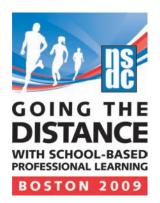




July 19-22, 2009 Boston Marriott Copley Place

# Going the Distance With School-Based Professional Learning

NSDC's 5th Annual Summer Conference for Teacher Leaders and the Administrators Who Support Them



July 19-22, 2009 Boston Marriott Copley Place

Boston, Massachusetts

Apply now to present one of the 150 breakout sessions that will address strands:

- **Learning Communities:** Creating, sustaining, and evaluating school-based learning teams.
- **Data-Driven Learning:** Using data to improve professional learning, instruction, curriculum, and assessment.
- **Professional Learning Processes:** Developing skills for planning, facilitating, presenting, and convening learning teams, and building collegial relationships.
- **The Learning Gap:** Applying research-based strategies (e.g. differentiated instruction, RTI) to improve student performance in literacy, math, and/or science.
- New Teacher Support: Accelerating new teacher competence and developing mentors.
- Teacher Leadership: Identifying, developing, and supporting teacher leaders.
- Administrator Development: Strengthening principal and central office instructional leadership and professional development skills.

Present your work to the 1,500 educators who will attend this significant meeting.

Submit your proposal online at: http://www.nsdc.org/summer09V2/proposals/





# Tap the power of peers

By Lois Brown Easton

irst-year teacher Francine
Gillespie waited in the 3rdgrade office for her
colleagues. She had brought
student work to share — a
science report she'd chosen randomly
from her students' reports on the galaxy.
She couldn't wait for her colleagues'



feedback and suggestions on the quality of the work and their ideas for her to improve her teaching of this unit.

Two miles away, four teachers stood in Bud Collier's room, jotting notes on clipboards as Bud taught a mathematics lesson they had created together. One watched a partic-

ular student; another scanned the room every 60 seconds; a third noted the work of a pair of

Peer-to-peer professional learning takes a variety of powerful forms

students in the back of the room. Later, they would meet for a colloquium. Bud would describe how he had felt teaching the group-created lesson; the others would chime in with the data they had collected.

In the high school across from Bud Collier's middle school, Enrique Chama summarized his research for the social studies staff. He described why he chose to research the effect of higher-level questioning. He had documented that students resist venturing outside their comfort zone with analysis and synthesis questions and shared what he had done to make higher-

### What's inside

### Lessons from a coach

Work on language, assume positive intentions when coaching, says Amber Jones.

### Page 5

## Voice of a teacher leader

Bill Ferriter believes that compassionate colleagues can solve the retention problem.

### Page 6

## Focus on NSDC's standards

To be useful, data need a strenuous workout.

#### Page 7

#### **Research brief**

Direct instruction in writing helps students learn.

### Page 9

### **NSDC tool**

Assess how your group is implementing NSDC's Context standards.

### Page 11



National Staff Development Council 800-727-7288 www.nsdc.org



# CHARACTERISTICS OF POWERFUL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Powerful professional learning:

- Begins with what will really help young people learn. It results in application in the classroom.
- Requires collecting, analyzing, and presenting real data. Because it is about what happens in the classroom, it is content-rich. It may never formally end; as classroom situations change, new questions arise leading to new answers and more new questions.
- Honors the staff's professionalism, expertise, experiences, and skills.
   Although they may work alone on some aspects of professional learning, such as Chama's action research project, powerful professional learning is collaborative or has collaborative aspects to it. Faculty are more likely to buy in to professional learning because they understand the need and respond to it by learning and helping each other implement changes.
- Establishes a culture of quality. The conversation in the hallways, faculty lounge, and meetings changes.
- Slows the pace of schooling. Each professional learning activity requires reflection, as well as sharing thoughts and ideas. Many educators organize themselves into professional learning communities to ensure that they have regularly scheduled time to continue their own learning, help others learn, and make sense of what's going on in school.

order questions a regular feature of class discussions. His data, collected over four months, were impressive, and his colleagues agreed to try variations of his processes in their own classes if he would coach them.

These teachers (their names have been changed) were engaged in peer-to-peer professional learning. Gillespie had brought student work to be examined using a tuning protocol at a grade-level meeting. Her colleagues had taken care of other business online beforehand so they could devote this meeting to professional learning. Anyone from Collier's vertical learning community could have taught the lesson he taught; the team had worked on it as part of lesson study which brought together district mathematics teachers from 6th through 10th grades. Chama was sharing the results of an action research project with his professional learning community.

