



Oak Park Elementary School District 97

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To: Members, Board of Education
Dr. Carol Kelley, Superintendent

From: Dr. Amy Warke, Chief Academic and Accountability Officer
Dr. Tawanda Lawrence, Senior Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Emily Fenske, Director of Organizational Learning

Re: Summer Professional Learning Update & Professional Learning Plan for 2018-2019

Date: September 4, 2018

Purpose: The purpose of this informational report is to provide a high-level overview of professional learning in the 2018-2019 school year, including information about 2018 summer professional learning and development of a long-term professional learning plan.

Introduction

The vision of District 97 is to create positive learning environments for all District 97 students that are equitable, inclusive, and focused on the whole child. In order to achieve this vision for all students, it is important to acknowledge the role of professional learning for district staff to ensure all staff have the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver on this promise to students and families. [Learning Forward](#), the professional association for professional learning, defines the [Standards for Professional Learning](#) as the elements of professional learning that increase educator effectiveness and results for all students. The D97 Teaching & Learning Department is committed to designing and delivering professional learning aligned to these standards as part of our larger commitment to our district vision.

The D97 Professional Learning Committee (PLC) plays a critical role in designing, advising, advocating, and evaluating professional learning throughout the district. Over the past two years, the PLC has composed and committed to its own mission, vision, and values, aligned to our district vision:

The mission of the District 97 professional learning committee is to create a comprehensive system of support for staff in their efforts to create a positive learning environment for all District 97 students that is equitable, inclusive, and focused on the whole child.

District 97 professional learning is strategic, job-embedded, reflects our district vision, and is connected to our students' needs.

We value professional learning that is collaborative, focused on student learning, differentiated, incorporates educator voice and choice, and reflects a belief that all educators can grow.

The report that follows is a reflection of the ongoing collaboration between the Teaching & Learning Department, including the Instructional Coach team, the PLC, and other district departments, such as Special Education.

Summer 2018 Professional Learning

In the summer of 2018, the Teaching and Learning department sponsored numerous professional learning experiences to help prepare District 97 staff for the new school year. Much of the work was centered around full implementation of Reading Units of Study (RUOS) and math differentiation and enrichment. In total, 97 unique teachers participated across 12 events, with 37 teachers participating in multiple events.

We began by offering opportunities to visit our D97 Summer Launch program, using those classrooms as lab classrooms for staff to see both Reading and Writing Units of Study (RUOS/WUOS) in action, along with math differentiation and enrichment. The Summer Learning Lab sessions were led by our external consultants, Clare Donovan-Scane for RUOS/WUOS, and Lisa Westman for math differentiation. We offered 4 Learning Lab sessions in June and July, with 18 teachers participating across the 4 events.

Additionally, this summer our Instructional Coach team offered professional learning around RUOS implementation. They offered sessions in “Starting Strong with RUOS Unit 1” tailored to the K-2 and 3-5 grade bands, along with sessions in “Digging In to The Learning Continuum” and “Small Group Instruction in RUOS” for grades K-5. 93 teachers participated across 8 events. The most popular session was “Digging In to The Learning Continuum.”

In addition to the professional learning offered by our external consultants and our internal Instructional Coach team, 3rd, 4th, GTD, and 6th grade teachers engaged in professional learning and planning sessions for math differentiation and enrichment with Lisa Westman. The K-5 ELA Committee and the K-5 Math Committee also met for planning with Dr. Tawanda Lawrence.

2018-2019 Professional Learning Calendars

The 2017-2018 Professional Learning Committee developed the 2018-2019 Professional Learning Calendars. The team made several changes to the calendars, including:

- There are now separate calendars for elementary and middle schools, to help bring clarity to meeting types across the schools.
- These are now 2-page documents, with a calendar-view of events on the second page.
- Several adjustments have been made to meeting types, meeting times, and meeting durations, to align with the new contract.

The Committee also advised on how to sequence the meeting types, so there would be a regular rhythm to department meetings, grade level meetings, and school-based meetings. Principals, Assistant Principals, and Building Leadership Teams own the planning and development of school-based professional learning sessions aligned to their School Improvement Plans.

To view the 2018-2019 Professional Learning Calendars, please click the links below:

- [Elementary Calendar](#)
- [Middle School Calendar](#)

2018-2019 Professional Learning Highlights

Job-Embedded Professional Learning

This is professional learning that occurs in the school buildings and is directly tied to the day-to-day work of staff. This is the most powerful form of professional learning. Below are some important ways we will providing job-embedded professional learning in 2018-2019:

- Ongoing support and coaching for grade level, department, and special area teachers to lead and facilitate professional learning communities with their teacher teams
- Instructional coaching, both from our internal coach team and with external providers, including:
 - Coaching for math differentiation in grades 3, 4, and 6 with Lisa Westman
 - Coaching for RUOS implementation in grades 3-5 (and K-2 as needed) with Lisa Vahey, Clare Donovan-Scane, and Rachel Dahl
 - Coaching for WUOS implementation in grades K-5, as needed, with Lisa Vahey, Clare Donovan-Scane, and Rachel Dahl
- Support for Building Leadership Teams to collaborate around School Improvement Plans

Workshop-Style Professional Learning

These are sessions designed to give groups of teachers a common understanding or message, or are designed to allow educators to select professional learning experiences they may not be able to receive in their teacher teams. Below are examples of some of the workshops we will be running in 2018-2019:

- Workshop series with Paula Kluth around inclusive practices for co-taught classrooms
- Workshop series with Dr. Yvette Jackson around the high operational practices of *The Pedagogy of Confidence* for 4th grade teachers
- Institute Day Kickoff at Dominican University with Meenoo Rami around the strategies outlined in her book, *Thrive*
- Institute Days with educator-led sessions and educator choice in session selection on November 6, 2018 and April 2, 2019

2018-2019 Professional Learning Committee

Planning is currently underway for the 2018-2019 Professional Learning Committee (PLC). This year, the PLC will be co-chaired by Emily Fenske and a member of OPTA, Tricia Groben, Instructional Coach at Longfellow. Emily and Tricia have been meeting over the summer to plan the work of the committee over the course of the year. This year the PLC will focus on professional learning for committee members around the [Standards for Professional Learning](#) and how those standards come to life in strong professional learning plans. The PLC will also own the development of D97 Institute Days. Similar to last year, each PLC member will also serve on a workstream team aligned to one of 4 key areas of ownership for the committee:

- Building the 2019-2020 Professional Learning Calendar and streamlining the process for issuing Illinois Professional Learning Hours for school-based professional learning
- Designing professional learning for D97 teaching assistants
- Supporting teacher leaders in developing as professional learning facilitators for Institute Days and school-based professional learning
- Evaluating the success of Institute Days through survey development and data analysis

Long-Term Professional Learning Planning - The Learning Forward Academy

In July, Emily Fenske, Director of Organizational Learning, began her professional learning experience as a member of the [Learning Forward Academy](#) Class of 2020. In the Academy, participants gain knowledge about the professional learning standards, understand the research and best practices in professional learning, and utilize design thinking and inquiry based approaches to solving a problem of practice in their organization. Through her work in the Academy, Emily will be engaging in a process to build a long-term professional learning plan for the district in an effort to organize, align, and focus professional learning for teachers to ultimately increase the impact of professional learning on student outcomes throughout the district. This work will unfold over the next two and a half years.