

Professional Learning Current Reality and GAPSS Review

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## **Part A: Professional Learning Current Reality**

### **Vision**

Dalton Middle School is the only middle school within the Dalton Public Schools District. The current enrollment is 1766 students in grades sixth-eighth. The vision of Dalton Middle School is a learning environment where students are engaged in rigorous activities that are authentic, meaningful, and require higher-order thinking skills. We believe that technology is a tool to enhance and aide in more effective and efficient collaboration, communication, learning, and teaching. According to Missie McKinney (assistant principal at DMS), “our goal is to provide each child with a 1:1 device that they can use to enhance their learning experience” (personal communication, September 21, 2015). Currently approximately 700 of our students are provided with 1:1 devices and the school and district are pushing to supply the other thousand students with them in the next three years (*Dalton Public Schools Three-year Technology Plan: 2015-2018*, 2014). In addition to providing 1:1 devices Mrs. McKinney also stated that she would like to see these devices become tools to help with instruction and create a blended learning environment that is felt across the school. “While we want each child to have access to a computer, we do not want them just sitting around collecting dust or becoming babysitters in the classroom” argued McKinney (personal communication, September 21, 2015).

### **Needs Assessment**

Dalton Middle School has four assistant principals in addition to the principal to create the administrative team. McKinney expressed that “we strive as a team to sit down and really dig deep into what we are seeing and hearing around the school to decide our next steps or needs within the school” (personal communication, September 21, 2015). Professional needs are determined by examining classroom observations, TKES evaluations, and patterns that arise within the entire school or certain sub-groups. The school Design Team also serves as a group that has representation from across the school and can suggest areas of weakness or interest for future professional learning. According to McKinney, one of the last places they tend to focus on for areas of future growth is the

data reported from the CRCT or Georgia Milestones testing (personal communication, September 21, 2015). Although this is data they consider, the administrative team prefers to pull data from classroom grades and common assessments before skipping straight to the end of year standardized testing. The needs are determined and goals are created and recorded in the Continuous Improvement Plan. The current goals as stated in the plan revolve around increasing rigor in the areas of mathematics and reading, providing extra academic support for students who are struggling, and refining the connections classes offered in the school to better align with the college pathways from the high schools (*Dalton Middle School: Continuous Improvement Plan*, 2015). Each of these goals is supported by data in the Continuous Improvement Plan.

### **Professional Learning**

Professional learning is offered in a variety of ways at Dalton Middle School. Knight (2007) argues that most administrators who are focusing on improving instructional strategies and practices are finding that just sticking with one type of professional development is not sufficient anymore. Dalton Middle School offers book studies, coaching sessions, whole group sessions, small group sessions, and a plethora of other training methods. Depending on the need, McKinney stated that there is a “smattering of offerings,” yet it is not always in an organized fashion. Some professional development is organized months in advance, while others are created in a quick time frame based on an immediate need. For example, the special education teachers and co-teachers attended a training session over the summer that had been planned out since the spring to address specific needs that were addressed during the school year. On the other hand, grade level trainings regarding Canvas, the Learning Management System that our district utilizes, were implemented two days after an update was rolled out and confused many teachers. Book studies have been offered for groups who were interested in a common topic or innovation and McKinney also made note of mentoring and coaching that happens on a frequent informal basis within the school (personal communication, September 21, 2015).

Within the last school year the school has focused much of its technology-related professional learning around the LMS Canvas. With the growing implementation of 1:1 devices the school and district are also striving to have a greater participation of staff creating content within the LMS and then using it with their students (*Dalton Public Schools Three-year Technology Plan: 2015-2018*, 2014). To assist in this growth, a school and district Canvas Support Team was created that have been providing large group, small group, and individual training sessions based on current skill level and needs. In addition to these Canvas trainings, the district recently created an entire day devoted to meeting the technological professional learning needs of the teachers within the system. Sessions were created revolving around issues or interests identified by staff and then each teacher attended sessions of their choice throughout the day. The sessions included topics such as Canvas, NearPod, apps that are useful in certain age groups, Microsoft in the classroom, and many more. During teacher in-service days DMS also attempts to offer at least one technology-related session for teachers to attend.

While the school and district strive to provide the necessary professional learning, McKinney was quick to point out that “we struggle to provide formal follow-up support after the trainings are over” (personal communication, September 21, 2015). Most follow-up occurs as the administrative team is doing classroom observations and will take note to see if the professional learning is being implanted in the classroom. The math and literacy coaches also provide a form of follow-up support through group meetings and individual conferences and coaching sessions. “This is an area for improvement in our school looking forward,” McKinney offered (personal communication, September 21, 2015).

### **Alignment to School Improvement Goals**

Professional learning at Dalton Middle School is aligned to the school improvement goals as outlined in the Continuous Improvement Plan as well as the district technology goals as outlined in the Dalton Public School Technology Improvement Plan. Two of the school improvement goals relate directly to increasing the rigor in mathematics and reading. To accomplish this goal professional

learning is being provided by the literacy and mathematics coaches both within the school and the central office level. Technology is another focus of professional development in the school according to McKinney and “we work closely with the district technology staff to provide meaningful trainings that meet our needs and helps further their goals for the district” (personal communication, September 21, 2015).

