3 Ways to Improve Your School

3 Ways to Improve Your School Without an Unlimited Budget

It seems that schools are expected to do more and more with less and less. Specifically, school leaders must increase school achievement, even if the school is faced with budget cuts. When school budgets are reduced or already lean, administrators, school boards and teacher leaders must search for creative ways to reduce finances while still continuing to improve teaching and learning. Though budgets may be inadequate, expectations for accountability are not. In fact, it's likely that they increase with each school year. With this in mind, below are a few ways to foster school improvement on a budget.

Funds-saving Combo: Evaluation, Partnerships & Incentives

1. Evaluate all resources to determine their impact on student achievement. The most effective way to manage assets is through an online system like SAM (School Asset Management System). Resources may include a wide array of items, including computers, laptop/notebook devices, tablets, monitors, display screens, interactive whiteboards, furniture, athletic gear, district vehicles, school equipment, and other items. SAM allows schools to manage all these assets with QR tagging and a mobile app, in addition to the online management system. Resources that don't significantly improve teaching and learning can be sold or traded in for new equipment. Some education technology companies even let you trade in old devices for credit on new devices!

2. Form community/school partnerships. Each school's leadership team should visit nearby businesses, nonprofits and faith groups to form partnerships. These organizations may be willing to sponsor school events. Sponsorships may include providing funding and/or volunteers for events and school programs. Many organizations are willing to provide mentors to students who will regularly visit the school and partner with a student(s). Pairing mentors with at-risk students contributes to increased student achievement.

3. Create incentives **for students to meet reading goals.** To increase the school's achievement level and thus, potential funding, students' reading scores must improve. To increase reading scores, students must read, read, read! While the ultimate goal of reading is for pure enjoyment, encouraging reading through incentive programs may help students realize how much they actually do enjoy reading once they begin doing it on a regular basis. Form a committee of teacher leaders, parents and school partners to set weekly or monthly student reading goals and to devise an incentive plan. The plan should include prizes that students will receive once goals are met. Prizes might not even be physical and may include free things like longer recess

or a games period once a month. Depending on the age level, students may even be invited to be on the committee. After all, who knows better what will motivate kids than a kid?

Every school has room for improvement, and strategies like these are not only likely to improve your school, but are also cost-effective and budget friendly! They are designed for the resourceful, reflective practitioner who is continuously looking for effective and efficient ways to improve student learning and narrow existing achievement gaps. Try these free or low-cost methods at school, and watch achievement levels improve!

School leaders' hesitance to invest in schoolwide devices can come from the feeling that the money is being "sunk into" devices that will just need to be upgraded in the future. Troxell's Buy Back Program resolves this issue for school leaders by ensuring that those devices have future value when it comes time to replace them. The IT asset disposition program gives schools cash or credit for existing IT hardware, stretching that initial investment and leveraging it into the latest and greatest devices. It's a win-win!