



FEBRUARY 2010

Happy New Year

PLCs are hard work but...

Jeremy Salmon, Principal at Delaura Middle School-Brevard

As many of you already know, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) can make a huge impact on your school.

They can have an effect on everything from the culture, to collegiality, to student performance. When I became principal of Delaura Middle School six years ago, my focus was on two issues: *how can we work as a more unified team and how can we maintain and raise our performance?* I saw PLCs as the answer to both of those questions and so began the implementation process. If you are interested in implementing PLCs at your school, here are some “big picture” elements to

consider that I learned while implementing PLCs at Delaura Middle School.

PLCs can seem overwhelming at first. As you begin your journey just remember that it is like eating an elephant—you do it one bite at a time. Start with what you consider to be the most appropriate definition of a PLC. Then begin your implementation with that end in mind. Keep the process and goals simple, and be sure that they are tied to your school improvement plan as well as the mission and vision of both your school and your district.

The next step is to infuse

continued on page 3



HIGHLIGHTS

FASD Spring Forum

“Making Connections”

April 19-20, 2010

Crowne Plaza Melbourne
Oceanfront

DON'T MISS...

Connecting RtI-Problem Solving, Differentiated Accountability, and FCIM

Lesson Study

DOE Updates

Legislative Updates

Protocol System Updates

Regional Collaboration

Early Bird Registration:

\$100 Members/\$115 Non-members

After March 15th:

\$125 Members/\$140 Non-members

Registration information at

<http://www.fasdonline.org>

Hotel reservations 1-800-227-6963

Officers		Board of Directors-Regional		Board of Directors-At-Large
President	Debra Elliott	Carol Milton (Region II)	Belva Free (Region I)	Mary Ann Ahearn
Past President	Bill Hall	Barbara Stafford (Region IV)	Debbie Iseman (Region III)	Chuck Bradley
President Elect	Cathy Starling	Bette Zippin (Region V)		Stacey Christophel
Secretary	Vicki Crisp	Florida Department of Education Representative		Jean Lamar
Treasurer	Barbara Eubanks	Eileen McDaniel		Sallie Jenkins
Executive Director		2010 Leadership Conference Co-Chairs		Bridget Veal
	Debbie Cooke	Belva Free	Joyce Menz	Theresa Vernetson

A message from your President



Greetings to Florida's educational and professional development leaders:

I hope everyone is well on their way to a happy new year and that your resolutions are keeping you healthy, organized, and happy. I know each of you continue to manage and juggle a variety of roles and responsibilities, while trying to keep pace with the ever-increasing chaos surrounding our educational system. My hope for you is that you can find a sense of balance amid the chaos and take time for yourself and your family.

As I was thinking about my article for this month, it occurred to me that we are entering a new decade. How can it be that we have already hit 2010 so soon? As we gaze on the sphere of influence within our educational system, the first half of this new decade is not promising to be one without challenges that will be linked to appropriate funding and resources. As school districts struggle with budget shortfalls, there is great pressure to use limited stimulus funds as a temporary measure to avoid staff layoffs and program cuts.

I hope that all of the state leaders and policy makers are focused on additional funding streams to offset the decrease in funding that we have experienced for the last few years. Our Commissioner, advocating for Florida to be a part of the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant, views RTTT as a possible funding stream, offering opportunities for those who are unafraid to seek new alternatives. As the U.S. Department of Education requires, the state draft for the Race to the Top application includes new ways of evaluating, paying and promoting teachers and principals; lengthening the school day; expanding pre-kindergarten for struggling schools; and judging the performance of colleges' teacher-preparation programs as some of the critical pieces. Professional Development for teachers and administrators is not only another

critical piece, but also a common thread woven throughout the grant requirements. If funded, RTTT will bring an increased focus on how and when professional development is delivered, presented, and evaluated.

I hope you enjoy our newly, themed newsletters. This quarter, our FASD Board has the spotlight on "professional learning communities" to help prepare us for new learning in the future, on the topic of Lesson Study. According to Lois Easton's training, Lesson Study, "provides an ongoing method to improve instruction based on careful observation of students and their work." It is



*Debra Elliott, Ed.D., FASD
President*

also a term used in the RTTT grant criteria and you could consider Lesson Study as a new twist for doing business in a professional learning community. FASD is collaborating with DOE, NSDC and

Differentiated Accountability teams to offer you the most current and updated information. Please join us at the Spring Forum on April 19 and 20 to hear more about the connection and link between RtI, Differentiated Accountability, FAIR, and the Florida Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM).

