

deciding

ALLIANCE FOR ACHIEVEMENT®



Building school success,
one student at a time.™

*When a school focuses on each student's
learning, the school itself succeeds.
Everyone has a role in getting the job done.*



ALLIANCE FOR ACHIEVEMENT®
Continuous School Improvement (K-12)

ALLIANCE FOR ACHIEVEMENT



“The AFA model helps teachers meet the individual needs of our diverse student population. The work with the state standards and professional dialogue that has occurred during the instructional team planning sessions has been so beneficial for everyone. The completed unit plans include excellent strategies and materials that are resulting in high quality, differential instruction for all students.”

Judith Baseman, Principal
Stephen Foster Elementary School



www.adi.org

ALLIANCE FOR ACHIEVEMENT
BUILDING SCHOOL SUCCESS, ONE STUDENT AT A TIME.™



Continuous improvement is every school's goal. In fact, it is a necessity. Today, a school simply *must* keep getting better to provide students the education they need in a changing world. Alliance for Achievement (AFA) helps teachers, administrators, staff, students and parents *work together* so that *their* school keeps getting better and better. AFA builds school success, one student at a time, and *everybody* has a role in getting the job done.

“As a school superintendent, I was always searching for the right combination of policies, programs, and procedures so that every student would benefit fully from their school experience. AFA puts it all together in a way that makes sense and works for teachers and students.”

Fred Plese
AFA Education Specialist



WORKING TOGETHER



“The AFA Education Specialists didn’t just tell us to form teams; they trained our teams to be effective, provided structure for our meetings, and taught us what to expect in the change process. Our teams are now the way we do business, and it is very productive.”

Stephon Humphrey, Teacher
Lovejoy Academy

TEAMWORK



A Leadership Team looks at the big picture. Instructional Teams of teachers hammer out the instructional strategies. A School Community Council engages parents in their children's learning. Students are accountable for their own learning and help each other learn. Everybody has a job to do, and they work together to get it done. AFA provides the structure and training to make teams productive. The result is a satisfying and fruitful experience.

"In my years as a middle-school social studies teacher, teams were my salvation. I learned so much from other teachers, and together we were able to address problems that seemed insurmountable when faced alone. AFA provides a team structure that empowers everyone to working together for each student's success. My passion is helping AFA teams function at the highest level of effectiveness."

Michael J. Koltun
AFA Education Specialist



TEACHING ALL STUDENTS AND EACH STUDENT



“This, to me, is the essence of AFA—targeting instruction to each student. It is a workable, systematic way to reach each child. The students assume a new level of responsibility for their own learning, and it is very effective.”

Laurie Small, Principal
Penn Hebron Academy

TARGETED LEARNING™



AFA's instructional model is based on two bodies of research: the dynamics of whole-class instruction and the adaptive strategies of targeted learning. AFA provides training and procedures for classrooms that incorporate the best of whole-class, small-group, and individualized instruction. Each student is guided by a Student Learning Plan based on demonstrated prior learning and with a variety of learning activities for every objective. Students take on new responsibility for their learning, building their competence and confidence as learners.

“For me, the thrill of teaching is seeing the lights go on in a child’s eyes. That’s what targeted learning is really all about. The teacher matches the mode of instruction with the individual student’s learning requirements. A lot of lights go on. I love it when that happens, and I love helping teachers create that magic in the classroom.”

Brenda May
AFA Education Specialist



TEACHING THE RIGHT STUFF



Sure it's work, aligning instruction to curriculum and curriculum to standards. But in the end, teachers are able to focus on instruction rather than preparation, and they have a menu of strategic options for every situation. They learn so much in the process, working together and grappling with criteria for mastery and ways to know that a student has learned.

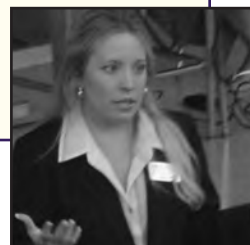
STANDARDS



State standards and benchmarks, and district curriculum guides, give teachers a framework for what each student must learn. AFA provides training and processes to bring learning objectives into daily instruction and to know how each student is progressing. Standards are the floor, and not the ceiling. Teachers plan instruction so that all students reach the floor, and no students are held back from further learning. Teachers build their instructional plans with both the standards and the potential of their students in mind. AFA does not dictate curriculum or require a school to change its curriculum. It helps teachers align their daily instruction to the curriculum and to standards and to reach each student.

