Results from the questionnaire demonstrate that science and mathematics teachers at the high school level had the highest level of in-class collaboration, but teachers of all disciplines collaborated on some level outside of the classroom. The majority of the collaboration happened prior to, or after the school day, along with during required district professional development meetings.



(Figure 2)

Figure 2 shows a consistent increase across the board. The Math A Exam saw an increase from 88 percent of students passing to 91 percent. This is a significant increase considering the increase in the number of students taking the exam (from approximately 40 students to approximately 130 students). Students taking mathematics classes that culminated in the Math A exam received in-class instruction from as many as three teachers collaborating together during the last six weeks of school. This came as a result of teachers selflessly giving up planning periods to impact student success rates. In these

classrooms, students received more personal attention and were able to gain a better understanding of the material as a result of multiple teachers demonstrating their knowledge through different perspectives, technology based lessons, cooperative learning, and project-based learning.

Although state assessment scores have seen improvement as a whole, collaboration at FTTHS is more prominent at the middle school level. It is believed that with a solid foundation at the lower levels of education, students will be more successful at the higher levels because they have gained a strong background to support more abstract concepts in high school. Since students are becoming more successful at the middle school level, students are more likely to be successful at the high school level.

Throughout the course of improvement at Freddie Thomas High School, the school has also seen a decrease in the number of suspensions throughout the school year. Figure 3 demonstrates the total number of suspensions that have occurred at FTTHS since the 1999-2000 school year. These suspensions include in-school, short-term, and long-term suspensions. An example of a short-term suspension is when a student has a suspension of five days or less, whereas with a long-term suspension, students are assigned to receive instruction outside of the classroom for an extended period of time (more than five days).

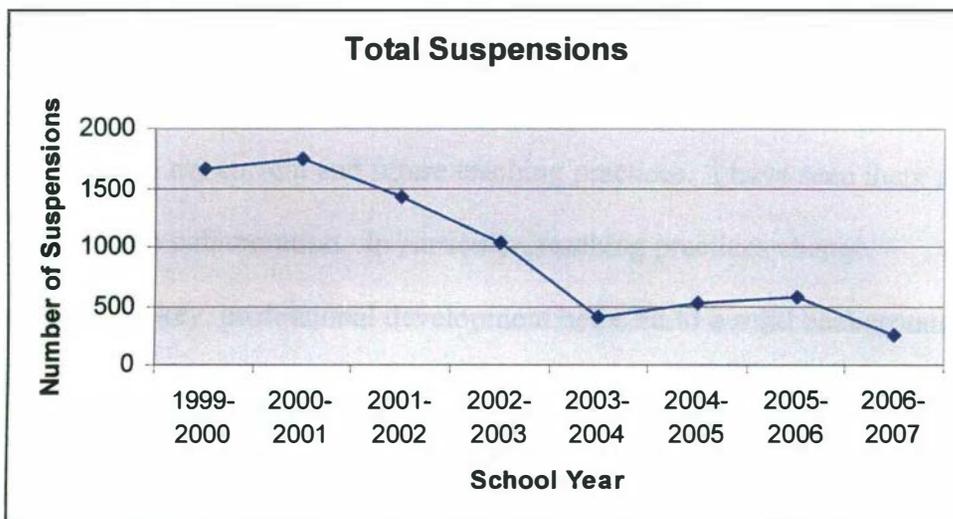


Figure 3

Figure 3 illustrates the significant decrease in suspensions at FTHS. At the peak, suspensions reached a total of 1,743 compared to 259 in the most recent school year. The most significant drop in suspensions happened in 2003-2004 when the administrative team changed at FTHS. With the change in administration, recall that there was a change in the collaborative or “familial” atmosphere at FTHS. Needless to say, students began to see a change in the school climate and changes began to happen with students as well. Behaviors changed and there was a significant decrease in classroom disruptions.

