
Minnesota Principals Academy
ALP Abstract

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High-Quality Professional Development

This Action Learning Project focused on ensuring that teachers new to the Fergus Falls School District be provided professional development regarding pedagogy that had been provided then studied in Professional Learning Communities in previous years. In order for teachers new to the district to implement instructional strategies that the district has invested in, they need to be provided qualitative professional development on the topics. With the focus on educational achievement, Fergus Falls teachers have studied Formative Assessment, Differentiation, and Question & Discussion Techniques, and implemented these into instructional practice.

In turn, the components of teacher evaluation were selected to measure professional performance of the instructional strategies. Using *A Framework for Teaching* by Charlotte Danielson, components in each domain that aligned with the instructional elements were identified and included in the teacher observation scoring chart. For instance Components 1b and 1f were included when PLC's were studying and implementing Formative Assessment. The first year of teaching involves three professional observations. In order to be evaluated fairly, teachers new to the district need to be informed and provided similar professional development as their colleagues previously had. The investment in increasing teacher quality requires this.

Vision:

The district will develop a consistent means to provide teachers new to the Fergus Falls qualitative staff development in the ongoing efforts to improve teacher quality.

Background:

Staff Development and Professional Learning Communities studies have focused on Formative Assessment, Differentiation, and Question & Discussion Techniques in the years prior to the influx of teachers new to the school district. In response to the increase in new staff, the district developed a Teacher Mentor Program with intentional activities and ongoing support.

Context:

The Fergus Falls School District has had 40% of the licensed teachers newly hired over the past three years

Alignment of Project to Vision:

Providing new teachers a supportive means to the work done in professional learning communities will further develop teacher quality. In turn, will enhance student achievement.

Implications for Practice:

The degree to which teachers new to the school district are equipped to understand and include Formative Assessment, Differentiation, Question & Discussion Skills within their instruction, will correlate to their level of proficiency and most importantly student achievement.

Strategic Planning:

It is important for District Leadership to review and update the Teacher Induction plans each year and adjust according to the needs of the new hires. To carry out qualitative professional development a cooperative effort of teacher leaders who are distinguished in the areas of focus along with administrators will be utilized. Evaluation of this plan, the training being provided, and teacher implementation will be critical to making proper adjustments.