“My background is in science and in special education. That may seem like a strange background, but I discovered in teaching both gifted children and children with learning disabilities that the key to success is always knowing what you are teaching and why, making the topic interesting, knowing how each student is doing, and channeling the student’s individual mastery of the content.”

Karen Huff
AFA Education Specialist



ENGAGING PARENTS



“Our School Community Council gets right down to business. The SCC Planning Guide keeps us on a productive track. As a result, we aren’t spinning our wheels with parents anymore. Parents are better informed and more supportive of the school because of it. The payoff is for our students, who now see their parents and their teachers working together for them. We are a much stronger community now.”

*Andrea Loeffler, Teacher
Grover Cleveland Elementary School*

Parents & Learning

SOLID FOUNDATION®



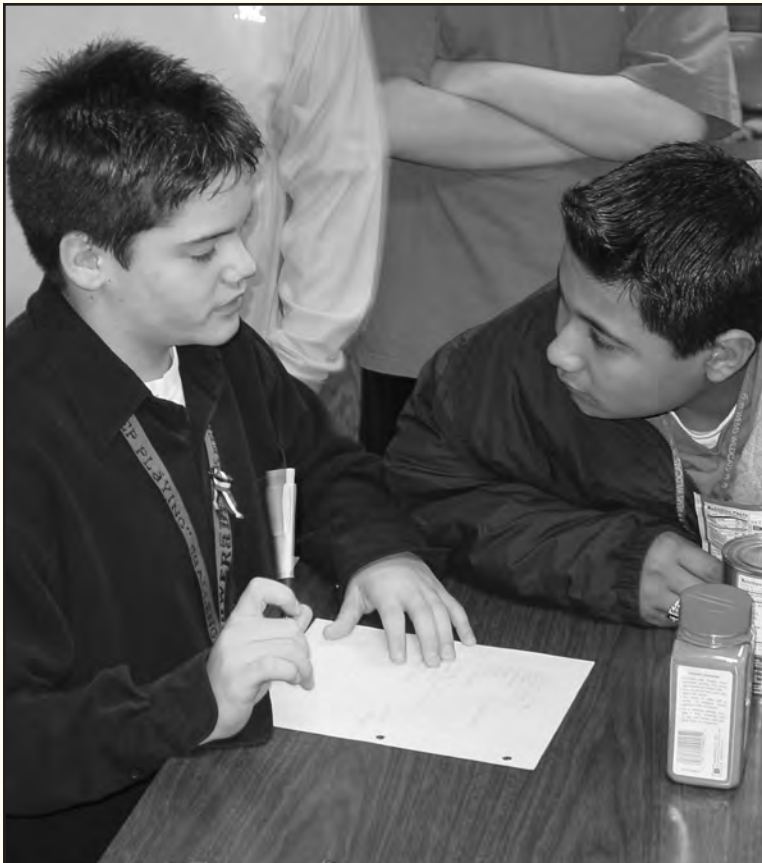
AFA's component for parent engagement is based on 20 years of research and field experience. Coordinated by the School Community Council, the Solid Foundation program focuses on parents' support for their children learning and reaches parents in direct ways, including curriculum-linked activities, home visits, and courses for parents. Solid Foundation enlists the home in building students' study habits, reading habits, and responsible and respectful behaviors.

"We all do it. We straddle two worlds. I'm a mom and an AFA Education Specialist. I don't just talk about the importance of parents in children's learning, I know firsthand about the importance of parents. AFA's Solid Foundation program engages parents in the learning lives of their children, and teachers feel the effects like a warm breeze."

Bernadette Anderson
AFA Education Specialist



MEASURING PROGRESS



“I love looking at the data and having honest, frank discussions about changes that need to be made. The information is great—extremely relevant for teaching purposes.”

Annie Prymer, Teacher
Venice Elementary School

DATA



How are students doing? How is the school improvement process going? Careful examination of information enables teachers and teams to measure progress and make good decisions. On daily classroom work, unit tests, and state assessments, each student's progress is closely monitored. Implementation of AFA components and strategies are also carefully tracked, and the school receives a thorough report every six months. AFA provides ways to organize the important information and training to use information for the benefit of each student.

"Data, data, data. Working in schools before becoming an AFA Education Specialist, I constantly heard the experts talk about data. But no one could ever quite put their finger on the data. It was more a concept than a reality. AFA makes practical, useful information about students' progress available to teachers and teams in ways that make sense. In fact, the teams learn to gather information and make decisions from it. I like that."

Kathy Kurpeikis
AFA Education Specialist



YOU ARE WONDERING



IS AFA RESEARCH-BASED?