Professional learning is the learning that teachers do themselves and with each other. Professional development, although valuable, usually involves outsiders who develop and train people. Professional development is sometimes the best way a faculty can learn something new, and most of us would prefer to be trained in something like lifesaving. The problem is that professional development often is a one-shot situation, and after the speaker or trainer departs or the university course ends, although teachers have the best intentions, they are unable to implement what they learned. They may have no support so that when there are problems, they have no one to turn to. They may find it easier to keep doing what is familiar, despite initial excitement about change.

### Other professional learning activities

In addition to the professional learning activities Gillespie, Collier, and Chama engaged in, consider these:

- Building assessments or rubrics together;
- Analyzing and revising curriculum;
- Conducting focus groups with students to get student voices;
- Analyzing videotapes of teaching;
- Participating in a book or article study;
- Using any of the protocols described by the National School Reform Faculty;



A simple three-part definition of professional learning communities is:

- A group of educators who meet regularly to engage in professional learning ...
- To enhance their own practice as educators ...
- In order to help all students succeed as learners.



### **GET THE POWER**

Read about 23 successful professional learning strategies in Powerful Designs for Professional Learning. The expanded second edition introduces new chapters on classroom walkthroughs, differentiated coaching, dialogue, and video. Available through store.nsdc.org.





- Developing and analyzing case studies, or using those available online;
- Analyzing assignments (Standards in Practice);
- Developing portfolios to share;
- Keeping journals and discussing key experiences with each other; or
- Shadowing students (or adults) in one's own or another school.

These and other strategies are fully described in *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning* (NSDC, 2008).

### How to get started

Professional learning starts in many schools by forming professional learning communities. However, unless teachers engage in professional learning, professional learning communities risk becoming just business as usual, rather than a time for professional learning. Beware the statement, "Oh, we do professional learning communities" in a school that may merely have renamed faculty, grade-level, or department meetings. A simple three-part definition of professional learning communities is:

- A group of educators who meet regularly to engage in professional learning ...
- To enhance their own practice as educators ...
- In order to help all students succeed as learners.

To be a true professional learning community, all three parts must be in place. Professional learning is not a business-as-usual agenda full of items to be decided or announcements to be made. Some characteristics of professional learning communities are variable, however, such as:

#### WHAT THE GROUP CALLS ITSELF

The earliest form of a professional learning community was probably a Critical Friends Group. A group can call itself a professional learning community if it is really engaged in all three parts of the definition.

• THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN THE GROUP
Sometimes two or three close colleagues
form a professional learning community.
Sometimes a whole faculty participates in a sin-

gle professional learning community. There's no perfect number, except as participants consider "air time." In a group of 10 or more, meeting for an hour or so, participants may become frustrated because they do not have time to talk. At the other end of the range, a group of three to four may lack diversity. Go for eight to 10 members and adjust as necessary by adding more groups.

### HOW LONG THE GROUP MEETS

Some professional learning strategies can be accomplished in 30 minutes; some take a few hours or more. Some require weekly meetings; some require monthly meetings. Some are better done when school is in session; others are better done after school or during breaks (with the teachers receiving compensation). The meeting time can vary according to what members want; however, professional learning communities should be scheduled ahead of time so that they have a regular place on the calendar.

The best way to get started is to start. Find someone who would also like to engage in professional learning. Decide when and where to meet. Informally share what you're learning. ("Joe and I looked at student portfolios the other day.") Be sure to share information with the school administrator and ask for time to share formally during a faculty meeting. Gradually invite other teachers to join you or start their own groups.

The impetus to start professional learning communities and engage in professional learning can come from teachers themselves or be launched by administrators, preferably with the help of a design team composed of those teachers most interested in participating. Professional learning communities, like most collaborative efforts, are unlikely to survive an executive mandate: "You, you, and you — be a professional learning community." It's OK to start small with two or three people sharing their professional practice, their students' work, and the questions, dilemmas, and problems that inevitably arise.

Professional learning can be contagious. When teachers talk about what they are learning, they infect others around them, who (because learning is natural) may then spread learning to their colleagues.

