

KS Direct Connection

KANSAS STAFF
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learningforward



OCTOBER 2010

*If your actions
inspire others
to dream more,
learn more,
do more and
become more,
you are a leader.*
John Quincy Adams

NSDC Turns To A New Era Of Learning Forward

Since 1969, the National Staff Development Council has proudly served as the professional association for those who care deeply about improving student achievement through educator learning. On September 1, 2010, we enter a new era.

NSDC is Learning Forward

Our new name, Learning Forward, acknowledges that we are an international organization. Our work focuses on professional learning. At nearly 13,000 members we are a thriving professional association of learning educators committed to effective practice, research, and advocacy.

The name change means that we are more committed than ever to advancing our purpose: *Every educator engages in professional learning so every day student achieves.*

The new name represents that what we do today in schools affects lives far into the future. We will continue to serve our members with the same dedicated level of attention, provide leadership in the field of professional learning, develop resources and information to support educator learning, and advocate for policies and effective practices that ensures that professional learning leads to student achievement.

When you visit us at www.learningforward.org, you can learn more about the name change and keep up to date on what is new. continued on page 3

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Leadership Conference



Leadership For Becoming A Learning School

April 19-20, 2011 Airport Hilton Wichita, KS

Keynote Presentation by Joellen Killion, NSDC Deputy Executive Director
Share your knowledge and experience through a breakout session. Submit a call for proposal form by October 29. See the form on page 9 or online at www.ksdc.us

President's Priorities

Learning Is Like Exercising...

By Jan Neufeld
KSDC President

I recently read an article in the Kansas news about a board member who asked his superintendent how they were going to achieve the increasing AYP targets and student learning goals. The superintendent makes the proclamation, "... in our district we are going to be focused on setting adult learning goals!" What inspired me about this comment is so much of the time we are focused on student learning goals and outcomes that we do not hold ourselves accountable for setting professional learning goals for adult learning. We craft smart goals for student achievement and results based staff development goals for buildings. How often do we focus on specific and focused adult professional learning goals?

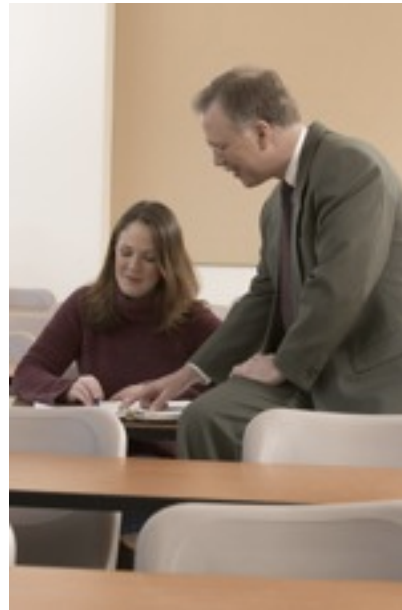
What are goals that we might set for adult learners? In our district, we are working hard to find out what do adult learning goals look like and how do we measure impact? This past year in the Newton Public Schools we began a powerful new project called Learning Community Days (LCD days as we like to call them). In the December edition of *Direct Connection*, one of our Newton KSDC members will be sharing more about LCD days in Newton. The conversation began out of a negotiations conversation in the spring of 2009 on the topic of professional learning. Like many districts, we have some feelings of discontent among teachers, administrators, and policy about "staff development". Dennis Sparks in "The final 2%" shares what it takes to create profound change in leaders. What are the fundamental barriers on "staff development days?" These are days that typically lack focus, substance; seamless planning and learning across time that becomes an extension into the classroom in ways that significantly affect teaching (Sparks 2005).

My little grandson is approaching his second birthday. Every single day, he is gaining skills in playing, talking, and performing small tasks to which we praise him and say things like, "What a big boy you are!" He is learning those skills based on the modeling and teaching of his parents and family. In what

ways are we supporting one another to gain new skills, new ways of talking, coaching and reflecting to bring about our learning growth? As I circle back to Learning Community Days in Newton, we have had some shared conversations that have brought about some big changes. Are we there yet? No, not yet. But we've had some great conversations and we have put into place a new investment in professional learning. Linda-Darling Hammond, in her research brief "Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad", shares key findings about professional learning and teacher practice. Here are a few:

- Sustained and intensive professional development for teachers is related to student achievement gains.
- Effective professional development is intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; focuses on the teaching and learning of specific academic content; is connected to other school initiatives; and builds strong working relationships among teachers.
- While teachers typically need substantial professional development in a given area (close to 50 hours) to improve their skills and their students' learning, most professional development opportunities in the U.S. are much shorter.
- U.S. teacher participate in workshops and short-term professional development events at similar levels as teachers in other nations. But the United States is far behind in providing public school teachers with opportunities to participate in extended learning opportunities and productive collaborative communities.

Our "ah-ha" was connecting the research of Darling-Hammond, Learning Forward resources, the definition for professional learning, the Learning Forward Standards, Standards Assessment Inventory, the Innovations Configurations, and the action steps for the standards. We then began planning conversations on how to create time for teachers to work toward learning goals they have created. We did this by developing Learning Community Days. The LCD



days are two, seven-hour days when teachers may select their own learning projects, action research, or collaborative educator teams to devote to specific content learning. Here is a comment one

teacher made in a recent district survey about professional learning, "Part of the reason that LCD days are so great is that it is a sign that we are trusted by our administration." While we haven't exactly approached the 50 hours Darling-Hammond talks about, we have made some healthy "toddler" steps in the right direction. Look for more information about Newton LCD days in the

December issue of *Direct Connection*.

As I bring about these thoughts and tie some key research together, I want to revisit the term "staff development". I shared in the August issue of *Direct Connection* the polarities in the terms professional development and professional learning. How can we make the shift between developing to learning? We must start by focusing on every educator engaging in effective professional learning by creating the conditions that result in aligning the work and learning of adults around improving the learning of each and every student.

When I see my little grandson holding his book upside down saying, "one, two, free, one two, free!" I realize the importance of what his little ears and eyes hear and learn from an adult. I love learning and taking on new learning challenges. One thing I must do in the near future is to commit to taking the final 40 hours of my doctoral program. I know once I take the first step, the rest of the steps will be easier to tackle. Baby steps, baby steps.....

I think all learning is this way. One step at a time. Learning is like exercising; it's good for us, it helps us grow, it makes us stronger, and it must be embedded in the culture of our learning life. DC

Calendar Countdown

KSDC Board Meetings

October 26, 2010
4:15-7:30 p.m.
Hyatt
Wichita, KS

April 19, 2011
4:00-7:30 p.m.
Wichita Airport Hilton
Wichita, KS

KSDC Board Advance

June 8-9, 2011
The Barn
Valley Falls, KS

Dream. Dare. Do

Learning Forward
Annual Conference
December 4-8, 2010
Atlanta, Georgia
Register at
www.learningforward.org

KSDC Awards Apply By December 15

Read more about awards for individuals, buildings, and districts on page 6 or check online at www.ksdc.us

Leadership For Becoming A Learning School

KSDC Annual Conference
April 19-20, 2011
Wichita Airport Hilton

Killion To Share Strategies That Focus Staffs On 'Becoming A Learning School'

By Craig Correll
KSDC President-Elect

"Leadership for Becoming a Learning School" will be the focus when KSDC holds its annual conference April 19-20, 2011 at the Airport Hilton in Wichita, KS. The conference features Joellen Killion, the keynote speaker at KSDC's 2010 conference, returning to work with educational leaders around the topic of "Becoming a Learning School." A copy of Killion's book on this topic will be included in the registration fees.

Becoming a Learning School is a toolkit for implementing Learning Forward's definition of professional development in schools. Collaborative professional learning teams meet regularly to advance teaching quality and student learning. Examine structures and process for successful collaboration, responsibilities of principals, teachers, teacher leaders, and central office staff, and strategies for evaluating team effectiveness.

Conference participants will gain strategies and tools to develop understanding of collaborative professional learning, strengthen school and district culture, establish focus on common goals, clarify roles of the stakeholders in the school, troubleshoot issues that are perceived as barriers to professional learning, and build a strong evaluation system that ensures revisions are based on needs.

April 19 will be spent working with Killion. Breakout sessions showcasing best practices by Kansas educators will be offered April 20.

Killion is the Deputy Executive Director for Learning Forward (formerly known as NSDC). In her work with Learning Forward, Killion focuses on improving professional learning for all educators.

On a more local note, Joellen Killion worked with the Kansas Professional Development Task Force this last year to develop revised recommendations for professional development across the state. Killion guided the task force in review, development, and recommendations for a statewide, comprehensive professional learning system for Kansas.

Share Your Experiences, Expertise Submit A Call for Proposals

KSDC invites all educators to consider sharing best practices by presenting a concurrent breakout session at the KSDC Leadership Conference. Breakout sessions will be held Wed., April 20. The theme for this year's conference will focus on leadership with the school/district.

Deadline for submitting proposals is Friday, October 29. See the

proposal form on page 9 for more information. Proposals may also be submitted online at www.ksdc.us DC



NSDC Changes Name To Learning Forward

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We invite you to contact us if you have questions about our name change. Use office@learningforward.org

NSDC is LEARNING FORWARD

Check out more about this step forward at:
<http://www.learningforward.org/about/newname.cfm>

An affiliate member of Learning Forward, KSDC is also considering a change in its name. The Executive Board has recommended the adoption of the name of Learning Forward Kansas. KSDC's board will discuss this recommendation as a part of their fall board meeting. If you have comments about this suggested change, contact KSDC Executive Director, Sandee Crowther, crowther.sandra@gmail.com DC





Doocees Wild...and that's no typo

By Karen Brack
21st Century Learning Team Chair

According to the Macmillian English Dictionary, *dooceed* is defined as "having lost your job because of something you have put in an Internet weblog or website".

<http://www.macmillandictionaries.com/wordoftheweek/archive/050131-dooceed.htm>

When my newly-minted teachers arrived in August and we began our New Teacher Academy, one of the first topics we discussed was the intelligent use of technology. Unlike my generation of educators, these teachers have grown accustomed to sharing their lives via every technological device available: Tweets, texts, postings, and blogs. As these modes of communication continue to advance and develop faster with each passing day, the divide between work and home has become less distinguishable. As staff developers, it's imperative that we offer training and guidance for all teachers, not just the iGeneration, to help them avoid making career-jeopardizing mistakes via social media.

Sadly, some postings contain opinions that can range from mild venting about a bad day (not a good idea) to potentially being libelous. Anything that a school employee posts about their students, students' parents, fellow staff members, administration, Board of Education, or district patrons that might be seen as negative, harassing, unkind, unjust, false or confidential could be a reason for discipline. This could range from a verbal reprimand up to, and including, dismissal. Because many new graduates are very used to posting their every move and thought on social networking sites, it becomes very crucial to set out some guidelines, not only for them, but for all employees who have



taken the leap into 21st Century communication.

The list of people who have lost their jobs due to their on-line behavior is growing. Check out the September 1, 2010 on-line article by Kailin Madden, a writer for CareerBuilder.com for some examples of Facebook foolishness that got people dismissed: [12 ways to get fired for Facebook](#). Madden cites one teacher who was forced to resign after a board member saw vacation pictures posted on the teacher's Facebook page. The pictures were taken during a tour of a brewery in Ireland. The case is expected to go to court this fall. While her activities were not illegal, perception is always important,and understanding the privacy settings in Facebook is critical.

While developing policy does not fall under the umbrella of usual staff development responsibilities, providing train-

ing that supports the district's policies can, and should. When discussing social networking policies, it's good to keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. Develop a policy consistent with other district policies. Include language about social networks such as MySpace, Facebook, and others.
2. Require all Internet activity to comply with other district policies such as anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.
3. Prohibit employees from making discriminatory or libelous comment when discussing the district, employees, students, and/or parents.
4. Require all employees to act in a professional and ethical manner.
5. Adhere to the district's Acceptable Use Policy.
6. State that the district reserves the right to take disciplinary action against an employee if his or her blog or webpage violates district policy.

Helping employees ace their understanding of social networking use may prevent them from being dooced. DC

Step forward and connect
with the power of
professional learning...

Join or Renew KSDC Membership
at www.ksdc.us



KLFA News

Webinar Helps Open Dialogue, Focus Work For New School Year

The Kansas Learning First Alliance held its first meeting of the 2010-2011 school year this fall. Almost three dozen participants representing 18 member organizations attended. This year marks the twelfth school year education organizations, agencies and institutions have worked together to improve teaching and learning in Kansas under the KLFA banner.

As part of the opening meeting, a Webinar was staged the night before. Almost 30 people came online to learn about the activities of the Kansas Education Commission, which was formed by the Kansas State Board of Education to help review and prepare for the next reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The Act is currently known as No Child Left Behind. The reauthorization is being referred to as the Blueprint for Reform.

The opening part of the meeting included updates on the status of the Kansas Learning First Alliance Education Foundation; the executive summary of the Watch and Talk parties, held in conjunction with *Reading, Writing and a Worthwhile Education for Kansas Kids*, which was shown statewide last fall; and an overview of the comments gathered the night before during the Webinar. Those comments were grouped by the Blueprint priorities the Commission is using to direct its work. The comments were also made available to the three workgroups KLFA uses to accomplish its work.

The three groups work toward improving student achievement; strengthening the professional development of educators; and engaging the public in school improvement and student achievement efforts. DC

One District's Journey...

On The Road To Differentiating Instruction

By Penny Schuckman
Central Office Representative

In the fall of 2009, the Haysville school district began the long, but worthwhile, journey of training all certified staff in the process of differentiating instruction for their students. The training focused on how to differentiate instruction based on students' learning styles, interests, and readiness. To train the 380 certified staff members, we scheduled nine training sessions throughout the fall. Staff members got to pick the training date that worked best for them. Two of the sessions were offered on Saturdays. Our district has three QPA/Work days a year in which staff receives training in the morning and then work in their rooms in the afternoon. If staff chose to attend the Differentiated Instruction on a Saturday, they were allowed to leave early on two of the QPA/Work days. This turned out to be a very popular option. Those that chose to receive training on a school day were provided a substitute. The training was provided by two members of our district office staff and three instructional coaches.

In order to encourage application of the skills learned, a half-day follow up session was scheduled in the spring of 2010. All certified staff members attended on the same in-service day. They were spread out among the district between the five trainers. One of our goals for the follow up session was to give teachers an opportunity to examine student work, so each staff member was required to bring a sample of student work from each tier of a lesson they had taught. Teachers received peer feedback on their tiered lesson based on the student work sample.

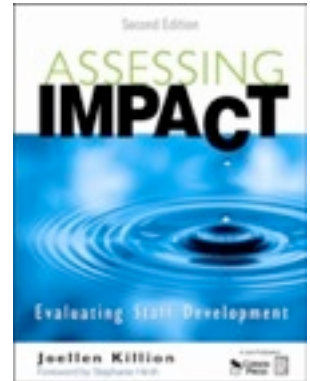
After all the effort and resources we put in to this professional learning opportunity, we just had one question. . . *"How will we know if this professional learning results in a change in teacher practice and impacts student learning?"*

This is where attending the Spring 2010 Kansas Staff Development Conference came to the rescue. Joellen Killion clearly outlined a process of setting goals for professional learning, writing

objectives to meet those goals, and having clear measurements to determine whether objectives are being met. Our district chose two

clear measurements to determine the degree to which teachers in our district are differentiating their instruction. The first measurement is the number of application and impact points awarded on My Learning Plan for differentiating instruction. The second measurement is our classroom walkthrough form which documents incidents of differentiation in the classroom. Each building and district administrator conducts 50 classroom walkthroughs per month.

Our district's journey was pitted with some ruts and bumps along the way and we have not yet arrived to our destination. Like anything worth doing, the trip has been well worth the effort. Joellen Killion's book *Assessing Impact: Evaluating Staff Development* has served as a valuable road map along the way. Killion also has a Teacher Professional Development Evaluation Guide available on the Learning Forward web site. If we can do anything to help you on your journey, please don't hesitate to ask. Until then. . . happy travels! DC



KSDC is an
affiliate member
of
Learning Forward

www.learningforward.org



KSDC Awards: In Search Of Excellence In Professional Development

KSDC Announces New Award Category

By Sheri Thomas
KSDC Awards Co-Chair

The Kansas Staff Development Council Awards Program recognizes excellence in staff development at several levels annually. The program is built on three major elements:

- The program must reflect knowledge, application, and impact;
- Awards will be presented at the individual, building, and district levels; and
- Awards will be decided on verifiable evidence.

KSDC is proud and excited to announce a new award for 2011:

KSDC Classified Professional Development Award

This award recognizes an individual or building/district that has made a significant commitment toward the staff development of classified staff members to improve student achievement. All Kansas districts are eligible to apply for this new award.

Applicants are asked to provide information and evidence about the classified professional development program and how the LearningForward (formerly NSDC) Standards for Professional Development are reflected in these efforts. Each individual or organization award winner will receive the following:

- Recognition at a KSDC Conference,
- A complimentary one-year membership in KSDC
- A certificate of recognition

Existing awards include:

The 21st Century Skills Professional Development Award

The 21st Century Skills Professional Development Award recognizes a building or district that has effectively implemented 21st Century Skills in their professional development program. All

Kansas school districts are eligible to apply!

Applicants will be asked to provide information and evidence to questions based on the areas of Content, Context and Process from the LearningForward (formerly NSDC) Standards. Evidence should also show how the Learning-Forward strategic priorities (Examining the Evidence, Developing School Leaders, Narrowing the Achievement Gap, Affecting the Policy Context, and Engaging Thought Leaders) are being implemented in your school. Award winners will each receive: A certificate of recognition, a banner announcing the award, a one-year building/agency membership in KSDC, and two registrations to a KSDC learning opportunity



Systemic Learning Award

The Systemic Learning Award is a school district level award. All Kansas school districts are eligible to apply for the award which recognizes district level commitment to growth in professional learning and support for change. Specific criteria for growth include the time, money, management, materials, and authority allocated to the adult learning effort in the district to foster improved student learning. The district will provide evidence of growth and achievement via the KLFA/KSDC/KSDE Systemic Learning (District) Rubric. The rubric is based on the National Staff Development Standards and includes all of the LearningForward (formerly NSDC) Standards. Up to two districts will be awarded annually. The award includes: A banner for the district announcing the award, a one-year agency membership in KSDC, and two registrations to a KSDC Conference

Professional Learning Community Award

The PLC Award is a building level award. All schools in Kansas are eligible to apply. The building must provide evidence of excellence in professional development by measuring progress on

the KLFA/KSDC/KSDE Professional Learning Community (Building) Rubric. The rubric is based on the Learning Forward (formerly NSDC) Standards and includes the standards most often aligned to school improvement efforts. The artifacts provided must illustrate the level of performance on the rubric. Up to two buildings will be awarded annually. The award includes: A banner for the school announcing the award, a one-year building membership in KSDC, and two registrations to a KSDC Conference

Impact Award

The Impact Award recognizes individual educators who take learning beyond knowledge and application and provide verifiable evidence of improved student learning as a result of professional learning for the educator. The number of Impact Awards is not limited and any educator may apply. The award consists of: A certificate of recognition, and a one-year individual membership to KSDC.

Staff Developer of the Year Award

KSDC helps districts recognize the staff developer who has had the most direct impact on your school district. Districts will be encouraged to nominate one individual (either an internal or an external source) who has had the most impact on improving student performance through professional learning in your schools. Remember, everyone can be a staff developer! Every individual nominated will receive a certificate and a complimentary one-year KSDC membership. Awardees will be recognized at the KSDC Leadership Conference.

Deadline for application is December 15 with winners being announced at the KSDC Leadership Conference in April 2011 in Wichita, Kansas.

For more information, contact one of the KSDC Awards Co-Chairs, Sheri Thomas, thomass@mcclouth.org, or Marty Christie, Marty.Christie@usd305.com

Visit www.ksdc.org for all award application information. DC

Professional Development *Change We Can Believe In*

By Hayes Mizell
Distinguished Senior Fellow,
Learning Forward

Two years ago, a young United States senator from Illinois sought and won the office of President of the United States. His campaign was historic in many respects, including the campaign's use of the internet to raise unprecedented amounts of money, and the use of words, phrases, and iconography to mobilize voters. One slogan of the campaign was "Change we can believe in."...

A slogan is neither a strategy nor a program, but as the election of 2008 demonstrated, words have power. The slogan, "Change we can believe in" captured the aspirations of millions of people...

I invite you to think very hard about professional development change we can believe in.

To prompt your thinking, I want to pose several questions.

First, is change in professional development necessary?

During the past 10 years there have been notable changes in professional development. Data has become an important factor in revealing educators' needs for professional development and informing their learning experiences. The number of "one-shot" workshops has declined. More educators understand what "job-embedded" means and more schools implement it through the use of school-based coaches, teams, and professional learn-

ing communities. Technology has made it possible for educators to see exemplary practice in distant locations and to learn from peers who work in other states. These are encouraging developments, but there is a long way to go before these approaches to professional development demonstrate a profound, consistent impact on student achievement.

...Even more change is essential. After all, the National Staff Development Council's (now Learning Forward) statement of purpose—

Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves —

is a vision that has not yet come to fruition in most schools. Change is the only way to translate this ideal into a reality that will ensure most public school educators experience professional development that is much more useful and effective than is now the case.

But as powerful as NSDC's (now Learning Forward's) purpose statement is, there is an even more compelling reason why more change in professional development is necessary. The overwhelming majority of school systems and schools know very little about what educators learn through professional development, how effectively they use what they learn, and to what extent students benefit. There is almost no accountability for results.

If you listen carefully to the educators responsible for conceiving, planning, organizing, and implementing professional development, most of what you hear focuses on process, including process that masquerades as content. Conversations continue to be dominated by references to speakers, consultants, books, videos, webinars, workshops, courses, conferences, and presenting. There is little or no discussion about whether or how the considerable resources school systems devote to professional development make a significant difference in the performance of educators or, equally important, in the performance of their students. The words "results," "outcomes," "evaluation," "evidence," and "impact" are not heard in most conversa-

tions among professional development practitioners.

If professional development is as important as we believe it is, as we say it is, then the field has to turn its attention to outcomes....The change that is required is to make professional development responsive to the *objective learning needs* of teachers and their students. By "objective learning needs," I mean needs supported by student or teacher performance data, both quantitative and qualitative. This is not professional development based on what teachers "want" or "choose" but what they need to positively impact their performance or that of their students.

This brings us to the second question to consider:

What is professional development change we can believe in?

Some things are fundamental. It would be quite a change, for example, if states, school systems, and schools took seriously the NSDC (now Learning Forward) *Standards and Standards Assessment Inventory* and routinely used these tools as a framework for conceiving, planning, and organizing every professional development experience. Though at least half of the state education agencies and many school systems have "adopted" the *Standards*, there is little evidence that they have honored and effectively used the *Standards* to drive daily practice. But there is an even more simple standard to guide professional development: Will the professional development increase the productivity of the educators who engage in it, and how will we know?

The primary role of professional learning is to raise the performance levels of teachers and their students. They are at the heart of public education. All of a school system's functions, including professional development, should align to improve teacher effectiveness and student learning. But if we are honest, we have to acknowledge that...too often, the purpose and execution of a specific professional development experience stems from bureaucratic

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Searching for a way
to stay connected
with a network of
staff developers 24/7?

KSDC is now on
Facebook.

Find a link on the
KSDC website.



Find us on
Facebook

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 interests, ego, or expediency. Someone in a position of authority makes a decision about the learning they believe teachers need, and that person's perspective and priorities drive the content and process of professional development. The individual's intentions are good, but the result is professional development that is done *to* teachers or *for* teachers rather than *with* teachers. Teachers become objects of professional development, not partners. The result is that teachers have no stake in the professional development, they have no commitment to it, they frequently do not learn from it or do not apply what they learn, and there is little impact on their practice or their students' learning. In contrast, change we can believe in means professional development driven by (a) teachers' *understanding* of their students' learning problems, (b) teachers' *commitment* to learn whatever is necessary to more successfully address and overcome their students' learning difficulties, and (c) teachers' *persistence* in seeking, using and refining their learning to raise their students' performance levels.

This change is not possible without new expectations and behaviors by the three parties responsible for professional development: administrators who authorize it, educators who organize it, and teachers who engage in it. Administrators must create and support an operational culture in which continuous professional learning for the purpose of increasing student learning is integral to each teacher's work. Educators responsible for organizing professional development must create and facilitate learning experiences that teachers value, and that cause teachers to develop and apply new knowledge, skills, and behaviors that benefit their students. Teachers must embrace a professional ethic that throughout their careers they will actively pursue, engage in, and use learning experiences....

We are now at the third and last question to consider:

Who are the people you work with who are blocking professional development change we can believe in, and what can you do to help them develop new commitments and expectations?

Answering this question is not a matter of finding a scapegoat, or assigning

blame. In fact, you have to begin by assessing your own commitment to professional development change, and what you are doing to make it happen. The cultures in your workplaces are powerful forces for stifling divergent points of view and maintaining the inertia that makes it so difficult to transition to true professional learning. There are so many layered, bedrock assumptions about professional development that it is difficult to even get a fair hearing about changes that could make it more useful to many more teachers...

But professional development is the result of many small, daily decisions made by educators at the local level. Teachers feel they are victims of this process because people in authority over them make the decisions about the content and process of professional development. But through their silence, teachers share the responsibility. Because most teachers believe it is the prerogative and responsibility of *other* people to make decisions about professional development, they accede to whatever is "provided." Teachers neither complain to administrators, nor provide constructive feedback. Therefore, professional development never becomes an issue that demands examination, rethinking, and change. Instead, it continues as *it has been* rather than changes to what *it can be*.

What would happen if teachers...begin to raise questions such as the following, and insist on credible answers, when a ..school system, or school begins to conceive and plan professional development?

- What quantitative and qualitative data about the performance of teachers and their students indicate that professional development will be the most appropriate, effective means to improve their performance?
- What specific, realistic outcomes, for whom, are we seeking from this professional development?
- Given who these teachers are, the challenges they face, and the contexts in which they work, what is the best way to organize professional development so it engages the teachers in addressing their learning needs?
- How will we document that teachers are applying what they learn through this professional development?
- What evidence will we collect and report that demonstrates teachers are

more effective because of this professional development?

- How will we determine whether and to what extent this professional development helps teachers raise students' levels of performance?
- There will not be professional development change we can believe in until local educators hammer such questions ... until they forge professional learning into a pattern of practice.

A major problem, of course, is that in most schools and school systems there are no safe venues to think about professional development. It is such a low status enterprise that it isn't even considered worthy of discussion. Besides, every educator assumes they know exactly what "professional development" means and that it means the same thing to all other educators. There need to be opportunities for administrators and teachers, separately and together, to talk about their beliefs, their experiences, their disappointments, and their hopes for professional development. These need not be highly formal or structured conversations. A superintendent or principal could convene a small discussion group simply to begin to review the utility and results of professional development. A few teachers could do something similar, perhaps talking over drinks after school. The point is, someone has to begin and sustain the conversation.

That is an essential step, but it is only one of many. Professional development change we can believe in requires action. Someone has to raise difficult questions. Someone has to decide to pursue a new, more effective course. Exactly what that is depends on many contextual factors, but you will know it when you see it because it will look and feel very different from what now passes for professional development in most school systems and schools. The primary difference, the one that should hit you in the face, is that the professional development will excite and engage teachers, motivate and support them to improve their practice, and cause them to lead all their students to higher levels of performance. That will be change we can believe in.

The preceding article is an excerpt from remarks by Hayes Mizell on July 20, 2010 at Session F09 of the National Staff Development Council's Summer Conference. DC

2010-11 KSDC Board

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