

EED Winter Conference 2008

Creating a School Culture for Collegial Conversation and Collaboration

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Attributes of a Productive School Culture

Make Positive Contributions
Honestly Assess Decisions
Provide Opportunities for Feedback
Create a Team
Self-Monitor and Self-Correct
De-Privatize Teaching Practice

Collegiality and Professionalism

Collegiality—the manner in which teachers interact with one another.

Professionalism—the sense of efficacy on the part of teachers.

Action Step 1. Establish norms of conduct and behavior that engender collegiality and professionalism.

Action Step 2. Establish governance structures that allow for teacher involvement in decisions and policies for the school.

Action Step 3. Engage teachers in meaningful staff development activities.

Our Professional Norms and Responsibilities

Circle the number on top of the box indicating *where you are personally* and the number at the bottom indicating where we are *as a team*.

1	2	3	4	5
Example: Be present means speaker has our full attention. (Cell phones and computers are turned off, grading papers is reserved for another time, side bar conversations are inappropriate.)				
1	2	3	4	5

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

A Framework for Teaching: Components of Professional Practice

- 4d. Participating in a professional community
 - relationships with colleagues*
 - involvement in a culture of professional inquiry*
 - service to school*
 - participation in school and district projects*
 - receptivity to feedback from colleagues*

Activity

Part One: It is better to create four to six inclusive principles that define the norms rather than a laundry list of 20 to 30 dos and do nots. Develop the positively stated principles and include the specific statements necessary for defining the desired behavior. (It is important as a practice to have the group develop and agree to follow the norms and responsibilities.)

Part Two: What tactics or strategies will you use when the inevitable happens? A group member decides to forget, ignore, or disregard the agreed upon norms and group functioning is beginning to suffer.

Configuration: Table Group

Materials: Term Bank, Our Professional Norms and Responsibilities Template

Time: 15 minutes

Report Out: At your table then a spokesperson will offer a summary with three other groups.

Norms and Responsibilities Term Bank

(The following are the rules of conduct as determined by consensus among the members.)

1. “Golden Rule” – Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
2. No side conversations.
3. Begin and end on time
4. Active participation by all.
5. Leave the past in the past
6. Silence cell phones/pagers.
7. Deal with issues not personalities.
8. “Time out” when needed.
9. Be committed to the process.
10. Be open and honest.
11. “What you see here, what you say here, when you leave here, let it stay here.”

1. No side meetings
2. Have fun and relax
3. Be on time
4. Established break times
5. Be courteous
6. State all concerns at meeting
7. Listen
8. Agenda before hand w/relevant information
9. Review meeting action items, include dates and times
10. Rotate facilitators / known facilitators
11. Focus on critical tasks
12. Establish time frame for discussions
13. Don't judge ideas during brainstorm
14. End on time
15. No interruptions, don't dominate
16. Teams for discussion breakout
17. OK to walk around during meeting
18. Time keeper
19. Raise your hand to discuss
20. Everyone has a fair chance to speak their mind (expand discussion time)
21. Time for discussion is up to facilitator
22. Agreement on voting item
23. Include discussion in minute's comments
24. Stay focused and on time
25. No rehashing
26. Table/parking lot for future discussion
27. Please turn off all cell phones and pagers for the duration of the meeting

Developed Norms are a Mechanism for Coping with Stress and Change

Do not be faint of heart! All groups have conflict. It is inevitable that educators will be involved in conflict.

A distinguishing factor between a dysfunctional group and an effective group is an effective group works through conflict and periodically revisits their group developed professional norms, when group functioning is faulting, when new members enter, or new dynamics confront the group.

An important task in schools is encouraging teachers to observe, discuss, and provide feedback about their professional practice. A major pitfall of many principals is looking at many aspects of curriculum, instruction, assessment (teaching and learning) and assuming the full responsibility that it all happens in classrooms. A principal needs to make certain that the entire staff is aware of and engaged in high quality teaching and learning in all classrooms.

Distributed Leadership is the art of mobilizing others to assist in the core mission of the school: Teaching and Learning.

Teacher leadership is often an untapped resource in many schools.

Teacher Collaboration: A Four Part Process

- A. **NORMS-** establish professional norms and responsibilities
- B. **PROTOCOLS-** Select or develop a protocol to enhance professional conversations
- C. **OBSERVATION-** (optional)- Using the observation/discussion templates will define and limit the information that is collected during an observation. (Your staff may not be ready for this large step.)

(Teacher observations should be voluntary, non-evaluative, teacher-directed, based upon observable teaching behaviors, with the focus of the collegial conversation being constructive feedback. It takes training in observing in a classroom, collecting data, following a protocol, and providing non-judgmental/non-evaluative feedback.)

- D. **FEEDBACK-** Adopting coaching language. Calibrating conversations (third point conversations) are likely to happen utilizing a Three Intentions format.

Principles of High-Quality Professional Development

(As defined by US DOE)

The mission of professional development is to prepare and support educators to help all students achieve to high standards of learning and development.

Professional Development:

- focuses on teachers as central to student learning, yet includes all other members of the school community;
- focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement;
- respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school community;
- reflects best available research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership;
- enables teachers to develop further expertise in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards;
- promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools;
- is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate that development;
- requires substantial time and other resources;
- is driven by a coherent long-term plan;
- is evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning; and this assessment guides subsequent professional development effort