### TAP THE POWER OF PEERS

# START WITH YOURSELF

- Ask colleagues to help you examine a piece of student work or an aspect of your professional practice; have a peer serve as facilitator and timer for the process.
- Take an article to a faculty meeting and ask if other faculty members want to form an ad hoc discussion group.
- Ask colleagues for help writing an assignment.
- Develop a case study about a student who is bewildering you and ask others to study it with you.



Don't let excuses delay professional learning. If you wait until the school culture is perfect and collegial trust is rampant, you will never begin. Professional learning activities themselves often foster trust, and team-building exercises don't mean much unless they happen when people work on real problems using a professional learning strategy such as a tuning protocol.

Start with yourself. Ask colleagues to help you examine a piece of student work or an aspect of your professional practice; have a peer serve as facilitator and timer for the process. Or bring an article to a faculty meeting and ask if other faculty members want to form an ad hoc discussion group. Ask colleagues for help writing an assignment. Develop a case study about a student who is bewildering you and ask others to study it with you.

### Conclusion

What Gillespie, Collier, and Chama do in the classroom is better because they have peer support — their students reap the benefits of their

teachers' professional learning. Gillespie, Collier, and Chama also affect the work of colleagues who hear about what they are doing and want to know more. As their colleagues begin their own journeys into professional learning, they begin to affect the learning of their students. Soon the school as a whole is improving. As more schools sponsor professional learning and the mechanism by which teachers learn (the professional learning community or whatever the learning group may call itself), they turn to the districts for support. Districts become professional learning communities, too. Peer-to-peer professional learning, then, is a powerful way to make change in a system that otherwise seems to resist change.

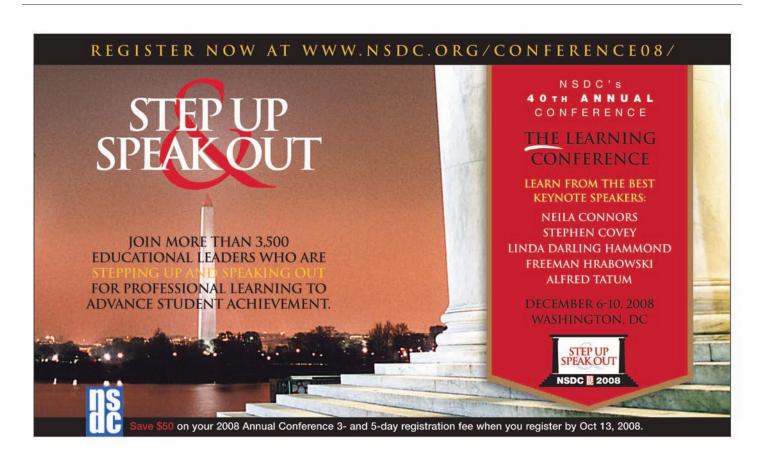
#### References

Easton, L.B. (Ed.). (2008). Powerful designs for professional learning, 2nd Ed. Oxford, OH: NSDC.

Ginsberg, M. (2004). Context, in Easton, L.B., (Ed.), *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*. Oxford, OH: NSDC. ◆

### TAP THE POWER OF PEERS

Don't let excuses delay professional learning. If you wait until the school culture is perfect and collegial trust is rampant, you will never begin.







Amber Jones is an instructional specialist with the Allen Independent School District in Allen, Texas. You can contact her at amber\_jones@ allenisd.org.

# Patience helps explain the role

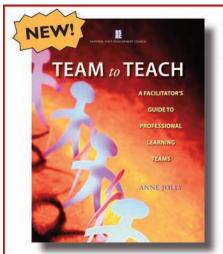
What challenges have you faced as a coach?

The hardest conversation I had was with a teacher who didn't understand the role of coach and didn't understand what I was there to do. She wanted me to pull small groups of students from her class and tutor them. She didn't understand that you can still impact student learning without working directly with students. Her experience was with people helping her in the classroom. I just sat down and we talked again about how I could support her. I had to explain that I could help plan lessons, co-teach, and she could still get great results, that you're not going to see as strong a benefit for yourself if you're using me to work with students.

I worked on coaching language. I had to think ahead of time and remember to assume positive intentions rather than getting my feelings hurt. I went in with the assumption that she didn't understand this role and once she realized what to ask for, that she would see that the other things I offer are even better.

I think you have to start by acknowledging, "I understand you feel pressure to get students to achieve," and make it clear that you want to help and support the person. I still had to have a few conversations. I had to be patient. In my own training, we discussed the change process, and I had to remember how many times you have to do something before change can occur.

