

## **GOAL 3: LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

CPS schools will have strong communities of learning where teams of teachers work with the principal and other school staff to create a work and school environment of problem solving, innovation, reflection on practice, and collaborative professional development to design and implement effective instructional programs.

### **Key Initiatives 2001-2002:**

- Chicago Reading Initiative provides reading specialists to 114 schools
- Chicago Urban Leadership Academy opens
- System conducts audit of all professional development funds with primary support from the Public Education Fund

### **Forthcoming Initiatives:**

- District provides intensive professional development in literacy to principals, teachers, leadership teams, and content area specialists together with strategies to build learning communities
- National Teachers Academy opens
- District develops demonstration schools and demonstration instructional areas to provide best-practice support and training for instructional officers, principals, teachers and staff in developing professional communities
- Area instructional teams provide area-wide professional development for leadership teams

The instructional framework (See “What Do We Mean by Quality Instructional Programs?” on page 8) presented in this Education Plan introduces high standards for instruction. It means that every principal and teacher should be able to articulate:

- Their content and instructional goals for learning and how those goals in each content area are related to school and district wide goals for learning,
- Their theory (or framework) for how instruction should be organized to reach those goals and how assignments and classroom activities implement that framework and expose students to the content and types of application they would need to meet those standards,
- How their instruction in content areas incorporates the districts’ literacy framework and builds core student literacy skills, and
- What assessment they are using to understand whether students are learning, and developing the ability to apply knowledge and skills to solve problems and evaluate results.

The importance of coherence and pacing also requires that each principal and teacher have a clear sense of:

- How their goals build on and contribute to what students have learned in previous grades and what students will be asked to do in subsequent grades,
- How their work in one content area relates to what other teachers are doing in that grade in other content areas,
- How their instructional frameworks, assessments, grouping, and assignment practices are coherent with a school- and district-wide approach, and
- How what they are doing in the classroom and in their professional development relates to school-wide goals for student learning.

Developing strong instructional programs requires that principals and leadership teams are frequently interacting around instruction, drawing upon each other’s expertise, looking at student work, and building common practice. Thus, a key to accomplishing Goal 1 and Goal 2 is that every school in Chicago must develop strong professional communities based in reflective practice and ongoing professional development. This requires engaging teachers differently within their building – sharing leadership and focusing collective work around the key outcomes for students. As the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards states, developing learning communities requires that teachers *“take on more proactive and creative roles; engaging them in the analysis and construction of the curriculum, in the coordination of instruction, in the professional development of staff and in many other school-site policy decisions fundamental to the creation of highly productive learning communities.”*<sup>1</sup> The CPS administration is committed to working in cooperation with the Chicago Teachers Union and Chicago Principals and Administrators Association to support new roles for teachers and develop teacher expertise. The provision of reading specialists, the new CTU Jacqueline B. Vaughn Graduate School for Teacher Leadership, and new professional development initiatives such as the Summer Institute for High Schools around reading and STARS are all examples of initiatives that promote teacher leadership and draw upon teacher expertise (See “The Chicago Public Schools Reading Initiative” on page 20).

Building learning communities also requires doing professional development differently than it has traditionally been done. When professional development consists of a participant attending a one day workshop on an interesting topic that is not connected to any core work that teachers have been doing that year, it neither improves teaching nor serves as a mechanism for building learning communities. For this reason, the administration is strongly committed to realigning professional development under the principle that professional development must be reframed from **“something that is done to you”** to **“something everyone does to continue their learning.”**

