

TRANSCRIPT

Emerson Co-Teaching Presentation - BOE Meeting - May 22, 2017

Two Students: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands one nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

Dr. Morrison: This year one of Emerson's goals was to enhance our ability to deliver differentiated instruction, as well as provide an additional avenue for students to learn within the least restrictive environment. This goal falls within District 64's third strategic objective focusing on differentiation, addressing individual learning needs and in part and all-encompassing continuum of services for all learners. Emerson's approach to this was to develop co-taught classrooms at each grade level.

Staff Member: As Emerson ventured into the concept of co-teaching the first cohort of teachers worked together to establish a definition and the application of co-teaching tailored to the needs of students at Emerson. Our definition of co-teaching is when a general education teacher and learning behavior specialist share the responsibilities of planning lessons, delivering instruction and assessing skills in a heterogeneous classroom. Co-teaching allows for greater continuum of services for students. It is important to note that this change in learning environment and approach does not change the curriculum or the concepts being taught or the rigor of the subject area. In fact it allows for greater differentiation to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

Dr. Morrison: Emerson's first cohort was a cumulation of 6th, 7th and 8th grade language arts teachers and special education teachers which were trained by Kara Forrest and Jill Dzik. Through extensive discussions regarding the implementation of co-teaching three areas of focus emerged. Scheduling, professional resources and training. Staff Member: To successfully implement co-teaching at Emerson, the structure of the teacher and student schedules needed to be addressed. Teachers needed common planning time to organize and develop instructional plans. The master schedule needed to align co-teachers instructional periods as well as ensuring parity within the educational information system.

Dr. Morrison: To provide instructional and training resources a website was created to help guide the staff. The website includes articles, models, resources, calendar and videos pertaining to co-teaching. A Google+ community was created as a place for the

cohort to ask questions of each other and share resources.

Staff Member: Training of staff began during the spring of 2016 for initial training on Maryland friends six models of co-teaching. During this first meeting the cohort identified a professional development plan for the 2016-2017 school year. This plan included observing other co-teaching partnerships, structured planning time and group collaboration opportunities which was then implemented to support the cohort throughout the year. Dr. Morrison: We will begin training the second co-teaching cohort at Emerson during the 2017-2018 school year. The second cohort consists of an additional sixth grade language arts teacher, six math teachers and three special education teachers. This will increase our sections of co-taught classes from five to twelve. Finally we will continue to provide collaboration time for our staff, which will enhance the effective implementation of the cohort initiative. Here is a video of responses from students who are in a co-taught class during this school year.

Student 1: I liked having two teachers because it gave you double help and you never really had to wait for someone to help you and you just got the help you needed really really quickly.

Student 2: It's pretty interesting again because of the two different perspectives you get. It makes you think more.

Student 3: It's different from classes with one teacher because first two different mindsets that are thinking alike.

Student 4: Like some people have a hard time in LA and I kinda have a hard time and it's nice to have another teacher like explain something if you don't get it another way.

Student 5: The teachers are more flexible with the material they're working with.

Student 6: Actually today we were talking about poetry and I were two groups of teachers, like two like groups. And like one teacher took one group and the other teacher took the other group and we were able to learn.

Student 7: When like one of them is like confused on something the other one can like help and then debate it, then they're like then they understand it and like help the rest of the class understand it as well.

Student 8: And if one of them is absent then the other one takes over as, as the head teacher.

Student 9: Where it can improve your writing and you can improve, there's like a lot of ideas that come out of like both teachers.

Student 10: When one teacher's busy and you really need a teacher that you can ask the other teacher so that so that you'll have to wait that long.

Student 11: ...Be that it was a lot more proactive.

Student 12: If you get it use it because if you have two teachers you can ask them more questions. You can have a better dialogue with them. It's helpful to be able to talk to your teachers. Having twice as much help doesn't hurt.

Student 13: Well if this is your first year ever doing it then it may be a little challenging at times if you've never done it before or don't know how it works but it's worked really well so far.