A Staff Development Proposal For Roselyn School District

T & L 951 - Dr. Ebmeier

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Description of District

Roselyn is a small working-class traditional community located on the outskirts of a metropolis in the midwest. However, recent demographic changes have challenged this perception. The district has experienced a 20% growth in students to the district. In the past fifteen years, percentages have doubled in students both on free and reduced lunch (80% from 40%) and minority student population (60% from 30%). Declining achievement scores have followed this influx of students.

The superintendent Dr. Sanders has been sensitive to bridging the community's older, traditional perception with a more realistic view of the students it now serves. In recent years, his role has been that of a change agent, moving the district into adopting new initiatives designed to better meet current student needs. Although these programs have sound research backing for districts comparable to Roselyn, they have been met with resistance from teachers who are not buying into these top-down directives. In order to respond to the changes needed for the district, Dr. Sanders has hired an outside consulting firm to conduct a needs assessment of the district and to recommend initiatives from this internal evaluation.

Student, teacher, administrator, and parent interviews and surveys were collected and observations both in and out of the classrooms were conducted. Objective data was gathered from standardized test scores, attendance and discipline reports, and failure rates of students. This information was then disaggregated according to socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and gender composition. The findings are summarized below:

Results of Needs Analysis

- Teachers have become increasingly frustrated with the students' declining achievement and problems attending. The one-size-fits-all approach to instruction is prevalent. If the "one" method doesn't work, frequently the child or parents are blamed for the problem.

- Grading and instructional practices shed some light onto the high failure rate and declining achievement of students in the district. Grading practices and assessments in general are traditional
at best, often appearing punitive in nature. The bell curve predominates, with winners and losers taught with each lesson. Many teacher interviews depicted the "best" teachers as those who frequently fail students, representing a badge of honor. Little reflection on the part of teachers and administrators as to why students have failed has been analyzed. However, some data obtained from the needs analysis does suggest that many students are failing because they are not consistently attending school. Cooperative learning is considered a watered down way to hold children accountable because the perception from many teachers is that learning is to be individual. Learning is fragmented and isolated as indicated by the curriculum and the way in which teachers work alone rather than cooperatively.

-Teaching currently represents an isolated endeavor. Newer teachers tend to feel isolated have requested more frequent interactions with the principal and other staff members. Many older teachers view lack of involvement with the principal more positively, often equating the lack of principal involvement with a sign of trust and greater freedom on how and what to teach. Thus, many educators in the district value being left alone to teach as tantamount to acting more autonomously.

-Most teachers perceive principals in the district as traditional managers rather than an educational leaders. They perceive a principal's job to be primarily responsible for handling discipline problems and fielding interference from parents. Very little data gathered from teachers involved the role of principals in improving instruction and student achievement.

-Administrators and teachers are heavily focused on the "here and now" in their mode of operation. Forward, proactive thinking and problem solving is not generally considered current practice. The goal for educators seems to make it through the day or week rather than reflecting on or changing practices.

-Staff development is generally been considered ineffective to most teachers throughout the district as indicated by surveys and interviews. Most take issue with this overly generalized view of professional improvement. Teachers tend to view staff development in a passive role which is what the principal believes the teacher should improve upon. This is often considered a charade/facade or a hoop to jump through in order to appease the principal. In other words, staff development is something that is done to them.

-Attendance for students appears to be a large concern in the district as compared to neighboring communities. Many students are out of class for prolonged periods. Students, parent, and teacher interviews suggest that prolonged illnesses are often due to difficulty for parents to get to doctors due to lack of transportation or difficulty taking tie off from work in order to take them. The result has been that many students stay at home by themselves when they are ill and because they are often not going to the doctor, illnesses tend to be lengthy. Additionally, older students often stay at home to tend to younger siblings when they are ill, resulting in families of children staying at home for long periods of time.

**Characters in Ineffective Staff Development**

Before formulating propositions and initiatives, educational research was first investigated as to what generally constitutes ineffective and effective professional development. Inefficient programs are piecemeal at best; they lack continuity and exist as vague goals. Often they are veiled under the guise of eclecticism, but instead become
programs "a mile wide and an inch deep" resulting in no true change. Those that do have some semblance of focus are frequently abstruse theories unrelated to practice or the individual schools unique context (Fullan, 1991). Additionally, many initiatives lack professional support to effectively implement them (Lieberman, 1986) such as frequent stabs of one-shot sessions for "the masses." These sessions often attempt to entertain the indifferent as would a broadway show, motivate the weary as would an inspirational speaker, or convert the infidels as would a tent revival. Other programs which do in fact focus on instruction concentrate solely on improving teacher skills without follow-up as it relates to improvements in learning. In these pseudo programs, teachers tend to be trained to look more like better actors more than working towards improved learning for children.

