Indicator Explanation

DOMAIN	EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	INDICATOR
Talent	Target professional learning opprtunities	2B.2 The school leaders engage in learning opportunities with teachers to learn together and reflect with them on professional practice (e.g., coaching, mentoring, observation).

Explanation. The evidence confirms that schools and teaching staff require a principal who not only manages the day to day operations but who is more importantly an effective agent of change. Such principals achieve enduring change by constantly keeping student achievement at the heart of all they communicate and act upon. These leaders expect and model high expectations for all in the school community. In order to achieve these high expectations, high quality professional development is provided for all staff. When the principal participates in the professional development, it models and demononstrates that the learning is important and changes in practice are expected and supported.

Questions. How will the principal let go of some of the managerial aspects of the position in order to provide leadership, mentoring, and coaching for teachers? What professional development needs to be provided to elevate the professional practices of all staff? How will the principal follow up on the effectiveness of the professional development and the implementation of what was learned?

Wei et al., (2009) define high quality or effective professional development as "that which results in improvements in teachers' knowledge and instructional practice, as well as improved student learning outcomes" (p. 3). A review of the literature yields five characteristics of high-quality professional development, which are described in detail below (Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, & Goe, 2011; DeMonte, 2013).

1. Aligns with School Goals, State and District Standards and Assessment, and Other Professional Learning Activities

Alignment helps reduce confusion and uncertainty about what and how to teach, and can help build shared vocabulary and common goals that are essential to sustain instructional improvements (Archibald et al., 2011). In addition, Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon (2001) as cited in Archibald et al., (2011) found that teachers report greater increases in their knowledge and skills when professional development activities:

- Build on what teachers have previously learned in related professional development;
- Emphasize content and pedagogy aligned with national, state, and local standards and assessments; and,
- Support teachers in developing and sustaining ongoing communication with colleagues attempting similar teaching changes.

It is also important to note, however, that a coherent aligned system does not translate into teachers that will implement changes to instruction in uniform ways; teachers will differentiate and integrate strategies in ways consistent with their teaching style and classroom context (Archibald et al., 2011).

2. Focuses on Core Content and Modeling of Teaching Strategies for the Content

A wealth of research evidence has documented that improved teacher knowledge, when followed by explicit changes in instructional practice, leads to improvement in student learning. Professional development must focus not just on content but on the teaching and learning process in order to positively impact teacher instructional practices (Blank & de las Alas, 2009, as cited in Archibald et al., 2011). Research has also shown that modeling teaching strategies effectively can be accomplished through instructional coaching. Coaching is most effective when it is conducted by an experienced teacher educator, includes observation of instruction followed by discussions with a coach, and involves teachers collaborating around what they are learning from a coach (DeMonte, 2013).

3. Includes Opportunities for Active Learning of New Teaching Strategies

Not surprisingly, active participation and engagement with professional development activities leads to larger changes in instructional practice. Active learning strategies include practicing learned strategies in the classroom, observing other teachers, conducting demonstration lessons, and reviewing student work with colleagues. These active learning methods typically take longer than passive learning activities such as seminars, lectures and workshops, but are more likely to result in improved instruction and student learning (Blank et al., 2009).

4. Provides the Chance for Teachers to Collaborate

Teacher collaboration is a necessary feature to maximizing the benefits of professional development. Hill, Stumbo, Paliokas, Hansen, & McWalters (2010) suggest that "teachers develop expertise not as isolated individuals but through job-embedded professional development, and as members of collaborative, interdisciplinary teams with common goals for student learning" (p. 10). Professional learning communities (PLCs) offer a collaborative setting for teacher professional growth. PLCs are lauded as a positive reform in professional development where "through collaborative inquiry, teachers explore new ideas, current practice, and evidence of student learning using processes that respect them as experts on what is needed to improve their own practice and student learning" (Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008, p. 90). PLCs provide an arena where teachers can elicit feedback on ways to improve their instruction, while acting within a safe and stable support structure for trying new teaching approaches (Archibald et al., 2011). Evidence suggests that PLCs can positively benefit instruction and student achievement at struggling schools (Saunders, Goldenberg, & Gallimore, 2009; David & Talbert, 2012).

5. Includes sustained, embedded follow-up and continuous feedback

Professional development that includes follow-up and feedback will be more likely to result in significant changes to teaching practices. Professional development activities are considered to be job-embedded when they are authentically related to the work of the teachers involved and informed by what teachers are doing and need to do (DeMonte, 2013). Teacher work within PLCs and instructional coaching serve as examples of job-embedded contexts optimal for professional develoment. Some specific examples include:

- A group of teachers meeting to analyze student test scores and discuss ways to change instruction and share important resources;
- An instructional facilitator conducting a model lesson for a group of teachers working on a particularl instructional practice; and,
- A teacher sending a video clip of her teaching to an off-site coach and they then discuss it in an online conference and talk about what could have been improved. (DeMonte, 2013, p. 7)

Professional development activities that are marked by these characteristics create greater opportunity for teacher "buy in," and thus increase the likelihood for instructional improvement and enhanced student learning.