### **Funding & Incentives**

Dalton Middle School is considered a Title I school due to our poverty rate. While being a Title I school opens the door for more funding to become available to the school, this classification brings many stipulations, one of which requires that all monies spent from Title I must closely align to the Title I plan the school has in place. According to McKinney, “most of our money used for professional development comes straight out of Title I funds so we have to be mindful in how it is used and be able to document the need and outcome of the training” (personal communication, September 21, 2015). If the training does not align with the Title I directives, funding can be used to cover the expenses from the local school budget, but this money is limited and sometimes earmarked for other purposes.

In the past, McKinney stated that participation in the professional learning opportunities both inside the school and beyond, was encouraged through the requirement of Professional Learning Units. “With the requirement of PLUs disappearing there are few extrinsic motivators to entice teachers to participate on their own, especially outside of school,” McKinney asserted (personal communication, September 21, 2015). The primary incentive that was identified within the school by McKinney was the teachers’ satisfaction that comes from creating a positive culture within their own classrooms. Monetary reimbursement is offered when available if teachers participate in school sponsored professional learning outside of their contractual time, but even this is dependent on available funds.

### **Diversity**

Dalton Middle School prides itself in offering a strong curriculum for all students, especially those in special education or English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Each year the school and district provide certification courses for ESL teachers as well as a three day SIOP training with an expert in the field that comes to the district for the training. As assistant principal in charge of coordinating the special education department at DMS, McKinney takes pride in the professional learning that is offered to teachers to assist them in the areas of co-teaching, rigor in the special education classroom, as well as up-to-date trainings on IEPs and differentiation (personal communication, September 21, 2015). In addition to these professional learning opportunities, the district level coordinators for ESL and special education are available at any time for training sessions based on individual or small group need.

## **Collaboration**

Dalton Middle School strives to create an atmosphere in which collaboration is supported and encouraged. According to Brian Suits (principal of Dalton Middle School), “DMS is designed in a way to create natural teams for teachers to collaborate cross-curricular as well as within their content areas” (personal communication, September 21, 2015). Common planning is provided and protects for teams and content areas each week to encourage this collaboration. The Design Team is a team that has been created to encourage collaboration throughout the school. This team collaborates to design professional learning and learning experiences for the staff that go beyond the content areas. In addition to these teams, the administrative team creates ad-hoc teams and committees as needed. For example, McKinney referenced a committee that is being created to take an in-depth look at grading policies within the school (personal communication, September 21, 2015). “Each of these teams is related back to the school improvement plan and goals to create the most-engaging and rigorous learning opportunities for our students,” stated Suits (personal communication, September 21, 2015).

## **Evaluation**

Evaluation of professional learning and the impact that it has had on staff and student achievement can be tricky to capture. Suits and McKinney agreed that while they do not like to link success to student test scores, this is still the easiest way to determine the impact of professional learning on student achievement (personal communication, September 21, 2015). Another form of evaluation comes in the form of classroom observations to see what the teachers are putting into practice. Informal conversations with both students and teachers is one way Suits likes to see what is being implanted in the classrooms (personal communication, September 21, 2015). “If you are doing what you need to in terms of professional development and support for your teachers, you will eventually begin to hear from each of your stakeholders the positive impact that is being felt and that is our goal,” indicated Suits (personal communication, September 21, 2015).

## References

*Dalton Middle School: Continuous Improvement Plan: 2015-2016.* (2015). Dalton, GA: Dalton Public Schools.

*Dalton Public Schools Three-year Technology Plan: 2015-2018.* (2014). Dalton, GA: Dalton Public Schools.

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.



**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING** - Professional learning is the means by which teachers, administrators and other school and system employees acquire, enhance and refine the knowledge, skills, and commitment necessary to create and support high levels of learning for all students.

**Professional Learning Standard 1: The context of professional learning--the who, when, why and where—contributes to the development and quality of learning communities, ensuring that they are functioning, leadership is skillful and focused on continuous improvement, and resources have been allocated to support adult learning and collaboration.**

**PL 1.1 Learning Teams**

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Teachers do not participate in learning teams or meet regularly to plan for instruction.	Some teachers in some grade levels or subject areas meet to plan for instruction, but meetings do not occur regularly and the work is not aligned with school improvement goals.	Most teachers meet regularly in learning teams to plan for instruction (e.g., develop lesson plans, examine student work, monitor student progress). This collaborative work would be enhanced by clear alignment of group expectations with the school improvement goals.	All teachers participate in learning teams throughout the year and meet regularly to plan for instruction (e.g., develop lesson plans, examine student work, monitor student progress). The collaborative work is aligned with the school improvement goals.

