

Change Management Plan
North Topsail Elementary School

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Introduction

The principal of North Topsail Elementary School (NTES), Dr. Georgia Fonville, had significant concerns that the faculty and staff at her school were not adequately prepared to appropriately attend to the needs of enrolled students who are afflicted with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This growing population of students includes individuals with a wide array of abilities and behavioral issues. In order to address the entire spectrum of challenges that these students present to faculty and staff members, specialized practices and techniques must be implemented and utilized. It is paramount that the faculty and staff of NTES be instructed on how to properly handle any behavioral issues that arise, in order to ensure that these students receive the best education possible. To address her concerns, a training needs assessment (TNA) was conducted in the spring of 2006 by the MIT Needs Assessment Team.

Specific goals of the TNA were to first determine how knowledgeable and familiar the faculty and staff members of NTES were with autism spectrum disorders, as well as how motivated they were to learn about it. Identification of faculty and staff attitudes and concerns about working with ASD children in the classroom was also a priority. The second goal was to identify possible solutions, based on the data derived from accomplishing the first goal. These solutions would ultimately enable faculty and staff members to appropriately care for ASD children who attend their school. In order to accomplish the second goal of the TNA, reliable information was collected regarding the best practices for dealing with ASD individuals in the classroom. This included information pertaining to behavior and communication such as the proper methods of restraining children who may harm themselves or others, and effectively communicating with non-verbal individuals.

After a thorough analysis and interpretation of the TNA, several appropriate solutions emerged that would address the concerns of Dr. Fonville:

- Educate faculty and staff members on how to effectively address the specialized needs of ASD students.
- Involve ASD specialists in every aspect of faculty and staff training that pertains to the needs of those students.
- Enculturate faculty and staff to continually strive to generate new methods of helping ASD students as a part of their career/staff development goals.

These solutions were reviewed by Dr. Fonville, who determined that they were appropriate and worth implementation. The relative advantage of implementing this plan is seen as significant and compatible with their needs. The purpose of this Change Management Plan is to outline the series of events that will need to occur in order for these solutions to be successfully implemented over a period of three years. The plan is a systematic way of organizing a system-wide change and is viewed, which will best serve the needs of all stakeholders involved. Using this dynamic plan will enable key stakeholders to build support among faculty and staff members through education and enculturation, in order to best serve the needs of all current and future students attending NTES.

Change Proposal Summary

The Change Management Plan for NTES will take place over the course of three years, and will include a combination of instructional strategies and materials designed to accomplish the abovementioned solution implementation. In addition, ASD specialists will be on staff during implementation to help ensure that all employees are comfortable interacting with this population of students, and will be available if any situations arise that require their assistance. During the first year, all faculty, staff and administrators will be required to attend a day-long group workshop. The workshop will need to be scheduled during a time when classes are not in session, so that everyone can participate- perhaps during the summer before the beginning of a new school year.

The purpose of this workshop is to provide the faculty and staff of NTES with tools such as alternative instructional and classroom strategies, and with information about behavioral and communication methods, which they will need to appropriately educate ASD children. Additional instructional materials will be provided including printed job aids with feedback forms, and a computer-based instructional CD-ROM to help supplement the content of the workshop. These materials are provided for utilization if an issue arises and the employee needs access to specific behavioral or communication techniques quickly. The feedback forms are provided so there is a consistent method of formative evaluation for key stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the program, as well as providing the focus areas for small group workshops in subsequent years.

During the second and third year, additional large group workshops will be held for all new employees, as well as small group workshops for all new and continuing faculty and staff. The small group workshops will be designed according to the needs of the employees and will allow for some amount of experimentation in order to increase the probability that the innovation will be adopted. Workshops will be offered several times over the course of the year, and may be organized according to areas of concern, grade level or the need for additional instruction. These workshops will also provide a platform for staff development, so employees can share ideas and experiences to help expand their repertoire of behavior and communication methods. For more detailed information pertaining to specific stages, goals, indicators, benchmarks and measures related to the Change Management Plan see Appendix A.