Effective Staff Development Characteristics

A plethora of reports within the field of education point to the fundamental role of staff development in making lasting change in schools (Little, 1986; Sparks and Hirsh, 1997; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000). Professional development programs are effective when they are contextually specific, blending the culture and personal characteristics of the staff with best practice. They are closely tied to improved student achievement and provide staff members adequate time to reflect and obtain feedback both personally and collectively on instructional practices. Finally, the crucial role of building principals in successful reform initiatives is heavily cited in research (Edmonds, 1979; Glickman, 1985, Lieberman, 1986; Fullan, 1991, 1997; Sarason, 1995; Senge, 2000). The RAND Corporation's study describes effective principals as those who operate with purposeful actions to assist and promote change rather than taking on a passive role (Berman & McLaughlin cited in Lieberman, 1986). What principals do and don't do heavily influences any reform program. Therefore, this proposal will describe in detail the role of the principal for each facet of this proposal.
Propositions For Effective Professional Development

Six key words make up this professional development plan: personalize and humanize, "professionalize," socialize, prioritize and standardize. These themes are largely hierarchical in nature based on a premise that learning occurs inside-out. Therefore, teachers first need to know themselves professionally with frequent feedback provided from the principal and other colleagues in order to grow. Secondly, educators must then be able to think beyond oneself before change can occur (Glickman, 1985).

1. Effective staff development must be personalized to fit individual's needs 2. and will focus to "humanize" members as integral parts of the learning organization.

Rationale: "Personalized"- Most principals ask teachers to be sensitive in where students are at academically and socially, then formulate learning experiences to fit their needs. Ironically, administrators typically don't subscribe to this philosophy for adults. Teachers and administrators often attempt to make the learning environment less complex by disregarding differences between students and teachers. Educating the masses is more convenient, less complex, and requires less expertise than diagnosing the staff's needs and designing individualized program plans based on those needs. Supervisors need to treat teachers in precisely the same way they criticize teachers for treating students. Research related to aspects adult development (ego, moral, and intellectual) as well as age and career stages of adults points to the critical need for personalized growth plans for educators (Ebmeier, 2001).

Rationale - "Humanized" - The levels of teacher efficacy, professional support, and teacher autonomy contribute to successful reform initiatives. First, considerable research suggests that a teacher's high sense of efficacy strongly affects gains in student achievement (Glickman, 1985; Fullan, 1991; Teddle & Reynolds, 2000; Senge, 2000). Yet, Fullan describes that teachers are often not sure that they can make all students learn, nor are they certain they make any difference at all (1997).
Supervision must promote the teachers' sense of efficacy. Educators must believe that they can make a difference in students' learning based on their teaching, and believe that all students, regardless of family background or socioeconomic status, can learn and show growth at their appropriate level. Second, professional support must be in place to help teachers overcome feelings of powerless and inspire continual growth and learning. New teachers are often thrown into classrooms with nothing more than a classroom key. As Ebmeir (2001) suggests, the field of education needs to provide teachers time to become acclimated by starting them in the shallow end of the pool rather than the high dive.

Third, very little attention is given to empowering adults to think autonomously and take on new leadership roles in schools. Many principals pay lip service to setting up site-based councils and shared decision-making forums but don't provide them with autonomy to make truly meaningful decisions. In these cases of pseudo-empowerment, feelings of commitment, leadership, and collaboration are likely to decrease rather than increase. Administrators often take on parental roles in schools drawing rigid, hierarchical lines between supervisor and subordinate. Autocracy and undemocratic treatment from principals and central office personnel often leaves teachers feeling powerless.

**Initiative #1 -** Differentiated staff development will be teacher-centered and data driven according to their different levels of adult development, looking for areas of growth in leadership, expertise, and new learning.

**Rationale:** Evaluations consume substantial time and effort. Evaluations largely take place for symbolic reasons which send the message that principals are in fact doing something and that the district cares about performance and improvement. Yet, often the process is, as Bowman & Deal describe:

> [a] form of high drama. Participants wear more formal 'costumes' than usual. New roles are enacted. Evaluators ask penetrating questions and respondents give answers that portray the world as it is suppose to be. Attempts to solve problems disappear after the ceremony is over (p. 245).

Instead, a specific description of the revamped evaluation system will be detailed.
Part of the evaluation system will serve to weed out teachers who don't perform minimal standards. However, more emphasis will be placed on consistently strengthening good teachers as well.

Evaluations should be based on the student and teachers needs. Administrators must take an active role in evaluations, including prioritizing the largest percentage of their duties during the day to this endeavor, and encouraging professionals to continually grow and improve in efforts for increasing student achievement.

