

Planning Professional Development

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Standard 1

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Performance Indicators

- The vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members
- The core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders
- The school community is involved in school improvement efforts
- An implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals are clearly articulated
- The vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions
- Assessment data related to student learning are used to develop the school vision and goals
- Barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed

Standard 2

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Performance Indicators

- Professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals
- Life long learning is encouraged and modeled
- There is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance
- Student and staff accomplishments are recognized and celebrated
- The school is organized and aligned for success
- A variety of sources of information is used to make decisions

Scenario

Mrs. Rachael Jones was in the first year as superintendent in the Brownwood School District and was about to meet with the district Professional Development Committee for the first time. She had reviewed the budget for professional development and was delighted to find that the district was spending more than the required one percent of state aid on professional development. However, in examining how this money was being spent, she discovered that the majority was being spent on one day workshops with one or two teachers attending, state and national conventions of various professional groups, and an occasional motivational speaker that was brought into the District for a professional development day program. She also discovered that the District did not have a professional development policy to clarify

the vision, mission, and goals of the professional development program or the procedures to be followed in establishing a professional development program. In her doctoral course work, Mrs. Jones had studied much of the recent research and writings on effective staff development, and she realized very quickly that, although the District was allocating a substantial amount of money for professional development, they were not spending it on the types of activities that related to the school improvement plan or the vision of learning for the district.

When Mrs. Jones met with the Professional Development Committee she discovered that the primary way they determined how the money was going to be spent was by dividing the total amount of money budgeted for professional development by the number of teachers in the district and allocating that amount to each teacher. Teachers could give all or part of their allocation to other teachers if they did not want to use it. This resulted in some teachers attending a large number of workshops and conventions and others not attending anything. In addition, Mrs. Jones discovered that the Committee made all of the decisions about who attended professional development opportunities with no input from the building principal or central office staff. It appeared there was little if any consideration given to the professional development needs of the building or district in relation to student learning. When Mrs. Jones asked about the Committee reviewing student performance data to determine the professional development needs, the committee members just looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders. The chairperson finally answered that the committee felt the teachers knew their individual professional development needs better than the committee or the principal. If a teacher wanted to attend a workshop or meeting, they applied to the Committee and received approval or disapproval from them. Actually, approval was almost automatic and there was no request for verification that the activity was in any way related to the vision, mission, or goals of the district.

Assignment

- What approach should the superintendent take in educating the Professional Development Committee about the latest research on effective professional development?
- Should the District develop a professional development policy? If so who should be involved in its development and what should be the process for the development of the policy?
- What should be the philosophy of professional development for the district?
- What should be some of the elements of the professional development policy?

**Instructor's Notes and Scoring Guide
For
Planning Professional Development**

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Instructor Notes

One suggested approach to utilizing this case study would be to assign some supplemental reading on effective professional development from the references listed below followed by a role playing activity with one member of the class playing the role of the superintendent and some of the other members playing the role of the professional development committee. At the conclusion of the role playing activity, other members of the class would critique the discussions between the superintendent and the committee. Another suggested activity is to divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 and have them discuss and suggest ways for the superintendent to address the issue. Their conclusions would then be presented to and discussed by the whole class.

Scoring Guide

2 point response. The response includes the characteristics of effective professional development as defined by the latest research and writing on professional development and specific suggestions as to how the superintendent should inform the professional development committee about this latest research. The response includes a process for developing a professional development policy and the stakeholders that should be involved in the development of the policy. A specific list of elements that should be included in the policy is included in the response.

1 point response. The response includes vague suggestions on how the superintendent should inform the professional development committee but there is little or no attention paid to the characteristics of effective professional development. There is a suggestion that a policy needs to be developed but little attention is given to the detail of the process for developing the policy or who should be involved in the process. Little if any attention is given to what is included in the policy.

0 point response. The response uses a top down approach to informing the committee about effective professional development. A policy is developed by the superintendent and central office staff and given to the professional development committee

References

DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2001). *Missouri professional development guidelines for student success*. Jefferson City, MO.

Sparks, D., Hirsh, S. (1997). *A new vision for staff development*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

National Staff Development Council <http://www.nsdc.org>

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/rpl_esys/assess.htm

Success Link <http://successlink.org/>

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory: Catalog of School reform Models
<http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/catalog/index.shtml>

University Council for educational Administration <http://www.ucea.org>

Pilot Test

This case study was piloted in a masters level class "Foundations of Educational Administration." The comments from the students were favorable and the only recommendation for revision was to add biographies of committee members. I did not add this component because I was more interested in the student concentrating on the characteristics of effective staff development and how to get a more effective PD plan developed for the school district.