

IMPACT STORY

Greenbush Consortium

Hiawatha USD 415



TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES

Before 2018

District shifts from many programs and practices.

2021 and beyond

Systems change and collective knowledge results in student gains.



2018-2019

Begin Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) re-structuring of LiNK project.

HIAWATHA USD 415 – OUR STORY

A snow globe, with a captured, perfect scene of a beloved location, only needs an occasional, gentle turn upside down to provide the owner with the satisfaction of seeing the flakes swirl, then gently drift back down upon the familiar scene.



Hiawatha USD 415 has possibly been using this same approach of Gentle Turns for school improvement. After all, the district piloted outcomes-based accreditation several years ago. Our district utilizes mission statements and visions and measurable goals. We offered professional development and performed Gentle Turns requiring implementation documentation for items deemed as improvements.

We deftly shifted from No Child Left Behind, to Quality Performance Accreditation and then to Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) with district and building leadership teams intact and functioning. We implemented MTSS. We learned about the new Kansas Standards and picked apart the 5 Rs. We took another Gentle Turn by transitioning to Schoolwide Title to serve more students.

We “kept up.”

However, some students never quite overcame their struggles with reading and math. We began to trend out of the “scored higher than the state average” side. Year after year, we complained about skills that students could not master - math fact fluency, content vocabulary, spelling or reading independently. Financial hardship connected to state funding dogged us, and we delayed curriculum resource adoptions. Even our nationally normed tests fell under the hatchet of budget cuts.

In the snow globe world, our dome was yellowed, leaking and in peril of failing. We exhibited all the risk factors but explained them away. We didn't recognize what we didn't know.

The application and acceptance to participate as part of the Greenbush LiNK consortium began at the same time as an intentional restructuring of our MTSS system with TASN guidance. Our story cannot be told separately. It took both of these initiatives to help see why we had been sliding, and what we needed to do.

Our staff's openness to applying for these opportunities, and the persistence of some key administrators and teachers led to the knowledge that Gentle Turns were not enough.

After a year of working to set the foundation of leadership and planning, our district began the 2019-2020 year gathering data from all new assessments. With this data, USD 415 staff members made instructional decisions, effectively grouped and provided interventions, and strengthened fidelity to the appropriate resources. Instructional changes occurred vertically and horizontally across the district. We began to realize we needed some major shaking up.

In a pristine, snow globe world, now is the time to say everything is improving, and we can stop shaking the globe. Systems are in place. We continue to grow our collective knowledge base and expertise in using data, MTSS, and persistence in recognizing the actual status of our achievements and gaps - because we want the best for our students.

The process is underway, but our snow is still swirling. We still need to improve our fidelity, competence and confidence. We need to verify we are on the right path. We are more informed and will continue to use evidence-based practices which benefit students. Our district and community “scene” is changing.

Many thanks to all involved in making this grant/program a reality for Kansas students.

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