Alliance for Achievement is based on two kinds of research: formative and evaluative. The model was formed over a 20-year period with the direct participation of such leading educators as Benjamin S. Bloom, James S. Coleman, Herbert J. Walberg, and Margaret C. Wang. Every aspect of the model is grounded in sound educational research, and that research base is fully cited in AFA manuals. AFA is also the result of 20 years of field-testing and evaluation. For example, a study of its instructional component in 42 schools found that after only two years of implementation, those schools were out-performing their states in gains on more than two-thirds of state assessment tests. A study of 129 schools employing AFA's Solid Foundation component found that over a two-year period the gain on state assessments for these schools exceeded that of a control group of schools with matching beginning scores by 80%.

WHAT DOES AFA PROVIDE US?

AFA provides **on-site** training and support over a three-year period. AFA provides processes for school improvement, procedures for instructional alignment, and in-classroom coaching. AFA provides structures and agendas for the teams, data for decision-making, and a team of consultants to address each school's

challenges. AFA's consultants are called Education Specialists, and they are master teachers and school administrators with experience in the school-change process. AFA provides **on-site** professional development workshops, classroom walk-throughs, team trainings, and regular consultations.

DO WE REALLY NEED SOMETHING MORE TO DO?

What most schools need are better organizational structures to build upon their strengths and to winnow out unproductive activities. They need time for teachers, administrators, and parents to work together. They need clear, research-based practices that make common sense and show results. These are not *more* things to do, but ways to do good things in a more efficient and productive way. AFA is not a project to add on top of everything else; it is a lens through which to see how well things are working and to do things more effectively.

"You name it, and I've taught it. And every kind of kid you can imagine. Actually, there are no "kinds" of kids, each one is wonderfully unique. Put me alongside a teacher in an AFA classroom, coaching and helping and sharing secrets, and I am in my glory."

Barbara Thomas
AFA Education Specialist



HOW MUCH TIME DOES IT TAKE TO GET EVERYTHING IN PLACE?

AFA begins with two days of training for the principal and one teacher (the AFA Facilitator) who is freed from classroom assignment to work with the other teachers during the three years of implementation. Then all the teachers receive three days of training and two days of preparation. Preparing units of instruction for one subject for a year requires about 30 hours of planning time by an Instructional Team. The Leadership Team (principal, AFA Facilitator, leaders of Instructional Teams) meets twice each month for an hour. The School Community Council (principal, Parent Education Facilitator, counselor or another teacher, and four parents) meets twice each month for an hour.

“For me, professional development is where the action is. I dream about ways to help teachers learn new techniques and develop new skills that will give them greater joy in their work. The end result is that more students succeed. I keep that in mind when training teachers as an AFA Education Specialist.”

Cheryl Patterson-Dreyer
AFA Education Specialist



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE “IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD” IS OVER?

The team structure remains in place to monitor continued school improvement. By the end of the three-year implementation, teachers have complete units of instruction for at least two subjects and are practicing classroom management procedures routinely. Upon request, AFA will provide consultation and professional development, but schools are able to maintain the processes on their own.

BUT HAS AFA EVER BEEN IN A SCHOOL LIKE OURS?

No doubt. AFA has been developed and implemented in urban schools, rural schools, and suburban schools. Every type of school configuration and mix of student populations has been part of AFA. AFA’s structures are adaptable to any school type, and the team of AFA Education Specialists brings experience in a great variety of school settings in several states.

“It seems now that I was a teacher in the Dark Ages, but it really wasn’t so long ago. A lot has happened in the world of technology in a few years. So much is available to teachers now to help them develop exciting lessons and organize everything that they do. Training teachers to use available technology as tools for learning is my job. I love it.”

John Redding
AFA Technology Specialist



**HOW DOES A SCHOOL PAY FOR AFA'S SERVICES
AND THE PLANNING AND TRAINING TIME?**

Most schools pay for AFA with a Comprehensive School Reform grant or similar funding. The good news is that AFA will help the school write its proposal, at no cost to the school.