**PLCS ARE HARD WORK BUT....CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

a high level of accountability for both teachers and administrators in each PLC. For example, have clear expectations for participation, individual roles, process and procedures, goal setting and reporting. As with any group dynamic, there has to be a shared vision, a results-oriented goal, a facilitator, and a level of accountability for what the group will accomplish and present back to others. The participation of the administration is also crucial as it shows support for the activity.

Also important is identifying which teachers will participate in a PLC. More often than not, those teachers that may be reluctant to become participants end up joining in and becoming a

productive member of a PLC because they see the benefits and effects that PLCs can have for teachers and students. But if roles, expectations, and goals are not clear from the onset, it can crash and burn quickly.

It is a time-consuming process that takes years to fully implement. You must have the right people in the right leadership positions approaching relevant issues related to both teacher collaboration and student performance. A few of the “ah ha” moments for our school during the last five years of implementation were:

- A PLC does not have to operate year-round.
- A school can implement a PLC as a whole faculty or a small group.
- The higher the level of accountability and

participation from both teachers and administration, the more productive the PLC.

- After PLC’s begin to show their effectiveness in your school, the level of collegiality and overall student achievement will increase.

Today, just six years into our PLC journey we have PLCs that operate as interdisciplinary academic teams, Subject Area PLCs, Data Team PLCs and the list goes on. Our level of communication and collaboration has increased and we are currently the second highest rated regular program school in the state. Simply put, PLCs have been the backbone of the structure and processes we have implemented, and the results speak for themselves.

* * *

PLCS-THE DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Pam Houfek, Director of Professional Development, Sarasota

Sarasota has been studying and implementing professional learning communities since 2001. Initially, the high schools incorporated PLCs within the Smaller Learning Communities grant in all five comprehensive high schools. Our district hosted summer institutes in which K-12 school teams, consisting of teacher leaders and their administrators,

congregated for a week to learn more about the need for teacher collaboration that is aligned with school improvement initiatives. In 2007, the district successfully negotiated a contract with the union that stipulates that teachers will meet at least weekly in collaborative planning teams.

The collaborative planning teams and their

agendas are teacher driven. Teachers decide whether they want to study academic or behavior interventions. They may examine student work, become more skilled in data analysis, develop common assessments, and learn more about evidenced-based instructional strategies. All teams use a district recording protocol for collaborative

continued on page 4

PLCS-THE DISTRICT PERSPECTIVE *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3*

plans. Teacher facilitators are trained in leading teacher groups. Teacher leaders participated in train-the-trainer models to lead training in high yield instructional strategies, cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, and infusion of technology into lesson design at their schools. Teachers have the option of participating in training during their collaborative planning time or during after-duty hours. The key to success was providing the training right at their schools and having resident experts available for the initial training as well as follow-up coaching and modeling.

Whatever it takes to help students improve is the focus of the learning communities (a.k.a. collaborative planning). As we go to press, district trainers are attending a Lesson Study Workshop and will return to train teacher leaders who will take the training to the teacher leaders at the schools. Lesson Study will

be another tool in the teacher's toolkit to learn, implement, and share in collaborative planning time.

* * *



UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR POWERFUL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By Alyson Adams, University of Florida

The traditional role of a College of Education has been one of initial teacher preparation and advanced graduate degrees for educators. At the University of Florida, through the work of the Laster Center for Learning, we've been working hard to break out of that mold. Instead, we envision educational partnerships that bring schools, communities, and universities together with the explicit mission

of creating master teachers and principals who raise student achievement in the highest needs schools. We approach this through job-embedded professional development that is teacher-driven and context-specific and yet supported and sparked by university faculty.

The ultimate goal of professional development is improved student learning, but the number of published studies

that link professional development directly to student learning outcomes can be counted on two hands (Yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007). This is not to say that PD doesn't make a difference – intuitively we know it does – but what it says to me as a university faculty member is that we researchers need to do a better job of designing, delivering, and

continued on page 8



FASD WEBSITE

www.fasdonline.org

MEASURING PLC IMPLEMENTATION USING THE NSDC INNOVATION CONFIGURATION RUBRIC

By Debbie Cooke, Executive Director



With an ever-increasing emphasis on using learning communities as a method of ensuring student achievement and professional learning, it makes sense that the premier organization for learning, the

National Staff Development Council (NSDC), would likewise generate a method for schools and systems to determine the degree to which their own practices “measure up” to research-based criteria.