Stakeholders

There are many factors that contribute to the success of a Change Management Plan, but the stakeholders are the most important. These are the people who make the changes happen. The NTES stakeholders involved in this plan include:

- Dr. Georgia Fonville, Principal
- Ms. Julie Ather, Special Needs Department Chair
- Faculty, Staff and Administration
- MIT Needs Assessment Team
- Parents and Students

Within this system, the principal will fulfill the role of inside change agent. Dr. Fonville is motivated and committed to doing whatever it takes, financially or otherwise, to ensure that this plan is implemented and effectively maintained. The role of innovator will be the responsibility of the Special Needs Department Chair. Ms. Ather's tasks will be primarily focused on developing and implementing the instructional materials, job aid and workshops. She will also be responsible for ensuring that all faculty and staff concerns, questions or issues relating to ASD children are addressed appropriately. The faculty, staff and administration will be responsible for attending and participating in the workshops. They will also be providing feedback for both the formative evaluation of materials, and the focus areas of the small group workshops during the second and third year. The MIT Needs Assessment Team will fulfill the role of outside change agent. Their primary responsibility was to recognize the needs of the faculty and staff of NTES, and subsequently design a plan for systematic change, which will address those needs. Finally, the parents and students of NTES will be providing faculty with some form of either indirect or structured feedback pertaining to the effectiveness of the program in terms of student performance. For more information about the Key Stakeholders and Stepping Stone Strategies, see Appendix B.

Opposition and Support

There are several issues that were identified during the needs assessment as potential constraints within this plan, which should be addressed. The innovators primary responsibility of developing and implementing the instructional materials, job aid and workshops rests solely on the Special Needs Department Chair. These tasks are in addition to other administrative duties and there is a concern that the work will be too overwhelming for one individual, especially if the timeline is shortened in order to speed the process of implementation before the school year begins. However, the principal has agreed to allow other staff members to help Ms. Ather if she determines that it is necessary. There is also a budget that would allow for an additional part-time staff person to be hired in order to aid in the development and implementation of the plan.

Another potential concern is that of the 37 NTES faculty and staff members who responded to the needs assessment survey, 15 (40.5%) have no experience working with ASD students, and 16 out of 22 respondents (59.5%) have no formal training pertaining to this student population at all. These individuals are considered the Laggards within this system. The primary concern about the Laggards is that they may not be as willing to participate in the workshops, and may not utilize the instructional materials and staff support provided by the innovators. There is also the possibility that they may view the responsibility of working with these students as being too daunting and complex.

Areas of support for the change include funding provided by NTES, Pender County and the North Carolina State Government for this program. In terms of stakeholders, 82.9% (33 out of 37) of respondents reported that they are aware that ASD student currently attend NTES and that this population of students is growing. The Opinion Leaders among the respondents include the 59.5% who have some experience working with ASD students. Another source of support is from the Early Adopters - 91.9% (34 of 37) of respondents reported being willing to receive training on how to

appropriately interact and teach these students. For more information pertaining to Commonalities within the Organization, see Appendix C.

Change Management Team

The primary purpose of the Change Management Team is to ensure that implementation of the Change Management Plan is successful and that the innovations are observable to all stakeholders. The team will maintain open and continual lines of communication using methods such as email, printed memorandum, and face to face meetings. The members of this team will serve as leaders and resources for all faculty and staff during the three year implementation process. They will also be responsible for motivating all NTES employees and raising their awareness of the change. They have been carefully chosen and recognized for being Opinion Leaders among the faculty and staff. The Change Management Team members include: NTES administration (Principal, Assistant Principal, and Special Needs Department Chair), Special Needs Support Staff (Speech, Occupational, and Physical Therapists), one faculty member from each grade level, one staff member from each department, a Title I Specialist, and the MIT Needs Assessment Team (only as consultants during initial stages).

