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professional LEARNING

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Model, Mentor, and Motivate for Quality Professional Learning

by Dr. Dan Jonker

The central message of the Michigan Staff Development Council is to model quality professional learning, mentor educators in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of quality professional learning, and to motivate policy makers (legislators, state department officials, local board members, and superintendents) to support quality professional learning with policy and funding.

In the Board of Directors' efforts to operationalize that central message, the Education and Advocacy committee has sponsored "Adaptive Schools" training throughout this year and will do so again in the upcoming 08-09 school year (Sept. 24-25 and Nov. 19-20 at Kent ISD). In addition, MSDC is sponsoring "Data Driven Dialogue" with Bruce Wellman and Laura Lipton in the next school year (Nov. 6-7 and Jan. 29-30 at the MELG Bldg. in Lansing) to help school leadership teams develop a process for collaborative inquiry and decision making.

Both of these professional learning opportunities build on the concept of a community of learners changing systems to improve student achievement. Board members mentor and coach

high priority school principals across the state of Michigan. Board members also serve on a variety of committees, workgroups, and other professional organizations to develop products and processes that support and advocate for quality professional learning.

This Board is constantly looking for ways in which it can assist its members in advocating for and implementing quality professional learning for all educators in Michigan schools. However, in order for a professional organization to remain viable, it must add value to its members' own work. We need to hear from our membership. We need to know what you want MSDC to provide in terms of information, networking, and services. To accomplish this, we will be sending out an electronic survey in May via our member listserv. We need each member to respond to this short survey to hear how we can better serve our constituency.

The survey will ask you to tell us what you are looking for from your involvement with MSDC. We want to know if we are meeting those expectations and, if not, how we can better serve you. We also want to know what pro-

fessional development you would like to see MSDC sponsor. Finally, we want to know your opinions about our communication tools and how we can improve communication with our membership. When you receive the survey in your email, please take the 10-15 minutes necessary to share your thoughts and ideas with us.



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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Advocating for Change: Let your voice be heard

by Dr. Fran Loose

As members of MSDC, we have an obligation to advocate for changes in legislation, regulations, and policies to improve the learning environment for staff and students. You have an opportunity for public comment in regard to NCLB Proposed Changes

On Tuesday April 22nd, Education Secretary Margaret Spellings announced proposed regulations regarding NCLB. The proposal is to amend the regulations governing programs administered under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, to clarify and strengthen current Title I regulations in the areas of assessment, accountability, public school choice, and supplemental educational services. Here is the link to the full announcement in the Federal Register: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-8700.pdf>. Several additional resources regarding the proposal are available at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/reg/proposal/index.html>.

Comments can be submitted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal or via postal mail and are due June 23, 2008. Comments will not be accepted by fax or by e-mail.

Some of the issues addressed include:

- Assessing higher order thinking skills through multiple measures/types of questions,
- Creating a national technical advisory council for assessment and accountability,
- Justifying exclusions of any students from assessment,
- Including state and local National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data on state and local report cards,
- Adopting the National Governors Association (NGA) compact regarding graduation calculation for AYP purposes,
- Setting realistic graduation rate goals and defining how schools make reasonable progress by 2012-13, disaggregated by subgroups,

- Permitting use of measures of individual student academic growth in a State's definition of AYP.

- Establishing a more rigorous approach to restructuring and how to get out of restructuring

- Notifying parents of eligibility of choice in a clear/concise message at least 14 days before the start of school

- Expecting districts to post on their websites the number of students eligible for supplementary educational services and approved providers.

Not everything in the NCLB proposal is new. For instance, §200.56d would add a cross-walk to the requirements for highly qualified (HQ) special education teachers who do not teach core academic subjects. These definitions already exist in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), but this brings all HQ requirements for clarity.

- A highly qualified special education teacher must obtain full State certification as a special education teacher or pass the State special education teacher licensing exam and hold a license to teach in the State as a special education teacher. ...
- Special education teachers teaching core academic subjects exclusively to alternate achievement standards (are) to meet the NCLB requirements for elementary school teachers and have subject matter knowledge appropriate to the level of instruction being provided and needed to teach to those standards effectively....
- A new special education teacher who teaches multiple subjects and who is highly qualified in mathematics, language arts, or science, (has) two years to demonstrate competence on the other core area subjects the teacher teaches, which may include a single high objective uniform State standard of evaluation (HOUSSE). (IDEA 34 CFR 300.18)