In 2003, NSDC, in conjunction with the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL), published its first set of innovation configuration rubrics aligned to the NSDC Staff Development Standards. The

twelve existing standards reference learning communities, leadership, resources, data-driven, evaluation, research-based, design, learning, collaboration, equity, quality teaching and family involvement. For each of these standards, rubrics are provided to measure whether the specific standard is (or is not) being attended to by the identified target population. The innovation configuration rubrics were initially provided for the target audiences of teachers, principals, central office staff members, superintendents and school boards. In 2007, NSDC published additional rubrics for the standards targeting school-based staff developers, institutions of higher education, state education agencies, professional associations, external assistance providers, and directors of staff development. Any entity wishing to determine the degree to which they are implementing learning communities, or indeed ANY of the NSDC standards, needs only to obtain copies of the rubrics to do a self analysis. For more information about the innovation configuration rubrics, visit the NSDC website at www.nsd.org. * * *

INCORPORATING TECHNOLOGY INTO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By Joyce Menz, Director of Staff and Program Development, Nassau County

This year Nassau County has adopted the digital media instructional resources program **Discovery Education Network (DEN)**, to increase and simplify the instructional integration of digital media by teachers and students. This program provides thousands of digital resources that are aligned with state standards and reviewed for appropriate content. Content is searchable by subject or grade level, and permission for use has been obtained (citations provided). The initiative is a joint effort of the district’s Office of Information and School Technology and the Office of Staff and Program Development, via a contract negotiated by NEFEC.

District facilitators for the program attended training provided regionally by NEFEC and in turn trained school-based facilitators to support the integration and implementation of DEN resources into instruction. Training for principals was included in the process. School facilitators provide a variety of on-going training opportunities, model lessons with DEN resources, organize lesson demonstrations at faculty meetings, and collect electronic lesson plans that utilize DEN resources for a district “library” of DEN-enhanced lessons. Teachers who attend the full range of training sessions, complete the district’s Training Implementation Report, and submit a lesson plan that integrates DEN resources receive a stipend. Utilization reports, Classroom Walk-through data, and digital library submissions will enable the district to evaluate the success of the training initiative.

NEWS FROM THE FLDOE

By Eileen McDaniel, Bureau Chief

This year has brought some changes to the professional development staff in the **Bureau of Educator Recruitment, Development and Retention**. We have a new Bureau Chief, Eileen McDaniel, who replaces Kathy Hebda, recently promoted to Deputy Chancellor for Educator Quality. Eileen was formerly the Senior Educational Program Director for Communication and Policy Development in the Bureau of Educator Certification, which included responsibilities as state director for District Alternative Certification Programs mandated by statute in all Florida school districts. Prior to joining the Department in 2004, she was a school principal and district administrator. She is a former elementary school teacher and Reading Specialist, having been in education for over 30 years.

A fond farewell goes out to our former Director of Educator Retention Programs,



Eileen McDaniel, Bureau Chief

Henry Pollock, who retired from the Department at the end of December. His many years of service and dedication to excellence in professional development are certainly appreciated, and we wish him the best in his third retirement.

The revision of Florida's Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol Standards has been ongoing, with valuable input from our Revision Advisory Group, field testing in six districts, the assistance of Joellen Killion, Deputy Executive Director of the National Staff Development Council, and overall facilitation

* * *

Calendar



April 17-18, 2010

FASD Board-Spring Meeting,
Melbourne

April 19-20, 2010

SPRING FORUM
Crowne Plaza, Melbourne

June 17, 2010

FASD Board-Summer Meeting, Virtual

September 18-19, 2010

FASD Board-Fall Meeting, St. Pete

September 20-22, 2010

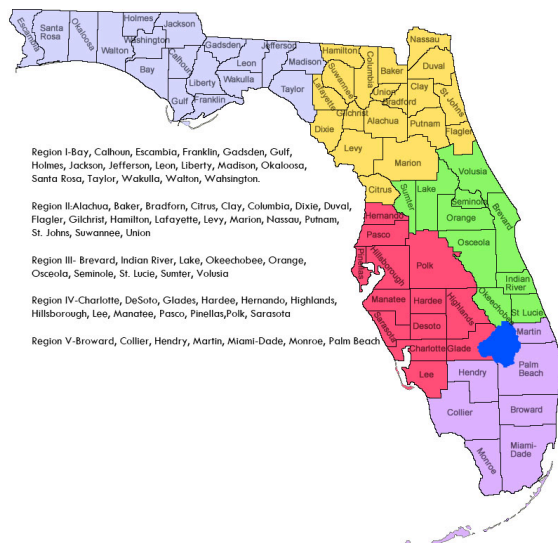
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
Tradewinds, St. Pete

by Connie Bergquist, President of Evaluation Systems Design, Inc. The updated standards can be viewed at <http://www.esdi.cc/Pro-Dev.htm>. The revision of State Board Rule 6A-5.071 to incorporate the revised Standards is also in process, with approval targeted for later this spring, in time for a possible roll out of the revised Standards by the end of this school year.



