

OSBA CONVENTION 2018 NOTES-
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BE EXCITED ABOUT MATH (BEAM)-

The North Marion School District truly changed their math culture by creating a math tournament 3 years ago that students love to participate in. They wanted to have kids experience joy with math and to participate even if it wasn't their strength. They have weekly math activities with scores tallied weekly, but no teams are eliminated (to encourage participation and learning). The competition includes a 35 minute timed team event and the option of a 35 minute individual event, using SBAC questions. They pick teams in December, then have competitions in Jan, Feb, March and April with a school assembly in May to recognize participants, give out trophies and prizes. They created a culture so that there is no fear of wrong answers, but kids are rewarded for trying and improving as well. They do "Pizza Pi" math night for families, with 500 kids/family members attending. They use iReady math in their schools and are seeing their math scores improve in the classroom. They used an elementary math coach paid for by Title funding to create and sustain this program but it could be done with dedicated employees. It started just with 3rd grade but now includes 3-5th grades because of the kids love of it. They are happy to share info.

WHO'S NO. 1? STUDENTS, IN EVERYTHING YOU DO

Alex Pulaski and Heidi Sipe presented this great session. This was a session about school district communications techniques with a focus always on students. They reinforced the importance of framing every board, staff, and school question around its effects on students -student outcomes, budgets for students, curriculum for students, employees for students. They strongly recommend building a library of student images and using them at every opportunity on social media, as well as assigning a staff member to telling your student stories on Facebook and Twitter frequently—highlight successful programs, celebrate achievements or all sorts, showcase student aspirations/dreams/goals, make cell phone or professional videos to highlight stories, . They stressed the importance of creating a media relationship with your local reporters and proactively including them in your information/updates/stories and issues to build a working relationship. They also stressed the importance of never saying "no comment" to a reporter, but at least saying "you are working to resolve this situation as quickly as possible while focusing on the well-being and education of our students..." The Superintendent can schedule a monthly lunch with the local reporter to maintain a strong connection and keep them informed of great things going on or of challenges that are being addressed. The Board should be a loud positive voice sharing the great things about the school district to families, community, etc.

SATURDAY CRITICAL ISSUES BREAKFAST

This also stressed the importance of using your students stories in all your communications to build relationships with students and families, as well as with community members. The Umatilla School District creates an annual color flyer that highlights a few statistics of each of its schools—scholarship money earned, number of college credits earned, # of electives offered,

average class size, literacy focus, after school options, robotics activities at all levels, etc etc. They also include a summary of some key district information, for example the numbers of students given meals at school, the extra-curricular activities options at various grades, the dual credit latest info, some positive stats on staffing, how bond money has impacted the district, and current technology updates—or any other info that helps paint a positive portrait of your district. These are distributed around the community from law enforcement to real estate agents, the mayor and key leaders. This is a great marketing tool!