

# Transforming Culture Through Professional Collaboration

From a State Initiative to School-  
Based Practice

**NSDC's purpose is ensuring  
that every educator engages  
in effective professional  
learning every day so every  
student achieves.**

# New Jersey Professional Development Initiative for Teachers

- All active teachers must accrue 100 hours of professional development every 5 years.

...The prescriptions for improving schools must not come from primarily outside the schools. The most lasting and important changes will come from within and will draw on the great resources within the schools.

Roland Barth

# Planning Structures

## Previous Structures

- NJ Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB)
- County PD Board (CPDB)
- Local PD Committee (LPDC)

## Responsibilities

- Develop statewide guidance
- Review and approve district plans
- Develop district plans

# Planning Structures

## New Structures

- PTSB
- CPDB
- LPDC and ELPDC
- School-based Professional Development Committee

## Responsibilities

- Develop a school professional development plan focused on the needs of the individual school

# CREATING THE CONTEXT FOR CHANGE

- ...the need for a common vision and goals that support the learning for all
- ...the reality of implementing professional learning teams
- ...the tools used to support the initial implementation of school-based learning
- ...the need for leadership and the importance of culture

# Breaking Ground: Initial Steps in Transforming Our Culture

- Step 1: Select teacher-leaders to facilitate learning teams



# Breaking Ground: Initial Steps in Transforming Our Culture

- Step 2: Establish Learning Teams



# Breaking Ground: Initial Steps in Transforming Our Culture

- Step 3: Introduce Professional Learning Communities to the staff

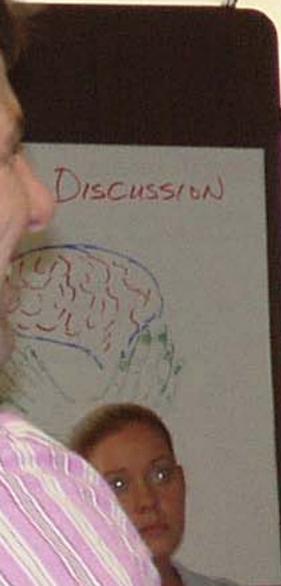


# Breaking Ground: Initial Steps in Transforming Our Culture

- Step 4: Plan PLC Meetings to foster dialogue
  - 1. What are our hopes and fears?
  - 2. How do we (at VTHS) define student achievement?
  - 3. How do we view our roles in supporting students?



A man in a light-colored, checkered button-down shirt is standing and presenting the whiteboard to a group of people.



A man in a pink and white striped shirt is seated in the foreground, looking towards the presenter.

A woman with glasses and a blue shirt is seated in the foreground, looking towards the presenter.

A woman in an orange shirt is seated in the foreground, looking towards the presenter.

A woman with long, curly brown hair, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt, is seated in the foreground, facing away from the camera.

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue polo shirt, is seated in the foreground, looking towards the presenter.

# Reflection: Assessing the Initial Steps

- Role of Leadership
- Facilitation Process
- Team Connection
- Relationships among staff and with students

# Reflection: Potential

- Do you believe that engaging in collaborative professional learning can impact student achievement and enhance school culture?
- What evidence do you have? What does it sound like? Look like?

# Reflection: Potential

- I hear conversations about academics in the halls and in the faculty room. (John)
- Teachers are placing education articles in our mailboxes. (Coleen)
- There are fewer negative comments about collaboration. This is a sign that the PLC's are no longer being dismissed as a “passing trend.” (John)

# Reflection: Potential

- There is a stronger sense of community. (Jim)
- I think that teacher driven professional learning has promoted a more collegial atmosphere in our building. (Doug)
- People are talking even when they are not at meetings. (Tim, Principal)

# Reflection: Challenges

- Resistance or reluctance to change: In theory, change is easy. In practice, we rely on past practice and stay in our comfort zone. (Terry)
- Lack of vision: We don't have a shared vision as a faculty. We don't take collective responsibility for the learning of our students. (Lisa)

# Reflection: Challenges

- When will we examine student work and look at student data?
- How do we find the time to build trust?

# USING TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

**COLLABORATIVE PROFESSIONAL  
LEARNING IN SCHOOL AND BEYOND:  
The New Jersey Toolkit for School-  
based Professional Learning**

# Chapter Contents

- Questions for dialogue to elicit initial perceptions and understandings;
- Articles to build knowledge and encourage conversation;
- Resources to make implementation decisions;
- Tools for teamwork in each of the critical areas; and
- Subject-specific bibliography.

# Leadership for Professional Learning

All resources are not obvious; great leaders find and develop available talent.

Dwight Eisenhower

Create a picture of a healthy school culture which embraces professional learning that supports the achievement of all students.

What are the attributes of effective leaders in a supportive culture?

How do we cultivate leaders and utilize their expertise?

How do we listen to all voices to make effective decisions for professional learning?

Chapter 5 (62-68, 86) and Chapter 11 (p. 222-247)

# The Team Connection

Getting the maximum benefits from commitment, involvement, strong initiative, good inquiry, open advocacy, effective conflict resolution, solid decision making and extensive use of critique is what spectacular teamwork is all about.

Blake, Mouton, and Allen (1987)

Create a roadmap for the work of a team for planning, implementing and reporting on their work.

How does the team build the rapport to focus on the hard work of developing successful strategies that enhance classroom teaching practice?

How does a team modify and revise their goals to continue on the road to improvement?

How does a team build consensus?

# Facilitating the Team

If time is taken to involve affected and interested parties (stakeholders), the plan will become their plan, implementation will be accelerated, and the potential for future conflict and disagreement will be reduced.

Dr Shirley McCune; *A Guide to Strategic Planning for Educators*; p 37

Create a blueprint for the building blocks of team facilitation that will provide the impetus for all members to invest in the identified goals and outcomes.

How does a facilitator assist the team in making decisions?

How does the facilitator maintain the ongoing movement of the team?

How does the facilitator ensure that all perspectives are heard and validated?

Chapter 6 (90-96, 106)

## Priorities

- Support from Dept. supervisors  
at all levels (administration,  
parental, classroom, student)
- departmental equality
- "Creative" scheduling \* (use  
Capitol time)
- Teacher-driven in-service  
teachers teaching teachers  
put what is learned  
into practice (i.e. forward)

- TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT AND SUPPORT THE TOPIC OF THE P.D.
- DRIVEN BY OUR COLLEAGUES
- REINFORCEMENT AND FOLLOW UP ON P.D. TOPICS
  - UTILIZE PAC. MEETING + DEPT. MEETINGS
- INPUT ON P.D. TOPICS COMING FROM OUR COLLEAGUES
- ACROSS THE