Implementation: First, the evaluation process will consist of a multifaceted collection of data designed to conceptualize the individual teacher's: a) level of ego development, b) level of intellectual capacity, c) view of career (career stage), and d) level of motivation. This "preassessment" information will guide the administrator in considering the formulation of goals and serve to improve interaction between the two parties in order to better facilitate those goals. This preassessment data will be collected from the principal through informal (general conversations and reflective journals described later) and more formal (faculty meetings), study groups, personal interviews, classroom observations, and data regarding student learning. Second, the teacher's level of skill will be assessed in the areas of the leadership, expertise, and new learning. This portion of the evaluation system is based on the belief that given ongoing supervisonal support, teachers can and will become better leaders, experts, and learners in the school. Showing growth in these three areas will encompass a large percentage of the evaluation. After this baseline data is gathered, goals will be established collaboratively with the teacher. Data collection will also include feedback from a large portion of student progress, instructional coordinators, department chairs, parents, and students. Summative evaluations will compare the compilation of supportive evidence of growth to the baseline. Although this system appears to be quantitative in nature, qualitative evidence is also gathered from Eisner's educational criticism and "connoisseurship" model (1979)
which adds a richness to the hard data. It is important to note that for the few teachers who are consistently unwilling or unable to work to show growth in these three areas, they will be "counseled out" or let go accordingly. It is important to note that all administration and central office personnel will also be evaluated in these growth areas as well. Without the upper ranks partaking in these mental stretches of growth, the plan will not work.

The areas of growth, leadership, expertise, and learning must take form in order for educators to change schools. First, the leadership area of growth serves to promote teacher efficacy, more equal power between the superior and subordinate, and motivate teachers to think outside their corner of the world. Activities may include helping follow-up with less serious discipline cases, sitting in on meetings with a concerned parent and teacher, analyzing school data and suggesting recommendations for areas for improvement, serving as the school consultant for the school business partnership on issues directly related to enhancing student achievement, chairing the instructional coordinator position at the school, training volunteers, conducting some faculty meetings, or serving as teacher in charge when the principal is out.

The "expert" skill area represents a very individualized part of the evaluation based upon the unique talents and strengths of each professional. The expert area of growth serves several purposes: it increases teacher efficacy, encourages staff members to draw upon each others' strengths, and connects staff members to socialize and appreciate others without having the same teachers always be in the spotlight. However, this is simply not a feel good session for teachers. Two important criteria for the expert growth area are: a) the expert must translate their knowledge to how it enhances student achievement in some way, and b) the new knowledge must be transmitted to others teachers in the building. "Expert" activities may include a 10-minute presentation at a faculty meeting, observing and guiding other teachers on the topic of expertise or method of instruction, or
videotaping the "expert" for the teacher bank. For lower level experts (those who may provide a challenge for administrators to find a strength), it may involve exploring a subject or area in which they teach or intensively researching the topic. The highest levels of expertise would be saved for the expert mentors at the demonstration school later described.

The third component of the evaluation system, showing growth in a "learner" dimension, may be the most important. Many teachers do not value the instructional improvement process. Some teachers either tacitly or overtly believe that what worked twenty years ago still works today. The idea of recognizing that a large part of being an educator involves continuing to learn is still a revolutionary idea in most schools today. Acknowledging the reality that one does not know something allows for the capacity to change. Establishing a "learner" mentality allows people to release themselves from rigidly-adhered-to opinions when they are confronted with contradictory, compelling evidence. In other words, freely allowing and in fact encouraging ideas to be re-examined permits individuals and groups to change directions without losing face.

**Initiative #2 - Beginning teachers will be provided intensive professional support through an extended internship of five years co-teaching with a master teacher.**

**Rationale:** Novice educators concentrate most of their energies on survival and security. They are interested in learning almost *any* system, regardless of its quality, which will contribute to not be driven out by students or fired by supervisors. With survival and security assured, teachers think less of their own needs and begin to address the tasks of teaching. Then and only then can they turn their focus on how to impact student achievement. It is important for teachers to have daily support during these first three years of the "survival" stage.

However, collegial support must also be present after this survival stage to encourage growth. Research also indicates that the third year of teaching is a crucial time regarding motivation. Some studies suggest that educators don't tend to improve instruction
after this period. They often resign themselves to not growing and many leave the profession due to feelings of boredom and waning enthusiasm (Ayers, cited in Glickman, 1985). A more experienced teacher must serve to help the teacher through the survival period transition and begin to slowly challenge leadership, expertise, and new learning to revitalize the teacher through years 3-5.

**Implementation:** Teachers who have quality expertise and training will become mentors who will co-teach with the novice for two years. For years 3-4, the novice will teach under other experienced educators as well as spend an intensive period at the demonstration school later described. However, the mentor will observe the teacher during these years while challenging him or her to focus more heavily in showing growth in student achievement. During year five, the mentor and teacher will again team teach with the expertise of the newer teacher becoming more refined. The mentor will also work with the novice on expand leadership abilities and broadening his or her instructional repertoire. During the later years, the mentor-to-teacher role gradually becomes a symbiotic rather than dependent professional relationship; both educators learn, lead, and shift roles of expertise.

