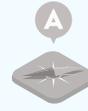




Site Level
Autonomy



Management



Alignment of
Spending to Goals



Resource
Equity



Transparency

Case Study

Principals innovate with social emotional learning budgets

Key Takeaway

Site-level autonomy allows principals to be more effective in delivering programs and opportunities to support the nuanced needs of their students.

When school leadership is involved in the strategic planning process of district-wide initiatives, and principals are given autonomy to determine how resources should be allocated in their schools, principals become uniquely qualified to craft innovative and equitable solutions to directly support their student community that may not otherwise have been possible with a blanket top-down solution.

Challenge

During the 2016/17 school year, **Schenectady City School District** was identified as requiring targeted support under then-impending ESSA regulations. The social and emotional development health of the students became a critical aspect of the district's comprehensive improvement plan because students facing chronic trauma and stress needed more support to succeed academically.

The district assembled a team of principals, teachers, and administrators from each of their 19 schools to attend a three-day trauma-sensitive schools institute (TSSI). The district used a mixture of Title 1 funds, and General Fund dollars to pay for the seminar and used the information gleaned to shape their district-wide institute implementation plan.

District Highlights

Student Enrollment	9,700
Number of Schools	19
Employees	728
State	New York
ERP	nVision

Solution

Principals were given autonomy to budget for funds to implement innovative solutions such as calm spaces, de-escalation, and sensory rooms to support the trauma-sensitive schools plan. They also prioritized initiatives including a social emotional learning curriculum, time to pay teachers to plan for TSSI implementation outside of the school day, professional development, and other resources to support the institute. **Total cost of the initiative: \$100K**

Principals with autonomy to allocate resources to support the TSSI in the manner most beneficial for their students fully empowers them to equitably align school-level resources with strategies that not only improve student achievement outcomes, but their overall social and emotional well-being.

SMART Pathways is a district financial management and strategy rubric with five Pathways and 48 indicators of success designed to move districts to holistic and sustainable financial management practices. When districts work to improve the **site-level autonomy** pathway, they work to ensure their budget owners have control over the dollars spent at their location and are provided the corresponding professional development needed to ensure their success.

Interested in learning more about the **SMART Pathways**? Let's talk.

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