Six Candidates Running for the MSDC Board of Directors (continued from page 4)

Kathleen McBroom, continued

Kathleen writes: *Michigan educators currently face an unrelenting barrage of challenges: new state-mandated core curricula, new grade level and course content expectations, new high school graduation requirements, federal and state technology, literacy and numeracy mandates, and ever-changing testing protocols. Educators are held responsible for shaping every aspect of their students' lives: social, ethical, and intellectual. Additionally, they are asked to accomplish these tasks with dwindling resources and compromised budgets.*

No one has the luxury of teaching anything in isolation any more. Michigan educators need focused and sustained staff development to help learn how to maximize our most precious commodity: time. Educators need staff development that addresses issues such as using technology to enhance teaching and learning, developing lessons and units that incorporate multiple content areas, and working in teams to instill overarching real world skills such as problem solving, research and information management, and effective oral, written, and online communication skills.

Ruth C. Rowe

Ms. Rowe has worked to make the change from an administrative/small committee driven professional development model to a data-driven building model for professional development in two districts. She has also facilitated the change from a traditional report card to one that is electronic and is standard-based.

Ruth writes: *Back in the day of the Michigan Coalition for School Improvement and Michigan Association for Staff Development, there was a very strong network of leaders across the State from large and small ISD's, school districts and university folks. We were able to support a couple of conferences and a well rounded network of peer support. Having gone from the county ISD level to a K-12 district, I am still in need of not only support, but long term, cutting edge training.*

The School Improvement Facilitators Network is one area that I was able to be involved with to raise my own level

of Professional Development, but it does cater to ISD/RESA's. So the void I see MSDC could fill is offering quality training for us as school improvement/instructional leaders to keep us moving forward.

David Swierpel

Mr. Swierpel graduated from the National Staff Development Council Academy with another district colleague, in 2005. In the past three years, Carman-Ainsworth has moved from "sit and get" and "select from a menu" professional development to providing every teacher, every week, with time embedded into the school day to work collaboratively with their colleagues on student focused professional learning. At the 2007 NSDC conference in Dallas, Mr. Swierpel was part of a district team that presented how the district administration and teacher union has worked together to redesign professional learning in Carman-Ainsworth. They are also participating with APQC (American Productivity & Quality Center) in their Professional Learning Community study beginning the fall of 2008.

David writes: *We must continue to strive to achieve the stated purpose of NSDC "...ensuring that every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves." There are still many educators who have little or limited opportunity to engage in effective professional learning. We must help schools and districts develop systems to provide these opportunities.*

Creating a system that provides educators with time to work collaboratively to improve student learning is only half of the battle. We must also equip them with the tools and processes that will allow them to use the time successfully. Becoming a true professional learning team is a process that requires training and support. We will not see the increases in student learning if we do not help all educators to continue to improve in areas such as how to use data, work as a team, and focus on student work.

Congratulations to each of these candidates! An electronic ballot will be sent to each MSDC member in early May.



MSDC's STRATEGIC GOALS

1

To increase the understanding, use, and advocacy of standards for quality professional learning across the state

2

To increase the visibility, influence, and credibility of MSDC and NSDC to partner in transforming the existing systems for the delivery of quality professional learning

3

To build organizational capacity to lead standards-based professional learning within and beyond MSDC

Six Candidates Running for the MSDC Board of Directors by Ben Boerkoel

May is election month for the Michigan Staff Development Council. This year, six candidates are running for board seats. Those candidates are:

Gary Appel, State Manager – Michigan, Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center

Leisa Gallagher, Acting Coordinator of Technical Assistance and Personnel Development for MDE's Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS)

Steve Hecker, Independent Consultant and Incumbent Board Member

Kathleen McBroom, Teacher Leader Dearborn Public Schools

Ruth C. Rowe, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for Parchment School District

David Swierpel, Director of Professional Development, Carman-Ainsworth Community Schools

Each candidate was asked to provide information on their contributions to the field of professional learning and a personal statement regarding their vision regarding MSDC. What is listed below and on page 3 of this newsletter are summaries of their candidate profiles.

Gary Appel

Mr. Appel has co-authored several publications including "Leading lesson study: A practical guide for teachers and facilitators," "An invitation to Lesson Study: Facilitators guide," "Powerful practices facilitators guide," and "The growing classroom." He has managed a team working with the Michigan Department of Education to develop an Individual Professional Development Plan process for Michigan teachers (2006-present). And he has designed and facilitated numerous two day (and follow-up) lesson study workshops in the Midwest including a number of workshops for Michigan's Math and Science Centers (2001-2005).