There has been a significant change at Freddie Thomas High School in recent years; scores have increased, behavior has changed, the collaborative climate has increased, and teachers are passionate about working together to improve their teaching and to see more students succeed. Through all of this, collaboration has grown and will continue to grow at Freddie Thomas High School to further contribute to success in the education of students who are part of the Freddie Thomas family.

Discussion, Summary and Reflections

Upon concluding this research, I have discovered many things that have had an extreme impact on my current and future teaching practices. I have seen there are many factors that go into collaboration. In particular, teaching practices change, communication is key, professional development helps build a solid background, and outside factors always impact the outcomes of success on student education.

At FTHS, collaboration is highly supported by administration. Teachers are encouraged to work together and teachers have formed bonds to create successful collaborative teams. One thing that is visible at FTHS is the amount that the middle school teachers collaborate in comparison to high school teachers. There is a significant difference in that the teachers at the middle school level have more invested in collaborating on a daily basis. One thing to keep in mind for future years at FTHS is the amount of collaboration should increase at the high school level as well. This increase in collaboration should further increase the success of students at the high school level. There was such a dramatic increase in middle school math scores that one can only assume what impact teacher collaboration will have on high school students.

As seen from the results of the surveys, and from experience, teaching practices change through collaboration. To demonstrate how this has changed teaching practices at FTHS, there are teachers with years of experience that are more prone to teacher-centered, lecture style lessons, and through collaboration, experienced teachers were encouraged to incorporate technology, group work, and more student-centered lessons. These student-centered lessons create a learning environment more welcoming to many different learning styles, from visual to kinesthetic. Speaking from experience, through

collaboration, I have evolved into incorporating more technology into my lessons, as well as giving up some control of the classroom and allow more student-centered learning techniques. This is not to say that I have only used teacher-centered lessons in my classroom, but I am now finding more ways to incorporate student-centered lessons.

At FTTHS, much of the collaboration that occurred on a regular basis was through informal meetings during and after school. Many teachers in the same discipline have common planning time due to careful scheduling by administration. With this common planning time, I have seen many groups of teachers meeting to discuss several common themes surrounding teaching. Some of the themes that can be seen across discipline are common assessments, management, lessons, standards, homework, and how to facilitate lessons. Much of this collaboration does not have a set agenda, but through these formal and informal meetings of teachers, all conversation revolved around positively impacting student success. Teachers would specifically talk about results of common assessments based on an item analysis performed on the student tests. The item analysis would demonstrate topics that needed to be addressed more thoroughly in the future. Teachers could address these topics through additional lessons, test prep worksheets (daily review) or through bell work when students enter the room. During these meetings, a suggestion as simple as using different terminology during a lesson can change the way a topic is accepted into the students' knowledge bank. In addition to this, there are many times when walking down the hallway, teachers would briefly convene and talk about making a quick change in a lesson to improve skills such as vocabulary, student retention or study skills. Much of these impromptu meetings have resulted in small, yet great, impacts on education at FTTHS.

Many respondents to the survey only had positive comments to make about collaboration and about the professional development received regarding collaboration. Teachers in the middle school math and ELA partnerships went to professional development meetings given by Rochester City School District professionals with significant experience with collaboration. In addition to these professional development opportunities, several teachers have experienced collaboration with graduate school classes. These opportunities for learning about collaboration have only provided for significant change in teaching practices of teachers at Freddie Thomas High School. Teachers have commented on how working together while learning about collaboration only further demonstrates the passion for a collaborative community in schools.

While it would be preferred to dedicate all of the success of the students at FTTHS to collaboration, there are other factors that could have contributed to the change in behavior, student scores, and communication of students. Through careful planning and scheduling, there has been a tracking of students into specific groupings where gifted students are supported at a higher level, and students at lower ability levels are kept together and brought up to higher ability levels together, thus meeting their specific needs. This tracking of students within the math and ELA partnerships has had a great impact on the success of students not only because students are reaping the benefits of the collaborative team, but now their individual needs are more closely met.

