LEAD FOR LITERACY MEMO

Providing guidance for leaders dedicated to children's literacy development, birth to age 9

DESIGNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL CHANGE

The Issue: While most educators receive professional development (PD) focused on literacy skills and strategies, at scale current efforts aren't working to improve children's literacy. If we are serious about training educators to deliver instruction that will boost literacy rates, then we need to make PD for educators more directly connected to children's needs and more intensive.

What Are Some Common Pitfalls That Impede Impact?

Common Pitfalls	What We're Learning
1. Choosing PD based on the latest educational fad or general offerings by outside organizations.	1. PD is only effective when the professional learning is directly related to children's needs, based on data (Memo 5).
2. Providing brief, isolated PD sessions.	2. PD opportunities should be ongoing, connected, and part of a long-term improvement plan (Memo 1).
3.Designing a PD plan that does not address the specific needs of the most academically vulnerable children at the site.	3. A PD plan is not complete if all students' needs are not addressed, particularly those students who are at risk for later difficulties (Memo 2).

For More on This…

♦ The FirstSchool partnership at the University of North Carolina and their paper, *21st Century Teacher Education for FirstSchool: A Model of Collaborative Inquiry*

♦ Reading Rockets for more information about how principals can support teachers

♦ *Fixing Teacher Professional Development* by H. Hill

Self-Study for Impact:

Use these guiding questions to steer the design and selection of effective professional development:

Based on Site-level Needs

♦ Do we have a PD strategy in place that is tightly connected to children's specific literacy needs at our site (Memos 5, 6, & 7)?

♦ Is this PD effort part of a long-term improvement plan guided by:
1) patterns in child data,
2) staff professional needs, and
3) organizational goals?

♦ Is PD connected to the curriculum (Memo 16)?

Intensive and Continuous Support for Educators

♦ Are our PD opportunities building off of each other, encouraging in-depth learning (Memo 1)?

♦ Does the PD design promote ongoing training that is embedded in daily practice?

♦ Does the PD design integrate theory and rationale with practice-based activities (e.g., case studies, data analyses, demonstrations, lesson designs)?

♦ Are post-PD supports part of the plan (e.g., materials, learning communities; Memo 9)?

Find this memo and others at http://langlit.gse.harvard.edu