

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TIME THAT SUPPORTS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Background

High-quality professional development is critical in enabling students to perform at the highest levels. Westwood provides a high-quality professional development program for all members of its staff.

Westwood's professional development program supports the growth and learning of teachers and staff members enabling them to provide an appropriately challenging and effective education for all students. Professional development is an integral part of Westwood's continuous school improvement plan.

Westwood provides multiple professional development options and opportunities for its staff. Professional development takes place within the school calendar, after school hours and during vacations. Westwood offers a menu of on-site courses and workshops. In addition, most Westwood educators take advantage of off-site courses, conferences, workshops and programs to increase their professional expertise.

Benefits

Professional Development: Benefits for Students and Teachers

A significant portion of on-site professional development time (early release days, common planning time and full-day professional development) is focused on improving practices that result in increasing student achievement. In collaborative work groups, teachers plan units of study, develop multiple assessments to check for learning, analyze students' work and develop interventions to challenge students' thinking and/or reinforce learning.

Teachers may, for example, work together to develop new strategies to increase students' comprehension of expository text or to enhance students' critical thinking skills. The new strategies are tried out in the classroom; data is gathered on their effectiveness and shared with members of the study group to expand the circle of learning. Thus professional learning is an ongoing process, seamlessly connecting professional learning time with classroom practice.

Additional Benefits:

In addition to the positive impact on student learning, teacher collaboration contributes to a positive professional culture in the school. Teachers work together as members of a professional learning community. They assume responsibility for the achievement of **all** students, not just those in their classroom.