**NATIONAL STAFF
DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

Our purpose: Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.



AROUND THE STATE

Region I

Belva Free, Region Director

belva@paec.org

The immensely popular **PAEC Patriot Project**, a Teaching American History Grant, continues to serve teachers from the Panhandle by providing training and experiences that enhance teacher content and pedagogy knowledge. Participants in the \$999,999 project will tour and study in Williamsburg, Richmond, Jamestown, Yorktown, Monticello and other historic sites this summer as part of the three year project. Teachers involved in this project have received not only professional development, but equipment and materials to enhance their delivery of American history in the classroom. Region I teachers are also participating in professional development offered by the PROMISE and Teacher Quality grants.

Region II

Carol Milton, Region Director

milton_c@popmail.firn.edu

During the fall of 2009, the school districts of **Clay** and **Hamilton** counties participated in the field test pilot for the new Third Cycle Professional Development Protocol standards. District and school level staff participated in interviews to field test the questions and assisted in gathering documentation to provide evidence for the standards. It was a very positive and beneficial experience for the districts in improving local professional development programs! Several districts in Region 2 have also been working on incorporating the Next Generation

Sunshine State standards into professional development activities and curriculum.

Region III

Debbie Iseman, Region Director

isemand@stlucie.k12.fl.us

St Lucie County is preparing for it's second annual Teacher Inquiry Fair in May of 2009. Over twenty K- 12 teachers and three administrators are working on yearlong Action Research Projects. They will present their findings at a community showcase. This year's topics range from using multi-sensory activities to teaching high frequency words to determining if student led book clubs have an impact on reading motivation. St. Lucie is very pleased to have educators who are committed to doing research that is focused on improving teaching and learning for all students

Region IV

Barbara Stafford, Region Director

barbara_stafford@sarasota.k12.fl.us

Hillsborough County - **Receives \$100 million grant from the Gates Foundation**. Stipulations of the grant require the district to develop an improved system to increase teacher effectiveness, including performance appraisal and compensation. The district is working with Charlotte Danielson to utilize her "Framework for Teaching" as a foundation for the system. Teachscape is also partnering with the district to provide the technology and support for the system via state of the art mobile video devices for both formative and summative evaluation. The remainder of the grant is under local control for school improvement. The district is convening input sessions across the district with parents and community to solicit ideas for improvement.

Region V

Bette H. Zippin, Region Director

bzippin-brd@browardschools.com

Shari Huene-Johnson, Coordinator of Leadership Development, **Collier** County, reports her district has been working on PLCs for five years and "has well-developed, functioning PLCs in all schools, including high schools." Shari also reports that in April, the district will host "Tune In to Tune Up-Topic: RtI" with Rebecca and Rick DuFour in a video conference format. Way to go, Collier!

Gracie Diaz, Assistant Superintendent of HRD, **Broward** County, reports "work on our Teacher Quality Grant is progressing nicely and we will have professional development modules for the Next Generation Math and Science Standards ready to roll this summer". This grant is a partnership with the local universities of Barry University, Broward College, Florida Atlantic University and Nova Southeastern University.

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR POWERFUL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

studying PD in ways that can be connected to student outcomes – and we need to do so in partnership with the people who are ultimately accountable for student learning. University faculty need to be embedded in schools and districts as equal partners with teachers, principals, coaches and staff developers to improve student learning by improving teacher practice through professional development. This partnership results in two-way learning, where all parties learn with and from each other.

This philosophy sits at the heart of University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning's School Improvement Model. In our model, professors-in-residence work in each partner district. These faculty members help to plan, deliver, follow-up, and evaluate professional development alongside teachers, coaches, and staff developers.