Timeline (For more information on strategies by year, see Appendix D)

Year 1

Objectives:

1. Compile reliable and empirically validated information pertaining to best practices for managing behavioral issues for ASD students.
2. Determine appropriate communication strategies for verbal and nonverbal ASD students.
3. Identify necessary and appropriate resources for ASD students at NTES.
4. Develop large group workshop, supplemental materials and feedback forms to present to faculty and staff.
5. Establish procedure for collection, review and evaluation of student interaction feedback and formative evaluation feedback.
6. Evaluate plan.

During the first year of implementation, the Change Management Team will begin compiling empirically validated methods of managing behavioral issues, communication, and alternative classroom strategies for students on the autism spectrum in an integrated classroom. Once the literature has been compiled, all resources will need to be identified and procured for the ASD students at NTES. The next step, after all of the literature and resources have been organized, will be to design and develop the large group workshop.

The workshop can be organized in a variety of ways to ensure that the information is disseminated in an efficient and effective manner that will be meaningful to all participants. As a general guideline, it is recommended that the workshop begin with an

overview of the subject area and an explanation of the sequence of activities that will take place over the course of the day. Next, the compiled information could be presented using multimedia such as PowerPoint, and the instructional materials, job aid and CD-ROM could be distributed followed by a question and answer session.

In order to make the workshop more interesting and motivating, a film could be shown that depicts trained individuals working with ASD students and demonstrating the techniques that were presented in the first part of the workshop. This will give the faculty and staff a way of conceptualizing the information and will help to generate discussions. It will also increase their understanding of the disorder and how to work with individuals who suffer from it.

After the film showing, and a second question and answer session, lunch should be provided for the workshop participants. Including refreshments and time for socializing can also be a motivating factor during a workshop that can be somewhat daunting for some individuals. It may be necessary to take several breaks over the course of the day to ensure that participants remain alert and focused on the material that is being presented.

Once the lunch break is over, the next section within the workshop could include breaking the group up into smaller groups and performing a role playing activity. This will also help bring the participants together and get them interacting, as well as breaking the monotony of consistently being presented information. The role playing activity will also give them a hands-on feel for what it really means to interact with children and individuals who are afflicted with an autism spectrum disorder.

In the final portion of the workshop, the formative evaluation feedback sheets should be distributed, completed and collected. This evaluation will assess any knowledge, attitude or skill acquisition that occurred during the workshop. It is very important for the participants to understand how their participation and honest feedback will be used to organize future workshops. This will help them feel that they are really part of the process, which can also be a motivating factor in the future when the time comes to actually utilize the information and resources that were presented during the workshop.

Finally, the participants will be given the student interaction feedback forms. These forms, in addition to observations, will be used to assess how well the information that was presented in the workshop, as well as the available resources, was integrated and applied in the classrooms. These forms will be collected on a monthly basis for each ASD student that attends NTES.

Year 2

Objectives:

1. Revise large group workshop and supplemental materials, if needed, for new faculty and staff.
2. Establish small group workshop schedule based on focus areas derived from feedback obtained during the first workshop and subsequent feedback.
3. Continue collecting feedback concerning faculty, staff and student interactions in the classroom.

4. Collect and disseminate information about new developments in research and behavioral/communication techniques.
5. Evaluate plan

After the evaluations from the first year have been analyzed and interpreted, the Change Management Team will meet to review the results. The second year of the implementation plan will begin like the first with a large group workshop for all new employees. This will occur after any changes have been implemented by the team, which were indicated during the preceding year's formative evaluation.

Next, the team will begin to design and develop the small group focus area workshops, which will be based upon the results generated from the faculty and staff student interaction feedback collected during the first year. The schedule and format of the workshops will be determined by the team and then distributed to all faculty and staff. The workshops will be offered several times over the course of the year as deemed necessary by the team and based upon the monthly feedback, perceived need and observations.

Information about new developments in empirical research pertaining to behavioral/communication techniques for ASD children in the classroom will be distributed to all faculty and staff as it becomes available. This information will be collected by the team, faculty members and support staff continually over the course of the year.

