



## Establishing Time for Collaborative Professional Learning

### Course Profile

#### Welcome!

Welcome to *Establishing Time for Collaborative Professional Learning*. This online course is designed to provide you with information, strategies, and tools to take on the challenge of remodeling your current school and district schedule to provide time for educators to meet, work, and learn in collaborative professional learning teams. You will be provided with research that supports the need for educator learning teams, as well as a toolbox to guide you through a process to identify ways you can adjust your school or district schedule. You will be able to build stakeholder support, and develop strategies that effective collaborative teams use to improve their practice and impact student learning. We believe that time is a gift—use it on things that make a difference!



#### About your Course Guides

Patricia Roy and Parker McMullen developed this course. They have extensive experience as middle school and high school teachers, administrators, and professional development consultants and trainers. Pat has been involved with Learning Forward for over 30 years. She co-authored *Becoming a Learning School* with Joellen Killion and also co-authored the first set of Innovation Configuration maps for the professional learning standards with Shirley Hord in 2001. Pat also wrote two columns for *The Learning Principal* and *The Learning System* from 2004-08.

Parker facilitated the development of his urban high school as a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools and also served as a principal of an intermediate school in Delaware. He served as a team coach for Arizona schools engaged in a three-year program to improve professional learning at their sites.

Because of modern technology, you will be able to access a host of other experts and resources as well. You will find videos from Stephanie Hirsh, Frederick Brown and a variety of other experts and consultants who have provided webinars through Learning Forward

media programs. You will also find articles from many of Learning Forward’s publications such as the *JSD*, *Tools for Learning Schools*, *Leading Teacher*, *The Learning System* as well as special reports and research studies. A vast array of resources creates the foundation for this online course.

## Who Is the Target Audience?

Promoting and designing effective collaborative professional learning is the responsibility of everyone who is interested in powerful teaching and learning and student achievement. That means that classroom teachers, school administrators, central office staff, superintendents, school board members, and community members are appropriate participants for this online course.

- The online course could be used by school board members as a study session focused on retooling a district and school schedule to support collaborative professional learning.
- Central office staff could use the course as the foundation for their own study of the topic within their own professional learning community (PLC).
- School leadership teams and administrators might study and discuss articles and information before launching PLCs within the school.
- Administrators and aspiring and emerging leaders could study this material in order to make a proposal to system leaders about the need for time at the school level for a different kind of professional learning.
- State education agency staff could use the course as the basis for their own study of how to establish time for collaborative professional learning and identify policies that would encourage (and not prevent) this change at the district and school level.

## Why This Course Exists

Time has been acknowledged as one of the biggest barriers to most educational reforms and programs. Professional learning is no exception. In a study that compared American professional learning to international practices, other countries provided many more collaborative learning experiences as part of the workday. Emerging studies have shown that teaching improves when educators are provided time to work together on instruction, analyzing student data, designing lessons, and developing common assessments. School and district schedules can and have been amended around the country to establish a consistent time for educators to collaborate with each other. It can be done and this course has been designed to help you understand why to do it, how to do it, and what this collaborative professional learning looks like when done with quality.

## Course Materials

The course involves four modules which include readings, videos, short presentations, practices, and reflections. Practice activities are included in the course so that you will have experience with and understand the impact of various components and tools provided in the course text. The expectation is that the practice activities will deepen your understanding, ground your practice, and encourage you to take action.

There will also be four assessments, one for each module, based on the content. To pass the assessments you have to read and/or watch all the content. The point of including assessments is to check to make sure you are keeping up with the reading and that you understand the basic concepts of the course. You have to correctly answer at least four out of the six questions to pass the assessment and advance to the next module.

## Course Design

The first decision about this course was to ensure that your participation could occur any time and any place that is convenient for you—rather than determined by a specific day and time. As a result, creating community or requiring interaction is not a component of this online course. To compensate, we will ask you to occasionally respond and post your reflections, responses, reactions, and thinking in a commentary box. This will also allow you to see how other participants are reacting to the materials and thinking about the tools. It will allow you to see commonalities as well as differences from others across the country who also take the course.

The primary text for this course is *Establishing Time for Professional Learning*, a workbook developed by Joellen Killion in 2013. It explains a Seven-step process for creating a stakeholder group who will identify potential strategies for establishing time, within the workday, for collaborative professional learning teams to learn together. It also includes tools to assist you in implementing this process. You will be able to download this text and tools within the online course.