Looking at the role of professor-in-residence using the NSDC standards as a framework, we can see how the *content*, *context*, and *process* of professional development can be enhanced:

Content: All of us in the field of professional development would agree on the importance of relevant, timely, and rigorous *content*. A professor-in-residence helps to bridge theory and practice by introducing research-based best practices to teachers and supporting the use of new strategies by coaching and mentoring teachers as they apply new learning. District staff developers often serve in this role as well, but what the university can offer to teachers beyond this is the potential for college course credit or a degree program related to new content learning. Job-embedded graduate degree programs (such as the UF Teacher Leadership for School Improvement Program) can be a rigorous way to bring best practices to teachers with embedded supports that encourage the use of new practices, not only the acquisition of new knowledge. Professors-in-residence teach and coach educators onsite through programs such as this.

Context: In order for professional development to impact teacher practice, the school *context* must support on-going teacher learning. Job-embedded effective professional development extends beyond traditional staff development days to include times and structures during the school day so that learning is incorporated into the daily lives of teachers, embedded in the act of teaching and supported through internal structures in schools. This creates a coordinated, systemic approach to professional development, embedded into the regular school routine with continuous cycles of inquiry (learn, implement, collect evidence of impact on student learning, reflect, adapt). A professor-in-residence can help schools examine their existing structures for teacher learning, bringing new ideas, strategies, and tools to enhance teacher learning within the school day, often through professional learning communities and inquiry groups.

Process: NSDC standards also address the *process* by which professional development is designed, implemented, and evaluated based on student data, teacher needs, and adult learning theory. In job-embedded professional development, professors-in-residence act as an external support to help teachers examine student data and then reflect on teaching strengths and areas for improvement that connect to student needs. We have found that having an external person, who is not judgmental or evaluative, provide this support for teachers is instrumental in helping them identify areas for improvement. Professors-in-residence lead teachers in cycles of inquiry where teachers identify problems based on data; create a plan for systematically studying the problem; acquire new knowledge, skills and expertise in the identified area; apply the new learning practice in the classroom; assess the impact of their new practice on student achievement; and share the outcomes of their new practice with other teachers in their schools -- before starting the inquiry cycle again.

The ideas above are just a few of the ways in which universities can work alongside educators at all levels to reinvent schools as powerful learning organizations that maximize the learning of educators and students. To accomplish this goal, we believe it will take intense partnership of all of us in education, and we stand ready to work beside all of you to accomplish this.

* * *

PLC'S ... FROM A TEACHER'S POINT OF VIEW

by Jean Lamar, Nassau County 2009 Florida Teacher of the Year

I am absolutely, unequivocally passionate about learning. Although I teach reading and English, I have always seen my classroom as a laboratory and myself as a scientist. Day after day for the past twenty years, I have poured over data, examined curriculum, and reflected on my teaching practices – all in an effort to help my students succeed.

Thinking back over the years, I remember the countless times I sought to learn and grow professionally. Once I drove to a nearby state, eager to gather ideas for my school's Shakespeare Festival. I have treasured information gained at workshops and conferences, and amassed a professional library of research whose authors now seem like beloved friends. One of the most valuable aspects of serving as the 2009 Florida Teacher of the Year was the opportunity to spend time in classrooms across our state and observe the practices of exemplary teachers. Today, technology



such as websites and blogs make learning and collaboration with my colleagues and fellow state teachers easier than ever. Likewise, I welcome

colleagues into my classroom, eager to engage in meaningful professional reflection and dialogue. In my district, I have been privileged to mentor new teachers and national board candidates as well as share with

veteran teachers.

It wasn't until later I learned that many of my common, everyday practices – collective inquiry, collaboration,



continuous improvement, to name just a few – define what we now all know as Professional Learning Communities. Yet while teachers may readily embrace the vital element of learning within PLCs, I fear that many – bombarded with the countless demands and complexities of teaching – feel content to learn within their own isolated classrooms. Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker in their highly acclaimed, *Professional Learning Communities at Work*, defy that irrationalism. Professional teachers, they say, function as leaders. DuFour and Eaker further quote John Gardner's observation (*The Task of Leadership*) that, "every great leader is clearly teaching – and every great teacher is leading."

So, my challenge to you is this: leader-teachers, embrace and encourage your teachers to become teacher-leaders. After all, we're in this together, forever desirous of making a difference in the life of a child.

Newsletter Staff

Editor/Layout-Bette Zippin

Web Publisher-Barbara Eubanks

Copy Editors-Debbie Iseman, Jean Lamar, Barbara Stafford, Theresa Vernetson

Feature Writers-Debbie Cooke, Debra Elliot, Eileen McDaniel

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the Florida Association for Staff Development, nor are the products and services mentioned endorsed by FASD.

MEMBERSHIP INFO

\$30.00 yearly dues

Application on the website

WEBSITE

<http://www.fasdonline.org>