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

All teachers in the school participate in learning communities. During common planning time, teachers have designated days for certain learning groups to meet. For example, on Tuesdays the special education teachers meet with their co-teachers to collaborate and design, on Wednesdays cross curricular teams meet to monitor student progress and design units that are cross-curricular. Thursdays are devoted for grade level content teams to meet and collaborate. At the beginning of the year the goals for each group are established during a pre-conference with the administrator.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is my recommendation that there be more accountability for these collaborative learning communities throughout the year. Check-in points with the administrator or recording of meeting notes would be beneficial to ensure that the group is on track and being productive with the time they are given.

## PL 1.2 Learning Community

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
There is little or no evidence that the principal, administrative team or related human resources (e.g., leadership team, coaches, central office) supports or reinforces the creation and maintenance of a learning community.	There is some evidence that the principal, administrative team, or related human resources (e.g., leadership team, coaches, central office) support or reinforce the creation and maintenance of a learning community, but additional support in this area is needed. Although administrators have created structures for meetings to occur, they have failed to provide teachers with professional development related to the collaboration process.	The principal, administrative team, and other human resources periodically support the creation and maintenance of an effective learning community to support teacher and student learning. In key aspects of the school, these individuals work collaboratively to reinforce collaborative forms of professional development and learning for staff members. Although this process is operational, it would improve if greater emphasis were given to monitoring its impact on school improvement goals and student achievement.	The principal, administrative team and other human resources consistently support the creation and maintenance of an effective learning community to support teacher and student learning. These individuals work collaboratively to reinforce teachers' skillful collaboration (e.g., facilitation skills, conflict resolution, and group decision-making). They also help to create structures to support collegial learning and implement incentive systems to ensure collaborative work. They monitor the impact of these collaborative processes on school improvement goals and on student learning, and participate with other individuals and groups in the operations of the learning community.

**EVIDENCE:** In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Professional development sessions are provided by the literacy and math coaches for their respective content areas. The special education department has also had professionals come in for staff development involving co-teaching strategies as well as techniques to address areas of need. These are the three main areas of improvement listed on the School Improvement Plan.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

While the learning communities are in place, it is recommended that the administrative team monitor the impact of these groups on student achievement. An evaluation method could be developed to link content that is worked on within the learning community to student achievement in these areas.

### PL 1.3 Instructional Leadership Development and Service

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Not Addressed</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Emergent</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Operational</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Fully Operational</b>
<p>There are few if any opportunities for teachers to participate in instructional leadership development experiences, serve in instructional leadership roles, or participate in supporting school-based professional learning.</p>	<p>There are opportunities for teachers to participate in preparing for and serving in instructional leadership roles and contributing to the school-based professional learning plans. However, the opportunities are limited to a small number of teachers.</p>	<p>There are many opportunities for teachers to serve in instructional leadership roles and develop as instructional leaders. They are highly engaged in planning, supporting, and communicating professional learning in the school. This would be enhanced if there were more opportunities for instructional leadership roles among various personnel.</p>	<p>A variety of teachers take advantage of opportunities to participate in instructional leadership development experiences and serve in instructional leadership roles (e.g., instructional coach, mentor, facilitator). They plan, advocate for support of, and articulate the benefits and intended results of professional learning.</p>
<p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –</p> <p>There is a Design Team in place to allow for teacher leadership within the school, but teachers must be invited to participate and there is a small population that makes up this team. If teachers are wishing to develop instructional leadership skills they must do the work on their own and create opportunities for themselves within their own learning communities. Team leaders are in place, but they handle more paperwork and parent communication responsibilities.</p>			
<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b></p> <p>A mentoring program is needed for teachers wishing to extend their skills beyond the classroom in a leadership role. Mentors and mentees would have a chance to develop their knowledge and skills and would allow for people to excel in their content areas with roles such as department chair.</p>			

## PL 1.4 School Culture for Team Learning and Continuous Improvement

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
There is little or no evidence of the principal and other leaders establishing ongoing team learning with clearly articulated expectations for professional learning.	There is some evidence the principal and other leaders support a culture involving ongoing team learning and continuous improvement. However, there is not a clearly articulated plan for professional learning for teachers and administrators.	There is general evidence the principal and other leaders support a culture involving ongoing learning and continuous improvement through a plan for professional learning for teachers and administrators. The professional learning would be enhanced by including a variety of designs (e.g., lesson study, peer observations, modeling, instructional coaching, collaborative teacher meetings, etc.) constituting high-quality professional learning experiences.	The principal and other leaders support a school culture that reflects ongoing team learning and continuous improvement. The principal and other leaders plan for high-quality professional learning, articulate intended results of school-based professional learning, and participate in professional learning to become more effective instructional leaders.