<b>Learning Community</b>	PD is designed to assist leadership in collaboratively discussing their work, problem solving, reflecting on practice, and taking responsibility for improving student learning.
<b>Results oriented</b>	PD plans and opportunities are used to establish clear goals for improving teaching and learning, provide opportunities to build knowledge, refine skills, practice new learning, obtain feedback, receive coaching, and evaluate results in terms of its impact on improving student learning.
<b>Ongoing and continuous</b>	PD is never an isolated activity without follow up. PD plans produce a variety of ongoing job-embedded professional development programs and opportunities to address the needs of individuals and schools at different developmental stages.
<b>Coherent with the school’s instructional program</b>	PD programs and initiatives are aligned with school-wide goals and system level priorities and build a common language across schools and the entire system.
<b>Data-driven</b>	PD strengthens staff skills to use multiple sources of information to analyze the impact of instruction and programs on student learning and utilize data to determine priorities, establish plans, monitor progress, and adjust direction as required.
<b>Student-centered</b>	PD enhances staff understanding and appreciation for the unique gifts and talents of all students and improves staff skills in creating productive learning environments that are responsive to student strengths and needs.

<sup>1</sup> National Board for Teaching Standards, 2002, Proposition 5. See [www.nbpts.org](http://www.nbpts.org)

<b>Curriculum-focused</b>	PD deepens staff knowledge in their content area and provides them with research-based instructional strategies that support improved student learning.
<b>Accountability</b>	Staff shares responsibility for decisions about professional development, program development, resource allocation, and leadership team design and evaluates professional development activities to build accountability.

**GOAL 3: LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT—  
School and District Level**

**Effective strategies for using professional development (PD) to create learning communities:**

<b>Effective Strategies for Using Professional Development (PD) to Create Learning Communities:</b>		
<b>Key strategy</b>	<b>What schools should be doing</b>	<b>How the district will support these strategies</b>
<b>Build a learning community (Learning Community)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school is characterized by a collegial climate and infrastructure that is conducive to adult learning.</li> <li>Staff identifies clear goals for instructional development that guide ongoing work throughout the year.</li> <li>The school breaks down isolation. Principals and teachers regularly observe classrooms. Teachers co-teach and present to each other.</li> <li>The school presents opportunities for families and community members to be learners in their building through adult education programs and parent involvement (See Goal 5).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District develops new demonstration schools and areas to provide PD and best practice support for schools.</li> <li>Instructional officers provide ongoing leadership for instructional program development.</li> <li>The district provides career ladders and encourages National Board Certification and teacher-directed PD.</li> <li>The district provides support for community schools (See Goal 5).</li> </ul>
<b>Focus on results (Results oriented)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PD activities have clear purposes related to improving practice and are evaluated in terms of their impact on student learning.</li> <li>PD opportunities support both individual and team instructional improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District designs PD to support learning communities in the schools.</li> <li>District aligns PD activities so that they are focused on supporting student learning and instructional improvement.</li> <li>District creates PD programs and activities that help principals and teachers develop the knowledge and skills needed to improve student learning.</li> <li>District monitors PD programs and activities at the school and system level through a regular review of design, implementation, and evaluation plans.</li> </ul>

Key strategy	What schools should be doing	How the district will support these strategies
<p><b>Make PD ongoing and continuous</b> (Ongoing and Continuous)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PD activities consist of continuous ongoing work that enables teachers to learn, practice, reflect, and improve their teaching.</li> <li>• Workshops and conferences are followed up by practice and review of classroom implementation.</li> <li>• The school effectively uses education and university partners to develop a climate of ongoing dialogue and activity around instructional improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District designs PD programs using intensive staff development over summer with ongoing and continuous follow-up (See “The Chicago Public Schools Reading Initiative” on page 20).</li> <li>• District provides support for university and educational partnerships.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Focus on building a coherent instructional program</b> (Coherent)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PD is linked to the school improvement plan.</li> <li>• PD goals and activities reflect the district’s priorities and goals (A focus on literacy, mathematics, science, and technology).</li> <li>• Decisions about PD programs and initiatives are made strategically to support staff focus, program continuity, and ongoing school improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District provides PD activities to support the implementation of literacy and mathematics framework and designs diverse programs to meet the needs of schools at all achievement levels.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Make activities in the school data-driven</b> (Data-driven)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers learn appropriate student assessment strategies and incorporate resulting knowledge of student learning into their teaching.</li> <li>• PD facilitates teacher reflection and assessment of their own teaching as a tool for improvement.</li> <li>• PD activities enable staff to systematically assess school-wide performance and adjust curriculum and programs accordingly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District provides additional data reporting systems (see “What is the Grow Network?” on page 16) to support school wide analysis of student data and ongoing assessment.</li> <li>• District provides technology and on-site support in analyzing data through area instructional offices.</li> <li>• PD in literacy focuses on building teacher assessment skills</li> <li>• Advanced Reading Development Demonstration Project provides university and specialist support in training teachers in reading assessment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Promote student-centered dialogue</b> (Student-centered)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PD activities provide opportunities for educators to enhance their understanding of the students they teach using research-based knowledge of human development.</li> <li>• PD activities provide opportunities for teachers to enhance their understanding of research-based learning theories and their practical applications in the classroom.</li> <li>• PD activities provide opportunities for teachers to become deeply knowledgeable about the communities they serve and the implications of children’s cultural assets and needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District provides PD support so teachers develop an understanding of developmentally appropriate practice for their content area and age group of students served.</li> <li>• District incorporates the importance of building environments of support that are caring as core components of learning communities.</li> </ul>

