



RESEARCH REPORT

Five Principles of Effective PD

Professional development should be job-embedded, but time is a big barrier.

THE COMMON CORE State Standards challenge schools to reframe learning with more critical thinking and problem-solving. To help teachers meet those demands, though, principals need to employ critical thinking, too. A new study shows that professional development for teachers is falling short.

In “Teaching the Teachers: Effective Professional Development in an Era of High Stakes Accountability,” the Center for Public Education and the National School Boards Association aggregated data from dozens of studies to uncover the tenets of effective professional development. Though 90 percent of teachers participate in workshop-style training, these one-off sessions don’t support teachers during the steepest part of a learning curve: implementation.

Instead, professional development should occur over time, and in an ongoing

manner through coaching. Studies show that effective professional development programs require anywhere from 50 to 80 hours of instruction, practice, and coaching before teachers arrive at mastery.

The report outlines five principles of effective professional development:

- Sessions have a **significant duration** and the process is **ongoing**. This allows time for teachers to learn new strategies and grapple with implementation.

MYTWOCENTS

During your busiest school weeks, how do you recharge?

My favorite way to recharge is to take a long weekend and travel somewhere I haven’t been before. My goal is to visit all 50 states in my lifetime.

—Sarah J. Hengst, *principal of John Paul II Catholic School, Houston, Texas*

Laugh! Get together with friends and share funny stories. Humor allows me to relax. Levity is key to the role of an administrator.

—Ericka Guynes, *principal of Earl Boyles Elementary School, Portland, Oregon*

- There is **support** for a teacher during the implementation stage that addresses the specific challenges of changing classroom practice.
- Sessions and activities are **active, not passive**. Teachers should be actively engaged to make sense of new practices.
- The professional development process **uses modeling**, a strategy found to be highly effective in helping teachers understand a new practice.
- The content is **discipline- or grade-level specific**, rather than generic.

The report also outlines the dual role that teachers play as technicians and as intellectuals. As technicians, teachers must implement specific, research-based skills. Workshops that explain the skills and provide coaching to transfer the skills to the classroom support this. As intellectuals, teachers examine broader strategies

and then develop innovative classroom approaches to support those. Professional learning communities support teachers in this role.

It may come as no surprise to principals that time, according to the report, is the largest cost of effective professional development. An ideal structure for ongoing professional development is to provide teachers with time embedded in the school day—three to four hours a week for collaboration and coaching. The report, unfortunately, doesn't reveal new ways for schools to squeeze in this time, beyond holding after-school sessions or carving out time during the week by covering classes with substitutes. Instead, it challenges districts to reconsider models, noting that effective professional learning doesn't have to cost more—it requires juggling schedules.

Read the full report here: <http://bit.ly/1gx0ZQm>

Member Spotlight: Mary Evans Energizing Students Through Positive School Culture

Member since:
2009

Position: Principal, Cumberland Trace Elementary School, Bowling Green, Kentucky

School mission:

"Learning as much as we can to be the best that we can."

School culture best practice: Over 400 pre-K-6 grade students at Cumberland Trace Elementary begin every single day with dancing, cheering, and encouragement at Schoolwide Morning Meetings. Greeted by kid-friendly tunes, students share achievements, announcements, and random acts of kindness.

"It is a time to sing, dance, recognize achievements, encourage each other, see the value of working together, and feel good about being a student in a supportive community of learners," says Evans, who's been principal here for 17 years. "Our Morning Meeting is a positive affirmation that school is a place where everyone matters. Students leave the Morning Meeting singing a lively song, congratulating their peers who were recognized that morning, and ready to start a new day of learning."



Read All About It

What NAESP's Facebook and Twitter fans are reading...

f PETER CARPENTER:

Boundaries for Leaders
by Henry Cloud
"Really terrific. He has a great way with words."

f JILL LLITERAS:

Focus by Mike Schmoker
"For the third time!"

f KEVIN O'CONNOR:

Teaching Tolerance
magazine.
"Not a book, but one of the most consistently worthwhile, regular resources available."

t CATHY KOOS

(@CKOOS1)
The Book Whisperer
by Donalyn Miller

t CHRISTINA DILLARD
(@CALIFORNIAED411)

Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain by John J. Ratey

I start out each day with an All-School Assembly. It's my selfish time with students and staff. I get to teach/present/lead, which always gets my motor revved up!

—Rod Garman, principal of North Fairview Elementary School, Topeka, Kansas

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