3. Effective staff development must "professionalize" teachers and administrators through redefining roles centered around instruction.

As earlier indicated, research suggests that the third year of teaching is a crucial transitional time because many don't continue to improve instruction after this period (Ayers, 1980 as cited in Glickman, 1985). Often, individuals receive tenure and the pressure to achieve a stable position has been eased. Teaching becomes largely a personal issue of making it through the day. Often after three years, they resign themselves and many leave because of this stagnant existence. Work environments for teachers are often chaotic, pulling away the critical focus on thinking about instruction and assessment. Schools must develop work environments for teachers focusing all
energy of improving student achievement, not superfluous duties.

**Initiative #3: Teaching is a thinking profession; therefore, teachers are assigned only instructional duties and each educator will be provided with ongoing, quality instructional assistance for all non-instructional tasks.**

Ebmeier (2001) compares the myriad of mindless duties that teachers often endure to having a highly paid owner of McDonalds who takes the orders, makes the food, and brings it out to the patrons. Duties need to be assigned considering the expertise level (and pay level) of the employee. Having teachers who make $50,000 a year supervising potty duty, cafeteria, and bus duty is not cost-effective and detracts from the need for teachers to view themselves as having a profession that thinks for a living. The school must structure work to focus on soundly establishing thinking and learning into the daily lives of those who teach.

The district will embark on a highly visible recruitment campaign for volunteers to work in the classrooms. Juniors and seniors in high school who are interested in a teaching career, parents, recent retirees in our district as well as adjacent districts, university students, employees from our business partnership, and half or ¾ time support staff will be enlisted. Unique benefits for those who are chosen will be offered. First, a stipend of $40.00 a week will be provided by a philanthropic organization such as the Danforth foundation (Senge, 2000). Half-time support staff personnel such as bus drivers have a notoriously high turnover rate. Support staff who volunteer an extra 12-15 hours per week would then be considered full time employees and be offered subsequent full-time benefits. For parents, support staff, and university students, and potential high school students, free on-site day care will be provided (teachers will have this benefit as well). Additionally, for those students, parents and support staff who are considering going back to obtain a college degree in teaching, the first year of community college will be paid by the district via satellite at each school site. The community college will offer the district at a lower rate because they view this as a
form of recruitment and networking and later a place for which student teachers can observe and perform their student teaching assignments. Free access to the school's computers, copiers, and internet will also be provided for those who enroll for school. For volunteers interested in earning a GED or other remedial work instead of a college degree, satellite classes will also be offered from the local high school. Free tutoring will also be offered from the high school students. Retired teachers will be offered full health benefits and will perform more professional duties such as helping to teach, tutor, or mentor teachers and/or train support staff volunteers.

Level 1 volunteers (those with the most basic levels of experience at working with students or those who have volunteered for under a year) will be assigned to classrooms to perform recess, lunch, and bus duties. Some will work with individual students on basic skills by gathering on-going feedback similar to a CCC or Josten's individualized computer program. Unlike the computer-assisted instruction, the teacher will have the volunteer work to assess specialized skills unique to his or her class of students. Level II volunteers will be working more with taking attendance, grading papers, and manning an after-school homework club to provide a place for student to do homework and receive help after school. Parent level II volunteers also help with the attendance problem in the district. When a student misses a day of school, two or three volunteers will bring the day's homework to his or her home as modeled after the "Rainmakers" program in Florida (Senge, 2000). Rather than viewed as a truancy intervention, this parent-to-parent visit is often perceived as less threatening because it is another parent reminding them of their accountability to their child's education rather than an intimidating professional. Volunteers would emphasize to fellow parents that the child really needs to be in school in order to get ahead in life. If a child is ill and cannot go to the doctor due to lack of transportation, the parents will let the school social worker know so he or she can take them to the doctor.
Proposition #3: Effective staff development must *socialize* staff in order to formulate core beliefs of the school by reflectively thinking as an entire group, in small groups, and through teaching together on a daily basis.

**Rationale:** The work environment of schools is routinized and teachers are isolated due to the current structure of schools and nature of the work (Ebmeier, 2001). Although setting up routines helps maintain order in the classroom, it also can inhibit teachers to thinking outside the box and experimenting with new ideas and methods. Because teachers work at different places at the same time, they often don't observe each other teaching. Structural isolation leads to psychological isolation which encourages educators to not see each other, not work well together, and not talk about instruction. As many Roselyn teachers indicated, they simply want to be left alone. Lortie's research suggests that this is the true of many teachers. In their study, teachers often wanted more time, fewer interruptions, and fewer clerical and other duties in order to spend more time "doing what they are *already* doing" (as cited in Glickman, p. 119, 1985). As Glickman states, "teachers should not be left alone, nor should they leave others alone" (p. 119, 1985). Collaboration is essential and developing guiding ideas from these discussions can not be hurried or done superficially. Teachers are not aware of their core values until they have considerable time to think together and reflectively. Collaboration only works when it is meaningful. Instead of thinking or looking alike, it invites diversity which is a necessary condition for new learning.