Some teachers ran with (the opportunity to have coaching), and I kept that in mind. I had to give it time and keep talking about coaching and what I was offering in different ways. By the end of the year, I felt like she had a better idea of what I could be doing and realized she could call on me. Some teachers are harder to get to shift their thinking than others — just like students.



### **Team to Teach**

### A Facilitator's Guide to Professional Learning Teams

This step-by-step book includes all the necessary guidelines for facilitators to help educators build a successful professional learning team. A comprehensive set of tools, totaling 150 pages, will enable facilitators and learning team leaders to take the necessary actions that will lead to high-performing teams.

Available in October—Reserve your copy today!

B394 \$50.00

Order by:

Phone: **800-727-7288** Fax: **513-523-**0

Fax: 513-523-0638 Online: store.nsdc.org





# Newest colleagues need our help

he past few weeks have likely been nothing short of a whirlwind for thousands of new teachers across our country beginning what has the potential to be an amazing career.

They've headed into new schools carrying a sense of enthusiasm that will be tough for us old-timers to match!

I always love watching new teachers, because despite having to work far harder than expected, they're typically one big smile — proudly wearing school colors, carefully writing on boards, and often changing their desk arrangements time and again. They won't sleep for days due to a wicked

combination of emotions and excitement, but welcoming students for the first time makes everything worthwhile.

Yet despite all of this effort and energy, statistics show that more than 30% of these new teachers will be gone within three years, and 50% will be gone within five.

The numbers are shocking to some. It's hard to imagine the same excited, energetic, new faces losing their smiles so quickly. But those of us who have survived in this field are not surprised. We understand how incredibly demanding this profession really is — and we've seen new teachers leave over and over again.

What should be shocking are the costs attached to such significant turnover. America's schools spend \$2.6 billion every year to address teacher attrition. But the costs are more than just economic.

Teaching is not a profession that most can

master while in college, and knowledge of content is not enough to make one "highly qualified." Accomplished teachers have a deep understanding of the ways that students learn content and the ability to present lessons using varied instructional approaches. Developing this craft knowledge takes significant time and experience.

Every year that teachers put under their belt is critical. Over time, they become more adept and efficient at addressing learning disabilities and tailoring instruction to meet the needs of increasingly diverse student populations. Over time, they become more confident and comfortable with their own strengths and

weaknesses. Over time, they move beyond the walls of their own classrooms and influence instruction across their schools and districts.

Over time.

The challenge in developing veteran, qualified teachers is that the clock starts ticking from day one. Each school day brings barriers that can seem insurmountable to that new teacher, and dissatisfaction can set in before expertise can develop. Often working in isolation, novice practitioners end up feeling frustrated and alone.

Then a more experienced peer takes the time to reach out, lending support and encouragement. Mentoring either formally or informally, they share what they've learned, learn as they share, and make teaching seem slightly more manageable.

Retention really isn't a complicated puzzle. It just relies on our ability to show compassion to — and concern for — our newest colleagues. •





Bill Ferriter is a 6thgrade social studies and language arts teacher at Salem Middle School, Apex, N.C.

America's schools spend \$2.6 billion every year to address teacher attrition. But the costs are more than just economic.

Join the conversation with Bill by visiting www.nsdc.org/blog/and offering your opinion. Bill posts his provocative ideas frequently — be sure to return often.





# Put data through their paces

potential to transform teaching and learning and systems.

Many people work in systems that are steeped in data — and are unfamiliar with how to use that data. Like households where exercise equipment clutters the basement, collecting dust while the people upstairs fail to get a healthy dose of aerobic exercise, schools and systems that don't use the data they have collected are not meeting the purpose. What is the point of having equipment if it isn't used?

ata alone have no value. Only

when put to use do data have the

Teacher leaders and coaches can take three critical steps to use data.

### Step 1

The first is to understand the data and its source. District leaders and principals typically can provide a list of the various data available in a school. Victoria Bernhardt describes four kinds of data present in most schools.

The data source must be clearly described so that decisions based on the data are informed with a clear understanding of what is assessed, how it is assessed, who is assessed, and when the assessment occurred. Without understanding where the data came from, decision makers may have inaccurate interpretations.

