Maria Gomez

A+ Committee Decides How to Divide State Monetary Award

I.) Description and Context: After the announcement that Apple Middle School was an “A” school, an A+ committee was formed. The chairperson for the committee appointed 10 staff members that would serve on the committee. A committee of teachers met to discuss and develop this artifact. It was our goal to decide how the A+ money would be divided among staff at Apple Middle School.

II.) When Developed: Several meetings were held during the fall semester this year to complete this project.

III.) My Role and Artifact Specifications: As a member of the committee, I worked collaboratively with a team comprised of instructional and non-instructional staff. Because this issue involved money, it was imperative that we set guidelines for short and long term goals for the distribution of these funds. Our short-term goal, which was accomplished by the end of our initial meeting, was to evaluate last years plan (A+ money plan) to conclude whether or not this plan was equitable. The committee pondered a number of questions:

A.) Was last year’s plan equitable?
B.) What were the disadvantages of the plan?
C.) What were the advantages of the plan?
D.) How much was actually put back into the school fund for the benefit of students?

Based on the above questions, our group collaboratively decided that last year’s plan was equitable. Although it caused controversy between cafeteria personnel and non-instructional staff, cafeteria staff did not receive money in 2005, the plan rewarded the rest of the staff at the school. Based on the above criteria, one revision was made to make the new plan more equitable. A portion of the 2006 A+ money would be allocated to cafeteria workers as well.

In addition to this, the 2005 A+ plan channeled 9.8% of the total award money back into the school fund. However, the 2003 A+ plan put 7.32% total award money back into the school fund. This change was due to the increase in the number of staff members at Apple Middle School.

In addition to this, our committee chairperson presented an article that was published in the Naples Daily News regarding FCAT bonus money. The article stated that the School Advisory Council (SAC), along with staff, decides where to spend extra money. The article claims that SAC needs to
decide what is needed at the school and bonuses are not appropriate, noting that teachers should not receive any of the A+ money. This article was brought to the committee’s attention because SAC does not, in fact, decide where the money goes. It is school staff that decides, and SAC approves or disapproves this decision. Although this article proved to be highly controversial, our group worked collaboratively and concluded that bonuses are appropriate, and instructional staff should be rewarded at our school.

As a member of the A+ committee, I worked in groups to brainstorm advantages and disadvantages of last year’s plan. Although our committee did not create the actual plan, we worked collaboratively to evaluate the previous plan to decide whether or not it needed to be revised.

The true test to confirm whether or not this plan would be successful was the presentation to the entire staff at the school. Our committee chairperson introduced the plan and stated what amount of money would be dispersed and to whom it would go to. As anticipated, there was controversy among the non-instructional staff. Apparently, they felt that $520.00 was not enough compensation. Ultimately, the majority was in favor of the plan, and it was approved.

IV.) This project addressed the following Florida Educational Leadership standards:

3. Managing the Learning Environment – High Performing Leaders manage the organization, operations, facilities and resources in ways that maximize the use of resources in an instructional organization and promote a safe, efficient, legal, and effective learning environment.

This activity involved analysis of budgets and the distribution of money throughout the school.

10. Ethical Leadership – High Performing Leaders act with integrity, fairness, and honesty in an ethical manner.

I learned that during this process one needs to act with integrity so that others trusted your opinion. If anyone was acting in an unfair or selfish manner, their opinions and actions created disharmony among the group.

V.) Reflective Statement:
This experience has given me the opportunity to participate in a decision that would benefit Apple Middle School and its teachers. I believe that I was asked to serve on this committee because I can be trusted with making decisions that affect the school staff and I can assume responsibility for making these decisions. I truly believed in the decision that was made by our committee and I stood by these decisions even when the plan created controversy between staff. Through this process however, I realized that it is difficult to please every staff member 100% when the issue involves the distribution or
use of school funds, and I learned that communication is the key to successful understanding of other’s needs.

The administration, A+ committee and faculty were pleased with the results. I learned that focusing on school goals and group needs, rather than individual needs, was a major factor in arriving at a decision that everyone could accept. This improved the school climate. When the plan was presented to the faculty, the majority ruled in favor of the plan. In addition to this, the staff and administration were pleased that 7.32% of the total reward money would be held back for student trips, reward events and other student activities.