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

The school and district promote teachers to continue their education through professional learning courses as well as enrolling in graduate degree programs. The principal stated that at least 70% of the staff currently has a graduate degree or is enrolled in a program to earn one. Within the school, Assistant Principal, Missie McKinney, stated that the school prides itself on offering a variety of forms of professional development to meet the needs of the staff such as book studies, content small groups, online learning communities, instructional coaching, and modeling just to name a few. Professional development is planned using the main goals from the School Improvement Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

With a staff that is so highly educated, it would be great to allow more teacher voice in the staff development that is offered in the school. Surveys or questionnaires for teachers to provide feedback would allow them to feel more a part of the planning instead of just attending the sessions when offered.

## PL 1.5 Job-Embedded Learning and Collaboration

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Teachers spend little or no time during the work-week learning and collaborating with colleagues to improve their use of curriculum, assessment, instruction, and technology.	Some teachers spend a small amount of time during the work-week collaborating with colleagues. However, this time is often focused on non-curricular topics and typically occurs after school.	Most teachers spend time during a workday each week collaborating with colleagues about curriculum, assessment, instruction and technology use in the classroom. This professional learning would be enhanced by allocating more time each week for job-embedded learning (e.g., lesson study, peer-observations, modeling, instructional coaching, teacher meetings).	Teachers spend a significant part of their work-week in job-embedded learning and collaboration with colleagues addressing curriculum, assessment, instruction, and technology. They receive sufficient support resources (e.g., materials, time, training) and assist with securing additional resources necessary (e.g., funding, time, technology) to sustain their learning. (NSDC Standards recommend that formal and informal job-embedded learning take place during at least 25% of educators' professional time. Such time can be devoted to lesson study, peer observations and coaching, modeling, conferencing, teacher meetings, mentoring.)

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Teachers attend collaborative sessions each week with their content area focus colleagues. Administration has determined that each Thursday content area teams will meet and collaborate. During this time, units, lessons, assessments, and pacing are discussed to ensure that everyone is on the same page while meeting the individual needs of the students in their classrooms.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To improve in this area it would be great to have more modeling and coaching sessions available for teachers in all content areas. These sessions are available in math and literacy because we have instructional coaches for these content areas, but the remainder of the staff is left out. Identifying exemplary teachers in other content areas would allow someone who could help facilitate this process in the absence of an instructional coach.

**PL 1.6 Resources Support Job-Embedded Professional Learning**

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Not Addressed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Emergent</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Operational</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Fully Operational</b>
Resources are not allocated for job-embedded professional learning that is aligned with high-priority school improvement goals. Little if any professional development is devoted to helping teachers use technology to enhance student learning.	Some resources are allocated for professional learning. However, much of the professional learning is conducted primarily after school and is not aligned with the high-priority school improvement goals. There is limited professional development devoted to helping teachers use technology to enhance student learning.	Most resources for professional learning are allocated for the identified high-priority school improvement goals. However, providing more job-embedded learning opportunities and professional development would enhance teachers' use of technology to support student learning. In other cases, these forms of professional development need to be more ongoing and sustained to ensure actual classroom implementation of training strategies and processes.	Resources are allocated to support job-embedded professional learning that is aligned with high-priority school improvement goals and technology supporting student learning. There is sustained commitment to ensuring that these professional development activities result in successful classroom implementation. There is also a process in place to determine the value-added of key strategies and processes, i.e., how they impact student achievement and related organizational short- and long-range goals.

**EVIDENCE:** In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

According to the school improvement plan and the Title I plan, the three areas of high-priority for the school are math achievement, literacy achievement, and achievement in the students with disabilities subgroup. Since these are the primary goals, Title I funds are used to ensure that any trainings or materials needed to achieve these goals are supplied. For example, additional student devices were recently purchased for the special education classes to ensure that IEP goals were being met and students had equitable access.



#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

To improve on this area, evaluation techniques need to be implemented to ensure that the funds being spent are actually directly impacting student achievement in these areas. A process should be implemented across the school to evaluate resources before they are purchased to determine if they are truly necessary and then again once they have been used to determine their effectiveness.

**Professional Learning Standard 2: The process—the how—of professional learning is aligned with articulated goals and purposes, data-driven, research-based, evaluated to determine its impact, aligned with adult learning theory, and collaborative in design and implementation.**

**PL 2.1 Collaborative Analysis of Data**

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Teachers and/or administrators use personal experiences or opinions to determine student and adult learning needs and goals. Data is not collected and analyzed in monitoring school and classroom improvement strategies,	Teachers and/or administrators work in isolation or with limited representation to review student summative data and determine student and adult learning needs and goals. Student and teacher data is collected and analyzed at the end of the year to monitor the accomplishment of classroom and school goals.	Teachers and administrators collaboratively analyze disaggregated student learning, demographic, perception, and process data to identify student and adult learning needs and goals. They collect and analyze relevant student and teacher data at the beginning and end of the year to monitor and revise school and classroom improvement strategies. Accomplishments are celebrated and results are regularly reported to family and community.	Teachers and administrators collaboratively analyze disaggregated student learning, demographic, perception, and process data to identify student and adult learning needs and goals. They continuously (minimum of 4 times a year) collect and analyze relevant student and teacher data (e.g. action research, analyzing student work, classroom observations, Awareness Walks, and surveys) to monitor and revise school and classroom improvement strategies. Accomplishments are celebrated and results are regularly reported to family and community.

