**Focus Group Questions**

**Thursday, July 16,2008**

**EDU 7900: Dr. Dunlop**

The following report is a reaction to a focus group interview of seven individuals, hired at the Central Islip Public School System for all but one individual to teach students, summer school. The only other individual was not a teacher, but a secretary for the summer, albeit she teaches during the school year. Shani Little, Eileen Kirchoff, Ryan Schmalacker, Rahana Schmalacker, Kevin Spicer, Andrew Brown,

#1. How would you respond to the changing process from self-contained classes to departmentalization?

Ans: There were many responses:

Andrew Brown: “I taught at Mulligan Elementary School, which is now the intermediate school. Two years ago they made the switch to departmentalization. Right off the bat, there was a lot of turmoil. I mean the kids had a hard time adjusting. They simply were not mature enough to deal with the change in scheduling. It retarded their learning. The simply couldn’t cope with the change.” That was the first year. After that, things got better. Now teachers enjoy one preparation only.”

Eileen Kirchoff: “I think that departmentalization is a good thing for teachers in that they will have an opportunity to concentrate on only one preparation. Also, administrators can show the appropriate research materials about departmentalization to lower the staff’s level of concern of the process of change. The process of professional development is another good key to get the staff to buy into the changing process of departmentalization.”

Rita Mattus: Departmentalization is ok if you have a good group of kids. What if you have 5 periods of bad personalities.” You will be stuck with a year from hell.”

#2: What are the necessary steps that are required for the process of changing from a self-contained class to departmentalization to take effect?

Alan: Orientation is something that would be required.

Shani Little: Let Kids do the tour of the building. In other words, get extra security, like we do in Longwood, and permit the students to give tour like “tour guides” to in-coming Freshmen students. As long as we made sure that the entire building was covered with security, we were confident that there would be enough supervision.”

Rahana: “During Orientation there should be role models who should do skits and the in-coming students should listen to films about what their goals should be.”

Kevin: “The administration should sell departmentalization program to the parents and to the community with arts and crafts, letters home, a website, or anything that sells big that is Public Relations.”

Eileen: “The in-coming students should have their schedules with them and do a practice run to get used to where they are going the first few days of the year. Also, ongoing professional development would be a tremendous help to keep the administration and the teachers and staff on the same page with respect to departmentalization, teaming, and differentiation.”

#3. How would you assess the effectiveness of the program utilizing formative and summative assessment techniques?

Eileen: utilizing open-ended questions for qualitative assessment or the Likert scale for quantitative assessment.”

Tom: Making a survey for the students about how well they like the new schedule during departmentalization.