Year 3

Objectives:

1. Revise large workshop for new faculty and staff members, as needed.
2. Schedule small group focus area workshops.
3. Continue collecting feedback from faculty, staff and student interactions.
4. Evaluate plan.

After the evaluations from the second year have been analyzed and interpreted, the Change Management Team will meet to review the results. The third year of the implementation plan will begin like the first and second with a large group workshop for all new employees. This will occur after any changes have been implemented by the team, which were indicated during the preceding year's formative evaluation.

Next, the team will schedule the small group focus area workshops, which will be based upon the results generated from the faculty and staff student interaction feedback collected during the second year. The schedule and format of the workshops will be determined by the team and then distributed to all faculty and staff. The workshops will be offered several times over the course of the year, as deemed necessary by the team and based upon the monthly feedback, perceived need and observations. Monthly feedback will continue to be collected, analyzed and used to revise the plan.

Pros and Cons

There are many reasons why this Change Management Plan will be successfully implemented. First, the plan is systematically designed and dynamic. There are many avenues for feedback at all stages, which is absolutely critical to its success and utilization. Second, the funding and resources are already available and the principal is fully willing, able and motivated to use those resources to ensure that the plan is successful. There is also significant awareness among the stakeholders of the need for this change, which is a motivating factor as well. The faculty and staff will be involved from the beginning, which will help them accept and adopt the innovation more readily.

Throughout the development of this plan, John Keller's ARCS model was utilized, which addresses all six phases that are important for innovation adoption. These phases include: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, adoption, and integration. It is understood and expected that there will be some amount of opposition to the change. This could be due to a lack of motivation among certain staff member who indicated during the needs assessment that they were unwilling to receive training on ASD. These individuals could possibly be those staff members who have virtually no interaction with those students. If this is the case, then their lack of adoption will not be a detrimental factor in the successful implementation of the plan.

Appendix A

Stages, Goals, Indicators, Benchmarks and Measures

Stage 0 – Care – Dr. Fonville expresses concern about the ability of her faculty and staff to appropriately handle the behavioral and communication needs of ASD students, and requests a TNA to determine their current knowledge of ASD and their motivation to learn about it.

Stage 1 – Relate – Establish a relationship with key stakeholders in the system.

Stage 2 – Examine – Define the problem by conducting TNA (completed)

Stage 3 – Acquire – Determine resources available and identify constraints

Stage 4 – Try – Choose a solution and execute a pilot test

Stage 5 – Extend – Implement solutions

Stage 6 – Renew – Evaluate solutions and revise

* Note: Stages 0-2 were completed prior to development of Change Management Plan Proposal.

Current performance conditions: The majority of NTES faculty and staff members have no experience working with ASD students.

Desired performance conditions: All NTES faculty and staff will be able to manage the behavioral and communication needs of ASD students.

Goals	Indicators	Benchmarks	Measures
Year 1: Faculty/staff will learn about the behavioral and communication needs of ASD students and be able to provide them with an appropriate educational environment	Faculty/staff will increase their knowledge about ASD student and their specific needs by working with these students and applying techniques learned in the workshop.	Faculty/staff will contact support staff concerning questions or issues about ASD students; feedback on staff/student interaction will be collected.	Results of feedback, surveys, interviews, observations, number of contacts with support staff
Year 2: Faculty/staff will continue to increase knowledge about best practices for ASD students in the classroom.	Faculty/staff will apply knowledge of practices with these students to show decrease in negative incidences.	Faculty/staff will attend small group focus area workshops to gain deeper understanding of techniques and brainstorm new methods.	Attendance at workshops, observations, interpretation of feedback.
Year 3: Faculty/staff will	Faculty/staff will increase academic	Faculty/staff will document	Attendance at workshops,

continue expanding their knowledge of strategies for educating ASD students.	and social growth of ASD students.	staff/student interactions, and students' grades.	observations, surveys, reviews of feedback documentation, parent-teacher conference records
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Appendix B