### Step 2

Once leaders have identified and collected the various data and the sources are clear, the second step is to analyze and interpret the data. Analyzing and interpreting are distinct processes. Analysis includes using the data to determine results. For example, if the results of this year's state assessment are presented to the staff at a back-to-school meeting, the results alone do not provide much information. They may tell the

staff what percentage of the students met the established standard for success. However, in the analysis phase when educators compare this year's results with the last three years' results, the data begin to make some sense.

Let's look at a specific example. The results of the 2007-08 8th-grade reading assessment show that 71% of students are proficient. The school's goal might have been to have 75% of

# he in the



Joellen Killion is deputy executive director of National Staff Development Council.

#### **DATA-DRIVEN**

Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.



students achieve proficiency. The staff might be disappointed at the results. Further analysis, however, might reveal that 77% of special education students achieved proficiency, up from 61% in 2006-07 and from 51% in 2005-06. The increase in proficiency among special education students is a point of celebration. In addition, the percentage of students in the below basic level might have been reduced from 30% to 10%. Again, this is a point for celebration. While this school did not meet its goal, groups of students showed substantial progress, and their gains are reason to appreciate teachers' efforts.

Another part of the second step is interpretation. Some groups showed substantial improvements, yet what contributed to those improvements is as important as knowing that they For more information about NSDC's Standards for Staff Development, see www.nsdc.org/ standards/ index.cfm





occurred. The interpretation phase gives staff an opportunity to explore the meaning of the results.

It's important to understand what those 8thgrade reading scores mean. How did the special education students improve so dramatically in such a short time? What changes in teaching, resources, staff, or professional development occurred in this time that might have influenced the results? Drawing conclusions about causation without an appropriately designed study would be inappropriate, yet it is possible to explore what changes teachers made in their classroom and how those changes might have influenced student performance, examining a wide variety of possible factors. For example, did the students whose data are being examined in 2007-08 perform better last year as 7th graders than the previous year's 7th graders? The interpretation process digs deeper into knowing if there is a reason for the significant improvement.

### Step 3

The third and most important step in the process of using data is to develop a plan of action based on what is known. If it's true that two groups of students at 8th grade are making rapid gains, other groups must not be making the same level of gain. What will the school do to support the learning of all students, most particularly those who did not achieve the school's standard of success? It is important to identify the students, understand any patterns of commonality among them, and examine what interventions exist at the classroom level, at the school as a part of the regular program, and at the school outside the regular program. Staff must know if these students accessed these interventions and which ones they tapped.

Once staff have answered these questions, teachers should set clear goals and plan a course of action. The course of action begins first at the classroom as part of the regular instructional program. What can be done in the classroom to improve students' reading performance? Language arts teachers might integrate explicit instruction about reading skills into their classroom curriculum. All teachers in a school might benefit from professional development on reading strategies to use across the curriculum. The

TYPES OF DATA	DESCRIPTION
Demographic	Describes the students, their families, the community, the staff, etc. (e.g., the number of second language learners in a school).
Achievement	Provides results of a wide variety of student academic assessments, including state, district, school, and classroom assessments (e.g., results of quarterly common assessments).
Perception	Includes results from various surveys about the opinions of stakeholders, typically parents, community members, and students (e.g., results of a student survey about their sense of safety within a school).
School process	Describes how the school or district operates in various situations so all stakeholders have clarity (e.g., student referral process).

school might provide additional resources to classroom teachers appropriate to students' varied reading levels. Teachers at a school might implement quarterly assessments of reading performance to identify students who are not benefiting from the most common interventions. The school might institute a read-a-thon, recognize students who read beyond their normal course work, offer library time for all classes, or provide any number of other incentives beyond the regular classroom; however, the classroom is the primary focus of intervention development.

As the interventions are moved from idea to action, teachers collect more evidence about students' reading performance. These new data offer ongoing information for identifying students for whom the interventions are and are not working, which interventions seem to produce the best results, and knowledge for when an intervention can be retired.

These three steps describe the basic process for my statement about using data. Data alone provide limited information. Only by understanding the data, analyzing and interpreting that information, and moving from information to action through clear goals and plans of action to improve the areas targeted for improvement, will data be useful for improving student learning. •

The most important step in the process of using data is to develop a plan of action based on what is known.





