



professional LEARNING

Issue #8
April, 2008

High Priority Schools Receive Help by Steve Hecker

The Statewide System of Support for High Priority Schools is in its first year of operation. The System responds to NCLB requirements and helps schools not making AYP.

Title I schools in Phase 3 and above receive the services of leadership coaches, academic coaches, process mentors, comprehensive school audits, and financial assistance. Each of these components is coordinated with the MDE and the ISD or RESA serving the school.

A unique benefit to all these schools is membership for their principals in both ASCD and NSDC, both at the national and state levels. These memberships provide significant resources for school improvement work.

On the NSDC side alone (and there are tremendous resources through ASCD as well), a principal has access to myriad articles and all back journals. Here are just a few examples from www.nsd.org:



Journal of Staff Development, March of 2007:

"Finding time for teams: Student achievement grows as district support boosts collaboration" (<http://nsdc.org/publications/articleDetails.cfm?articleID=1441>)

A Nebraska district worked with the community and staff to add 30 hours of teacher learning during the workday.

"Complex project, concrete steps" (<http://nsdc.org/publications/articleDetails.cfm?articleID=1453>)

Staff developers can learn their own lessons from these tips on how best to work with schools to improve teacher learning.

Journal of Staff Development, Winter of 2008:

"Asking the right questions: Teachers' questions can build students' English language skills" (<http://nsdc.org/publications/articleDetails.cfm?articleID=1590>)

Teachers can increase their skills in targeting classroom questions to students by using an action research strategy. (Available to the public for a limited time.)

By Jane D. Hill, Kathleen Flynn

Notice that within these citations there are links. This means that all a principal

needs to do is visit the site and click on the link to read the article. There is no Google search with millions of hits – targeted, high-quality information is readily accessible.

Also notice that some articles are "Available to the public for a limited time". As members, principals don't have that limitation.



Mission Statement:

“MSDC advocates for quality research-based professional development policies and practices to increase the capacity of those who work to improve student learning.”

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From Fuzziness to Focus by Shirley Hord PhD

One of the explicit outcomes of the Coaching School Results process is the support of school administrators in identifying goals for their schools and districts. The CSR coach supports, assists, and enables principals and superintendents to clarify their thinking and specify directions toward which their organizations should move. This is no easy job, but is the necessary first step. When the goal is clarified, then comes the challenge of creating a shared vision of what the goal will look like when it is implemented in the district and/or schools.

For decades, getting clear on just what the new goal, and its program, process, or innovation that will lead to the goal has been quite haphazard, poorly described and fuzzy. Is it any wonder that efforts to change and improve schools have not lead to significant results with great frequency? Practitioners typically lack clarity about what the innovation is at its introduction and subsequently what it should look like during implementation. Such a lack of definition leaves intended teachers and administrators with little understanding of the demands or requirements of the innovation and with impoverished mental images of what it should look like if it has been implemented in a high quality way.

School change researchers and practitioners recognized this dilemma, studied the issue, and rose to the challenge of how to define new curriculum, instructional strategies, and other innovations that would support administrators and teachers in reaching specified goals. A tool was created to precisely define or describe what a new program or practice, be it

curricular, instructional, or policy changes, might be. This tool became known as the Innovation Configuration Map (IC Map) (Hall & Hord, 2006), that, as suggested, guides implementers in reliably moving new practices into schools and classrooms. It also provides clear pathways to increasing staff effectiveness.

The CSR coach assists the administrator in specifying the rudiments or a “frame” of what one would see if goal-oriented activities are taken by educators in the school. Rich detail is not generated at this time, for the wise coach and administrator understand that providing the opportunity for the staff to contribute to the vision of the change will increase their motivation to become a part of implementing it.

The IC Map has been used by many schools and districts in order to describe a new program intended to reach a district or school goal. The IC Map also sets expectations for implementers, but suggests that high quality implementation will not happen over night, thus, participants will move along a continuum from less desirable practice to ideal practice, with the help of facilitators and coaches.

The CSR coach will remain available for the positional leader of the school (principal) or district (superintendent), to guide conversation about the progress being made toward real change. The IC Map is a tool that can be used by the CSR coach, by the principal and superintendent to check implementation, and by teachers to track their progress toward reaching their specified goals.

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Coaching School Results

MSDC Board Needs Nominees Committed to Promoting Quality Professional Learning

The MSDC Board is looking for current members who would be willing to be nominated for one of five at-large board positions for the 2008-09 school year. The nomination forms are available on the MSDC web site; at www.msdconline.org.