**EVIDENCE:** In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Assistant Principal, Missie McKinney, stated that the administrative team sits down and analyzes the data to determine needs and goals for the school. If needed, the design team will be brought in to help disaggregate the data, but this is only a small handful of teachers from the school building. The math coach is also used at times to help analyze the data and then reports back to others their findings.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Data should be collected more frequently throughout the year from both students and teachers to determine benchmarks and progress. This would allow for more data to be available to be analyzed. The data should in turn be given back to the content areas or grades to analyze and use as they plan and design future lessons and activities.

## PL 2.2 Evaluating Impact of Professional Learning

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
The principal and other leaders develop and implement a plan for evaluating teachers' reactions to professional development events. Teachers' contributions to the evaluation are limited to providing satisfaction ratings. The evaluation identifies changes in teacher knowledge and skills as a result of participation, but it does not evaluate changes in practice or impact on student learning.	The principal and other leaders develop and implement a plan for evaluating professional development events. Teachers contribute to the evaluation by collecting and analyzing summative student learning data. The evaluation identifies changes in teacher knowledge and skills as a result of participation and year-end student performance, but it does not evaluate change in teacher practice.	The principal and other leaders develop and implement a comprehensive plan for conducting ongoing (formative and summative for a one- to two-year period) evaluation of the impact of professional development on teacher practices and student learning. The evaluation also emphasizes changes in school culture, organizational structures, policies, and processes. Teachers contribute to the evaluation by collecting and analyzing relevant student learning and process data.	The principal and other leaders develop and implement a comprehensive plan for conducting ongoing (both formative and summative over a three- to five-year period) evaluation of the impact of professional development on teacher practices and student learning. Evaluation also emphasizes changes in school culture, organizational structures, policies, and processes. Teachers contribute to the evaluation by collecting and analyzing a variety (student learning, demographic, perception, and process) of relevant data. The plan specifies the evaluation question(s), data sources, data collection methodology, and data analysis processes.
<p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –</p> <p>Teachers are typically asked to complete short surveys after completing professional development sessions to gain feedback on the session regarding the most useful things they could take-away from the session and what they would change for future sessions. This information is seen by the administrative team as they prepare future trainings. Administrators look to see if any strategies or techniques are used from the trainings in the classroom during observations. This information is noted in the teachers' TKES assessments.</p>			

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Assessments need to be created to evaluate professional learning and how it directly impacts the students in the classroom. This could be done through the use of observational notes or pre and post assessments. The data then needs to be analyzed by the teachers to see what is effective as they move forward with instruction.

## PL 2.3 Interpreting and Using Research Results

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
The principal and other leaders review professional journals that summarize research instead of actual research or they do not recognize a need for reading and interpreting research when making instructional decisions regarding professional development and school improvement approaches.	The principal and other leaders review educational research. They create opportunities for a few, select teachers to study educational research. They work with them to conduct reviews of research when making instructional decisions regarding the adoption of professional development and school improvement approaches.	The principal and other leaders demonstrate modest skills in interpreting educational research (validity and reliability, matching populations, and interpreting effect-size measures). They create opportunities for teachers to learn to use educational research. They work with them to conduct extensive reviews of research to make informed instructional decisions regarding the adoption of professional development and school improvement approaches.	The principal and other leaders demonstrate advanced skills in determining appropriate research design, interpreting research results, and determining whether results can be generalized. They ensure that teachers and community members learn to use educational research. They work with them to conduct extensive reviews of research to make informed instructional decisions regarding the adoption of professional development and school improvement approaches.
<p>EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –</p> <p>The administration work with the design team to review educational research. When they find something of interest, they work to travel to another school who has implemented something similar so that they can see it in practice and gain advice from the individuals making it happen in those schools. If it is worthwhile, they return to design how to implement that in our own school.</p>			
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <p>Teachers outside of the design team need opportunities to explore the educational research and participate in these off-site visits. If a math teacher researched a new strategy for a math classroom, then they should have the same opportunities to go and visit somewhere that is implementing the strategy and share it with others.</p>			

