

Framework for Professional Development

Goals: Continued development of pedagogical learner and content knowledge relating to Learning Cultures curriculum values of student autonomy, competence, relatedness and opportunity to learn

Action: To implement a multi-faceted professional development scheme to satisfy the professional development needs of school-wide initiatives and the professional development initiatives of individual teachers.

Consultant: Cynthia McCallister will work in consultation with the Principal and in collaboration with faculty (study group facilitators, Inquiry Team members, assessment workshop coordinators) to plan, implement, monitor and participate in PD initiatives

PD Initiative Components

Infrastructures:

1. Learning Cultures Curriculum as Observation Framework: The Learning Cultures curriculum is the basis for classroom observations and the format rubrics serve as tools for classroom observations. School administrators and teachers make reference to the rubrics to guide self-assessment and professional goals.

2. Observation and Feedback: The Learning Cultures curriculum is a leadership model resting on the assumption that the school leadership assumes responsibility to ensure that all students have opportunity to participate in the Learning Cultures curriculum. Another underlying assumption of the Learning Cultures curriculum model is that all classroom teachers adhere to the curriculum formats. A comprehensive program of classroom observation in which teachers receive feedback concerning the degree to which the Learning Cultures model is being successfully implemented is the linchpin of program success. Therefore, a first phase of implementation is to establish a plan for implementation phases and procedures for teacher observation and feedback.

3. Instructional Accounting: The Learning Cultures model is based on a tenet of equality of educational opportunity. Within the model, learning opportunities are occasions to take part in social practices, specified by the procedures delineated in the format rubrics. The documentary practices specified by each format incorporate a mechanism to record evidence of each students' opportunity to learn.

It is incumbent upon the school leadership to assume responsibility to ensure that each students' opportunity to learn is guaranteed by monitoring building-wide 'instructional accounting.' Periodic goals should be established for how many opportunities each student should have to participate in each type of format (e.g., four CUR sessions per week, 2 conferences per week). Records should be monitored in order to identify cases in which children's opportunities to learn have not been met.



The responsibility for instructional accounting can be distributed across faculty (e.g., contiguous grade level teams can conduct instructional accounting).

4. Professional Development Leadership Team: The school will establish a team to assist in PD planning. Based on a commitment to the Learning Cultures model, team members will assume responsibility to identify areas of need across the school and to determine how to assess and identify such needs and means to address them (e.g., via observation, teacher survey).

5. Professional Development Support:

The Learning Cultures Framework for Professional Development is designed to build school level capacity with relative independence of external contract vendors. In order to do so, a number of components must be in place. Once a cycle of observation-feedback has been established, as outlined above, teachers should exercise agency to take part in in-house professional development offerings, described below.

A. Teacher Self-assessment: Teachers should begin the year by doing a self-assessment of strengths, needs and goals based on the rubric indicators and the Holistic Assessment of Professional Learning, then take part in initial conferences with the leadership to discuss support for meeting goals.

B. Teacher Survey: Professional Development Team should conduct a baseline survey of teachers to identify preliminary strengths, needs and goals, data from which will inform initial PD planning.

C. Site Visits: Routine site visits will be conducted to provide demonstration of pedagogical practices with opportunities for follow-up discussion.

D. Inter-visitations (intra-school and inter-school visits): Teachers have option to participate in two inter-visitations annually (this total can be increased upon approval)

- Teachers apply for inter-visitation opportunities
- Provide rationale for visitation based on self-assessment
- Establish agenda for learning (including reading/research, observation and conference components)
- Provide documentation/reflection of inter-visitation experience

E. Residencies: Teachers who are identified to need significant levels of support (e.g., those who have been observed and whose performance has been rated unsatisfactory or those who have difficulty securing changes in practices) should have opportunities for classroom residencies in which an administrator, coach, consultant or fellow teacher comes into their classroom and models/demonstrates ideal practices.

F. Inquiry and Learning:

- **Study Groups:** Formal study groups are formed to: 1) address emerging problems or questions of practice, or; 2) systematically research aspects teaching or learning.
- **Assessment Workshops:** To provide on-going opportunities to examine the ways in which judgments are made about students' development within the primary academic (semiotic) domains of reading, writing and math.

Format: Workshops should be held on a routine basis (e.g., monthly for 60 minutes); they should follow a specified protocol (presentation of student work followed by discussion); they should be collaboratively planned by teachers; they should be facilitated by teacher-leaders; the agenda should cycle through previously identified areas of focus (e.g., math, reading, writing).

G. Individualized Learning: Teachers are encouraged to pursue individualized courses of inquiry and, for those who are interested, support should be made available to arrange informal inter-visitation opportunities or meetings with staff development consultants on a voluntary basis according to individual teachers' availability (i.e., during prep periods, lunch or before/after school). Topics might include unit planning, classroom organization, individual assessment, interpretation of assessment, instructional planning.

H. Teaching Portfolio: Teachers should be invited to keep bi-monthly self assessments of their practice using a format similar to that used with students. Each teacher will assess their own professional performance. This documentary process will help teachers identify strengths, areas of growth and need, establish professional goals, and prioritize involvement across the range of PD options.

I. Public Information Presentations: Teachers involved in the formal PD mentorship program should expect to give at least one workshop/presentation open to the general public (parents, other educators). These events can take place at the school, and should be organized to include classroom visits.