Key strategy	What schools should be doing	How the district will support these strategies
<p><b>Align PD with Curriculum (Curriculum-focused)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional development enhances the knowledge of teachers and leadership in content areas and how to teach them.</li> <li>Professional development activities enables entire staff to coordinate curriculum within and across grade levels to provide coherent and developmentally sound programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New induction program provides pedagogical inquiry groups for new teachers in their content areas.</li> <li>District provides leadership training for high schools in reading and mathematics and training for leaders in content areas in implementing district frameworks.</li> <li>Mathematics and science initiatives provide new frameworks and curriculum supports.</li> <li>District supports ongoing learning and development of content specialists in the following areas: Reading, Mathematics, Technology, Early Childhood, and English Language Learners.</li> </ul>

*Note: This goal draws from the Principles of Professional Development working committee from the Professional Development Audit.*

*John Booz*



### **Professional Development Principles**

#### *Improving Learning for All Students and Staff*

Professional development is effective when it demonstrates its impact on the ultimate goal—**improving student learning**. It supports high quality teaching, learning, and leadership by helping participants build knowledge, refine skills, practice new learning, obtain feedback, and receive coaching support. In order to effect a significant cultural change, professional development must be reframed from “**something that is done to you**” to “**something everyone does to continue their learning.**” Effective professional development is . . .

#### **Content**

- ✓ **Curriculum-focused:** Deepens staff knowledge of the subjects they teach and provides them with research-based instructional strategies that support improved student learning
- ✓ **Student-centered:** Enhances staff understanding and appreciation for the unique gifts and talents of all students and improves staff skills in creating productive learning environments that are responsive to student needs
- ✓ **Data-driven:** Strengthens staff skills to use multiple sources of information to analyze the impact of their instruction and programs on student learning and utilize data to determine priorities, establish plans, monitor progress, and adjust direction as required

#### **Process**

- ✓ **Coherent:** Aligns professional development programs and activities with school-wide goals and system-level priorities and builds a common language across schools and the entire system
- ✓ **Continuous:** Produces a variety of on-going, job-embedded professional development programs and activities to address the needs of individuals and schools at different developmental stages
- ✓ **Results-oriented:** Establishes clear goals for improving teaching and learning, provides opportunities to build knowledge, refine skills, practice new learning, obtain feedback, receive coaching, and evaluates results in terms of their impact on improving student learning

#### **Context**

- ✓ **Learning Communities:** Develops professional communities that work collaboratively to help adults discuss their work, problem solve collectively, and reflect on their practice, and take responsibility for improving student learning
- ✓ **Shared Leadership:** Identifies and supports skilled teachers and administrative leaders who utilize principles of adult learning and change management models to transform classroom instruction and organizational performance
- ✓ **Access to Resources:** Requires extended and sustained time, access to research-based expertise, high quality staff members, and adequate financial resources to support adult learning and collaboration



*Fred Brown*



*John Booz*