## PL 2. 4 Long-Term, In-Depth Professional Learning

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Not Addressed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Emergent</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Operational</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Fully Operational</b>
<p>Teachers experience single, stand-alone professional development events that are typically large group, workshop designs. There is little if any evidence of implementation or change in practice in classrooms. No emphasis is given to enhancing teachers' content knowledge or understanding.</p>	<p>Teachers attend multiple workshops on the same topic throughout the year to gain information about new programs or practices. They experiment with the new practices alone and infrequently with limited school-based support for implementation. No emphasis is given to enhancing teachers' content knowledge or understanding.</p>	<p>Teachers participate in long-term (two- to three-year period), in-depth professional learning that includes a variety of appropriate professional development designs including the use of technology. The various designs are aligned with the intended improvement outcomes. They include but are not limited to follow-up support for implementing new classroom practices (e.g., collaborative lesson design, professional networks, analyzing student work, problem solving sessions, curriculum development, coursework, action research, and classroom observations). Some evidence is present of attention to enhancing teachers' content knowledge.</p>	<p>Teachers participate in long-term (two- to three-year period), in-depth professional learning that engages learning teams in a variety of appropriate professional development designs including the use of technology. The various designs are aligned with the intended improvement outcomes. They include but are not limited to extensive, follow-up support for implementing new classroom practices (e.g., collaborative lesson design, professional networks, analyzing student work, problem solving sessions, curriculum development, coursework, action research, and coaching with feedback). A major focus of ongoing professional development is a commitment to maintaining and updating all teachers' knowledge and understanding of the content they are teaching and changes occurring in their field(s).</p>
<p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –</p> <p>The school provides multiple sessions per year on topics of interest or need. For example, this year there have already been four sessions focused around the use of Canvas, the Learning Management System in place. Teachers are able to learn, go back and try things out in their classrooms, and then return for future trainings to share what they have done and build a deeper understanding.</p>			

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

There needs to be more follow-up support for trainings so that teachers are not waiting until the next training to get their questions answered. Creating experts within the grades or contents that can help answer questions and fix problems in-between training sessions would be beneficial for all involved. This would also help speed up the learning and implementation.



## PL 2.5 Alignment of Professional Learning with Expected Outcomes

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
The principal and other leaders provide single, stand-alone professional development events that are typically large group, workshops with no expectations for implementation of new classroom practices. Generally, activities are not aligned with the school improvement plan or related priorities.	The principal and other leaders provide multiple workshops on the same topic throughout the year. They articulate the learning goal, but do not discuss expectations for implementation. Teachers receive limited school-based support for implementing the new classroom practices. Activities are only generally aligned with the school improvement plan or related priorities.	The principal and other leaders align a variety of professional development designs with expected adult learning outcomes (e.g., collaborative lesson design, professional networks, analyzing student work, problem solving sessions, curriculum development, coursework, action research, and coaching with feedback). The professional learning is long-term (two-to-three year period) and in-depth with extensive school-based support for the implementation of new practices. They clearly communicate the expectations for implementation by providing rubrics that describe the desired classroom practices and communicate how those practices connect to the school improvement goals. Generally, activities are aligned with major priorities within the school improvement plan.	The principal and other leaders align a variety of professional development designs with expected adult learning outcomes (e.g., collaborative lesson design, professional networks, analyzing student work, problem solving sessions, curriculum development, coursework, action research, and coaching with feedback). They ensure that teams of teachers are engaged in long-term (two-to-three year period), in-depth professional learning with extensive school-based support for the implementation of new practices. They clearly communicate the expectations for implementation with collaboratively developed rubrics describing desired classroom practices and communicate how those practices connect to the school improvement goals.

**EVIDENCE:** In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

He principal leads the design team and administrative team to create and design learning experiences for the staff. While there is a great deal of thought that takes place in the planning of these sessions, it is not always clearly communicated to the rest of the staff who is encouraged or required to attend these professional development sessions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the principal work to communicate clearly the implementation expectations for training sessions with techers and not rely on the ones providing the training to do so. If all of this information comes from the principal it is likely to be received in a better fashion that teachers will respect.

## PL 2.6 Building Capacity to Use Research Results

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Professional development is planned with no regard for research about adult learning needs and individual and organizational change processes. The sessions provided include strategies that do not mirror the instructional strategies teachers are expected to use with students (e.g., lecturing on inquiry method, covering material instead of helping participants to use and internalize it), and sessions are the same for all teachers regardless of their career stage.	Professional development is planned using research about adult learning needs and how individuals experience the change process. The professional development sessions demonstrate classroom practices through videotapes and simulations. The experiences focus on procedural learning - "how to do it" - rather than on developing deep understanding of concepts and problem solving strategies. Some professional development is specialized for new and mentor teachers.	Professional development is planned using research about adult learning needs and individual and organizational change processes. The professional development sessions include modeling and demonstrations of expected classroom practices. The experiences impact teachers' depth of understanding enabling them to use the new strategies routinely. Some professional development is specialized to reflect career stages of new teachers, mentor teachers, and teacher leaders.	Professional development builds the capacity of the staff to use research about adult learning needs and individual and organizational change processes as they implement new strategies. Professional development sessions consistently employ the same instructional strategies that are expected to be used in their classrooms. The experiences impact teachers' depth of understanding enabling them to solve problems and adapt new strategies to classroom circumstances. Professional development is differentiated to reflect career stage needs and interests (e.g., mentoring, leading learning teams, coaching, utilizing technology, and curriculum development).
<p><b>EVIDENCE:</b> In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –</p> <p>Professional development is planned around the needs of the teachers on staff. This may mean a large group setting or it could mean a small book study to help deepen the understanding of a select group of teachers on a topic. McKinney commented on how the school prides itself on meeting the needs of the adult learners as well as the student learners.</p>			

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Additional training for mentor teachers and teacher leaders needs to be designed within the school and district. The school works hard to ensure that new teachers have a mentor, but the mentors are not always properly trained on what to work on with the new teachers. Creating this training would help both the mentors as teacher leaders and the new teachers who are benefiting from what the mentor has to say.