Yet, building a collective focus is not easy and it requires specialized skills that most administrators often do not possess. Individualism and collectivism must have equal power in staff development (Fullan, 1991). It requires the administrator not only focus on each teacher's professional growth but also maintain a collective building focus unique to each school. Therefore, two separate skills are needed; skills mentioned earlier for individualized staff development, and skills needed to enhance the groups interaction.

Perhaps most importantly, effective staff development prioritizes time be used for collaboration and reflection. "Drive-by staff development" or training of the masses often
does more harm than good. If teachers repeatedly see these quick fixes turn to failure, they are more likely to be suspicious of other programs (even successful ones) which come their way (Joyner, p. 385 as cited in Senge, 2000).

**Initiative #4: The district will structure the school schedule to allow teachers time for collaborating and reflecting.**

**Rationale:** Learning opportunities for teachers must represent a substantial portion of the day. If teachers are not allowed reasonable time to take risks, talk to others, and reflect upon their practices, even the best initiatives will not be successfully implemented (Fullan, 1991).

**Implementation:** First, the district will adopt a 6-1 schedule. For weeks one through six, teachers and students will attend school as usual. During the sixth week, teachers will prepare for week 7 by assessing the students' learning for that period and comparing it to the baseline data. Depending on the student's level of growth, they will be assigned enrichment, remedial, or study time for the seventh week. For week 7, students will attend half days while teachers work five full days on staff development. The paras, volunteers, and substitute teachers in the district will supervise the enrichment and remediation activities. For the seventh week only, the local university will be provide 60 additional student teachers to teach these half days while they are observed by their university instructor, then attend afternoons at the university. During these half-day study sessions for students, two adults will be in each classroom so that individualized tutoring can take place. The teachers will spend these days extensively tracking, analyzing, and discussing their students' portfolios and rates of growth over the last six weeks. The principal, vice principal, or instructional coordinator will view each teacher's assessments and student portfolios to monitor progress, provide feedback and collectively discuss modifying instructional practices according to the results. Whole-group collaboration time will also take place during the seventh week as well. A variety of
activities such as learning in their study groups, teaching at the demonstration school in order to refine instructional practices, or participating in an externship outside the field of education will take place.

Secondly, the regular school day will be extended to one additional hour for staff members. The daily schedule will allow for common planning times for each educator so that they can plan and collaborate with their co-teacher. This extra hour each day can also be used for staff collaboration activities or individualized professional development activities as described above.

**Initiative # 5: Administrators will be trained and observed frequently in order to improve their abilities at facilitating staff discussions during whole groups staff development.**

**Rationale:** Fullan states, "one of the most fundamental problems in education is that administrators and other planners of change frequently do not have adequate formal and on-the-job preparation to be change leaders" (p. 95, 1991). Lasting change is essentially a product of words and language. Language exchange generates thinking, motivates, and contributes to new behaviors. Whole group collaboration allows time to develop words, phrases, metaphors unique to the school. The shared language binds group members and is a visible sign of membership while formulating and reinforcing the group's values and beliefs (Senge, 2000). Thus, conversations during whole group settings must be meaningful. It is important for principals to not waste this precious time with insignificant matters such as general announcements. Weekly reminders will be disseminated via e-mail instead of during group discussion time.

The skills required for group professional development have generally consisted of the "sit-and-get" philosophy of telling or selling what needs to take place. Instead, effective group staff development requires the principal to possess a sophisticated repertoire of skills in organizational theory, group dynamics, change theory, and serving as a group facilitator. These skills are quite different than the top-down approach that Sergiovanni calls "follow me" leadership (cited in Senge, 2000). This phenomena appears to be the
case in the Roselyn district. Innovations appeared to have little success because teachers did not take part in the process. The teachers may have appeared to conform superficially, but did not fully buy-in to these initiatives probably due to the little power they had about these changes.

**Implementation:** Principals must be extensively trained in different areas of staff development in order to promote the best exchange of ideas to take place and know what to do when obstacles arise which impede the group interactions. First, skills must be acquired in the area of the change process and organizational theory. One pitfall described by Gross is the phenomena known as "false clarity" in which people act as though they have changed, but have simply have assimilated the superficial trappings of the new practice. A second pitfall in organizational change involves the strong tendency for people to adjust to change by doing as little as possible; often by only attempting the appealing aspects of the model and rejecting the more difficult changes (Gross et.al cited in Fullan, 1991). Yet, the practical emphasis to organizational theory and the change process should be more emphasized. In-baskets, simulations, and role plays should be the thrust of the learning. Mentors and peer coaching for administrators will be set up to provide on-going observations of one another as principals conduct faculty meetings and staff development training for their teachers.

