

Teacher Planning Prompts: No-Cost Ways to Improve Our School Now and Next School Year

You can use these examples to organize discussions of ways to use current resources to make greater progress. Here are four “success stories”—ways schools have used resources they have to make greater progress.

Thematic Chicago Learning

The librarian and social studies and language arts teachers worked together to plan topic-focus learning about Chicago past, present, and future. Each month, there was a different theme. For example, one month, the theme was transportation, and the students saw videos about Chicago transportation. Before the videos, the students talked about the topic. They watched the video. Then, they drew pictures or wrote summaries of the topic. They made their own plans of ways to improve Chicago in terms of this important part of how the city works. Older students turned their work into “big books” for younger grades.

How could we adapt this idea for our school?

Inspiring Learning

A school declared the first and second floor hallways a Chicago museum. Teachers worked with their students to create exhibits about Chicago progress.

Now, when students are in the hallway, they are learning about Chicago—and thinking about their future.

How could we adapt this idea for our school?

Primary Writers—Better Parent Involvement

A school needed parents to volunteer in meaningful roles. The primary grade teachers put together writing kits that include sight words and writing prompts that ask children to write about their community. Now, the parents work with children in the primary grades every day.

How could we adapt this idea for our school?

Make Better Use of Books

The librarian put all the books about Chicago and other cities in one part of the library. She didn't have many books, but she didn't have a budget to buy more. So she worked with classroom teachers to have students write about the city for Young Authors. The students donated those books to the school library. The 8th grade class contacted Chicago agencies to get booklets about the city. Those went into the Chicago section of the library, too.

How could we adapt this idea for our school?