

Shelby County School Leaders Preparing for 2014-2015 School Year

Shelby County Schools' administrators and Central Office leaders recently met for two days of back to school leadership training to prepare for the opening of the 2014-2015 school year.

Superintendent Randy Fuller said a focus on leadership training is one of the things that sets Shelby County apart as a "model of excellence" in education.

"We are training them to be visionary leaders," said Fuller. "Our theme for the two day event was to show our collective sense of purpose as a district with an emphasis on individuality for all our departments and schools."

Administrators got an overview of the district's priorities for the upcoming year. These priorities include a professional development focus to create meaningful relationships with parents, businesses, community members, and organizations to better support students.

"According to a growing body of research the most accurate predictor of student achievement in school is parent engagement," said Dr. Lynn Cook, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction. "Throughout the year, our schools will be sharing best practices for community engagement and local agencies will also share services available to support students and families."

Supporting students and families is also the focus of a Learning Supports model the district implemented last year in the Montevallo and Vincent school communities. Melissa Youngblood, Student Services Supervisor, shared with administrators how successful the model was in those two communities. Shelby County was one of 11 school districts who participated in implementing the model, which focuses on removing barriers to learning by providing resources, strategies, and best practices that support student learning and enable all students to have an equal opportunity for success. The Learning Supports model, a collaborative effort of the Alabama State Department of Education, the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), and Scholastic, will be expanded district-wide this upcoming school year.

The model not only provided resources to help improve student achievement, such as report card conferences for 9th graders at Montevallo High students, but it also helped reduce the number of absences and discipline referrals in both communities. District Leaders were also trained on a new data dashboard, a software tool that will assist school leaders in the analysis, interpretation, and reporting of multiple indicators of student performance. This tool will be used in school improvement efforts, and to identify at-risk students in the areas of achievement, attendance, and discipline.

<http://podcasts.shelbyed.k12.al.us/scs-news/2014/07/25/shelby-county-school-leaders-preparing-for-2014-2015-school-year/>