In addition to this form of tracking, there is another form of tracking happening at FTTHS as well. In the City School District, there is a large number of students that remain at one grade level (seventh, for example), due to low performance in addition to behavioral and attendance issues; these students are known at FTTHS as “repeats” whereas

students new to the seventh grade are called “newbies”. The tracking that occurs between these two groups of students is that “repeats” and “newbies” are not in the same classes, causing teachers to focus on the needs of the students that are struggling to get out of a grade level. With this more individualized attention students are receiving, it only follows that teachers with “newbies” or “repeats” are collaborating with each other to individualize instruction for their classes.

Not only are the aforementioned factors impacting the success of students at Freddie Thomas, but state mandated exams at the elementary school levels are creating more accountability for elementary schools to have students meeting standards. With this accountability at the lower levels, students are entering FTHS with a solid knowledge base.

Similarly, students of the Rochester City School District have a choice of high schools they wish to attend. Through the selection process, students are given choices and are matched with the best school that fits their needs according to their preference of high school. Since the scores at FTHS have been steadily increasing over the past few years, more students and parents are seeing that FTHS is a good school to attend, therefore, students with better abilities are choosing FTHS as one of their top choices of high school to attend. Additionally, since parents are seeing that FTHS is a school performing better year after year, they are showing more support for the education their children receive.

It can be seen there are many factors that contribute to increasing student success at schools. One of the most significant factors though is an administrative team that fully supports the needs of its faculty and students and implements best practices for success.

Freddie Thomas High School is lucky to have an administrative team that works as a family with the remaining faculty thus creating an atmosphere that supports collaboration and boasts the success of students. An administrative team that is supportive of its teaching staff and is willing to devote resources to increasing collaboration of professionals, can only have a positive impact on student success through a “trickle down” effect.

While the impact seen at FTTHS was significant in a short amount of time, there are factors to further study in the future. A question to further investigate is how to organize formal collaboration meetings. These meetings often have an agenda of sorts, but most formal meetings stray from the planned agenda. This leads me to believe that collaboration does not need to be formal to be successful. Also, it would be interesting to further investigate an empirical study about collaboration where the only factor that differs between groups of students is that one is impacted by a collaborative system and the other is isolated and the teacher does not collaborate with others. This study alone would demonstrate the impact collaboration would have on student success.

Regardless of outside factors and future studies, there has been a change at Freddie Thomas High School when teachers began to collaborate on a regular basis. This professional discourse has been a gateway to allowing students to be more successful in gaining an education where as prior to consistent collaboration, behaviors ruled the school. When the faculty and staff of a school community choose to collaborate with one another, they are bettering themselves as professionals and bettering the education their students receive.

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The questionnaire was designed to assess the following factors in relation to your perception of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your business. The questionnaire is divided into two main sections: Demographic Information and Business Impact. Please provide your responses to the following questions.

1. Name

Teacher Administrator Other

2. How long have you been working in your current position?

Less than 1 year 1-5 years 6-10 years More than 10 years

3. How do you describe your business? (Please check all that apply)

- Retail
- Wholesale
- Manufacturing
- Services
- Education
- Healthcare
- Government
- Non-profit
- Other

Appendix

4. How has your business been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic? (Please check all that apply)

- Revenue has decreased
- Revenue has increased
- Revenue has remained the same
- No change
- Other

5. How do you rate the overall impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your business? (Please check all that apply)

This questionnaire is to support research on collaborative teams in school and your reflections based on your personal experience with collaborative teams. Your confidentiality is secure; you do not need to put your name on this questionnaire. Please return this questionnaire to J. Roe's mailbox. Thank you.

1. I am a:

Teacher Administrator Paraprofessional

2. I currently teach/support: (Check all that apply)

Math ELA Social Studies
Science Special Education

3. Briefly describe your experience with collaboration at FTTHS.

a) What subject area(s) do you participate in for collaborative teams?

b) What grade level(s) does your collaborative team primarily teach?

4. Do you believe staff collaboration leads to student success? YES or NO

a) Why or why not?

b) If so, do you have personal experience to support your reasoning? In what area(s)?

5. Have you received professional development on staff collaboration? If so, what kind of professional development?