All MSDC Board members are expected to:

- a.) be a member in good standing in MSDC and NSDC.
- b.) attend and participate in four (4) Board meetings annually.
- c.) actively support MSDC's and NSDC's mission statements and activities.
- d.) chair or serve on at least one standing committee each year
- e.) study and/or research recommendations to establish appropriate policies and procedures for MSDC.
- f.) represent MSDC at the request of the President.
- g.) perform other duties as requested by the President.
- h.) contribute to the newsletter by writing articles and/or contacting contributors.
- i.) act in accordance with the

norms of the MSDC Board.

j.) promote membership and MSDC services to members.

Are you ready to take a leadership role in the Michigan Staff Development Council? Please consider nominating yourself or someone you know for a board seat.

Take this opportunity to make a difference for quality professional learning in Michigan schools.

Please return your completed application to benboerkoel@kentisd.org (preferred) or MSDC Board Nominations, c/o Ben Boerkoel, Kent ISD, 2930 Knapp NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525 no later than Friday, April 11.



We Need You!



STAR MODEL FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

1

Content/Key Focus Area

2

**Facilitation & Elaboration:
Structure of Group**

3

**Networking &
Benchmarking**

4

Reading & Research

5

**Job-embedded &
Experiential**

CREATING A WORLD OF WONDER
Through School-Based Professional Learning

NSDC'S 4TH SUMMER CONFERENCE FOR TEACHER LEADERS AND THE ADMINISTRATORS WHO SUPPORT THEM

Orlando World Center Marriott
July 13-16, 2008

Coaching Benefits Client and Coach by Riva Korashan

Before:

Coaching for me has always been about helping others. I listened pretty well, did a good job paraphrasing and questioning to check my understanding of what was being said. Once I had clarity, I could come up with lots of ideas and suggestions for the other person to try, often based on what had proven successful for me. I would share my stories and experiences as a way of empathizing and to show the person that I have been where they are. I think I was a fairly successful coach. The people I coached thanked me and told me that I had helped them. I felt good about myself.

Now:

I realize now that coaching isn't about me, how I feel or how much I know. Coaching is really all about my client – what they feel, what they know and what they want. As their coach it is my job to help make that as explicit as possible so that they can achieve what they really want.

Listening is still the most important skill in my “coaches’ tool kit” but how I listen has changed dramatically. I am conscious at all times of the unproductive listening patterns I can easily fall into. I work to quiet the voice in my head that is perhaps really judging or criticizing my client, formulating my own “just like me” story, asking too many questions about things that aren't important and brainstorming with myself all of the possible solutions to the concern I think I'm hearing. I now listen as fully and intently to my client as I possibly can. I listen to hear their passions, goals, desires and unexamined assumptions. I have learned to become more comfortable with silence – no easy feat for a high talker! Dave Ellis, in his book *Life Coaching: A New Career for Helping Professionals* (1998), describes what happens to people who are listened to fully.

“When people receive the gift of full listening, they start to speak freely about their upsets, their secrets, their anger, their sadness, their embarrassment – and then their passions. Full listening allows people to get past the obstacles to their creativity and to invent goals they care deeply about. When you listen fully, you assist people to move from the disappointments of the past to the joys of the present moment and to the creative possibilities for the future. When you listen fully, boredom can blossom into inspiring passion.”

But perhaps the greatest change in my coaching has been what I do with all that I have heard. My job as a coach is to be a mirror for my client. My coaching work is about reflecting back to my client what they have said so they gain greater clarity as to what it is they really want – their purpose or goal. I go through a multi-step process with my clients. It isn't a “lock-step process” by any means. Each client is an individual with different needs. In general though the process goes like this: I start by asking my client what it is they want to celebrate since we last spoke and we take time to really appreciate whatever it is. Next I usually ask them what they want to focus on in our current conversation. I ask them to “tell me more” so that they can explore their thinking in greater depth. Then I reflect back them to them what they have just said. Next, I usually ask “so what do you want?” and again ask them to “tell me more” so that they can gain greater insight into what that really is. Once again, I reflect back what I have heard them say. My next question is usually “so what do you think you want to/can do?” And here is where I have noticed another tremendous change in my coaching. My clients can usually think of something that they want to do but instead of stopping there and jumping on

that solution I ask them “what else can you do?” several times. They generate a much richer list of strategies or actions that they can take to get what they want. When I ask them to choose one action from their list to try first it is hardly ever the first one they came up with! A coaching conversation usually ends with asking my client what has been most important to them in our conversation and then I will also share what I have learned from them.

In the past, I judged my coaching performance by the quality and sometimes quantity of advice I gave. The best accolade I could receive was when I heard “I did what you suggested and it really worked.” Now I judge my coaching by how much and how well I listened and by the brilliant ideas and insights my client generated for themselves. And the best accolade is when I say to myself after the conversation “Wow! I was in the presence of brilliance just now.”

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