For more information, see the AFA information at this website: **www.adi.org**

Or call to talk with:

Karen Gerdts

Director of Partnership Development

1-800-759-1495

kgerdts@adi.org

ALLIANCE FOR ACHIEVEMENT®

Building School Success, One Student at a Time.™



The Research Base

Alliance for Achievement's central contention is that when a school attends to *each* student's learning, the school itself succeeds. AFA is founded on research that explains how students learn best in school. Researchers whose work has contributed markedly to AFA include: James S. Coleman, Margaret C. Wang, Patricia Gennari, Herbert J. Walberg, Benjamin Bloom, Ralph Tyler, Paul Baker, Sam Redding, Roger Weissberg, Eva Patrikakou, Geneva Haertel, Joyce Epstein, Dorothy Rich and Maynard Reynolds. The Academic Development Institute, AFA's sponsoring organization, has benefited greatly from its association with these and other researchers in education and psychology. Alliance for Achievement is based on the following research about student learning and school success.

- 1. Classroom Culture.** A meta-analysis of 28 factors that affect school learning found that the single most powerful factor is classroom management—the way the teacher organizes and manages the complex variables of curriculum, time, space, and interaction with students. In AFA, the teacher creates a “classroom culture” that is evidenced in the teacher’s “withitness,” the learner’s accountability for learning, the clear procedures in the classroom, and the way the teacher mixes whole-class instruction, small-group instruction, and individual instruction. A study of AFA’s classroom model in 42 schools found that the schools out-gained their states on more than two-thirds of their state assessment tests. See: Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993; Brophy, 1999; Waxman & Walberg, 1999; Zins et al., 2004.
- 2. Home Environment and Parental Support.** Research has long established the strong influence of a student’s home environment on that student’s success in school. Less clear has been what schools can do to engage parents in their children’s learning. We now have significant, new research that shows that schools can improve their students’ learning by engaging parents in ways that directly relate to their children’s academic progress, maintaining a consistent message of what is expected of parents, and reaching parents directly, personally, and with a trusting approach. AFA’s parent component, Solid Foundation, was evaluated in 129 schools over a two-year period and found to improve school-wide scores on state assessment tests at a rate 80% higher than a control group of schools with the same beginning scores. See: Epstein, 1995; Patrikakou, Weissberg, & Rubenstein, 1999; Redding, 2000; Henderson & Mapp, 2002.
- 3. Targeted Learning.** AFA’s *targeted learning* is premised on research that demonstrates the importance of instructional alignment, differentiation of instruction, time on task, evidence of mastery, and careful monitoring of each student’s progress. In a meta-analysis of the factors that contribute to school learning, the student’s cognitive processes were found to be the third most powerful of 28 variables. Cognitive processes include prior learning and competence in the building blocks of learning, such as reading and computational math. We know that what a child knows affects how the child incorporates new learning. AFA’s *targeted learning* encourages the teacher to vary instruction so that all students meet target objectives and each student is able to learn to the extent that his or her demonstrated mastery allows. See Bloom, 1988; Freiberg et al., 1990; Wang, 1992; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993; Stringfield & Herman, 1996; Brophy, 1999; Paik, Wang, & Walberg, 2002.
- 4. Motivation and Metacognition.** Metacognition, the student’s repertoire of learning strategies and ability to monitor his or her own learning, is the second most powerful of 28 factors that contribute to learning. The student’s motivation to learn, and social and behavioral factors, are among the other strongest contributors to learning success. Together, these factors empower a student to *want to learn* and *know how to learn*. AFA’s teaching methods intentionally build student accountability for learning, develop an array of learning strategies, and foster motivation to learn. Social competence is a companion to academic learning in the AFA classroom. See Brophy, 1999; Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993; Brophy, 2004; Zins et al., 2004).

5. **School Community.** The school itself can function as a community, and when that happens, its constituents—teachers, staff, students, and parents—work together toward the common goal of student learning. We know that a school community provides a strong context for academic and social learning. AFA helps a school intentionally build a community based on clear expectations for student learning and behavior. A Leadership Team, Instructional Teams, and School Community Council share leadership, articulate a vision, and monitor progress. See: Coleman, 1987; Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Redding, 2001.

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Academic Development Institute

Founded in 1984

Assisting families, schools and communities with children's academic and personal development.

The Academic Development Institute (ADI) works with families, schools, and communities so that all children may become self-directed learners, avid readers, and responsible citizens, respecting themselves and those around them. ADI's vision is of an American landscape filled with distinct school communities reflecting the hopes and dreams of the people intimately attached to them. To this image of the school as a community, ADI is devoted. When the school functions as a community, its constituents (students, parents, teachers, staff) associate with one another and share common values about the education of children. At the root, members of the school community assume responsibility for one another. Those children become our children, and parents are not external agents, but full partners in the education of their children and of each other's children. Teachers are not isolated practitioners of pedagogy, but professionals integrated into the web of community and buoyed by common purpose.



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