Using Data to Develop Professional Development Plans

Purpose

This document is designed to provide guidance to school data teams and professional development committees on best practices in developing professional development and learning experiences within their specific school context.

Professional Development Plans

A professional development plan is "a set of purposeful, planned actions and the support system necessary to achieve the identified goals. Effective [professional learning] programs are ongoing, coherent, and linked to student achievement" (Killion, 2008, p. 11). These plans are developed using data that identify student and educator needs, are implemented with regard to adult learning theory, are evaluated based on student and educator outcomes, and are sequenced to continue developing internal staff capacity to meet the needs of all students. **Figure 1** demonstrates the five-step cyclical process outlined in this document to guide teams in identifying and evaluating professional development.

Figure 1: Data-Based Decision Making Process for Professional Development

Step One: Collect Data

A core feature of both multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and effective professional development is the use of data to drive decisions. Before selecting any

professional development, schools and teams should identify the needs of their specific site, personnel, and students. Data that teams may find useful could include, but is not limited to:

- Needs Assessments
  - [OTISS Site Fidelity Assessment](#)
  - [Oklahoma 9 Essential Elements Needs Assessment](#)
- Observations of Staff
  - Evaluation observations
  - Coaching observations
  - Intervention integrity checks

- Staff Surveys
- Family Surveys
- Student Outcome Data
  - OSTP
  - Screening data
  - Office Discipline Referrals (ODR)
  - Absence data
  - Mobility
  - Graduation rates

Step Two: Identify Deficits

Focusing on student needs and outcomes, use the data available to your school team to identify areas of improvement for student outcomes and drill down to potential root causes for improvement. For instance, if student outcome data is demonstrating a deficit in reading outcomes for students in second grade, teams should use available screening data, teacher observations, and needs assessments to identify potential gaps in instruction or common student skill deficits. Using this data, the school team will identify all potential areas of focus for improvement.

Step Three: Prioritize Needs

Realistically, most schools may identify multiple areas of improvement for the school year. It is the responsibility of the professional development committee to prioritize these needs. It is important to take into consideration your site's capacity (personnel, time, money) to implement high-quality professional development, so that the system is not overwhelmed. Focus on meeting the highest needs first before working toward other areas of need.

Some things to consider when prioritizing need:
1. What area of need will impact the most students?
2. Are there areas that need to be improved before students can benefit from other instruction?
3. What can we make an impact in most quickly and easily?

Example: A team has identified needs in phonics and decoding instruction across all grade levels and a need for improved meaningful lessons for the 90-minute reading block in K-3rd grades. The team prioritizes professional development in literacy lesson planning first, because it is an essential prerequisite to high-quality decoding instruction.

Step Four: Develop and Implement Plan

Using the prioritized needs, the school professional development committee will develop improvement goals for area(s) of need and outline professional development activities that will be used to attain this goal. Keep in mind, professional development activities can vary and may include activities in professional learning communities (PLC), peer-to-peer coaching or observation, instructional coaching, feedback following observations, book studies, webinars, asynchronous online learning, podcasts, or the traditional lecture/workshop.

Example: Using the example from the prior step, the developed goal might be, "All teachers will develop and implement evidence-based literacy lesson plans that include instruction in the big 5 components of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension), as measured by administrator observations. By the end of the year, students "at-risk" in reading for decoding ability will be reduced by 10% across the school."

Activities related to these goals might be professional development in literacy lesson planning, development of common lesson plan structure in grade-level professional learning communities, peer coaching and observation in effective phonics instruction, etc.

Implement the plan designed by the professional development committee.

Step Five: Evaluate Outcomes

After the plan is developed, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning on staff and student outcomes. Following professional development and learning opportunities, the professional development committee should review the same student data that indicated an area of need initially. Additionally, the committee should review impact on educators knowledge, beliefs, and/or practices, as well. If schools do not see improvement in student outcomes, this may indicate that the learning was not effective, that practices or knowledge were not

appropriately implemented, or that there is a more specific area of need or other root cause for the need. Professional development committees should review these possibilities and begin back at Step 1 to gather any additional necessary data and revise and improve learning plans.

These steps are cyclical and part of a school's continuous improvement cycle.

References

Killion, J. (2008). Assessing impact: Evaluating staff development. (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.