



High-quality professional learning takes systemwide support

Working with the board to develop a vision and goals is the first step of articulating a framework to guide schools. A systems approach and design builds from that vision and goals.

Professional learning on each campus is based on that vision and goals. Our instructional specialists and coaches spend one day a week in our central office collaborating and working within their own community team, but for the most part they are working on campuses because that's where they're most needed, where the teachers and administrators are.

One of our system's four goals is quality professional development. In order to achieve that, we have to provide the structure. To pursue performance, we make professional learning part of our daily, embedded operations and routines. Professional learning has to be consistent and of quality.

We provide time for teachers to work in teams to plan curriculum, instruction, and assessment. They look at student activities, resources, lesson plans, the effectiveness of lesson plans, how the lesson plans connect with our curriculum guides, and the quality of the connections — all of those pieces are intertwined throughout the year. Each school has set a structure for the staff's own professional learning, and even though the schools have different schedules, they all build in professional learning time using a late start time once each week for students.

All staff establish a professional

development plan based on their own school data and they work together on that for the year. They continually disaggregate data, looking at the data from all angles to analyze strengths and weaknesses to adjust teaching strategies.

At the school level, Learning Forward's Learning School Alliance

is a central piece as well. Sometimes in smaller districts like ours, you don't have access to national or worldwide perspectives. You can't bring in speakers and the latest and greatest. The quality of and access to resources provided through the alliance and its network of schools are

great. The other complex piece is that being involved in the alliance builds capacity and teacher leadership that filters into the school. In addition, we can compare ourselves with other schools doing similar things to see whether we're on the right track. It builds in a lot of support and assurances.

The staff's daily professional development in school is directly connected to their students and their

learning goals and outcomes. Each school uses its professional learning time differently, but individual goals are always connected to district goals.

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