

## **Professional Learning Plan for New Curriculum Implementation**

### **COMPONENT 1**

- an information gathering component of the PL plan
- a necessary component of any new implementation PL, but face-to-face interaction is not required to transmit this information effectively.
- recommended scheduling for May or June (in the school year before implementation)
- completed individually or in small groups
- if small groups preferred, meetings can be virtual, or where geography permits face-to-face
- guided by an information package which would normally include, but not be limited to: multimedia resources, professional literature, practical examples, etc.
  - consists of live action sessions and multimedia PowerPoint's, the purpose of which is to be interactive and thought provoking
  - opportunities to pause when necessary to reflect on the multimedia content
- purposes of component 1/information package include:
  - provide an overview of the Professional Learning components
  - provide an overview of the new curriculum
  - explore and become familiar with the curriculum guide and resources (directed by the online multimedia package)
- teachers would be encouraged to reflect on multimedia content, with the opportunity for further discussion during Component 2

### **COMPONENT 2**

- an opportunity to develop or extend collaborative groups (PLCs) pertaining to teaching and learning related to new curriculum.
- recommended scheduling for May or June
  - in the school year before implementation, however, intended to take place following a period of reflection on Component 1 material
- recommended that teachers meet in groups ranging from 2-5 people, or up to 10 in certain circumstances (e.g., two large schools joining together)
- if Component 1 was completed in small groups, this is an opportunity to build on that collaborative group

- meetings can be virtual, or, where geography permits, face-to-face
- facilitated by a curriculum leader (e.g., department head, grade level lead teacher, numeracy support teacher or District personnel
- intended to be collegial where teachers discuss, ask questions, work through exploratory activities, etc.
- content of component 2 should be driven by PL needs evolving from component 1. It could include:
  - opportunity for reflection and follow-up on the multimedia piece from Component 1, curriculum guide and new resources
  - opportunity to discuss and answer any questions arising from Component 1
  - attention to the beginning topics of the course
  - opportunity for teachers to offer suggestions for the topics to be discussed/covered in Component 3

### **COMPONENT 3**

- face-to-face, large group session recommended to occur in the Fall (early in the school year of implementation)
- planned and organized in consultation with district and DOE staff (may include teachers, curriculum working group members, etc.)
- focus on teaching and learning within the content area/level
- agenda items would incorporate suggestions provided by teachers during Component 2
- can be regionalized within districts

### **Considerations**

- This three-component plan should be the starting point for the development of a Professional Learning Community for teachers.
- Provides a PL resource teachers can use continuously.
  - They can refer back to it at any point during the implementation year, or at any point in subsequent years of teaching the course.
  - Available to teachers who would “miss out” on PL (new hirers, teaching assignments changed, long-term substitute)
- Very beneficial to teachers in remote areas...it could reduce the loss of instructional time.

- Provides “teacher talk” and collaboration
- Extends the initial PL
- Opportunity to customize to meet specific, regional needs. Agenda items would address any issues arising from the spring sessions.
- More in-depth treatment of instruction and assessment possible.

### **Role of the Department of Education**

- Design and production of the legacy component (multimedia component)
- Organization of PL working group responsible for planning and development.
- Financial resources necessary for PL working group
- Subject matter/level, teaching and learning expertise in the planning, and in special cases, delivery of PL through the involvement of DOE staff.

### **Role of the School District**

- Organization of PL plans within the district. This would include:
  - Development of the district PL team
  - Determining appropriate time, location, etc. of each component
- Subject matter/level, teaching and learning expertise in the planning and delivery of PL through the involvement of district staff.

*\* Typically, a total of 2 substitute days would be required for all 3 components (½ day for Component 1, ½ day for Component 2, 1 day for Component 3.*

Planning and implementing professional learning sessions for teachers is a collaborative effort between Department of Education and District personnel. Program Specialists provide input into the multimedia component by identifying teachers from their districts who model innovative classroom practices that would offer valuable professional learning experiences for teachers throughout the province. The small and large group components of the model are planned by district and department personnel. The provincial PL working group discusses and determines important topics and activities to be developed in these sessions. Ongoing communication and collaboration between department and district Program Specialists is important to the successful design and implementation of professional learning sessions.

### **Summary of the Attributes of the Professional Learning Model**

- Opportunities for both formal and informal in-service development.
- Time for professional learning and collaboration built into teachers' work day.
- Professional learning activities that are embedded in teachers' contexts and that are ongoing over a period of time.
  - High intensity job-embedded collaborative learning is most effective.
- An environment that supports the involvement of teachers in decision making and problem solving.
- Teacher induction program for new teachers with release time for new teachers and mentor teachers, and formal training for mentors.
- All professional learning activities begin with teachers' self-evaluation.

### **Underlying Considerations**

- Professional learning occurs within a Professional Learning Community (PLC).
- Small groups at the school level work collaboratively to improve student learning.
- Individual teachers need to become aware of specific weaknesses in their own practice. In most cases, this not only involves building an awareness of what they do but the mindset underlying it.
- Individual teachers need to gain understanding of specific best practices. In general, this can only be achieved through the demonstration of such practices in an authentic setting. (peer observation, peer reviews, team teaching)
- Individual teachers need to be motivated to make the necessary improvements. In general, this requires a deeper change in motivation that cannot be achieved through changing material incentives. Such changes come about when teachers have high expectations, a shared sense of purpose, and above all, a collective belief in their common ability to make a difference to the education of the children they serve.
- High quality sustained professional learning must take place throughout the school year. This includes:
  - linking with school development and district strategic plans,
  - examining student data to determine greatest area of student need,
  - pinpointing areas where additional educator learning is necessary,
  - identifying and creating learning experiences to address these adult needs,

- developing lesson plans and assessments,
  - applying a variety of strategies in the classroom,
  - refining new learning into lessons and assessments,
  - reflecting on the impact on student learning and repeating this cycle with new goals as necessary.
- Required resources and opportunities to make this happen must be provided.
  - Professional learning is a product of both external learning and job-embedded opportunities that increase teacher knowledge and change their instructional practice in ways that support student learning.
  - Professional learning should begin with teacher assessments of what students need and subsequently what teachers identify as areas for their own learning.
  - Professional learning components should focus on the concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation and reflection.
  - Professional learning must focus on enhancing teachers' knowledge on how to engage in specific pedagogical skills and how to teach specific kinds of content to learners.
  - For substantial change to occur, curriculum, assessment, standards and professional learning should be seamlessly linked.
  - Research has shown that sustained professional learning has an impact on student achievement.
  - Five attributes of effective professional learning communities which encompass mutual respect, promotion of risk taking and innovation, and collaboration are:
    - supportive and shared leadership,
    - collective creativity,
    - shared values and vision,
    - supportive conditions,
    - shared personal practice.