A5: Measurable Effect of Professional Development

**Indicator:** There are effective operating processes that determine the measurable effect of professional development, coaching, and mentoring on student performance.

**Prompt:** Comment on the effectiveness of the processes in determining the measurable effect of professional development, coaching, and mentoring on student performance. Provide evidence about whether the professional development/learning has had a positive impact on student learning.

**Findings**

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<tr>
<th>Supporting Evidence</th>
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<td>Meeting records</td>
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<td>Student work</td>
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<td>Teachers’ self-reflective evaluations</td>
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<td>Student scores on in-house writing assignments</td>
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<td>Student and teacher interviews (10% stratified random sample)</td>
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<td>Classroom observations</td>
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Our two-pronged professional development program (described in Chapter I) has had the greatest impact through the school-based portion. Our focus on strengthening writing for all students has not only improved students’ actual writing measurably but strengthened our internal school culture of personal reflection and growth on the part of all instructional staff members largely due to coaching and mentoring within academic departments and across our career path structure. **However, we do not have an agreed upon common writing rubric for our school; this is an important area to address especially with the emphases of the Common Core Standards.**

Almost all staff report that the personal coaching and mentoring by our English/Language Arts teachers has been key followed by deep discussion in personal interviews has deepened all discussions giving a clearer focus on our schoolwide efforts to improve student performance. This initial leadership has been greatly broadened as teachers in other disciplines have joined the leadership of our professional development cadre.

This side benefit, the comradery of staff has increased with greater understanding and respect for all members. At some level, this has been the greatest benefit as it makes all our work is stronger!

This local, in-house model has been so successful, we plan to begin the same type of focused, long-term professional development as we work to improve students’ problem solving skills.

District guided professional development has focused primarily on the implementation of the Common Core Standards. We’re likely about 40% of the way to an understanding of the work ahead.
C1. **Instruction Criterion**

To achieve the academic standards, the college- and career-readiness standards, and the schoolwide learner outcomes, all students are involved in challenging and relevant learning experiences.

**Differentiation of Instruction**

**Indicator:** The school’s instructional staff members differentiate instruction, including integrating multimedia and technology, and evaluate its impact on student learning.

**Prompt:** *How effectively do instructional staff members differentiate instruction, such as integrating multimedia and technology? Evaluate the impact of this on student learning.*

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| Using classroom observations over the past two years conducted by district and site administrators and teachers, staff found that a majority [well over 70%] of instructional staff members differentiate instruction based on process at least some [approximately 20%] during each class period. The types of differentiation identified were all around the process of learning: independent and group/pair work, the use of technology, and different levels of support. However, differentiation was almost always by whole class not by individual or clusters of students. | *Classroom observations*  
*Teacher and student surveys (Results in VC workroom)* |
| To further refine the data, instructional staff members tallied changes in strategies (process and product based only) in each classroom over a period of one month. These findings essentially matched those of the external evaluators – Some differentiation, but, perhaps not enough, and still class-based. The least used of the strategies were technology and differentiated products. A part of this is related to the general lack of technology equipment schoolwide. Not unexpectedly, some instructional staff members (primarily instructional assistants) seemed always to be responding to the varying needs of students. | *Classroom observations*  
*Teacher and student interviews*  
*Student work samples* |
| In addition, none of the findings supported attention to the critical learner need of vocabulary development. Thus, some differentiation is occurring, it’s very often unrelated to identified overall student needs and there is no evidence that any of this – particularly technology – has affected student learning. | *Classroom Observations*  
*Focus Group followed by full faculty discussions* |
| How might the shift to Common Core Standards show additional differentiation? |  
Consider adding subject area/SLC responses which might show additional differentiation. |
D2. **Assessment and Accountability Criterion**

Teachers employ a variety of appropriate formative and summative assessment strategies to evaluate student learning. Students and teachers use these findings to modify the learning/teaching practices to improve student learning.

**Modification of the Learning/Teaching Process** *(Prompt which will be stricken from the final report is here for continuing guidance as we write. However, the guide words will be left in.)*

Evaluate the effectiveness of how assessment data is collected, analyzed, and used as the basis to make decisions and changes in the curricular and instructional approaches.

Our work during the self-study has **not** identified any instances where assessment data (formative or summative) has been collected, analyzed, and used as a basis to make decisions and changes in the curricular design implemented or instructional practices employed. The curriculum has been unchanged for past 5 years. Professional development has been largely directed at implementing the Common Core State Standards. Discussions about data have mainly been on how to raise scores on high-stakes tests.

We have a **deepened understanding** of the need to reflect on the implications of assessment results both to guide curricular implementation and drive instructional practices. The view of student performance evaluation must be analyzed over a larger scale than just a test or a grade. Our only sense of “preparation for success in college, career, and life” is based on college entrance and irregular and relatively infrequent reports from graduates. The discussion which occurred around this Prompt was both short and difficult as we struggled to understand our ongoing use of data and its basic non-impact on our processes.

**ADD Subject and/or SLC Responses.**

- English/Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Others

**Evidence:** Faculty/PLC discussion notes; data presented in Chapter I; the SPSA; and three grant applications for technology funds

**Conclusions**

**Prompt:** Comment on the degree to which this criterion is being addressed.

While staff have participated in a great deal of diverse professional development during the past three years, no measure of its true effectiveness in improving student learning have been implemented. In addition, no substantial improvement has occurred in overall student learning over that time frame.

**Prompt:** Comment on the degree to which this criterion impacts the school’s ability to address one or more of the identified critical learner needs.

*However, the perceived benefit of in-house, colleague lead/driven professional development has been so well received we will continue the practice as we move forward in improving students’ writing and problem solving skills.*