Secondly, specialized training in facilitating meetings needs to be provided to administrators. Understanding when and how to use different techniques for building consensus should be taught. Along with facilitation techniques, social skills training should also take place for administrators. Role-playing scenarios such as how to talk to one another through Senge's "advocacy and inquiry" model will be part of the learning for leaders (Senge, 2000).

The nature of what should be discussed will be the third area of assistance for principals. Topics should involve discussions centered around analyzing test data.
However group conversations should also focus on justifying whether practices at the school are useful or not when looking at the data. Making dangerous subjects safe should be part of the content in meetings. Racism, hegemony, gender discrimination, and other sensitive subjects may need to be addressed when students' test and discipline programs are analyzed.

Discussing and often debunking eternal, misguided myths about teaching and learning should also be part of the content during group staff development. Senge believes that thousands of teachers in schools today are unwittingly operating out of a deficit perspective when teaching children (2000). As in the case of the Roselyn staff, teachers have either consciously or unconsciously adopted the "bell curve" mental model (the survival of the fittest mentality) which assumes that a percentage of students must fail in schools just as there are those who make the top grades. Other misperceptions appear to exist for many educators in the Roselyn district regarding cooperative learning. From the data collected, many teachers believe that cooperative learning is a diluted way to acquire knowledge because learning should be individual and competitive, not collective and cooperative. Changing mental models will help to focus the staff towards more clear, collective organizational goals.

Initiative #6: Teachers will also trained in the process of change and in critical interpersonal skills necessary for effective change. Staff will turn in reflection logs to the principal instead of lesson plans.

Rationale: Humans by nature often resist change because it is uncomfortable. Teachers need to understand the change process. Principals often don't discuss theories on change and organizational theory, perhaps because they believe them to be esoteric concepts which don't relate well to the job of teaching. Teachers will not be committed to change unless they see the need for it. Understanding the change process will allow some to understand why change is so often resisted and implementation is difficult (Fullan, 1991). Providing them with the big picture is one small step to success.
Second, teachers as well need specific social skills training. The ability to communicate, listen, motivate, and gain trust are critical to lasting change. Teachers who are often isolated in schools have not had much experience holding professional conversations largely because most schools have not encouraged them to do so. Educators will need guidance in refining their ability to communicate.

Reflection is also a key feature in changing behaviors. As mentioned, often teachers only think about making it through the day. They pick up tricks of the trade here and there rather than grappling with underlying beliefs and reasons why they are doing things. Effective teachers think about what they are currently doing, assess the results of their practice, and explore new possibilities for teaching students. Reflection is a fundamental step to promoting thinking about practice. Glickman suggests that if thinking begins to take place among a staff, school effectiveness isn't far behind (1985).

**Implementation:** Teachers must be trained in the change process and be provided with skills in the advocacy and inquiry method of discussions as well. Norms such as not using sarcasm and not interrupting others must be set forth and honored in order to improve discussions. Educators will be asked to turn in reflection logs each week to the principal instead of lesson plans.

**Initiative #7: Teacher-led study groups will be formed to enhance conversations centered around learning goals.**

**Rationale:** Change in schools requires that teachers understand themselves and be understood by others in a variety of settings. Effective study groups allow teachers to collaborate on a focused topic of learning.

**Implementation:** Teachers will select a topic of interest as a goal of their individualized professional development plan. This goal may involve taking on leadership role in the group, learning something new, or increasing their expertise and sharing the information with others. All of the study groups will take place during school hours and
not rely on teachers to "find the time" on their own. The principals will sit in on these meetings occasionally to encourage, motivate, and assess the teachers' skills in leadership, learning, and expertise.

Initiative #8: Overstaffing of school personnel will be provided for each school so that all educators will co-teach 1-2 hours each day.

Rationale: The absence of observing others teaching, sharing ideas, and reflecting among teachers adds to little or no change in schools.

Implementation: One or two full-time teachers will be hired in each school according to the size of the school. They will be in charge of covering classes so that teachers can co-teach and observe another teacher each day. Extra teachers will not be asked to perform substituting duties because the goal is to promote professional interaction.

4. Effective staff development must prioritize goals based upon the data-driven needs of the school and district. Practices that have been proven useful will then be standardized.

5. Rationale: Principals must guard against being "victims of the moment" in both their daily interactions and staff development programs. Nearly all school districts purport that they want principals who are instructional leaders who can facilitate change and help teachers work together. However, few principal actually spend their time doing so. Most principals spend the majority of their time on housekeeping matters and maintaining order. This is a continuous tasks of crisis management in which all problems are seen as important. The natural consequence of this is that principals rarely call attention to program changes.