The principal is the keeper and the champion of the school's ideal culture and practices. Consequently, it is the duty of the principal to not only espouse those values but to demonstrate them in his or her own behavior as well (Lucas & Valentine, 2002; Marks & Printy, 2003; Murphy, 2007).

Principals Must Model Behaviors and Practices in Line with the Vision

Elmore (2000) notes that:

> Most leaders in all sectors of society are creatures of the organizations they lead. Nowhere is this more true than in public education, where principals and district superintendents are recruited almost exclusively from the ranks of practice. … One does not get to lead in education without being well socialized to the norms, values, predispositions, and routines of the organization one is leading. (p. 2) It is therefore essential for principals to establish a vision for the school and the values to which all members of the school community will adhere.

Yet this vision will not take root without aligned changes in behaviors on the part of staff, students, and the principal. Lucas and Valentine (2002) emphasize the need for the principal to truly live the vision of the school; when the leader models the behaviors that he or she expects to see from others, it provides an example for others to emulate. Murphy (2007) writes:

> Effective principals and other school-based leaders articulate the vision through personal modeling and by communicating with others in and around the organization. … They demonstrate through their actions the organization's commitment to the values and beliefs at the heart of the mission as well as to the specific activities needed to reach goals. (p. 73)

Lucas and Valentine (2002) found this to be true; modeling expected behaviors not only clarifies how teachers and students should act, but it also can lead to the empowerment of teachers in their practice and informal leadership roles. The findings of their study demonstrated that leadership modeling appropriate behaviors was significantly related to having a culture of teacher collaboration and collegial support. Schools with principals who were committed to and demonstrated organizational values were better able to establish a learning community among the staff that was focused on student achievement and had a strong sense of shared leadership (Lucas & Valentine, 2002; Marks & Printy, 2003).

Hipp (1996) found, in her study of teachers' self-efficacy, that having a principal who led by example was related to improved self-efficacy in teachers. When a principal acted consistently with the school vision and values, teachers felt more secure and supported; they were also more willing to pursue their own professional learning, take instructional risks, and speak to colleagues in an honest and appropriate way when their leader had modeled these behaviors for them. It must be noted that effective principals, by modeling the behaviors they hope for and expect from every member of their school community, are also holding up a mirror to their own practices. Elmore (2000) writes that, "Leaders must lead by modeling the values and behavior that represent collective goods … leaders should expect to have their own practice subjected to the same scrutiny as they exercise toward others" (p. 21). By making themselves vulnerable to the same expectations as everyone else in the school building, principals are reducing the level of "bureaucratic controls" that Elmore (2000) insists are detrimental to school improvement efforts (p. 31).

The Need to Balance Culture and Instructional Responsibilities

With so many assigned responsibilities, a principal must be able to balance his or her duties as a manager and those as an organizational change agent (Marks & Printy, 2003). It is of course a primary responsibility to ensure that the school is not only physically but psychologically safe for all of its community members; being highly visible throughout the school and managing student behaviors is a large part of this. Murphy (2007) writes that an essential part of principal modeling is "personally enforcing discipline with students," which leads to a true sense of shared responsibility and a genuine feeling of support for teachers (p. 80). Hipp (1996) found that teachers in schools with effective and appropriate means of managing student behaviors, as well as a strong sense of school culture and shared values, had higher ratings of self-efficacy and were more amenable to change.

While it is critical for principals to establish and maintain a positive school culture, they must also remain active in the instructional side of the work and empower their teachers as experts and leaders. Marks and Printy (2003) quote Glickman (1989) in saying that, "the principal is not the sole instructional leader but the 'leader of instructional leaders'" (p. 371). Elmore writes that principals should guide improvement processes "and provide direction for them, since most of the knowledge required for improvement must inevitably reside in the people who deliver instruction, not in the people who manage them" (p. 14).

Yet by remaining involved in the process of curricular and instructional decisions, observations, and growth, principals demonstrate the importance of teaching (Murphy, 2007). It also places value in the teachers themselves, as the principal cannot fully carry out his or her vision for the school without a teaching staff that is talented, successful, and collaborative (Lucas & Valentine, 2002). By providing teachers with the appropriate resources, supports, opportunities, and models, principals are actively encouraging the growth of their staff and students (Marks & Printy, 2003, Murphy, 2007).

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