

Career Tech Matters

by Dennis Franks • March 3, 2017

Pickaway-Ross teachers' have embraced High Schools That Work and it's paying off for our students.

High Schools That Work is a teacher-driven effort that uses proven educational strategies to improve students' academic and technical achievement.

Key practices have been identified that impact student achievement, such as setting high expectations for students, establishing a program of study and providing extra help to students.

In February, Pickaway-Ross took part in a site-review process in which about a dozen educators observed our teachers to determine how well those key practices are being met.

I'm pleased to say that our teachers are delivering high-quality instruction, according to feedback we received from the site-review team members.

After spending Feb. 16 visiting classrooms, team members shared their observations with staff members.

While each site-review member focused on a different area in their comments, each mentioned how much students enjoy Pickaway-Ross.

"Students love it here and it's because of (the teachers)," said Shannon Dutton, a science teacher at Delaware Area Career Center.

"It's hard here," Shannon said of the schoolwork. "It's not easier than a home school. It's harder but you make it worth it," she told staff members.

Pickaway-Ross' Learning Lab was singled out as excellent and can be used as a model for other schools. The dress code for students also was praised.

"You have built a culture of uniforms and badges," said Kelly Kohl, Architecture/Engineering instructor at Delaware. "I love it. It helps kids feel that they're part



Krista River with the High Schools That Work visiting team observes Elizabeth Kolb's class.

of a group. It's a cultural thing and you've made it a positive."

Josh Younge, a member of the High Schools That Work team, said he got the impression that the visitors were encouraged by the climate of student and staff interaction.

Moreover, Josh said the feedback helps staff members.

"I think that getting an objective, snapshot view from professionals from outside the building can help develop perspective on what is working and what can be improved," he said.

"I believe that the feedback we receive can be used to facilitate different initiatives that we have been working on and help us as we plan for the future."

Verdie Williams, who with Kevin Krebs coordinates High Schools That Work efforts, said the leadership team will take the preliminary report and develop a three-year plan to address areas that need improvement.

Verdie said the group is developing a mentoring program that will address some of those items and staff members will get professional development on this during New Student Days later this month.

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