

# Getting Creative with Professional Development

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## **Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:**

Center Grove Schools have gone through a distinct change in the last two years with the format of our weekly Early Release Schedule. Each Wednesday schools release students forty-five minutes earlier than regular scheduled school days (M, Tu, Th, and Fr). For the past ten years, this Early Release schedule afforded principals and their professional development committees to schedule PD opportunities on a weekly basis based on teacher, building, and corporation need. In the last two years, a transition has taken place where Early Release time is now primarily focused on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) creating an obstacle for our Professional Development opportunities.

After graphing and reviewing our High Reliability Standard (HRS) data for the 2017-2018 school year, our weakest indicator with the highest standard deviation was Level 2.6 - Teachers have opportunities to observe and discuss effective teaching with a mean of 3.2 and a Standard Deviation of 1.01.

Therefore, the purpose of our action research was to investigate creative ways to meet the Professional Development needs of our teaching staff to allow for high level discussion.

## **Statement of Your Team's Wondering:**

With this purpose, we wondered can we improve teacher effectiveness through outside of the box Professional Development Deliveries? How can we document improved effectiveness? Do we provide ample quality opportunities to encourage teacher growth in the process? Are we meeting the needs of all the teachers?

## **Methods/Procedures:**

To gain insight into our wondering, we shared our action research plan to the PGES Leadership Team (including Assistant Principal and Instructional Coach) and then to the Professional Development Committee. Next, we purposely discussed our school HRS data (Highlighting the lagging indicators - meeting the expectations of the Action Plan). Our goal was catalyze ideas on improving our Professional Development delivery.

Areas for growth – HRS 2.6 We have opportunities to view and discuss examples of effective teaching – I have opportunities to interact about effective teaching via technology (for example, virtual coaching or online discussions) and discussion– We regularly view and discuss examples of effective teaching at faculty and department meetings – School leaders have information available about teachers' participation in discussions about effective teaching.

We collected data using a tracking mechanism for teacher participation in PD, exit slips - from professional development activities, discuss Professional Development with the Leadership Team and make anecdotal notes on suggestions and utilize teacher interviews.

### **Stating Your Team's Learning and Supporting it with Data:**

As a result of analyzing our data, the important things we learned include providing differentiation to our professional development to keep all grade levels engaged in the process, we also learned that the school culture was shifting as PLC prevented teachers from interacting outside of their grade level and we needed to improve teacher ownership of learning goals.

Most of our follow up data came from parking lot activities where teachers used sticky notes to document growth/strengths vs areas of need. A positive record was shared in the fact that multiple teachers wrote they felt heard (suggestions taken from the original HRS survey), appreciation of PD breakdown (differentiation), more flexibility was given in the time we were providing PD (Before school, during prep, early release once a month, and after school), and there were several comments about the utilization of our building instructional coach being a positive and influential part of the professional development movement.

### **Providing Concluding Thoughts:**

As a team we believe that the action research process was extremely beneficial to our school. This process allowed us to use our survey data to act as a catalyst for positive change in the building. We intend to continue this cycle each year, as it has yielded positive results in the culture of our school and opened the door for reflective conversations.

Some of the next steps actions have morphed into ideas for continued practice such as: 1. tracking data regularly (exit slips at each PD) 2. Monthly questionnaires on recommended PD opportunities (needs) 3. Tracking Domain 1 and 3 meetings in the evaluation process to drive PD planning for the next year 4. Utilizing technology resources as a method for PD (some teachers prefer this method 5. Documenting coaching cycles for all teachers with the hope of developing a multiyear plan for each and every teacher in the building.

Although we have some new and exciting processes in place, we plan to continue with the HRS survey method to re-evaluate the functions of our school. This initial year has opened the door for teachers in sharing their voice and gaining confidence that they have a leadership voice in the processes we choose to use.

### **References:**

N/A