

Empowered Educators

South Broward High School



Core Belief from High School Redesign: Empowered Educators

Core Indicators of Empowered Educators that our Professional Development targets:

3.1) Empower instructional staff with authority to define professional development needs and to make decisions about curriculum, teaching methods and classroom environment.

3.2) Create a critical mass of personnel in the school who are engaged in reflective practice intended to improve teacher practice, student learning and whole school reform.

3.4) Utilize communities of practice as a mechanism for transforming the way educators are prepared inducted and retained.

Goal: *To increase student achievement by empowering instructional staff with the authority to define professional development needs and to make decisions about curriculum, teaching methods and classroom environment in alignment with our School Improvement Plan and High School Redesign.*

Method: *A survey of our professional staff overwhelmingly indicated the request for professional learning communities as our method of professional development. With this in mind, the entire professional staff was given the challenge to form learning communities of their choice with the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement and improving instructional strategies.*

Seventeen (17) Professional Learning Communities were developed and are functional at this time. Although each Professional Learning Community has a different objective, each has the ultimate goal of increasing student achievement through the improvement of instructional strategies and techniques.

Outcome: *Teachers were surveyed at the end of first semester.*

Results:

- *90% prefer Professional Learning Communities over the traditional method of staff development.*
- *96% are satisfied with the time allotted to Professional Learning Community meetings.*
- *87% are satisfied with the Professional Learning Community that they joined.*
- *84% felt that their Professional Learning Community is providing them with strategies to better meet the individual needs of their students.*
- *79% felt that they are developing new instructional strategies as a result of their Professional Learning Community.*
- *99% would like to continue with Professional Learning Communities for the upcoming school year.*
- *When asked for comments: The majority of teachers said:*
 - ❖ *They enjoyed the collegial dialogue, discourse and sharing of best practices.*
 - ❖ *They liked the freedom of choice to create and develop their own professional development through a Professional Learning Community.*

Student achievement data will be analyzed at the end of this school year.

Observations: *Teachers are using a wider variety of instructional strategies in their classrooms. Students are more engaged and focused as a result. Teachers are mentoring and advising students on a more personalized level resulting in better student-teacher relationships.*

Conclusion: *We have greatly improved staff motivation, school climate and educational experiences in our classrooms. We will continue to improve our Professional Learning Community process for next year based upon our experiences this year. We believe that our professional development program is aligned with High School Reform, Empowered Educators, Core Indicators 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4.*