

Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board



PD Learning Needs Assessment

A Review of Professional Development Needs and Structure

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Research Questions or Hypothesis

Research Questions:

Does the professional development opportunities provided to administrators meet their learning needs? In addition, how do administrators support teacher professional development that impacts the student in the classroom?

Hypotheses:

We expect that professional development currently provided does not meet all administrators needs and the impact on the classroom is either small or undefined.

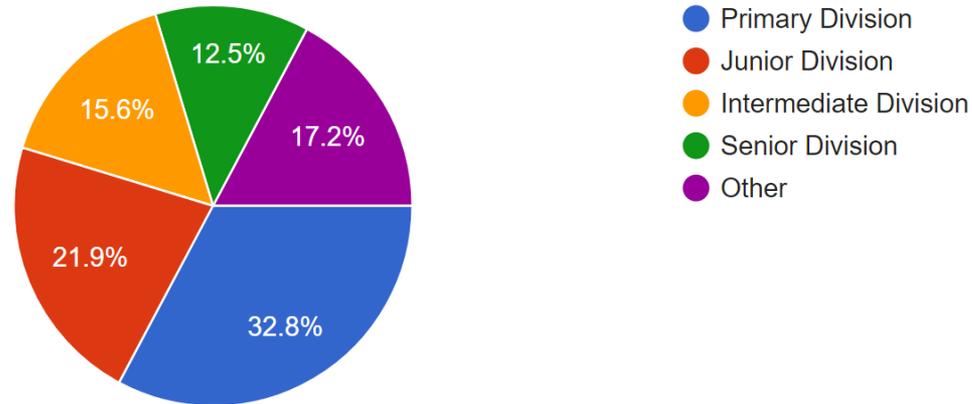
Methodology

1. The purpose of the initiative was explained to administrators at a network meeting.
2. Administrators and teachers were asked to complete an online survey.
3. Research team met and reviewed feedback identifying themes and common messaging.
4. Results of the survey results were collated and shared with administrators.
5. Schools provided with release time to meet with teachers to discuss survey results and determine a Professional Development Plan that best meets the needs of teachers and opportunities of administrators.

Findings

1. In which division do you currently teach? (e.g. most of your students are enrolled in a division). If you are an itinerant arts teacher, French teacher, Student Support Centre teacher or are employed as a teacher in some other capacity (e.g. SAT), please choose "Other."

(64 responses)



Key Qualitative Findings from Teacher Survey – 63 responses

1. How do principals support your learning needs/professional development? What do you like? What do you need? What are the challenges?

Like

95% of all responses mentioned one of the main themes – Principal Support, Relevant Workshops or Dialogue with Colleagues.

“My principal allows me to attend in-services and workshops that are related to my grade.”

“Attending subject/grade relevant workshops and engaging in professional dialogue (including time for co-planning) with colleagues is invaluable.”

“I love that I can ask for resources and PD and most often my needs are met.”

Need

70% of responses that mentioned needs identified time to work with colleagues or access to more technology .

“I need time to work with colleagues to develop best practices in different areas.”

“We need technology to function.....”

“Offer workshops, opportunities (time) to meet with colleagues.....”

Challenges

80% of challenges identified indicated time and communication as the main challenges.

“Challenges are being away from my students and planning for that.”

“At times, the communication piece can be an issue in regards to different things being implemented.”

“..the biggest challenges - non-focused PD that is a waste of time because teachers get negative.”

Key Qualitative Findings from Teacher Survey

2. Can you provide an example of the best professional development you have experienced and outline the impact on your classroom?

95% of responses mention one of the three main themes – dialogue with colleagues, hands-on workshops or events that provide practical examples that can be implemented the next day.

“.....networking and talking with other teachers about what they are doing in their classrooms.”

“.....provide me with material that was relevant and manageable to implement in the classroom.”

“Visiting another kindergarten classroom before starting my first year in kindergarten.....”

Key Qualitative Findings from Admin Survey – 16 responses

1. What professional development opportunities best suit your needs?

88% of responses included the themes of “how to” workshops or collaboration with admin from like schools

“.....focus on current issues and needs: Math, Autism, Technology, Mental Health.”

“.....beneficial for leaders to learn more about how we.....”

“.....meet with schools with similar school profiles/needs. I learn best through active learning/dialogue or discussion/seeing classrooms.”

2. How do networks support your learning needs/professional development? What do you like? What do you need? What are the challenges?

Like - 90% of the participants comments included:

Smaller group allows for easier sharing and dialogue

connect, ask questions, trouble shoot, and plan

dialogue that occurs relating the topic to the application in our schools

Need - 90% of the needs identified were:

discuss how we are going to implement this type of learning

Need more focus.

find common ground

Challenges - 98% of the challenges identified were:

“.....distance and time to attend meetings.”

Key Qualitative Findings from Admin Survey

3. Can you site a specific example of what you have shared/implemented at your school after a PD session or network meeting? How was it shared? How was it received?

19% of respondents identified network related information shared with staff

“Yes, developing a universal design for learning mind set was shared.”

“I have shared more from district support visits than network meetings.”

“I began using the new GIFGIC resource for Grade 3 after a PD session.....”

4. How do we know our PD is having an impact on the classroom?

100% stated visual observation as how impact is measured.

“.....see teachers making changes.”

“We know by spending time in classrooms.”

“This is difficult to measure.”

Conclusions

Based on our findings, we can conclude that the professional development opportunities provided to administrators does meet the needs of most who completed this survey. However the impact on the classroom and on teachers is unclear and unmeasured. The connection to other administrators and sharing of experiences is the main benefit of the learning networks.

Teachers appreciate the support of administrators in their efforts to reach their professional development goals and the opportunity to connect with other teachers..

Time and resources are a challenge for all professional development.

Recommendations

Learning networks should be structured or focused on a identified learning goal.

Success criteria or some form of monitoring and measuring the impact on the classroom must be created.