# How to teach students to write

### DIRECT INSTRUCTION EFFECTIVELY IMPROVES WRITING SKILLS

### By Carla Thomas McClure

he quality of student writing increases when teachers show students how to divide the writing task into steps (i.e., planning, revising, editing), then teach how to accomplish each step, according to a 2007 research meta-analysis published by the Alliance for Excellent Education.

# What instructional elements have been shown to improve student writing?

The 2007 Alliance review, authored by researchers Steve Graham and Delores Perin, identifies 11 instructional elements that have shown positive effects on writing quality among students in grades 4-12.

They are — in order of magnitude of effectiveness — explicit strategy instruction, summary writing, collaborative writing, specific product goals, word processing, sentence combining, prewriting, inquiry activities, process writing (e.g., creating a supportive writing environment and encouraging students to take ownership of the work), study of models, and writing for content-area learning.

# Are these elements equally important for all students?

The authors of the Alliance study are quick to say their meta-analysis does not constitute a writing curriculum or reveal an "optimal way" to combine the various instructional elements.

Needs may vary among individual students, they say. Instruction in writing strategies, however, seems especially effective with low-achieving students.

# Do students with learning disabilities need additional support?

Some students with learning disabilities do need additional support, concluded Linda H. Mason and Steve Graham in a 2008 article in *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*. For students with learning disabilities who are not making adequate progress in a general education setting, the instructional elements identified in the Alliance study may need to be implemented outside of the general education setting, they say. These students also may need additional structure and support.

Based on the results of a research metaanalysis focused solely on writing interventions for grade 4-12 students with learning disabilities, Mason and Graham offer several recommendations:

Teach students to regulate their own writing

### EDVANTIA

Carla Thomas McClure is a staff writer at Edvantia (www.edvantia.org), a nonprofit research and development organization that works with federal, state, and local education agencies to improve student achievement.







behaviors, such as goal setting and self-reinforcement, throughout the writing process.

- Use teacher-student and student-student conferences.
- Provide guided and independent practice across genres.
- Cognitively model the writing process (e.g., say aloud the things writers usually think as they write, such as, "I know there is a better way to say this, but I can think about that later, when I'm editing").
- Teach reading and writing together to support content learning.

#### References

Graham, S. & Perin, D. (2007). Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools: A report to Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent

### What is a meta-analysis?

Meta-analysis is a way to summarize the collective results of multiple research studies. For example, the Graham and Perin meta-analysis mentioned in this article is based on 142 studies; the Mason and Graham review is based on 40 studies. When researchers do a meta-analysis, they use statistical methods to determine the strength and consistency of the particular educational practices included in the studies.

Education. Available at www.all4ed.org/files/WritingNext.pdf.

Mason, L.H. & Graham, S. (2008). Writing instruction for adolescents with learning disabilities: Programs of intervention research. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 23(2), 103-112. ◆

Teachers Teaching
Teachers (T3)™ is
published eight times
a year by the National
Staff Development
Council, 504 S. Locust
St., Oxford, OH 45056.
Copyright, NSDC, 2008.
All rights reserved.

### MAIN BUSINESS OFFICE

504 S. Locust St. Oxford OH 45056 513-523-6029 800-727-7288 Fax: 513-523-0638 NSDCoffice@nsdc.org www.nsdc.org

**Editor:** Valerie von Frank

**Designer:** Kitty Black

### **NSDC STAFF**

### **Executive director**

Stephanie Hirsh stephanie.hirsh@nsdc.org

### **Deputy executive director**

Joellen Killion joellen.killion@nsdc.org

### **Director of business services**

Leslie Miller leslie.miller@nsdc.org

### Distinguished senior fellow

Hayes Mizell hmizell@gmail.com

### **Emeritus executive director**

Dennis Sparks dennis.sparks@comcast.net

### **Scholar laureate**

Shirley Hord shirley.hord@nsdc.org

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

### Karen Dyer (2009)

President dyerk@leaders.ccl.org

### Ingrid Carney (2009)

icarney@boston.k2.ma.us

### Sydnee Dickson (2008)

sydnee.dickson@schools.utah.gov

### Cheryl Love (2010)

samsseed@aol.com

### Charles Mason (2010)

President-elect masonc@mtnbrook.k12.al.us

### Sue McAdamis (2008)

Past president mcadamissue@rockwood.k12.mo.us

### James Roussin (2009)

jim.roussin@gmail.com

### Sue Showers (2008)

cinsue@fuse.net

### Ed Wittchen (2010)

ed.wittchen@telus.net

### COPYING/REPRINT POLICY

All content in *Teachers Teaching Teachers (T3)* is copyright protected by the National Staff Development Council and may not be copied or reprinted without permission. Please see www.nsdc.org/library/publications/permpolicy.cfm for details as well as a form for submitting a request.