   Goodland's study suggests that the greatest predictor of school success is goal congruence between teachers, administrator, students, and parents (cited in Fullan, 1991). Thus, maintaining instructional priorities is paramount. The educators in this study did not focus on violence, discipline, and management but directed their energies towards school educational priorities (as cited in Glickman, 1985). School and district goals must center around how to increase student performance.
School improvement plans should be unique to the school itself. Analysis of the data must take place frequently and is crucial to the formulation of goals for instruction and staff development. School personnel often do not analyze data and make adjustments accordingly because they don't have adequate time or do not have the data in a time frame conducive to making timely adjustments. For example, standardized tests are typically given to students in the spring and not reported back the same school year. This lack of timely feedback contributes to lack of gains in student achievement.

Training educators in refining instructional techniques will probably be necessary for any successful improvement plan. Yet, oftentimes this training focuses only on the teacher and not on how the teaching is affecting the student learning. Training also becomes high drama. Teachers are flown to various seminars and are enlightened with "the" training from "the" expert. The lack of serious sharing about the results of student learning based upon this newly acquired knowledge often leads to ineffective learning organizations.

**Initiative #9**: Schools will all have an in-house "demonstration school" for staff members to enhance their repertoire of teaching strategies shown to improve student learning.

**Rationale**: As John Dewey suggests, schools should be laboratories for working with teachers to test old hypotheses and try out new ones (as cited in Glickman, 1985). Most forms of inservice training are not designed to provide ongoing, interactive, cumulative learning necessary to developing new concepts, skills, and behaviors. A demonstration school in which teachers test out new ways to improve student learning is perhaps the ultimate personalized staff development. Instead of one shot workshops which provide little or no follow-up for teacher needs and concerns, the demonstration school offers ongoing practice, classroom feedback, and coaching designed for the individual educator.

**Implementation**: Each school site will have at least 2-3 closely linked classrooms designed as the demonstration school. The school would be supervised by master teachers who observe, consult, and provide feedback to demonstrating teachers.
The master teachers will help demonstrate teaching methods and provide trials suitable to the individual teacher's needs and abilities. Ideally the demonstration school would be located in an open, central site encased with large windows which allow other teachers and students to observe it from the outside. The openness of the plan serves to send clear messages to observers that this school is a place for learning and teachers are learners as well.

The demonstration school is designed to help teachers both short-term and long-term. For example, teachers can use the school for a one to two week time period to refine skills or gather ideas for how to teach a concept better. Additionally, educators can go to the demonstration school for a 3-month paid sabbatical for intensive work. Follow-up demonstrations are emphasized. For example, teachers may have an extensive time at the school for learning a skill. Then, after a month or two, the teacher comes back to refine that same skill after more experience and time for reflection. Another example of using the school for follow-up would involve testing out techniques gained from an "outside" inservice in attempt to "mutually adapt" the new skill (described later) to fit the learners of the particular school.

Although the demonstration school would be run by master teachers, university professors could be consulted and brought in to help as well with techniques in their area of expertise. Because each school site would have their own demonstration school based on improving their particular students' needs, schools would begin to specialize in techniques proven effective at that school. Thus, teachers at all schools could observe a variety of different specialties, serving as springboards for others which they take back and adapt to their unique setting if it proves useful.

As part of their individualized professional development plans, all teachers would use the demonstrations school at least two to three times per year. This would depend on the teacher's needs for that year and professional goals. It is important not to use the
school as punitive measure by principals, but rather should be viewed as a tool for
growth, both in the "learning" and "expertise" area.

**Initiative #10: All forms of student achievement will be frequently and continuously monitored.**

**Rationale:** Edmond's research on school effectiveness suggests that a primary focus of
school energy should involve monitoring pupil progress through diagnostic data
collection and use of data for instructional improvement (as cited in Glickman, 1985).

The teaching profession is often marked by the absence of concrete models for emulation,
unclear lines of influence, and random or vague conditions of criteria for evaluating
student work. Teachers often look to the informal, general observations of students and
their own informal observations to gauge their effectiveness. Educators should align their
improvement efforts with standards and measurable, targeted goals.

**Implementation:** Best practice in research can and should be part of initial discussions,
but improvement plans should then be gleaned from what works in the individual school
by pre-assessing each student, formulating a baseline, attempting new learning strategies
or concepts, then administering a post-test and analyzing the results.

Student achievement test scores will be given in a timely fashion. When analyzing
these achievement scores, it is important to look not only for overall trends, but also
to look at individual students by disaggregating the data in order to make meaning of
how the results relate to future goals for the student. For example, each student's scores
should be to the previous years' scores rather than comparing a teacher's former students
with current ones. Glickman suggests that student achievement data should be balanced
with criterion-referenced data measure which if often more accurate at demonstrating
student growth (1985). Criterion-based tests should be both standardized forms and in-
house forms as well. Student portfolios will also be a significant piece of the in-school
evaluations. Looping students will allow for longer analysis of student's scores. After
tests scores are analyzed, reflective discussions must take place among the staff. Senge (2000) cites that very few teachers have built-in time for their students or themselves to reflect on their students' progress on a continuous basis. Teachers will analyze the data with the help of the instructional coordinator and begin collecting his or her own as well. A teacher might use a scoring guide to first analyze the frequency of items missed, then assess which students missed certain problems in order to plan for individual and whole-group remedial lessons.

