

Strategic Learning Initiatives: Job-embedded Professional Development

Sustained and intensive professional development (PD) will play an instrumental role in the Strategic Learning (SLI) SIG Transformation Process. SLI's comprehensive approach to PD is designed around a reform model that substitutes one-time workshops for deeper, sustained learning opportunities for all school staff, with extensive on-going PD sessions supported by coaching, demonstration and reflection sessions. In this regard, the project will create professional learning communities at the school, a structure that has been shown to be effective in enhancing teachers' effectiveness, creating a shared sense of responsibility for student success, increasing staff satisfaction and morale, contributing to the greater likelihood of systemic change, and ultimately positively impacting student achievement.

The professional development times and offerings will be based on identified school needs as determined by the initial school needs assessment, a review of student assessments, classroom observations and the teacher's professional growth plan. The on-site SIG professional development facilitator will work with individual teachers, small groups and the entire staff to identify PD needs and provide workshops, coaching, modeling and reflection sessions that will enhance teacher skills and support improved student achievement.

SLI's instructional model utilizes the Focus Instructional Process (FIP) as a framework for its' work. The professional development that teachers' experience, facilitated by an SLI professional development facilitator, during FIP provides them with new teaching and learning strategies. FIP is largely organic in terms of a teacher's professional development. Each of the eight steps in the process will empower teachers to communicate better with their students, with parents/families, with other teachers, and with school and district administrators, The Focused Instruction Process has a cumulative effect of establishing shared leadership within/across the school.

More specifically, FIP will begin with a series of workshops whereby teachers learn how to incorporate the eight steps of the process into their curricula. Teachers will transfer knowledge to students through the common core standards-based FIP focus lesson. Through the focus lesson step, skills are highlighted that allow students a vehicle for navigating and comprehending knowledge in all content areas in a meaningful way. Regular formative assessments are administered to monitor student progress toward mastery of the skills/standards. Student instructional interventions and enrichment sessions are scheduled for students based on the formative assessment results. Weekly grade level/department meetings provide teachers the opportunity to share instructional successes and challenges and offer instructional support and feedback to each other. Through continually communicating with each other in the weekly planning time about lesson planning, re-teaching, and enrichment, teachers will undergo a transformation in communication and delivery of instruction.

Strategic Learning Initiatives has implemented the FIP instructional improvement model and provided professional development services over the past ten years in Illinois SIG schools in DePue High School, and Lanphier High School in Springfield, twenty Chicago Public Schools, Glen Oaks High School in East Baton Rouge, LA and Para los Ninos Charter School in Los Angeles, CA.

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