Professional Learning --Planning and Implementation

The Professional Development Taxonomy created by Katherine Tucker (2013) will be used to support planning and implementation of professional development. Refer to Appendix A for the taxonomy template and Appendix B for an example of filling in the taxonomy template. The taxonomy is used to plan each of the division's initiatives, through an analysis of where each Division initiative is in its implementation progress.

The Professional Development Taxonomy is a framework that organizes and describes a progression of professional learning activities. This framework has proven to be very useful for planning professional learning, supporting implementation, measuring progress and evaluating results. Divided into five phases, each focuses on a different sort of professional learning. Each is described below.

**Phase 1: Build Knowledge**
During this initial stage the individual is developing awareness and building knowledge. This phase focuses on increasing information about the topic, understanding "what it is" and developing the deeper conceptual understanding awareness, including comprehending models, theories, principles and generalizations of the topic. For example if the professional learning content is on differentiated instruction, the participants are learning what differentiated instruction is, about the model(s) used and how it informs teaching.

**Phase 2: Develop Skills**
During this phase, the focus is on learning "how to do it". What skills and processes do you need to know to be able to apply your understanding of the topic? If we continue with the example of differentiated instruction, teachers are learning how to differentiate instruction through lesson planning, instructional delivery and assessment based on the model you have learned.
Phase 3: Apply to Practice 3:
This phase emphasizes preparing, implementing and refining practice. The learner is beginning to determine when and how they prepare to implement the new learning. For example, if the initiative focuses on vocabulary, when and how do they teach vocabulary using their new understanding? This phase also includes beginning use and experimentation with the new procedures in the classroom. At this point, it is particularly important that learners are supported without being distracted or deterred by a high stakes evaluation. Next, the learner refines their practice, moving towards high quality, consistent application of the new practices. To get to this level, supports for implementation look quite different than during earlier phases. Collaboration becomes key to being able to refine and share practice. A coach may provide support for refinement, as well as a collaborative learning team or peer coach.

Phase 4: Improve Results
By Phase 4, collaboration becomes central to improving results and extending impact. Improving results includes assessing progress, reflecting on the results of that assessment and ensuring a continuous improvement cycle is implemented. This phase is necessarily done by groups of people versus each learner separately, given that it represents shared understanding of what effective practice looks like and how to improve collective impact of the innovation. Assessing teacher implementation of vocabulary strategies, analyzing student work and assessing students' vocabulary knowledge might measure improving vocabulary. On the other hand, differentiated instruction might be measured by analyzing lesson plans and student success with related performance tasks. Ongoing results analysis will guide the adjustments, additional support and monitoring required to achieve success. Collectively, these activities support the individual to grow and collaborative teams to refine strategies that work in their setting while the organization remains on track for continuous improvement.
Phase 5: Impact
In the final phase, emphasis is on how progress made by individuals, by collaborative learning teams and how the organization is maximized. Impact may be extended to other groups. For example, if the vocabulary initiative was focused on English language arts classes, applying the lessons learned to mathematics vocabulary instruction can extend the impact. Or, if focused on upper elementary, the initiative may be extended to middle grades classes. Successful differentiated instruction focused on improving instruction for English Language Learners may be extended to include other groups or all students. Finally, the initiative may show promise for impacting additional schools within a district or even beyond the district or local community. How will you maximize the impact of the intensive efforts that have gone into implementing this improvement effort?

**Professional Learning Design**

Professional development is designed based on identified goals and student, teacher, leader needs. Professional Learning designs include active engagement, modeling, reflection, and metacognition, while supporting change in knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practice.

Professional learning times are flexible in that they include
- Full day in-services,
- Early release days,
- Professional Learning Community meetings,
- Before and after-school,
- During instruction and planning periods, and
- Saturdays and summer special sessions.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are a vital voice when designing professional development. Professional learning goals are developed as a result of the PLC's analysis of
- Student work,
- Lesson plans,
- Progress monitoring,
- Summative assessments,
- Student data tied to School Integrated Action Plan Goals,
- State requirements,
- Division and/or school initiatives, and
- Outcomes of inquiry processes.
Professional Development Evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness of professional learning, the Guskey model will be used to structure Professional Learning Evaluation. Guskey proposes that professional learning evaluation should include the following critical components:

1. Participants' reactions
2. Participants' learning
3. Organization support and change
4. Participants' use of new knowledge and skills
5. Student learning outcomes
# Guskey’s Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation

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<th>Evaluation Level</th>
<th>Typical Questions Addressed</th>
<th>Typical Info. Gathering Methods</th>
<th>What is Measured or Assessed?</th>
<th>How Will Information Be Used?</th>
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| 1. Participants’ Reactions | • Did participants like it?  
• Was time well spent?  
• Did the material make sense?  
• Will it be useful?  
• Was the presenter knowledgeable?  
• Did the physical conditions of the activity support learning? | • Questionnaires administered at the end of sessions.  
• Focus groups  
• Interviews  
• Personal learning log  
• MeetingWorks internet-based sessions  
• Analysis of threaded discussion forums | • Initial satisfaction with experience. | • To improve program delivery and design |
| 2. Participants’ Learning | • Did participants acquire the intended knowledge or skill? | • Paper and pencil tests  
• Simulations and demonstrations  
• Participant reflections (oral and/or written  
• Participant portfolios  
• Case study analysis  
• MeetingWorks internet-based sessions  
• Analysis of threaded discussion forums | • New knowledge and/or skills of participants | • To improve program content, format, and organization |
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| 3. Organization support and change | • What was the impact on the organization?  
• Did it affect organizational climate or procedures?  
• Was implementation advocated, facilitated, and supported?  
• Was the support public and overt?  
• Were problems addressed quickly and efficiently?  
• Were sufficient resources made available?  
• Were successes recognized and shared? | • District and school records  
• Minutes from meetings  
• Questionnaires  
• Focus groups  
• Structured interviews with participants and school or district administrators  
• Participant portfolios  
• MeetingWorks internet-based sessions  
• Analysis of threaded discussion forums | • The organization’s advocacy, support, accommodations, facilitation and recognition | • To document and improve organizational support  
• To improve future change efforts |
| 4. Participants’ use of new knowledge or skills | • Did participants effectively apply the new knowledge and skills? | • Questionnaires  
• Structured interviews with participants and their supervisors  
• Participant reflections (oral and/or written)  
• Participant portfolios  
• Direct observations  
• Video or audio tapes  
• Concerns-based Adoption Model | • Degree and quality of information | • To document and improve the implementation of program content |
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| 5. Student Learning Outcomes | • What was the impact on students?  
• Did it affect student performance or achievement?  
• Did it influence students’ physical or emotional well-being?  
• Are students more confident as learners?  
• Is student attendance improving?  
• Are dropouts decreasing? | • Student records  
• School records  
• Questionnaires  
• Structured interviews with students, parents, teachers, and/or administrators  
• Participant portfolios | • Student learning outcomes:  
1. cognitive (performance and achievement)  
2. affective (attitudes and dispositions)  
3. psychomotor (skills and behavior) | • To focus and improve all aspects of program design, implementation, and follow-up  
• To demonstrate the overall impact of professional development |