## PL 2.7 Knowledge about Effective Group Processes

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Teachers and administrators lack knowledge about effective group processes and/or work alone, disregarding collective responsibility for student learning.	Teachers and administrators have knowledge of stages of group development and effective interaction skills, but lack skill in group process strategies needed for productive collaborative work. As a result, colleagues work in temporary groups often encountering unresolved conflict or frustration. Technology (e.g., email, chat rooms, and websites) is used to support collegial interactions.	Teachers and administrators have knowledge and skills regarding group processes (e.g., group decision making strategies, stages of group development, effective interaction skills, and conflict resolution) that are necessary to accomplish tasks and satisfy the interpersonal expectations of the participants. As a result, the school culture is characterized by trust, collegiality, and collective responsibility for student learning where colleagues work collaboratively. Technology (e.g., subject area networks, lesson sharing, seminars) is used to support collegial interactions.	Teachers and administrators have knowledge and skills to monitor and improve group processes (e.g., group decision-making strategies, stages of group development, effective interaction skills, and conflict resolution) that are necessary to accomplish tasks and satisfy the interpersonal expectations of the participants. As a result, the school culture is characterized by trust, collegiality, and collective responsibility for student learning where colleagues work collaboratively in established, ongoing learning teams. Technology (e.g., online discussions, web casts, and seminars, educational blogs, listservs, downloadable resources) is used to support collegial interactions and to ensure effective and sustained implementation.

**EVIDENCE:** In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

The school culture is positive and there is a high retention rate of teachers from year to year. This is not always common with such a large staff. Technology is used to share resources amongst teachers as well as a way for administrators to share knowledge and training with the rest of the staff. This is evident in the roll-out of a school-wide Canvas course to help train teachers on new technology resource tools that are free or have paid subscriptions through the school.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the school continue to work to create a collaborative space online where teachers can contribute and access resources at any point from any location. This will aid in the technology skills of the staff as well as the level of collaboration and hopefully quality resources that are available to improve student achievement.

**Professional Learning Standard 3:** The content—the what—of professional learning reinforces educators’ understanding and use of strategies for promoting equity and high expectations for all students, application of research-based teaching strategies and assessment processes, and involvement of families and other stakeholders in promoting student learning.

### PL 3.1 Classroom Practices Reflect an Emotionally and Physically Safe Learning Environment

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Classroom practices reflect little or no evidence of teachers’ training in understanding the impact that attitudes regarding race, disabilities, background, culture, high expectations, and social class of both students and teachers have on the teaching and learning process.	Classroom practices of some teachers reflect evidence of teachers’ training in understanding the impact that attitudes regarding race, disabilities, background, culture, high expectations, and social class of both students and teachers have on the teaching and learning process.	Classroom practices of most teachers reflect skill in communicating high expectations for each student and adjusting classroom activities to meet student needs. Respect for students’ cultures and life experiences is evident through the emotionally and physically safe learning environment where students of diverse backgrounds and experiences are taught the school code of conduct (customs) to help them be successful in the school context.	Classroom practices (e.g., considering interests, backgrounds, strengths, and preferences to provide meaningful, relevant lessons and assess student progress, differentiating instruction, and nurturing student capacity for self-management) of all teachers reflect an emotionally and physically safe environment where respect and appreciation for a diverse population is evident. There are high achievement expectations for all students and teachers. The principal and other leaders provide professional learning for teachers lacking understanding of the impact that attitudes regarding race, disabilities, background, culture, high expectations, and social class of both students and teachers have on the teaching and learning process.

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

There has been a large amount of training involving the WOW (Working on the Work) framework with the staff to focus on getting to know the students before designing learning tasks and assessments for them. This is evident when you walk through the classrooms at the beginning of school and see a large amount of learning inventories and “Get to Know You” activities being completed by students and staff. The staff feel it is also important for the students to get to know the teachers, not just the other way around.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The recommendation is for the teachers to do a more intentional job of readdressing the students' interests and needs throughout the year and not just at the beginning of each school year. As the students grow and develop, so do the needs and interests of each child.