### contact

Complete contact information for all staff and board members is available on the web site at www.nsdc.org/connect/about/index.cfm.





# SELF-ASSESSMENT of implementation of NSDC's Context standards

**PURPOSE:** Determine a group's perception of the Context standards of NSDC's Standards for Staff Development. The assessment can be used to reveal strengths as well as areas for improvement.

Because of the value in obtaining multiple perspectives, the self-assessment will be most useful if several members of a group complete the survey and share their responses. Stakeholder groups that might use this self-assessment include district staff development committees, school boards, schoolbased staff development committees, whole faculties, or school improvement teams.

**PREPARATION:** Prepare enough copies of the Self-Assessment and the Scoring Guide (p. 13) so that each participant has his or her own copy. Prepare a poster-size copy of the Scoring Guide and be prepared to display it in the meeting room.

TIME:

**Part I:** 15 to 20 minutes. **Part II:** 90 minutes to 2 hours.

**Part III:** 1 to 3 hours.



The self-assessment will be most useful if several members of a group complete the survey and share their responses.

### Directions to the facilitator

### PART I: COMPLETE THE ASSESSMENT

- 1. Have each individual complete the Self-Assessment alone.
- 2. Ask participants to record their responses on the scoring guide.







### **PART II: ANALYZE THE DATA**

Analyze the data in two ways: average score and score distribution.

### **AVERAGE SCORE**

- 1. Display the poster-size copy of the Scoring Guide on the meeting room wall. When participants have completed their individual scoring, ask them to transfer their scores to the poster-size scoring guide. Group members can do this by making hatch marks, posting colored dots, making Xs in the appropriate places, or using any other method the facilitator devises.
- 2. Select a participant or a group to compute the average score for each question and then for each standard
- 3. Create a list that rank orders the standards from highest to lowest.

### **SCORE DISTRIBUTION**

- 1. Direct participants' attention to the poster-size scoring guide which shows the distribution of the scores. Ask them to consider whether there is common agreement or disagreement of group member opinions. For example, an average of 3.0 could occur because all participants responded "Neutral" (3.0). But the statement could also average 3.0 if half the group responded "Strongly Disagree" (1.0) and half responded "Strongly Agree" (5.0). Wide distribution indicates disagreement concerning the statement. This kind of skewed distribution would require further conversation for there was not agreement among group members.
- 2. Highlight questions with a wide distribution of scores. Encourage participants to discuss these questions by asking:
- Why did you score this statement as a 1 or a 5?
- Does anyone want to change the score based on this new information?

### PART III: DETERMINE STRENGTHS AND AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

- 1. Lead a group discussion to reach a consensus about which issues should be given priority in an improvement plan.
- 2. The group could then create an action plan for the implementation of the priority standards.

The self-assessment will be most useful if several members of a group complete the survey and share their responses.







### **Self-assessment**

Name (optional) _	School or district	:

Determine whether the school or district is the focus for your answers. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Not sure	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutra I	Agree	Strongly agree
In this school/district, 25% of an educator's workday is used for staff development.		1	2	3	4	5
In this school/district, collective bargaining agreements     (teacher contracts), calendars, daily schedules, and incentive systems support staff development.		1	2	3	4	5
3. In this school/district, all teachers are part of ongoing, school-based learning teams that meet several times a week to plan instruction, examine student work, and/or solve problems.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. In this school/district, small learning teams are a primary component of the staff development plan.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. In this school/district, staff development occurs primarily during the school day.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. In this school/district, school faculties and learning teams focus on school and district goals.	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. In this school/district, leaders recognize staff development as a key strategy for supporting significant improvements.	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. In this school/district, at least 10% of the district's budget is dedicated to staff development.	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. In this school/district, administrators and teacher leaders develop knowledge and skills necessary to be staff development leaders.		1	2	3	4	5

SCORING GUIDE CONTEXT		
Learning communities	Leadership	Resources
4	2	5
3	7	8
6	9	1
AVERAGE SCORE:	AVERAGE SCORE:	AVERAGE SCORE: