

2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

NORTH COLONIE CENTRAL SCHOOLS
LATHAM, NEW YORK

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

“The key to improved learning for students is continuous, job embedded learning for educators.”

--DuFour, DuFour, Eaker and Many (2010)

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PHILOSOPHY:

“Organizations that improve do so because they *create and nurture agreement on what is worth achieving*, and they set in motion the internal processes by which people progressively learn how to do what they need to do in order to achieve what is worthwhile.” Richard Elmore

The North Colonie community seeks to promote ongoing opportunities to enhance teacher performance and improve student learning. With a primary goal of improving conversation around an understanding of the complex task of teaching, professional development opportunities will allow all educators to become more reflective practitioners

As part of a meaningful, rigorous professional learning plan, we support:

- An emphasis on improved student learning
- The promotion of professional, collaborative endeavors
- The mentoring and support of new teachers
- The importance of self-reflection and analysis of practice
- The availability of resources available to contribute to one’s learning
- The widespread availability of relevant, ongoing opportunities to engage in learning activities to improve practice
- The value of educational innovation in a supportive environment
- Opportunities to explore, question, and debate in order to integrate new ideas into classroom practice.
- Experiences grounded in knowledge and research about teaching and learning

These efforts are subject to the leadership and guidance of the Deputy Superintendent, the District Director of Teaching, Learning and Innovation, K-12 Department Supervisors, the Director of PPS, the Director of Human Resources, and the Chief Innovation Officer, supported by a team of instructional technology resource teachers and ELA and mathematics coaches. District-level priorities are supported by building principals and other administrators.

BACKGROUND:

Currently we provide four (4) Superintendent’s in-service workshop days which engage all teachers in staff development for seven (7) hours times four (4) or 28 hours annually. This totals 140 hours over a five-year period. After-school department meetings and building faculty meetings occur at least monthly. These are all mandatory in-service opportunities. We also offer a voluntary Professional Learning program for which participating teachers receive credit toward salary incentives. Teachers may select from a range of opportunities offered outside the school day as well as throughout the summer. Course are taught by District instructional professionals, the McLean Group or CASDA as the only outside provider of professional development. CASDA has already been approved by the NYS Education Department.

During the course of the 2018-19 school year, the District restructured the department of Curriculum and Instruction to provide greater support K-12 for faculty and staff. A new position, District Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Innovation was added to the administrative team. This position works closely with the Deputy

Superintendent to articulate the instructional vision across all buildings and grade levels. The realignment of our 9-12 Department Supervisors in Mathematics, Science, ELA, and Social Studies to K-12 Department Supervisors in these content areas. The goal is to ensure that we have consistent alignment of curriculum and instructional practices K-12. We have also expanded the scope of our 7-12 CTE Department Supervisor to K-12. Finally, we realigned our K-12 Foreign Language Supervisor to be the District Supervisor of Bilingual Education and World Languages. This realignment will provide for consistency for ENL students throughout the District. We have experienced great results with the expansion and restructuring of our instructional administrative cabinet and this has provided greater collaboration and professional development for our faculty and staff.

We also provide ample opportunities for job-embedded professional learning. Each building has two technology resource teachers. Under the direction of the Chief Innovation Officer, the technology resource teachers meet monthly and then return to buildings to share ideas, model lessons, and collaboratively plan with classroom teachers so that instructional technology can be seamlessly infused into learning opportunities for students. Moreover, the District continues to support the work of four instructional coaches, two in English Language Arts and two in Mathematics. The coaches, who are master teachers on special assignment, were originally added to help support the roll out of the Common Core Learning Standards.

Linda Darling Hammond, reminds us, “Every single time we try to do reform by changing the curriculum, changing the management structure, changing the budgeting process, whatever, without paying attention to helping teachers learn how to teach kids well, the reform fails.” We are proud to say that in North Colonie, we have always valued professional development and opportunities for teacher growth, and the sweeping educational reforms of the last few years have made that focus a clear priority. In short, the coaches provided and continue to provide the kind of embedded, relevant professional development that the state could not possibly be expected to provide.

For teachers receiving professional certification, our district in-service training is working to meet the 100-hour mandate. For example, continued reading and writing staff development, differentiated instruction training, technology workshops, grade level meetings, ELA/Math and other New York State assessment scoring, Building Council training, mentor training, each include many hours of training.

Furthermore, the negotiated contract between the North Colonie Teachers’ Association and the district, while providing to teachers the required 100 hours of professional development every five years, recognizes that all teachers have a professional obligation to participate in professional development in order to remain current with their profession and meet the needs of students. Subsequently, the regulations that are required of professionally certified teachers, serve as a guideline for all teachers.

2019-2020 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

“Evidence is mounting that we need to shift from targeting expectations and consequences at individual teachers to strengthening the structures that help educators work together...”

--National Center for Literacy Education, 2014

➤ **CONTINUE TO CREATE FLEXIBLE, VARIED, AND RESPONSIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS AT ALL STAGES OF THEIR CAREERS**

For many members of our faculty, the traditional after school class is still a viable means of professional learning. For others, however, the timing of the offering is what constricts them, not the range of offerings. As such, during the summer of 2019, we will offer a range of professional learning opportunities during July and August. Additionally, we will continue to use our technology to our advantage by creating a series of video tutorials to

instruct and support faculty and staff on everything from the basics of the Google platform to updating the electronic gradebook.

Throughout the school year, it is imperative that professional learning opportunities be varied both in content and delivery method. A focus will be on English Language Learners and using assessment data to drive instructionally focused curriculum and instruction. Among the opportunities we will support:

- Professional learning sessions, taught by internal educators, focusing on new academic goals and best practices.
- Teacher-proposed , flexible study circles, facilitated by Instructional administrators
 - Book study
 - Lesson study
 - Student work review
- Project Planning with iTRT's and our internal Technology Innovation Specialist
- Collaboration with our Instructional Coaches

➤ **INCREASE THE NUMBER OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS TO LEARN FROM OTHER TEACHERS IN DISTRICT**

Research and real world experience tell us that professional learning in the local context is most effective in helping educators to implement promising classroom practices to meet new and changing educational standards. To this end, the District has made it a priority to create collaboration time during the school day in all teachers' schedules, grades K—12. The collaborative work aligns with district goals and objectives, but participants have significant choice about which specific opportunities to pursue. Many teachers choose curriculum-focused work, but other undertakings involve research on the part of participants to study myriad topics ranging from engaging the reluctant reader to classroom based interventions to support students on the spectrum.

In response to two district initiatives, we will create two district-wide guiding coalitions who will study a single issue in order to make recommendations for professional learning. The first will be a coalition supporting students and families who are struggling with the impact of poverty. The coalition's charge will be to work as a representative group in order to help create a North Colonie plan to help support our students and families in poverty. Specifically, the coalition will:

- Unpack the myths and stereotypes surrounding students in poverty
- Research models and ideas for cognitive intervention strategies
- Research successful models for parent and community involvement

in order to make recommendations and provide professional development opportunities for our larger school community.

The second coalition will focus on the needs of English Language Learners and the ways in which we can support all teachers in their work with our English Language Learners. The coalition will work as a representative group in order to help create a North Colonie blueprint for success for our English Language Learners which is aligned with the new mandates from the state. Specifically, the coalition will:

- Research models and ideas for professional development for both ENL teachers and classroom teachers
- Research successful models for parent involvement
- Research models for successful co-teaching to support the needs of English Language Learners

in order to make recommendations for our larger school community.

Finally, the District continues to support a mentor program for new teachers. Each new teacher is assigned a mentor; their professional partnership begins in August, prior to the start of the school year. New teachers have

ongoing daily opportunities to confer with their mentor and have the ability to request two half-days throughout the school year to gather for intensive work. Recognizing that a great deal of mentorship in year one may have to do with logistics and management, the District has expanded its commitment to mentorship into a second year of opportunities. New teacher/mentor pairs may also request up to two half days in year two to continue their ongoing professional conversation.

➤ **CONTINUE TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACULTY AND STAFF TO LEARN ABOUT CHANGES IN THEIR ACADEMIC FIELDS AND CORRESPONDING BEST PRACTICES IN PEDAGOGY**

Each year, the District commits to summer curriculum development. For the 2019-2020 school year, the District gave priority to offerings aligned with courses which would be facing new or changing standards. Throughout the year, teachers are given release time to work together. At the elementary level, a significant amount of time will be devoted in the 2019-20 school year to science curriculum. With a change in program to align more clearly with the new science standards, teachers will need opportunities to debrief and share regarding all aspects of science related not just to curriculum, but instructional practices and assessment as well. At the secondary level, priorities will be given to English Language Arts as teachers score the district-level administration of the Common Core English regents.

➤ **DEVELOP A STRONGER ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS PROTOCOL TO ALIGN INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES WITH STUDENT NEEDS**

One concern, particularly with the 3—8 assessments, is the fact that teachers believe results are not timely and cannot be used to inform instruction. Moreover, the lack of transparency with the actual tests themselves makes it difficult for teachers to identify any trends or patterns upon which to reflect. This year, the District will continue to contract with CASDA in order to provide support for the analysis of the 3—8 ELA results.

EVALUATION

- We will measure our plan and professional development opportunities against the Professional Development Rubric provided by New York State Education Department.
- We will use our Google survey tools at the end of the year to determine which professional offerings should be continued as well as which need to be planned for the upcoming school year.
- The Director of Human Resources, the Deputy Superintendent, and the Chief Innovation Officer will continue the development of the Professional Learning Webpage, giving faculty and staff the opportunity to propose classes to teach and request classes to be offered in real time.