Gary writes: *Professional learning has evolved tremendously over the 30 plus years I have been in education, and yet many educators in and out of schools hold a very limited vision for what it can look like. MSDC is playing an important role in helping people up and down the system understand the dynamic ways to embed learning into the professional lives of teachers and build collaborative and collegial structures that support student learning. MSDC has the capacity to reach out to additional constituencies such as school boards, MDE field service consultants and central office administrators in its effort to change the professional development landscape in Michigan.*

Leisa Gallagher

Ms. Gallagher is currently coordinating the Reaching and Teaching Struggling Learners Initiative through OSE/EIS. This initiative is an action research project aimed at supporting secondary multi-disciplinary teams as they examine their school improvement practices.

In 2005, Ms. Gallagher was on the statewide planning team for a three year initiative, funded by the CDC, entitled 'Michiana', a school health effort between Michigan and Indiana. In particular, in terms of data-based decision making, she helped develop a Michigan specific, web-based, survey tool for these teams to use and assess the health behaviors and attitudes of their middle and high school students. The survey is, "Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth" (MI-PHY).

Currently, Ms. Gallagher is working with a state level planning team comprised of OSE/EIS and the Michigan Alliance for Families to launch a parent and educator learning community aimed at building relationships between leaders in order to improve school/community partnerships so that students with disabilities are better able to achieve at high levels. This work is being evaluated by Wayne State University's Center for Urban Studies.

Leisa writes: *MSDC has addressed learning practices which promote excellence and equity. The values of equity, trust, and participation are critical to closing the achievement gap. I have been influenced by the work of my MSDC colleagues, Drs. Fran Loose and Amy Colton. Their vision and coaching have helped me change my practice in the department: using protocols, activating learning communities, conducting collaborative inquiry, and identifying examples of positive deviance. I would like to continue to learn how to work this way through this potential connection with the MSDC board. At a NSDC conference I was struck by Dr. Yvette Jackson's recommendation to adopt a 'pedagogy of confidence' toward students. I believe that I could grow as a leader if I could investigate the impact of this attitude with both students and staff in Michigan. I would be honored to join the MSDC board.*

Steve Hecker

Dr. Hecker directed the Intel Teach to the Future project in Michigan (2001-2006), which supported 3,000 teachers in the incorporation of technology into their daily lessons. In addition, he helped develop and deliver the Intel Teach to the Future Leadership Forum nationally. Dr. Hecker has also contracted with the MDE Office of Professional Prepara-

tion Services and Professional Development (OPPS) to support the identification of schools and districts wherein high quality professional learning was/is occurring. At MDE he also participated in helping develop a plan for Individualized Personal Professional Development for Michigan teachers. Dr. Hecker has been a member of the MSDC Board since 2000, which has afforded him opportunities to advocate for high-quality professional learning in the context of coaching, auditing, and mentoring high priority schools.

Steve writes: *I believe that the core function for the MSDC is supporting the adoption by schools and districts of high quality professional learning practices. These practices are informed mainly through the NSDC standards, and at their root involve small groups of educators (two to four people) routinely (weekly) discussing student work involving common assessments – as a job-embedded practice, a part of the work day or week (true "professional learning communities, or PLCs).*

Alignment of the curriculum, assessment, and instruction are an integral part of this work, and of course a reliance on data to drive decisions is required. Use of the School Improvement Framework and the associated Comprehensive Needs Assessment is a key for school-wide success, but action must rest within the PLC structure.

Kathleen McBroom

In her current role as Teacher Leader for the Dearborn Public Schools, Ms. McBroom is responsible for developing, delivering, and assessing staff development. She has worked with teachers and support staff (paraprofessionals, library media secretaries) at all levels (K-12) and is directly responsible for the following areas: social studies, world languages, library media & instructional technology, and school improvement (She serves as the district liaison to Advanc-Ed, the parent organization of NCA). Ms. McBroom presents frequently at district, state and national conferences and workshops..

Dearborn Public Schools was recently awarded two Arabic language grants (ALIF, 2007 and STARTALK, Summer, 2008), both of which have strong staff development components. As administrator of both grants, she is responsible for developing ongoing professional development programs that address the needs of diverse learners. (novice through expert teachers from public, charter, and parochial schools across the United States).

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