## PL 3.2 Deep Understanding of Subject Matter and Instructional Strategies

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Teachers demonstrate superficial knowledge of subject matter and mostly rely on textbooks. They primarily use lecture, seatwork, and discussion as instructional strategies and paper-and-pencil tests for assessment.	Teachers demonstrate breadth of subject matter, but the content they teach is often not aligned with required learning goals (e.g., GPS, district standards). They may use some engaging instructional strategies and a variety of assessment strategies in some contexts; however, most of their instruction is presented in traditional whole-group, teacher-centered fashion.	Teachers exhibit a deep understanding of subject matter, use a variety of appropriate instructional strategies, and use various assessment strategies to monitor student progress toward meeting rigorous and required standards. They plan interdisciplinary units with colleagues and can articulate a rationale for why specific instructional strategies and assessments are appropriate to specific content or objectives.	Teachers exhibit a deep understanding of subject matter; differentiate instruction based on needs, interests, and backgrounds; use a variety of appropriate instructional strategies; and use various assessment strategies (e.g., constructed-response test items, reflective assessments, academic prompts, culminating performance tasks and projects, interviews, rubrics, peer response groups) to monitor student progress toward meeting rigorous standards. They plan interdisciplinary units with colleagues and can articulate a rationale for why specific instructional strategies and assessments are appropriate to specific content or objectives.

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Teachers have a deep content knowledge and collaborate as a content team each week to ensure that all classes within the grade are on the same page and understand what is expected of them by the state and standards. It is the goal of each teacher to use the standards as a minimum guideline for instruction, but to push the students beyond that. Interdisciplinary units are created on team when possible such as the environmental issues and biomes unit that seventh grade science and social studies teachers have created and implement in their classes.



#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Although the lessons and units are pushing the students to think beyond what is required, the assessments could be improved to reflect this thinking. Many teachers still assess through multiple choice tests and there needs to be a push to include more open-ended response questions and performance tasks across the contents and grade levels.

### PL 3.3 Sustained Development of Deep Understanding of Content and Strategies

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
The principal and other leaders encourage but do not require teachers to participate in district-based professional development opportunities to increase knowledge of content, research-based instructional strategies, and assessments. There is minimal if any evidence of school-based professional development to promote student achievement. They create work schedules that result in teacher isolation and individual practice.	The principal and other leaders emphasize the importance of teachers' deep understanding of content knowledge, research-based instructional strategies, and assessment strategies. They create work schedules to support collegial interaction and sharing and encourage teachers to participate in district-based professional development focused on content, pedagogy, and assessment.	The principal and other leaders promote teachers' deep understanding of content knowledge, research-based instructional strategies, and assessment strategies as a high priority. They avoid large-scale trainings that may not address the needs of all participants. They create work schedules to support collegial learning and differentiated professional development focused on content, pedagogy, and assessment. Teacher learning time and application of strategies and assessments is closely monitored.	The principal and other leaders promote the sustained development of teachers' deep understanding of content knowledge, research-based instructional strategies, and assessment strategies. All professional development activities are purposeful and aligned with specific individual and group needs. They create work schedules to support <b>ongoing</b> , collegial learning and differentiated professional development focused on content, pedagogy, and assessment. Teacher learning time and application of strategies and assessments is closely monitored.

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

The school mission and mission statement states that it is the goal of the school to create meaningful learning opportunities for students and teachers. The administration has worked hard to offer choice in professional development by offering multiple sessions at the same time and allowing teachers to choose which session they should attend based on need. This was also seen at the district level in the last staff development day where each teacher chose five sessions to attend across the district instead of staying at their school all day and listening to the same sessions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To improve upon the foundation that has already been started, it is recommended that the school work to continue building ongoing learning opportunities and not just those scheduled for staff development days on the calendar. This should be a practice that continues throughout the year either during planning periods or after school.

### PL 3.4 Partnerships to Support Student Learning

Not Addressed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
no collaboration with the community in activities to support Communication through written correspondence is encouraging parents to school functions, yearly conferences, and performances.	There is a school committee to focus on developing community partnerships to support student learning. Communication through written correspondence or phone is about school programs, student progress, and encouraging attendance at school functions, yearly conferences, and performances.	There is a committee that works with families and the community through partnerships that develop programs to support student learning. Strategies are implemented to increase family involvement such as offering suggestions about ways parents can support student learning at home and communicating with families about school programs and student progress (e.g., information about report cards, grading practices, student work, homework, and school events) through a website, phone, email, voice mail, and written correspondence.	Partnerships among teachers, families, and the community are maintained to develop programs that support learning and increase student skills and talents. Strategies are implemented to increase family involvement as providing parent education workshops with information about child development and support student learning at home. Communication with families about school programs and student progress (e.g., information about report cards, grading practices, (student work, homework, and school events) through an interactive website, phone, email, voice mail and written correspondence.

NOTE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

We have a Title I Parent Involvement Committee that meets to focus on the school/home partnership. Within our district we also have an involvement coordinator who goes out into the community to meet with the families and also brings them into the school to learn what is going on and how they can support each other.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The presence of this committee needs to be felt on a larger scale within the school and community. While the committee is in place, they act on what is happening currently and many parents are not aware that it even exists. This could be communicated to parents at community events or parent/teacher conferences within the school.