

CCSS Community of Practice Breakout Session

Topic: CT Core Standards: Implications for Curriculum Revisions

January 20, 2015

1. **What implementation practice learned at the 11/24 session (CCSS Classroom “Look-fors”) did you try in your school or district?**

- SUGGESTION: presentations be taped for use by participants? (e.g. With BOE) Lynn said a plan is being designed by CAS, using the Digital Library and notes and resources from previous Community of Practice meetings to create such a product. The project is just in the planning stages. The benefits could be very good.

2. **What are the three “best ideas” from each of the a.m. sessions?**

- The value of the idea of practicing “change” strategies before creating new policies; David Pearson suggested allowing a long timeframe to lay out the change vision of the leader. Erin McGurk commented on a multi-year approach to planning and indicated that such an idea emanated from their Superintendent. This shifts conversations from , “**Are** we going to? to “**How** are we going to”? There is a need to weave new things into the vision. When you project ahead, the leader needs to buffer the mandates and weave them to avoid resistance.
- David mentioned some of the downfalls of a multi-year planning approach; Weave new things into long-term vision.....Integrate new mandates..... and buffer staff from too much change. Professional Development needs to be focused to sustain initiatives. Collaborative reading with staff discussions was suggested. Everyone must get the same training. Erin said the Ellington team had strong, solid leadership with little turnover. The Superintendent was supportive. The District has a learning culture of reading and growing professionally.
- The value of standards-based report cards was discussed. Standards-based report cards can fail if piloted without a plan. Loretta asked about a systematic plan for implementation. Erin said the Ellington team had strong, solid leadership with little turnover. The Superintendent was thoughtful and read right along with the administrative team. The District has a learning culture of reading and growing professionally. Students moving from Middle to High School now have parents who will demand standards based report cards because they now understand what students are expected to know and be

able to do. Students and parents now know what they have to do to move from one level to the other and from one grade to the other.

3. **What did you learn from your colleagues that you will bring back to your school or district?**

- Questionnaires for meetings were useful for getting feedback. Lynn asked about the electronic feedback form for PLGs. The forms are completed right there at the meetings. If teachers check off “other”, it can generate a good conversation with the administrators. In addition, others can check in and see what the team is working on. The form serves for accountability and role certitude. An administrator can walk into the room, knowing what the PLG members are doing. An administrator can prioritize his/her time and which meetings he/she attends. Liz said it is easy for teachers to put their meeting notes and questions on this form. (Google docs is a very useful platform). Initially there was some pushback from teachers concerning the use of the forms. In some districts, teachers will only use if anonymous.
- Regina talked about the importance of culture as a basis for work. Distributive leadership is important because the principal cannot do the work alone. New staff are often willing to present. This is a way to develop leadership among teachers. *Maximizing the Principal (Fullam)*, supports the broadening of leadership.
- The value in content specific joint meetings between levels was discussed.
- School wide rubrics were developed, but initially they were difficult for HS teachers to embrace. Michele worked hard last year to differentiate rubrics between grades 9/10 and 11/12. Rubrics are based on a continuum of learning. There was a need for PD work to be done with teachers concerning the use of these rubrics. Teachers are aware that they can take students up to the next grade level in the high points of the rubric. Continuum language helps. Kindergarten has a continuum of sight words, then they can go on to read from that point.