



*A Community of Learners*

## **Informational Memo: Professional Learning Update**

To: School Board  
Trisha Kocanda, *Superintendent*

From: Daniel Ryan, *Assistant Superintendent, Professional Learning and Human Resources*

May 22, 2018

### **Overview:**

During the 2017-18 school year we initiated a new format for Professional Learning that arrived out of faculty surveys, current research, and our District vision and goals. As a result we used our three allocated Institute Days to align our Professional Learning with research that supports individualized, classroom relevant training. We were able to offer a customized, effective set of Professional Learning options that supported the District Vision for Reaching All Learners. We had three goals for Professional Learning for the year:

- We want Professional Learning to be cohesive and long-term.
- Professional Learning must be relevant to Student and Faculty needs:
- Professional Learning must be job-embedded and research-based:

### **Overview of the Year:**

At the end of the 16-17 school year faculty received a “map” of the Professional Learning opportunities scheduled for this school year. In addition to the four District Early Release Days, faculty are able to use their weekly Building Early Release Days and the three Institute Days. These are all structured, identified times for the entire District to participate in compliance trainings, engage in subject-specific discourse, and analyze student data.

In addition to our weekly Collaborative Leadership Team (CLT) meetings, support from Content Area Facilitators, and Professional Learning via Winnetka University, we utilize our three scheduled Institute Days for Professional Learning. During the 2017-18 school year we held Institute Days on:

- Friday, November 10

- Monday, January 22
- Monday, April

Based upon feedback from the spring faculty survey, current research, District goals and needs, we designed the Institute Days with each morning devoted to Professional Learning “courses” and the afternoon for District committee meetings. In September, all faculty received an “application” to facilitate an “Inquiry Circle” during one or all three of our Institute Day sessions. These sessions would be for 90 minutes, either between 8:30 and 10:00 or 10:15 and 11:45. Faculty were given an overview of the District vision and mission for the year and we asked to submit course ideas that both supported District goals while also relevant to teacher needs, job-embedded and research-based.

Faculty were allowed to create courses that were either co-taught or individually presented. They could choose to teach a course that ran throughout all three Institute Days. Many of the courses were scheduled as a continuum, meeting in November, January, and April. Only a few of the courses ended up being a single, stand-alone 90-minute course.

We received nearly 30 course applications, which were reviewed to determine they met the criteria listed above and 19 courses were selected, many co-taught to involving 24 faculty instructors. Course topics ranged from *Exploring Social Emotional Universal Screeners* to *Differentiated Math Instruction, Using Rich Tasks and Productive Math Discussions*. In addition, we had 6 courses that were generated by Central Office Administrative Team Members that aligned to specific District goals for the year. These topics ranged from *Executive Functioning and Classroom Performance* to *Integrated Service Delivery for ALL Learners*.

Once the schedule of courses were identified a SCHED was sent out to all faculty and staff in early October to create their course schedule for the year. One of the goals for the year was to have faculty have a predictable, individualized, relevant Professional Learning calendar from the start of the year. By mid-October all faculty and staff knew the courses they would be taking during the three Institute Days during the school year.

### **Evaluation:**

It is always important to collect data regarding the effectiveness of any new endeavor. After each of the three Institute Days we sent a survey out to all faculty and staff to collect their feedback on the Institute Day programming. Below are the results from all three Institute Day surveys. Two questions were asked regarding the morning sessions.

<b>2017-18</b>	<i>How relevant were the sessions to your day-to-day work with children? (% Agree + Strongly Agree)</i>	<i>How would you rate the overall effectiveness of the morning sessions to meet your professional needs? (% Agree + Strongly Agree)</i>
<b>Nov. 10</b>	<b>92.3%</b>	<b>90.7%</b>
<b>Jan. 22</b>	<b>87.0%</b>	<b>88.9%</b>
<b>April 2</b>	<b>89.1%</b>	<b>80.0%</b>

As part of the April 2<sup>nd</sup> survey faculty were asked about their overall satisfaction with the Institute Day format during the 2017-18 year. The results were:

- 87.3% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way the Institute Days were organized during the year (versus a 66% satisfaction rate last year)
- 85.6% agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to maintain the Institute Day format next year.
- There was one narrative response question asking faculty and staff to share their comments about the Institute Day and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

**Conclusion:**

Overall the feedback for the Institute Day sessions has been very positive. As we plan for the 2018-19 school year, we need to make sure that we continue to connect our Professional Learning to the District Vision/Mission. We are collecting feedback not only from our faculty and staff but our Building Principals and Central Office Team. At this point it appears that we will continue with the model used this year of a half day for committee work and the other half day for Professional Learning courses.