Program evaluation is also an important key to developing curriculum changes. It is critical that only scores of students who participated in the project from beginning to end be used for summative review of programs. Using different tests for the pre and post test evaluation component prevents the problem of regression toward the mean. After data is collected and analyzed for a significant period of time, in-house curriculum revision should then take place to adjust objectives accordingly. Glickman cites that local schools rarely turn curriculum development over entirely to their teachers (1985). In the Roselyn district, each school should become their own "resident experts" who intimately know the needs of their students through continuous analysis and reflection. Because they know their students' needs better than anyone, they should be very active in curriculum development. Teachers will modify the curriculum through the "mutual adaptation" process described later. Researchers suggest that teachers who are involved in selecting revising, and changing an externally prescribed curriculum, were more successful at having the revisions held and lasted (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978 cited in Glickman, 1985).

**Initiative #11: Instructional coordinators will be hired for each building to continually monitor student progress and work with principals on staff development goals based on this data.**

**Rationale:** Data collection of student learning, teacher interventions, and strategies needs to be monitored on an frequent basis in order to determine if improvements are
taking place. Cooley's "cybernetic model" describes how a principal may not necessarily be the data collector of the testing data, but act in the role of coordinating professional growth plans based upon this data (as cited in Glickman, 1985). The principal then is be responsible for analyzing overall results of the data and then working with staff to set up opportunities for growth based on the students' and teachers' needs. Compiling the data will need to be a large part of the decisions that the principal and staff will make. Yet, collecting, analyzing, and coordinating the data will be excessively time consuming for just one person within a school. Therefore, an instructional coordinator will be hired.

**Implementation:** The instructional coordinator will be responsible for collecting and monitoring data and work with the principal on analyzing it in order to determine student needs. Student portfolios will be read by the coordinator, the principal every month to ensure that student monitoring is pervasive within the school. The instructional coordinator will train staff members to better assess their student portfolios, criterion-referenced tests, as well as standardized tests.

**Initiative #12:** Within each individual school, teachers will become "resident experts" and develop a common technical language from reflective discussions and observations.

**Rationale:** Clarity comes from meaningful conversations. The language of the group should become more specific as staff members begin to intensively interact with one another. Teachers who have frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about their teaching practice rather than personal socializing and lamenting over the failures of students failures of ideas are more likely to make bigger influences on student achievement (Fullan, 1991).

**Implementation:** As whole group staff development moves past the "socialization" stage into the "prioritization" and "standardization" stage, common themes through conversations will begin to emerge and words and phrases will be gleaned in order for the common technical language to develop. It is important not to hurry this process in order
for educators to ensure that specific meanings of language are understood well by each staff member. For example, "cooperative learning" probably has varying conceptualizations depending on who one asks.

Staff development should come both from within the school (with the common technical culture and resident experts) as well as from outside of the school through going to workshops and educational conferences which tie into the specific learning goals of the school. It may be arrogant to believe that the school needs no outside help or input from anyone. The school runs the risk of becoming insular and stagnant by stifling new ideas and concepts which may contribute to better learning in the individual school context. Yet, too often teachers have drawn to outside speakers and experts as intellectual zealots viewing them as omnipresent and omnipotent idols. Fullan warns that outside experts frequently attempt to change individual schools with little or no success. The Rand Corporation study suggests that lasting and successful implementation projects are characterized by "mutual adaptation" in which the teachers are involved in the selecting, revising, and changing of the externally prescribed curriculum. Through this process, the external ideas become theirs which led to the change taking hold (as cited in Glickman, 1985).

Curriculum development decisions and planning should also come from the local schools in order to fit the individual needs of the students at each school. Goodland (cited in Glickman, 1985) believes that the reason many schools are ineffective and floundering is because the curriculum work is largely done far away from the local schools. Curriculum development should take the form of "mutual adaptation" to fit the individual school context.

**Conclusion**

Effective professional development must be focused at the individual school and based on the thorough and consistent monitoring of student and teacher needs. It should be an
active part of the teacher's daily lives. Finally, teachers need time for collaboration and encouragement to develop and grow professionally in the areas of leadership, expertise, and new learning.

The Roselyn development program allows teachers to take responsibility for more of their work as professionals who make intelligent, educated decisions based on well-grounded in-house and outside data. Principals will work in their role as instructional leader and coordinator in the school. In turn, the students in the Roselyn District will excel because they will be provided with instruction based upon their unique needs.

References


