Session Title:
Life After an MSP: Lessons Learned about Building Capacity for On-Going Reform

MSP Project Name:
MSP of SW Pennsylvania

Presenters:
Nancy Bunt, Allegheny Intermediate Unit
Sam Shaneyfelt, Carlow University
Cynthia Tananis, University of Pittsburgh

Authors:
Nancy Bunt, Allegheny Intermediate Unit
Cynthia Tananis, University of Pittsburgh

Project Session

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Summary:
What does it mean to build a legacy or to accomplish sustainability? Is it about relationships that survive the churn of inevitable personnel change? Is it about creating capacity at all levels? Does it involve demonstrating value-added? Funded ten years ago, the MSP of SW PA added math and science expertise to the staff of a regional education agency. It aimed for scale, involving 50+ school districts across an 11 county region, engaging rural, urban and suburban districts with enrollments from 600 to 4,000+. As a comprehensive MSP, it engaged district teams in systemic planning, while providing all building administrators with sustained learning opportunities. Join the PI, Project Director and Evaluator to explore their experiences and discuss their ultimate lessons.

Section 1: Questions framing the session:
What does it mean to build a legacy or to accomplish sustainability? Is it about relationships that survive the churn of inevitable personnel change? Is it about creating capacity at all levels? Does it involve demonstrating value-added?

Section 2: Conceptual framework:
As an MSP funded in 2003, in only the second round, and in the last round of both comprehensive MSPs and K-12 –led MSPs, we are well situated to speak to later stages of the life cycle of an MSP. We define sustainability as building habits of mind among educators at all levels that involve life-long learning and constant refinement of practice making best use of emerging research.

Section 3: Explanatory framework:
We found that having a logic model matters. Key at the onset, allowing it to evolve over time both created ownership and assisted with essential on-going communication. The logic model will serve as the conceptual framework across our discussion.
We will share the lessons learned from our MSP, and our continuing application of them in life after the MSP. Examples include:

- Building capacity through professional development at all levels matters: IHE faculty and deans, K-12 administrators, K-12 teachers, and even among parents.
- Modeling effective teaching and learning at all levels is crucial to building the habits of minds required for sustainability.
- Helping educators effectively integrate their MSP work into their daily practice matters. Listening to their realities and helping them connect MSP strategies to state and local mandates is a key strategy.
- Building educator capacity to use data effectively to explore progress and show relevance is a key strategy.

Section 4: Discussion:
As resources available to K-12 education shrink, working smarter matters. Being guided by an every evolving logic model helps focus efforts—both ours and other MSPs. Carefully documenting what capacity is needed at all levels, and how that capacity is strengthened, (as determined by using reliable measures) helps make most effective use of limited resources—again, both for our and other MSPs. Finally, the necessary integration of MSP strategies into the ever-evolving education landscape is essential to accomplishing the goal of strengthened teaching and learning. At this time, that means capitalizing on the Common Core and NGSS, supporting effective teacher evaluation/improvement, and working to find the most effective use of virtual education.

Section 5: How will you structure this session? What is your plan for participant interaction?
We will employ the strategies of How People Learn, i.e. eliciting prior knowledge, offering a visual conceptual framework for the knowledge being shared, and encouraging metacognition about what is being learned. The 45-minute presentation will flow as follows:

(1) We will pose questions as to roles and ages of MSPS—and their definitions of legacy and sustainability, to be shared at their tables or with the room (depending on group size) (5 minutes)
(2) We will distribute our logic model as a conceptual framework for discussion, and encourage interpretation of it as a communication tool. We will open to questions they may have about particular portions of the logic model concerning programming. While describing the many ways we used it, we invite subsequent perusal of an academic study of the use of logic models by several MSPs. (10 minutes)
(3) We will distribute a two-page summary of lessons learned by our MSP from our final report. We will elicit interest in our elaborating on particular lessons—and share perceived implications for their work. Two examples indicate how discussion may flow (10 – 15 minutes)
- Addressing extensive turnover of administrators and teachers in our MSP such as:
i. Meticulous development of tracking databases
ii. Multiple appointments to each experience
iii. Development of annual action plans for each district
iv. Annual visits with leadership team in each district.

- Integrating MSP into the daily work of educators
  i. Facilitated sessions for district teams to identify all the current initiatives they perceive underway in their buildings, and then guiding them to relate MSP purposes to those initiatives;
  ii. Embedding in each PD experience for each stakeholder, the explicit relationship of MSP strategies to state and local initiatives;
  iii. Ensuring that our staff is fully informed, if not expert about all federal and state initiatives).

(4) Finally, we will distribute copies of the 2012-2013 MSC Journal which describes the current status of our continuing work, three years after NSF MSP funding, and will invite questions requesting elaboration on any of the many activities described therein. (10-15 minutes)

(5) If any time remains, we will invite open discussion of our definition of sustainability and legacy.