Key Stakeholders and Strategies

Name	Role in Innovation	Resource/Constraint	Stepping Stone Strategy
Dr. Georgia Fonville, Principal	Inside Change Agent	Resource – can provide leadership, resources and can change the system	Stone 1 – Introduce innovation, provide trial time, evaluate and adopt. Stone 4 – As a leader, publicly commit to innovation to motivate mainstreamers
Needs Assessment Team	Outside Change Agent	Resource – Can help bring about systematic change	1 – Introduce innovation and evaluate
Special Needs Support Staff	Innovators	Resource – Can provide needed human and instructional resources	1 – Introduce innovation, provide trial time, evaluate and adopt 4 – Publicly commit to change and help influence mainstreamers
Change Management Team	Leaders	Resource – Can bring about change systematically	4 – Publicly commit to change and help influence mainstreamers
Staff willing to receive training	Leaders	Resource – Are motivated to participate in change and can influence others	4 – Publicly commit to change and help influence mainstreamers
Staff not willing to receive training	Laggards	Constraint – Are not motivated to participate in change and may influence others	Stone 2 – Demonstrate innovation and answer questions

Appendix C

Commonalities within the Organization

For the Innovation	Against the Innovation	Importance to System (1-10) *10 is highest	Ease of Alteration (1-10) *10 is easiest
Administration is concerned about issue and is motivated to resolve problem		10	1
Vast majority of faculty/staff are willing to receive training		10	5
Most faculty/staff are aware that ASD students attend NTES and that it is a growing population		7	8
Funding has been provided by Federal Gov., State and County		10	1
Federal laws and regulations		10	1
	Staff support for the development of large group workshop and materials	10	6
	Faculty/staff may not use personnel resources and instructional materials to fullest potential	9	7
	Over half of faculty/staff have no formal training pertaining to ASD	5	1

Appendix D

Strategies by Adoption Year

Strategies	Awareness	Interest	Evaluation	Trial	Adoption	Integration
Year 1						
Faculty/Staff will receive large group workshop and CBI about best practices with students having autism and identifying appropriate resources	Change Management Team is formed and principal informs faculty/staff of new plan	Faculty/staff is made aware of workshop before end of school year and sent reminders in mail; also receive information about autism to spark interest	Observation of faculty/staff working with students having autism, surveys, interviews, staff/student interaction reports	Faculty/staff provided opportunity to practice skills in large group workshop by participating in role play activities	Faculty/staff implements practices into daily activities; outside support from other staff provided	Faculty/staff integrates strategies with decreasing levels of support
Year 2						
Faculty/staff will continue to use best practices in classroom and attend small group workshops to expand knowledge	Small group workshops outline expectations for faculty/staff to find new and creative ways to assist students with autism in the classroom and share methods and strategies with others	Interest generated through workshops and continual increase of students with autism spectrum disorder population	Observations of faculty/staff working with students with autism, evaluations of staff/student interaction reports, discussion among team members and implementation of new strategies	Faculty/staff will try new strategies in monthly small group workshops by using role play activities	Faculty/staff continue to implement practices into classroom and document incidents and staff/student interaction with little to no help from outside support	Documentation records kept concerning student growth and activity; faculty/staff begin to share new practices and strategies they have researched with members outside small group
Year 3						
Faculty/staff continue using best practices in classroom	Faculty/staff refreshed about best practices in initial	Interest generated through small group workshops and continued improvement in	Observations, interviews, surveys, documentation	Role playing activities still used within	Faculty/staff continue to implement strategies and	Documentation of behavioral incidents and

environment and attending small group workshops to expand knowledge; will utilize support staff as needed	faculty meeting by principal and Special Needs Department Chair; basic concepts reviewed in first small group workshop	student behavior	on, staff/student interaction reports, parent-teacher conference records, and small group discussions	small group workshops ; support staff available for additional help and guidance as needed	practices and find new ones to use in classroom environment ; document staff/student interactions both positive and negative and track academic growth of students	academic growth of students with autism; faculty/staff continue to research new and creative practices and strategies to share with others to help these students improve academic and social performance
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