

## PDSA Sample B

**The problem:** Bliss Public Schools had recently discovered that they had a chronic absenteeism problem in their middle and high schools that was effecting student achievement. Last year, one of their high schools had figured out some practices that effectively reduced chronic absenteeism. Now a group of 3 schools (1 middle and 2 high schools) were trying to replicate the results.

Aim: Decrease from 88 to 20 the number of students that are chronically absent (10 or more days) in 3 schools by July 2015.

**The team:** The Chief Academic Officer of the district was sponsoring the project and each of the schools had a team made up of a couple of teachers, the Assistant Principal and a counselor. This second phase of the work had launched in the summer of 2014. During the first months of the school year each of the teams had established a regular rhythm for meeting as a team and collaborating across the three schools. All the teams had training and experience running PDSAs in their context. You coached each of the teams about twice a month and had a good relationship with each of them. You are reviewing one of the team's latest PDSAs in preparation for a coaching session you have with them.

## PDSA (plan-do-study-act) worksheet

**CHANGE:** Letters to parents after 5<sup>th</sup> absence    **OBJECTIVE:** Try the process in a new school (middle school)    **CYCLE:** 6    **CYCLE:** November 2, 2014

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### PLAN

**Describe the test of change:** We are going to ask the middle school to try sending letters home after the fifth absence for a week.

#### **Predictions:**

- This will be straightforward for the AP to do and won't take too much time.
- We hope that providing parents with the information reduces the likelihood of absences in the future.

#### **Steps to execute:**

1. Provide the AP (Lisa) with the letters for parents
2. Ask her to try it for one week and to track how much time it takes her
3. Check back in with Lisa two weeks later and ask (a) how many letters she sent, (b) how many students she didn't get to send letter to (and why) and (c) whether the students are absent the next week

### DO

#### **Describe what happened when you ran the test**

- Getting Lisa up to speed on the idea was relatively easy. She appreciated having a letter ready to go.
- Lisa adapted the paper letter format to an email because that was how the school typically communicates with parents.
- Lisa didn't have ready access to the attendance list and had to ask the secretary to pull it for her.
- Lisa looked through the attendance data and sent all the letters on Friday.
- One parent came and talked to Lisa about the letter. They were surprised because the school is very good at communicating with parents but the letter felt "harsh" (Lisa thought this was because it was written for a high school context).

### STUDY

#### **Describe the measured results and how they compare to the predictions**

- There were 4 students that hit their 5<sup>th</sup> absence during the week of testing. Lisa sent a letter to all of them. It took her 25 minutes to send the letter. The next week, 1 of the students that received a letter was also absent (illness)

### ACT

#### **Describe what modifications to the plan will be made for the next cycle from what you learned**

Next cycle: Test a modified letter with three parents

Following cycle: Implement the process for 2 months and look at whether it decreases chronic absenteeism.