



Pat Roy is co-author of *Moving NSDC's Staff Development Standards Into Practice: Innovation Configurations* (NSDC, 2003).

Structure influences behavior

Researchers tell us that there are first- and second-order changes within educational reforms. First-order change is the refinement of current practices — changes, but not dramatic ones. These continuations of past behavior are spiffed-up improvements of accepted practices. Second-order changes are a break with past practice, are outside the existing paradigm, and require new skills and knowledge (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Developing educator collaboration in schools is a second-order change, and it's a change that central office staff have to play a role in developing.

Central office staff need to **support and sustain a district culture that is characterized by collegiality** (Roy & Hord, 2003, p. 148). Since collegiality can be viewed as primarily a school-based issue, what is the role of central office in this work? First, central office staff need to **provide resources so that teachers, administrators, and central office staff can routinely work with each other to learn, coach, and give feedback**. Basic collaboration needs to become standardized practice throughout the system. Needed resources might include the use of skilled facilitators or meetings in which different protocols are used for structured discussion or to examine school-based issues. Central office staff will truly understand the power of collaboration when they also are expected and encouraged to collaborate with their peers, as well as with principals and teachers.

One core belief that central office staff can model is a shared responsibility for *all* students. Central office staff are seemingly required to advocate for their own programs, and that advocacy can be misconstrued. So central office staff

need to **act on the belief that all students are everyone's responsibility — not just the students connected directly to one's programs**.

Another major task that central office staff need to undertake is to **provide time for teachers, administrators, and central office staff to meet with colleagues for discussion and problem solving**. For many administrators, this task has meant working through the political, financial, and transportation issues to create a schedule in

which educators have time to collaborate during their work day on curricular, instructional, and assessment issues. This task is extremely difficult for any single school to broach and requires the skill and knowledge of the superintendent and other central office staff to convince school board members and the community of the importance of this change. NSDC has published a compilation of articles, tools, and examples of schedule

changes that can be helpful in accomplishing this task (Von Frank, 2008).

Every system is designed to get the results it's getting. If the district truly values collaboration and collegiality, alter the district structure, procedures, and interactions to encourage powerful learning among faculty members and administrators.

REFERENCES

Roy, P. & Hord, S. (2003). *Moving NSDC's staff development standards into practice: Innovation Configurations*. Oxford, OH: NSDC.

Von Frank, V. (Ed.). (2008). *Finding time for professional learning*. Oxford, OH: NSDC.

Waters, J.R. & Marzano, R. (2006). *School district leadership that works: The effect of superintendent leadership on student achievement*. (Working paper.) Denver, Colo: McREL.

NSDC STANDARD

Collaboration: Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.

Learn more about NSDC's standards: www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm.