# Utah Association of Secondary School Principals

## Executive Board Members

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<th>Position</th>
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<td>Rich Middle School</td>
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<td>Pleasant Grove Jr. High</td>
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<td>USOE Liaison</td>
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Impact Journal

Impact Journal is an open-ended theme journal published by the Utah Association of Secondary School Principals (UASSP). Impact is published twice each year.

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Impact Journal Publication Guidelines

Impact Journal is an open-ended theme journal published by the Utah Association of Secondary School Principals (UASSP). We welcome opinion essays, interviews, program descriptions, research reports, theoretical pieces, school climate pieces, reviews of books, humor, satire, poetry, and cartoons.

Impact is published twice each year to correspond with the UASSP annual winter and summer conferences.

Form

• Impact editors use American Psychological Association (APA) style manual.
• Manuscripts can be sent by e-mail attachment.
• Most of our articles are between 1000 and 3000 words.
• Submit a cover sheet with the manuscript. The cover sheet should include the title, author(s), each author’s present position and school (if applicable), each author’s academic status (if applicable), each author’s mailing address, telephone, and email address.

Submission deadlines are November 15 and April 15 of each year.

Manuscripts will be reviewed as to content and acceptability. Authors should assume that manuscripts will be edited to conform to length and clarity.

Send manuscripts electronically to the editor.

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Letter from the Editor

Mary Rhodes, EdD
Editor

I flew to San Diego this spring, and besides the expected and delightful warmth of weather and friendships, lunches were an astonishing surprise. Compared to patrolling halls, intervening in heated basketball intramurals, and grabbing vending machine fare, my stroll through Little Italy’s Farmers Market, interaction with congenial vendors, and partaking of my hosts’ artistically-prepared meal nourished my heart, physique, and mind. I decided such a summer lunch was essential, and I sent pictures of the colorful china with fresh vegetables, salty olives, and exotic cheeses home.

This summer’s edition of provides a bill of fare that will nourish you. The first article is essential. Kellis provides critical information on the status and non-status of transgender policies in Utah and gives guidelines, exemplars, and messages of our moral obligations.

Two articles address important instructional practice at the classroom level. The article by Branch is a reminder that, regardless of allergies and aversions, some elements of nutrition, in this case content literacy, are eternally relevant for everyone. Gardner and Fratto take a classic pairing—special education and regular education teachers—to explore new models and substantive training for co-teaching.

The article by Shepherd and Brinkman examines a new entree in the marketplace—the implications of the new state evaluation model. The deep case study research by Stewart on principals also looks at impact of the state evaluation and expands our concept of locally grown beyond the Wasatch front to explore how three principals operate in in rural Utah.

Boren provides us with a beautiful menu of team leadership configurations; when combined, the power of each item results in harmonious and sustaining models for collaboration. Certainly, desserts can contribute to our health and joy, and Stensrud’s sweet and salty piece de resistance adds an appropriate flair to complement our journal contents.

The garnishes provided by Robert King and Dave Tanner are evident in cover and photos throughout the journal. Brent Summer, Jane Bradbury and Carl Boyington are the chefs extraordinaire, organizing and making all possible. Thank you also to the many vendors who pay the check.

On returning home and serving lunch to my shocked husband, he said, “Jacque and Beth have nothing on you.” I hope, this summer, you travel, bring home new and healthy practices, and fashion them with your creativity. As you journey into the contents of this luscious and nutritious journal, you will find healthy ideas that you can devise with a creative presentation for your school. Bon appetit.
On March 1, 2016, mere hours before a bill requiring transgender schoolchildren to use the public facilities corresponding to their birth gender would have become law, Governor Dennis Daugaard vetoed it (Wagner & ChapPELL, 2016). Daugaard, a one-time supporter, spoke personally with individuals affected by this bill; after hearing their stories, he changed his mind. The week before Daugaard’s abrupt about-face, Charlotte, North Carolina passed a measure aimed at allowing transgender individuals to use the bathroom they desired (Delia, 2016). Less than one month later, in direct response to Charlotte’s actions, the North Carolina Legislature passed a law to prevent local governments from implementing anti-discrimination measures meant to protect gay and transgender people (Domonoske, 2016).

Gripping court cases, drama-filled legislative sessions, last minute vetoes (or passes), and passionate debates have played out over the airwaves, capturing the attention of America’s public. The battle over transgender rights, particularly as it relates to bathrooms and locker rooms, has moved from the state level, to the local level, to higher education, and now occupies the k-12 realm of public education.

This article explores the rights of the transgender student in the public school. It analyzes current legal cases and the direction of the federal government and examines the current policies of several Utah school districts. It reviews the practical application of the literature and the implications of a case study in Canada.

Before transgender rights in the public school can be fully explored, one must first understand the terms and definitions as used in the legal court documents, non-profit support materials, and even in school policies. These terms include gender expression, gender identity, transgender, and gender nonconforming.

- **Gender Expression** – “the manner in which a person represents or expresses gender to others, often through behavior, clothing, hairstyles, activities, voice or mannerisms” (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 2015).
- **Gender Identity** – “A person’s deeply held sense or psychological knowledge of their own gender. Gender identity is an innate, largely inflexible characteristic of each individual’s personality” (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 2015).
- **Transgender** – “An adjective describing a person whose gender identity or expression is different from that traditionally associated with an assigned sex at birth” (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 2015).
- **Gender nonconforming** – “A term for people whose gender expression differs from stereotypical expectations. This includes people who identify outside traditional gender categories or identify as both genders” (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 2015).
The transgender conversation becomes particularly heated as it sets individual rights in seemingly direct conflict with deeply ingrained societal mores and deeply held religious beliefs. When that topic covers restrooms and locker rooms in k-12 public schools, the outcry from concerned parents is real and almost immediate. Public school administrators must find a way to resolve the concerns of the parents, create a safe place for the transgender student or students, and educate the staff and student body. Public schools must be proactive in creating welcoming and accepting school cultures that make it possible for every student to feel safe and protected inside the school.

**Research and Literature Foundation**

**The Legal Basis**

**First Amendment.** The First Amendment is commonly known as the amendment protecting free speech. Six years ago, a gay student planned to bring her girlfriend to Itawamba Agricultural High School’s prom and planned on wearing a tux instead of a more traditional dress. In the wake of the announcement and ensuing scandal, the high school cancelled the prom. In the subsequent court case, a federal court ruled that wearing a tuxedo and bringing a same-gender date was the student’s attempt to “express her identity...The Court finds this expression and communication of her viewpoint is the type of speech that falls squarely within the purview of the First Amendment” (ACLU, 2010).

While this case did not deal specifically with a transgender student, the implications are clear. Transgender students dressing as their identified gender rather than as their assigned gender are within, according to this case, their First Amendment rights. The date, if any, which they choose to bring to school events also falls under the purview of free speech.

In fact, the dress issue had been decided almost ten years previously in the court case Doe v. Yunits (Andrus, 2015). GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders brought a case against the Brockton School Department for consistently disciplining a male student presenting as female for wearing girl’s clothing. The Superior Court in that decision ruled that by enforcing gender stereotypes, the school was violating the student’s First Amendment rights and sexually discriminating against the student (GLAD Legal Advocates and Defenders, 2000).

**Fourth Amendment.** The Fourth Amendment protects the privacy of the person—individuals have the right to be secure. The potential application of this amendment would protect the right of an individual to not have a person of the opposite sex in a public restroom or locker room (Andrus, 2015). Transgender cases brought to court under this amendment are not as clear-cut as the cases brought up under First Amendment rights. Even states seem to have a difficult time agreeing on the issue. As referenced in the introduction, the Governor of South Dakota recently vetoed a bill that would require transgender students to use the bathroom corresponding to their biological sex (Wagner & Chappell, 2016).

**Fourteenth Amendment.** Like the Fourth Amendment, the Fourteenth Amendment is used in some court cases to suggest that the idea of equal protection extends to transgender individuals who would like to use the gendered restroom with which they identify (Andrus, 2015). Current trends in court cases suggest that this is a much more accepted argument. The backlash against North Carolina, and the potential backlash...
against Georgia, should they choose to follow North Carolina’s example, has been swift.

**Title IX of the Education Amendments and Title IV of the Civil Rights Act.** Both Title IX and Title IV prohibit the discrimination of students based on sex. According to a news release by the Department of Justice, “The enforcement of Title IV and Title IX are top priorities of the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division” (Department of Justice, 2013). In fact, the Department of Justice and the Department of Education have worked together to address sexual discrimination due to gender stereotypes in school districts across the United States.

Recently, the Department of Education reached an agreement with an Arcadia, California School district over a Title IX complaint. The school district, acting on the advice of its lawyers, provided a separate cabin for a transgender student during an overnight fieldtrip. In addition, the lawsuit claimed that the “district had prohibited the student from accessing facilities consistent with his male gender identity, including restrooms and locker rooms at school… because he is transgender” (Department of Justice, 2013). Under the agreement, the school district has agreed to provide training for administration and faculty about preventing discrimination for transgender students, create policies and procedures to prevent gender discrimination, and work with a consultant to help create a safe learning environment for transgender students.

The fact that the Department of Justice and the Department of Education have teamed up to address gender discrimination shows that this is a federal priority. The terms of the agreement with the Arcadia School District illustrate a willingness to work with school districts and educate them about the best ways to create a safe school culture for these students. This author suspects, however, that this grace period has a finite end date. Just as ignorance is not a solid legal defense for a citizen, it is an unwise plea for a school district on the wrong end of a gender discrimination complaint.

**Keeping Students Safe.** The data on bullying and harassment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, and transgender youth paints a stark picture. Research shows that “LGBQ youth are more likely than their straight peers to report skipping school due to fears of fighting or physical violence” (Hillard, Love, Franks, Laris, & Coyle, 2014). The victim’s poor attendance leads to a decrease in attachment and grades. The harassment and bullying lead to these students feeling unsafe at school. How does a school administrator address this serious problem? Studies show that a multi-pronged approach works best. Teachers need to be trained not only on how to recognize the harassment and bullying, but how to respond when it happens in the classroom. Support groups and other school programs help create a support structure for these students when they do feel marginalized or discriminated against. Finally, state laws against discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation lead to a significant decrease in verbal harassment. (Hillard, Love, Franks, Laris, & Coyle, 2014).

**Field Activity**

Three Utah school districts have an anti-discrimination policy. Alpine School District has a non-discrimination policy that specifically states that it will not discriminate based on “gender, sexual orientation, gender identity…or as otherwise provided by state and federal law” (Alpine School District,
It is simply one more reason why it is imperative for school districts not just to have an anti-discrimination policy, but rather a full, fleshed out policy.

Davis School District, alone of the six school districts researched, has the best, most comprehensive, and easily available policy concerning transgender students. They have provided guidance for the schools within its boundaries, with the caveat that as circumstances, laws, and opinions change, so too will its policy. The policy itself includes definitions, school response, discrimination and harassment, privacy and confidentiality, student records, restroom and locker room accessibility, gender segregation in other areas, dress code, and sports and physical education.

As it currently stands, the policy section regarding restroom and locker room accessibility states, “a transgender student should not be required to use a locker room or restroom that conflicts with the gender identity consistently asserted at school by the student” (Davis School District, 2015). It goes on to state that if a transgender student requests additional privacy, they can be provided with “reasonable alternative arrangements” such as “the use of a private area, or a separate changing schedule, or use of a single stall restroom or dressing room” (Davis School District, 2015).

Given the current environment, this author is shocked that more Utah school districts have not proactively addressed this issue. Davis School District is not appreciably less conservative than the other school districts, yet it has taken the lead in creating a policy that is comprehensive and easy to access. Other districts should follow suit and create full, fleshed out policies that address the needs of transgender students.
districts researched—if anything, it is more so. The other school districts would be well served to look to Davis School District’s policy, talk to them about the process of writing and implementing the policy, and learn from them. A policy makes the school’s position clear. If written in accordance with the law, it serves as a protection for both the school district and the transgender student. In fact, a good policy not only outlines what is and is not acceptable, but it also provides direction for students who need to pursue a complaint or make adults aware of harassment.

Theory to Practice

According to the definition provided previously, gender is inflexible and a deeply held psychological knowledge inside of a person—so gender should not be a fluid switching back and forth at will. With this definition, or using this definition to frame a situation, it is easy to see how the bathroom issue turns from one of horror that a man is in the women’s restroom, to one of support that a woman is not made to use a man’s restroom.

While it would be difficult to police or control in the general public, a school is far from a sample size of the generic population. Transgender students are a tiny subset of the population. A student who identifies as female but is biologically male would have been in conversations with school officials and counselors. The administrators would have created a plan with that student, a guardian—if appropriate—and certainly a counselor. It is not an invitation for boys to walk into the girls’ restroom at will or vice-versa.

In this same way, it is important for administrators to resist the urge to make all restrooms gender neutral. A transgender student is far from gender neutral. They feel strongly that they are one gender, in the body of a different gender. One concept that has not been explored in this paper and could be explored in future research is that of gender nonconforming students. For these students, a gender-neutral bathroom might be an appropriate response.

In a restroom, stalls provide a decent measure of privacy. In most public school locker rooms, however, changing occurs in the open-benced spaces between lockers. Showers are often lacking even a nod to privacy, with shower spouts springing periodically from a large, completely open, tiled room. In this open area, there is no getting around the fact that a biological male or biological female is changing or showering in the same area as, and in potential full view of, the opposite gender. One can easily understand a parent’s concern and frustration that their child would be exposed prematurely to the naked body of the opposite gender—such an exposure might offend that parent’s modesty, religious tenets, and be in direct contrast to family teachings.

In such a scenario, it is important for the administrator to consider all of the students and the rights that have been firmly established legally. While some schools have decided to provide the transgender student with a special bathroom or changing area, current legislation makes it unlikely that such arrangements will be considered lawful for much longer, if at all. Construction of future schools might include privacy stalls in the locker rooms and showers much like there are privacy stalls in restrooms. Clearly, the expense to retro-fit the entirety of public school buildings in America is prohibitive. However, a much less expensive option might include installing privacy curtains. In the meantime, school administrators would be wise to allow any student who expresses concerns of privacy the use of a separate bathroom or alternative changing schedule.

Why this is Important for PreK-12 Students

As referenced previously, studies show that LGBT teens are more likely to experience bullying, more likely to view school as an unsafe place, more likely to stay home because of bullying, and more likely to experience the concomitant negative effects of missing school (Hillard, Love, Franks, Laris, & Coyle, 2014). Somehow, in the gay rights
In this instance, the example of Catholic schools in Canada provides a model for schools and communities to follow. It is very possible for a conservative community to come together on behalf of a marginalized group and create safe space for them. In the midst of a nationwide movement to stop bullying at school or on social media, it is unconscionable to still have a subgroup of society prey to the whims of social predators stalking the halls of a school or the walls of Facebook. In fact, the ISLLC standards clearly state that effective leaders “build and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student” (National Policy Board for Education Administration, 2015). If every school administration took this mandate to heart and creating a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that met the needs of each student, then suicide rates would drop, bullying would decrease, verbal harassment would not be tolerated, transgender students would feel safe enough to stay at school. Teachers would be trained, parents would be educated, and the unity of the school and the community would increase.

Conclusion
Administrators have a fiduciary responsibility towards the students entrusted into their care in the education system. It is their responsibility to create an environment that is safe for all children, that protects—in as much as possible—each child’s burgeoning belief system and understanding of the
In fact, the group of advocates managed to create programs and strategies that were not only acceptable to the stakeholders, but incredibly helpful and successful for the LGBT youth.

The administrator finds themselves in the unenviable position of finding a balance between honoring the transgender student and respecting the culture and beliefs of the opposing student. What makes this somewhat more difficult is that while societal mores have changed in accepting LGBQ students, those same societal mores have not changed to the same extent for transgender students. Creating policies that promote the use of locker rooms and bathrooms that correspond to a transgender student’s identified gender is going to create a very real concern among the parents and community.

The smart school district will not wait until a parent or student threatens legal action on the existing policy or lack thereof. Rather, a proactive approach with a robust public education campaign that builds on the values of the school, its culture, and the legal framework will prepare a district’s stakeholders to accept a policy that values and protects every student. Administrators in particularly conservative areas will want to give this issue the time it deserves. Waiting or putting the discussion off will not make the policy any easier to write or the stakeholders any more likely to acquiesce. It is important for the school district to be a leader rather than a follower in putting these students first and making school a safe place for them to learn and thrive.

References


GLAD Legal Advocates and Defenders.
Since this paper was written, there have been significant developments in the transgender conversation. North Carolina’s law requiring individuals to use the bathroom of their assigned gender at birth has been met with significant backlash by individuals, companies, and governments alike. The Department of Justice recently gave notice to North Carolina that their law violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. As this paper deals with an issue currently being fought on the public stage it is inevitable that current information will soon become dated. This author, along with the rest of the world, will continue to follow the developments as they occur.
The importance of literacy across the curriculum

Sherri Branch

Adolescent literacy in the secondary schools is critical! The schools our kids attend today are not the same as the schools you and I attended as kids. Sitting passively and listening to lectures will not provide our students with the skills they will need to succeed in today’s world. Our kids today need to learn to think critically by engaging in active and purposeful reading, writing, problem solving, and discussion in all of their classes. They need the ability to use not only reading and writing, but also thinking. They need to make meaning of their learning, and they need to learn to apply this meaning to their own lives. As instructional leaders, two important questions we want our students to be able to answer are, “How can I use what I learned today in my life right now and in the future?” and “Why is this important to me?” I believe it is our job to prepare our students to succeed today and in the future through content literacy.

Although now I am in administration, I began teaching reading at Jefferson Junior High School (Granite School District) out of program need back in 2004. I quickly realized that although my reading class would help the few students I had, we needed to do more on a school wide level. My class alone was not enough to avert the crisis that approximately 46% of the students at our school were reading below grade level at that time. This led to me conducting staff trainings on school wide literacy. As a result, the percentage of students reading below grade level decreased, teacher frustration in the classroom decreased, and scores increased.

What is cross-curricular literacy and why is it important? Cross-curricular literacy, or content literacy, is not just putting reading and writing in all of our subject areas, but making meaning of our learning through reading, writing and thinking. A reading class, alone, is not enough to eliminate the harsh reality that many of our students read below grade level. Although most schools have reading support through ESL classes, special education classes, or elective reading comprehension classes, we frustratingly find that those classes, alone, are not enough to avert the crisis that sometimes upwards of 40% of our students are not reading on grade level. So many times educators and instructional leaders find themselves asking, “What more can I do to help so many struggling readers?” The answer: Put literacy and reading comprehension strategies in every class across the curriculum.

Following are some literacy strategies that every teacher can incorporate into what they are already teaching to help their students become active readers. Active reading
leads to better comprehension, just as active learning leads to better understanding. As Confucius said, “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.” This applies to reading just as much as it applies to learning. Cris Tovani (a wonderful reference for teaching reading in the secondary classroom) has a book entitled, Do I Really Have to Teach Reading? The answer, YES! We all do! Many of your teachers will wonder how in the world they can possibly add a new element to an already overloaded curriculum; doing so, however, will enable students to learn complex new concepts in their disciplines. It is imperative for them to help their students become better readers.

Literacy strategies can basically be broken down into three categories: before reading, during reading, and after reading. Below is a wonderful guide I put together for my teachers and students:

**Reading Strategies: How to be an Active Reader**

**Before Reading Strategies**
1. Read the title page and make a prediction on what this reading assignment will be about
2. **Preview** your reading
   - Read the title
   - Read the head notes and subtitles
   - Look at all the pictures and read their captions
   - Read any and all boxes or other items that stand out on the page (usually in color)
3. Do you want to **change** your prediction?
4. Find any **vocabulary words** that are identified (bold faced, underlined, italicized)
5. What **questions** are going through your mind?
6. Can you make any personal **connections** to this reading?
7. Do you have any **prior knowledge** about this topic?
   - What do you already know about this?
8. Set your **purpose** for reading.
9. Set a **plan** for how you are going to read this story or article and what strategy you are going to use. Some possible ideas are to check your prediction to see if it is correct or answer the questions that are going through your mind.

**During Reading Strategies**
1. **Monitor your understanding.**
   a. Are your questions being answered?
   b. Can you describe in your own words what you have read so far?
   c. Are you confused? *If you are, what are you going to do about it? How are you going to fix it?*
   - Reread
   - Continue reading to see if it starts to make sense.
     If it doesn’t, then go back and reread again
   - Look at the pictures and other extra support provided for you on the page
2. Continue to adjust your prediction and make new ones.

**After Reading Strategies**
1. Think about, remember, and self-reflect on what you learned
   - Discuss what you read
   - Form an opinion about what you read
   - Write about what you read
Teaching students academic vocabulary in all classes is of vital importance. A great reference to use is, Bringing Words to Life by Isbel Beck. Academic vocabulary, or Tier 2 words as Beck describes, are the words students see mostly in an academic setting, i.e. compile, infer, simplify, summarize, revise, analyze. Students often see these words used in instructions, and if our students don’t understand what these words mean, then more than likely they won’t understand the instructions. This can be of a particular burden if it is instructions to a test, particularly the high stakes tests our kids take every year (SAGE, CRT, ACT, SAT,).

You will also find a Cheat Sheet (Appendix A) on literacy strategies I have used to train educators on how to begin putting literacy into their already overloaded curriculum. I strongly emphasize to my teachers this is something they can add to what they already have in their lesson plans. They do not need to create a whole new curriculum or brand new lesson plans, but just to incorporate these strategies into whatever reading they are assigning their students. I have also included a summary table of Literacy Strategies (Appendix B) to give to students as a reference to keep and use in all classes.

Allow me to use an example to sum up why literacy is important in every class, every day. One fellow teacher in monthly faculty trainings I held on cross-curricular literacy was very resistant to add these (or anything else) to her instruction, complaining it was just “one more thing” she was being asked to do. However, after taking some time to teach her kids a few of these strategies, along with other textbooks strategies (using baby steps), she quickly realized that while it seemed a lot of work up front, it saved a lot of classroom time later. She included reading comprehension strategies as a part of every instruction. As a result, these strategies became second nature to her students, thus improving their comprehension of the material, which resulted in higher grades and test scores. After all, raising test scores is one necessary evil all instructional leaders face, and putting literacy across the curriculum is one sure way to do that. Not promoting literacy skills for our students is an unnecessary evil.
Appendix A
Literacy Strategies - Cheat Sheet

Before Reading Strategies (Pre-reading)
• Preview the text or other reading material
  o Read all the bold words (usually the vocabulary words for that text), and italicized words, and use context clues to find their meaning.
  o Read all the graphics, not just look at them.
  o Read all the sidebars and anything that stands out by itself (which means it is important!)
• Create a purpose for reading (helps them to be active readers)
  o Turn titles, headings, and subheadings into questions (using who, what, when, where, why and how), then look for the answers to those questions while reading.
  o Have students read the questions at the end of sections and then read for answers.
  o Use the section guides or goal boxes at the beginning of the section to create questions before reading.
• Expose to the vocabulary
  o Each subject has its own “jargon”. Make sure your students understand and can define/use the “jargon” you are using in your classroom. Some vocabulary will carry over between subject areas.

Making Connections with Reading
• Text to Text
  o How is what you are reading similar to anything else you have ever read?
  o How is it different?
• Text to Self
  o How is the reading similar to your own life?
  o How is it different?
• Text to World
  o How is the reading similar to what is happening in the world around you?
  o How is it different?

Visualizing
• Using the words you are reading to create a picture in your mind
• “What do you see in your mind when you read that?”

Predicting
• Based on the thoughtful use of prior knowledge
• A thoughtful hypothesis based on clues

Inferring
• The ability to “read between the lines”
• To get a meaning the author implies, but does not state directly

Appendix B
Literacy Strategies

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<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description of Strategy</th>
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| Before Reading Strategies     | • Preview your reading: How long is the reading? Are there any section guides or goal boxes? Read all the titles, headings, and subheadings; find all the boldface words and italicized words and read the surrounding text to find their meaning. Read, don’t just look at, all the visuals and their captions associated with the reading (pictures, photographs, maps, charts, graphs, etc.); Read, don’t just look at, anything else that has been set off by itself (sidebars, boxed items, sections in color, highlighted items, diagrams, models, etc.)
|                               | • Set a purpose for reading (other than “The teacher told me to.”): Turn titles and headings into questions and try to answer those questions as you read (use the five W questions of who, what, when, where, and why... may include how also): Read the questions at the end of the chapter first, then look for the answers as you read
| Making Connections To Your Reading | • Try to make connections between the text you are reading and other texts you have read
|                               | • Try to make connections on how this reading relates to the real world
|                               | • Try to make connections on how this reading relates to your life, personally
| Visualizing                    | • Try to create a picture in your mind of what you are reading
|                               | • Find the important words and their meanings by reading the surrounding text. How do these words help you paint a picture in your mind?
|                               | • Understand how each subject has specialized language – words that are used only in that subject matter
| Predicting                     | • Read the titles and headings, and see if you can predict what the reading will be about
|                               | • Stop periodically throughout your reading and see if you can guess what will happen next, then read to see if you are correct. If not correct, then try to make another prediction
| Inferring                      | • Develop the ability to “read between the lines”
|                               | • Determine what the author implies, but does not state directly
| Questioning                    | • Always question what the author is saying: i.e. Do you believe what you just read? Why or why not? Does what you read seem real or believable to you? Is what you read practical? Can you use it?
| Summarizing                    | • Be able to summarize or paraphrase what you just read in your own words; can you retell what you just read in your own words?
| Organization Patterns          | • How is the reading organized? Is it a cause and effect? Does it compare and contrast? Is it a question and solution? Is it a description of something? Does it list things in order, or chronologically? Is it a process or sequence of something?

References

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The Utah Co-Teaching Project:
Transforming Opportunities for Student Success in Mathematics

Lori Gardner USOE and Peggy Fratto USOE

One of the challenges for education in the twenty-first century is to prepare all students for participation in an economy where skills of the twentieth century will be, in many areas, obsolete. Our children must have the knowledge and skills to access competitive careers and to participate in a changing society. In response to this reality, part of the vision and mission of Utah public education is to ensure literacy and numeracy competency for all of Utah’s children. To advance this goal, the Utah State Board of Education (USOE) adopted the Utah Core for Mathematics and Language Arts, which addresses the complexity of what students need to know and be able to do.

Across the state, educators and administrators are now grappling with the intent of the mission to provide access to the core for all students.

As we raise the bar for each student, schools and districts are challenged to find ways to close the achievement gap for students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English Language Learners. One approach in special education that has seen resurgence in the last few years is co-teaching. While there may be various interpretations of what it is, the most common definition of co-teaching is as an instructional approach in which general and special educators share responsibility for planning, instruction, and assessment of a common group of students.

It is a practice that when done well can lead to substantial academic gains for students. However, without consideration of who is best suited for such a collaborative relationship, when support in terms of planning and scheduling is not provided, and when teachers do not have an idea of what they could or should be doing, it can be a waste of precious resources.

One approach to provide a solid foundation for good co-teaching has been through the collaborative efforts of Utah Schools to Watch and USOE’s Department of Teaching and Learning and the Department of Special Education to create a program to train and support teachers in effective co-teaching. This started in 2010 when Utah Schools to Watch received a grant from its affiliate, The National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform and the Education Development Center to help provide professional development in the area of middle grades math. The emphasis of the grant was on serving special education students in the regular classroom setting with the support of co-teaching. Schools to Watch joined in a collaborative venture with specialists from USOE to offer a summer workshop to district and school math specialists.
After a year of planning and developing the Co-Teaching Handbook: Utah Guidelines, a pilot program of professional learning for middle grade math teams was launched. In the fall of 2011 the Co-Teaching Pilot was initiated with seven teams participating. After the first successful year, the Utah Co-Teaching Project moved forward involving teachers in grades 6-9 with a focus on mathematics. In the first two years, teachers were also encouraged to participate in the Middle Level Summer Numeracy Program, a joint venture between the USOE Department of Special Education and the University of Utah.

Now concluding its fifth year, the project has grown from 7 teams to 26 teams with Northern and Southern cohorts. Teachers in grades 6 through Math II have been involved. The Co-Teaching Project and the Summer Numeracy Program have merged to provide 10 days of high quality professional learning along with several rounds of coaching.

The focus of the program is on developing positive working relationships between the teams. Teachers reflect on what they need in a classroom environment, how to share responsibility and how to handle conflict. Using the principles of Growth Mindset, the teachers attend to developing a community in their classroom where every student is accepted and supported in taking risks. Teachers explore instructional strategies that utilize the expertise each brings to the classroom. With five of the ten days dedicated to the eight math practice standards, teachers also gain a better understanding of where and why students struggle in math and how to scaffold learning and interventions that promote deep understanding.

Another important component of the program is the work that is done to support teachers through instructional coaching. Through the recent sponsorship of the project by the Utah Professional Development Network, each team is assigned a coach who visits the classroom several times a year providing teams with data to help refine their practice. Administrators are also provided with guidelines and tools to help them better understand what should be happening in the classroom and how to assess the quality of co-teaching.

Pairing two great teachers is just the first step in co-teaching. Consideration also needs to be given to other factors:

- Selection of students to be scheduled into the class
- Schedules aligned to provide common planning time
- Faculty and parents informed and understanding purpose of the class
- Teachers who understand what co-teaching is or is not
- Teachers who understand what they need to do to make the venture successful

Effective co-teaching can serve to close the achievement gap and provide students access to the skills and knowledge they will need for college and career. For further information about the Project or as to what resources might be available talk to your Special Education Director, contact the Utah Professional Development Center or contact Utah Schools to Watch at utahschoolstowatch@gmail.com.

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The last five years in education have been tumultuous, both within Utah and in arenas external to Utah. Research clearly demonstrates quality teachers have significant impact on student learning (Rowe, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 2000). Regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity, and special needs, quality teaching and positive school climate are what ultimately make a difference. What has changed in the last five years is that state legislatures interpreted this in such a way that it led to top-down summative assessment mandated through legislation and policy to try to ensure such quality. This has fostered an assessment movement that has both intended and unintended consequences - some good and some unfortunate consequences.

**Intended Consequences**

There are several noteworthy intentions related to summative evaluation initiatives. First, states, districts, and schools have a responsibility to identify teacher expectations. We should honor excellence, provide regular summative feedback, and remove those who cannot meet standards and expectations. This protects educators and promotes growth.

Educational systems must take seriously the mandate to provide quality education and educators. Clear standards and expectations provide a common language from which to identify both quality and unacceptable performance. States and districts have the dual responsibility of promoting quality teaching and of removing those who cannot meet those standards. It is an efficiency that is needful but it is also a humane obligation when considering the needs of students. Students are a captive client and suffer when we do not fulfill our responsibility to provide qualified and skilled teachers. Standards and assessment are both legal and moral imperatives we should embrace.

Educators work within a tumultuous work environment. The demands are complex and intensely public. The most highly qualified teachers have those patrons who are critical of them. Even though 99% of patrons and stakeholders would disagree, any educator will accumulate over a career people who judge them harshly. This makes ongoing
summative judgment for evaluators complex. This may be due to the very human tendency to focus on negative input rather than the predominance of favorable input. We all look at surveys and feedback of our performance and focus on the single negative comment rather than the preponderance of favorable comments. Teachers as clients and principals as evaluators are susceptible to this human characteristic. It is an unfortunate artifact of being a person striving to serve and please other people.

Evidence-based summative judgment removes the exaggerated importance of individual angst from the predominantly favorable client judgments of educator worth – which in the state of Utah is high. Multiple surveys demonstrate that even though their might be general dissatisfaction with the educational system, parent satisfaction with their local school is high (Gallup.com, 2014). Danielson points out that professional consensus is that the number of teachers whose practice is below standard is very small (Danielson, 2016). Effective evaluation systems help articulate that and provide evidence of proficiency to the public.

Finally, educators deserve to know what standards and skills are required for employment and acceptable performance. There should be no mystery as to what is required to be a judged a proficient educator. The assessment requirements we now have removes the artificial constraints and prejudices of squeaky-wheel judgments made for convenience or personal preference. Research-based standards such as the Utah Effective Teacher Standards (Utah Effective Teaching Standards-UEN, 2016), provides a safe-guard and protection for what is required of educators for continued employment in complex community environments and a standard for guiding professional development.

**Unintended Consequences**

The law of unintended consequences articulates that the actions of people always have effects that are not anticipated and unanticipated (Merton, 1976). While policy makers and educational leaders intended to identify and promote quality teachers through effective summative evaluation, there were unanticipated effects of the effort that must be considered. Based on these emerging consequences it may be necessary to make course corrections in the near future. There are several unintended consequences we must now wrestle with in policy and implementation. First, the use of student growth measures and state assessment is proving problematic. Second, the emphasis of summative evaluation has diverted resources and time from the more important task of formative assessment and professional development. Third, the need to demonstrate compliance with assessment requirements may be reducing the important job of summation to a reductive point-assessment format.

Quality teaching is difficult to define. Many state systems, including Utah, require evaluators to make judgments of teachers based on learning gains. The ability to measure student growth for the purposes of teacher evaluation has proven problematic. SAGE assessments provide useful benchmarks for state, district and school level assessment but may not be an accurate measure of individual teacher effort and skill. Educators understand that a multitude of factors influence state assessment and only some of these are in the control of the educator. It is difficult and even undesirable to ascribe student learning to individual teacher effort. At its best, it fails to recognize the community effort necessary (this includes colleagues, school, district, community, and parents). At its worst, it provides a disincentive for teach-
ers to willingly wrestle with more challenging student assignments.

The need to comply with the new rules and regulations involving summative assessment has diverted attention to summative products rather than formative development. Requiring summative evaluation and reporting in rules and regulations have placed too much emphasis on the process of summation. We, the authors, advocate that formative work (promoting professional growth) with teachers is the primary responsibility of school leaders. In current standards, summation typically occurs every three to five years for career educators. Formative work should occur monthly, weekly, and daily in our estimation. Formative work removes many of the concerns associated with summative evaluation since ongoing formative work demonstrates sincere commitment to quality education, instructional leadership celebrating effective teaching, and commitment to a school culture that puts the student needs first. Summative evaluation is the “autopsy.” Formative work is the growth promoting “diagnosis and prescription.” As evaluation system providers and administrative coaches, we, the authors, express concern that summative requirements and efforts to be compliant with state regulations may be diverting educational leaders’ time and attention away from the proper purposes of educator evaluation. Summation is dominating our time and our resources and in some cases diverting us from the important work of formative professional development.

Formative development of staff provides the ongoing development necessary to foster productive teacher-student outcomes. Danielson (2016) states, “A comprehensive personnel policy must not only ensure good teaching on the part of every teacher, it must also ensure opportunities for ongoing professional learning by all teachers.” Effective evaluation provides ongoing growth opportunities for highly qualified teachers and the necessary feedback to an educator failing to meet standards so that educators may have the opportunity to develop proficiency. It also eliminates the rare turmoil associated with termination of a toxic educator that may ill-servce students and the community. Formative work deals with the problems early and eliminates the prospect of a surprise termination after years or decades of employment. Formative work with educators identifies needs and growth areas, provides intervention, and ultimately growth or exit from education. That is what should happen. This needs to be the focus of an educational leader.

In the effort to define educational standards and measure proficiency, the summative initiative can devolve in some situations to reducing the complex nature of teaching to a computation of rubric averages. As authors we applaud the efforts of the state of Utah to promote evaluator judgement and allow scrutiny and override of computations that may not factor in community, personal, and environmental factors that won’t emerge in a Likert scale rating. Educational leaders should resist the temptation to reduce a judgement to mere computations. Evaluators must exercise discretion and professional judgment in both formative and summative settings. Our job is not generating scores for a triennial report but promoting quality teaching.

Evidence-based formative intervention takes the argument and tension out of an evaluation process and focuses on what is needful - teacher proficiency and continued professional development. It is the sincere desire of the authors that in an evaluation cycle, the emphasis will properly remain on formative development. In the end, forma-

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tive development will remove any surprise or tension from summative evaluation. In the rare case an educator should be exited from the system, ongoing formative assessment identifies the problem and makes transparent the need to do so.

Conclusion
Educational leaders are navigating a complex environment. We can do this by being formalistic and adhering to rules and regulations to protect ourselves or we can look at the intent and purpose of those rules and regulations. Clearly, the intent is that we provide the most skilled and productive educators possible to students. Focusing on summative assessment while minimizing the utility of formative growth may meet minimum standard and policy requirements. It misses the target of developing effective schools and effective educators. Formative work in developing pre-requisite skills, ongoing professional improvement in order to better serve student, and celebrating effective teaching should be the focus. We advocate that we focus our priorities to that end.

References
Utah Effective Teaching Standards – UEN. http://www.uen.org/k12educator/uets/

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Both leaders and teachers are to be evaluated to increase school effectiveness based on these standards.
effective professional development so that the new evaluations are fair and helpful to educators. Policies such as these often unintentionally add pressure for rural administrators to implement in their schools and districts.

The following problems have been identified for this study:

1. Because of Utah’s rural schools’ remoteness, distance, and small size,
   a. Rural school principals often lack a close relationship with experienced peers such as what exists in urban and suburban settings and therefore lack a collegial relationship with these peers for understanding the standards and implementing the evaluation system.
   b. Principals often find it difficult to mentor, supervise, and develop teachers in professional development activities covering contemporary issues in curriculum, instruction, and assessment—all elements in the new state standards and evaluation policy.

2. Although larger Utah suburban and urban school principals usually have district administrators to support and mentor principals and teachers, rural schools often do not have the same services provided by their district offices because of their remoteness, distance, and small size.

3. Likewise, Utah rural principals often work in isolation from other school principals and are alone in performing their roles and responsibilities. These roles and responsibilities are often multifaceted as a principal might also serve as a part time teacher, counselor, or athletic or activity coaches. Utah rural school principals might also have district responsibilities that are not typical for urban and suburban districts.

In the State of Utah, urban school districts make up approximately 80% of total school populations, and are highly concentrated in an area that has the seventh highest density population area in the nation along an urban corridor approximately 100 miles long. Inside the corridor are resources available to principals in large districts, public, and private university for professional help. Accessing these resources and colleagues is plentiful, but for rural districts in Utah, which are widely dispersed geographically and isolated, are at a great disadvantage because of limited resources for leadership development.

Methods/Data Sources

In order to understand and address the purposes and problems identified, three research questions guided this study:

1. How well do Utah rural principals understand the new standards in daily school practice?
2. How do Utah rural principals apply the new requirements of the UEL standards and the UET standards?
3. What is the professional lived experience of principals in rural Utah communities?

In order to address the research questions for this study, the researchers utilized an ethnomet hodology of visual ethnographic case study. Using “rapid” or “mini” ethnographies (Wall, 2014) the researchers video recorded the remoteness of the community, the school building, and conducted a semi-structured interview with the principal within a single day’s time. Because of the remoteness and isolation of the rural schools, researchers had limited access to the informants. Visual ethnography was selected with the intention of representing the society and culture of these groups of people and because of the sensory nature of the human experience (Pink, 2013). Case study analysis provided a means of understanding the principals in rural areas with different genders, school levels, and career

Preston, Jakubiess and Kooymans (2013) identified rural challenges for principals as diverse responsibilities, gender discrimination, hiring disadvantages, and a lack of professional development support.
stages. Visual and interpretive analysis will be used in understanding common themes and ideas from the data collected.

The researcher purposely selected three principals from three rural communities in Utah based on the following criteria:
1. Two principals from elementary settings and one from secondary settings
2. One principal who are in early and two who are in mid-career stages.
3. Two male and one female principal.

Results

The following will present results from three cases. The three cases will be described and results of the visual analysis will be shared.

Case 1. A mid career Native American female principal at Rose Elementary (names have been changed), Mrs. Scott has been principal for the past 5 years. Previously she worked as an instructional coach within the district. Rose Elementary is located within one of the largest counties in the state of Utah. The county is the sixth lowest in population density in the state of 1.9 people per square mile. The closest city of 50,000 people is 215 miles away. Rose is located in a small town of 320 people and borders the largest Native American reservation in the state. The K-5 school with 6 teachers, has a student make up of 86% low SES, 64% ELL, 89% minority, and 18% special education. Over a 100 students attend the school, with the largest minority of Native American students coming from the reservation. The district in which Rose Elementary belongs has an enrollment of 3000 students in 12 schools and has a fairly large district office with a superintendent and 8 directors. The district offices are located 25 miles from Rose Elementary. Mrs. Scott grew up on a reservation in a small town in New Mexico and understands the culture and situation of those living on a reservation.

Case 2. A white male early career principal at Sage Elementary, Mr. Butler has been principal at Sage for the past three years. Sage is located within the same county as Rose’s school. However, Sage is in a town of 4000 people. A PreK-5 school with 26 teachers and over 600 students enrolled, it is the largest school in the district. Sage is made up of 64% low SES, 42% minority, 14% ELL, and 13% special education. The largest minority is also Native American students. Sage is part of the same district as Rose, yet their proximity to the district office is much closer. The district offices are located in the same town. Mr. Butler grew up in a suburban area of Salt Lake City and taught elementary in that area until he relocated to Sage as a principal.

Case 3. A late career white male principal at Desert High School, Mr. Taylor was born and raised in the community and attended the high school as a youth. Coming from a family of educators, he was a teacher and principal in multiple rural communities over the past 22 years in the southern part of the state. Mr. Taylor has been at Desert High for three years. Desert is a community of 4,000 people and located 80 miles from a city of 75,000 people and 200 miles from the nearest city over a million people. Desert High has 250 students with a student make up of 91% white, 4% Latino, and 3% Asian Americans. The school is approximately 50% low SES and 15% receiving special education services. The district office is located in the same town as Desert High, and has a superintendent and a number of district directors.

In order to answer the research questions of this study, the three cases were
compared for commonalities and differences among their responses. The results are presented below according to each research question.

Question 1 and 2. A commonality between cases was that the three principals overwhelmingly focus more on the UET standards than the UEL standards. The first two principals spend much of their day evaluating teachers and facilitating their improvement. Mrs. Scott felt she was more familiar with the UET standards as she was an instructional coach prior to being a principal. Mr. Butler acknowledged that in monthly principal meetings, elementary principals would practice and demonstrate what the UET standards would look like. Although no formal professional development was provided, both principals described a need to learn about the standards on their own. Mr. Butler stated, “there is just so much…10 standards with additional sub standards. It is difficult to wrap your head around them.” Mr. Taylor was very familiar with the standards as he was a member of the group that created the standards. A strong difference from the first two principals, Mr. Taylor felt the standards were created “to appease the state legislature”. He also felt that the standards are not needed to determine effective teachers, “you know by being in a teacher’s classroom if they are effective and if they are reaching students. I feel like at times we are jumping through hoops with all this evaluation.” Mr. Taylor said schools needed to rely on the systems already built within teacher preparation and student teaching to remove ineffective teachers.

Another commonality among the cases was that the three principals were not as familiar with the UEL standards. The three principals were evaluated and received feedback by their supervisor and had a discussion of developing within the standards. Mrs. Scott acknowledged that she was aware of her areas of weakness and would “figure it out myself” rather than wait. Mr. Butler admitted he knew where he was lacking in the standards, but did state that he “would like to see the [UEL] standards discussed in a principal meeting. What does it look like for us?” Mr. Taylor said that he thought the UEL standards were very applicable and good for principals. He stated his Superintendent, who evaluates him, was very “hands off” and only came to the school when he needed support.

In applying the UET and UEL standards, the three principals described how they mentor and facilitate teacher improvement within their school. Although no formal professional development was discussed, Mr. Butler described his formal evaluations as more formative in nature. He felt the evaluation and observation does not capture all aspects of the teacher, so he tries to talk with the teacher. Yet with 26 teachers he finds it difficult to support all of them. Mrs. Scott meets with her teachers on a weekly basis for 30 min. She helps them plan and discuss struggling students. Having only 6 teachers allows her to stay in touch with each teacher’s performance. She did admit that it was difficult for the teachers to collaborate, as they were all “singletons” within their grades, but did consider their entire school a “team”. Mr. Butler’s teachers had ample opportunity to collaborate as most grade levels had three to four teachers, which he mentioned was rare throughout the district and unique to his school. Mr. Taylor stated, “I think the standards are way to ensure good curriculum, and instruction, but it isn’t a cure all. They are a guideline but they don’t address everything. I’m not sold on it. I do like having a model to follow.” He felt that “80%” of teachers struggle with how to relate to students, rather
The impact of implementing and evaluating the UET and UEL standards does not seem to weigh heavily on the principals' demands. Their approach to evaluating and supporting their teachers through the standards and evaluation tools were different, but each acknowledged the need to understand the standards and use them appropriately.

of her greatest challenge is situations involving family members of the students at the school. She stated, “how they are going to get step dad out of the home because he has been drinking all night, that is a challenge.” Mrs. Scott said her greatest challenge is the teacher turnover every year. She described the 60-70% turnover each year as a “giant reset button.”

Mr. Butler did not grow up in a rural area and has had to learn about the culture, as many members of the school are related to each other. He described the community, “everybody knows everybody, and everybody knows everybody’s business, its amazing how fast things spread around. I’m in the community, I see kids everywhere.” Mr. Butler did acknowledge the benefit of working in a small district is accessibility, “There aren’t so many people trying to get their attention. Questions can be answered quickly.” He did admit the challenge of a small school district is the lack of training. Large districts have more specialists to rely on, and “here we are our own specialists.”

Mr. Taylor was the only principal of the three to come from the community in which he was working as the principal. Mr. Taylor described his feelings, “I love rural Utah. I love being home. I love giving back to a community that raised me. Principals in suburban Utah, they can leave and go home. Their personal and professional lives don’t mix. In rural Utah everything mixes.” He described working as a rural principal as living in a “glass aquarium” where you can never get away from the job and you are constantly “watched”. He admitted that working as a rural principal helps when you are from those communities, rural principals “need to be raised in a rural setting to know the politics, and know the families that live in your community, how to be consistent and how to be fair. Takes the right kind of person to do it.” Mr. Taylor did describe the isolation from “things to do” and how kids need to be “creative” when they get together. However, professionally Mr. Taylor stated, “Our school district has provided everything I need. I don’t feel isolated on a professional level.”

The three principals did not express a feeling of isolation or disconnectedness from colleagues and the district. Situations are unique in rural communities and require a different approach to leading. Mr. Taylor described this as, “rural principals wear a lot of different hats. Yet they need to maintain that credibility no matter which hat you are wearing.” Although other struggles were described, the principals seemed to be a good fit for the needs of their schools.

Conclusion

The initial analysis of these case studies has revealed that rural principals are not as isolated and alone as previously thought. The ability to communicate with and proximity to the district as well as being a fit for the type school in which they lead was a positive element in their leadership. The impact of implementing and evaluating the UET and UEL standards do not seem to weigh heavily on the principals' demands. Their approach to evaluating and supporting their teachers through the standards and evaluation tools were different, but each acknowledged the need to understand the standards and
use them appropriately. The three principals shared that there are not many opportunities for personal professional development but were aware of their needs and were making efforts to adapt. They also expressed a desire to have many things that are available to larger districts and more populated areas, such as less teacher turnover, content specialists, and a greater diversity of activities and experiences for their students. Yet, the three principals seem content and comfortable within their school situations. In the future one more case will be conducted and added to the overall evaluation of this research focus.

In its current state, this contribution can begin to help districts and state agencies as they plan professional development and support to rural principals.

References
People talk about being part of something larger than themselves, of being connected, of being generative. It becomes quite clear that, for many, their experiences as part of truly great teams stand out as singular periods of life lived to the fullest. (Senge, 2013, p. 12)

PLC Revolution

The Professional Learning Community (PLC) revolution has swept the educational world. Ample converging evidence indicates that the principles and practices of PLCs are an effective framework for supporting improved student and teacher learning (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). Over the last 20 years, schools throughout our country have begun to embrace PLCs and many have experienced remarkable gains in student and teacher learning. School leaders have rearranged schedules, reallocated funds, and worked tirelessly to create the cultures and structures that support high-functioning PLCs. While it has taken time and training to overcome the old culture of teacher isolation, many schools and districts have seen the benefits that come as teachers embrace PLC processes. With an intense focus on results, teachers collaboratively work to ensure that each student has the time and support needed to learn content at deeper levels (Hess, Jones, Carlock, & Walkup, 2009). Because teachers are willing to share and compare results and the best practices that led to those results, students are able to learn more at a deeper level than ever before. Many teachers feel energized by their collaborative work with other professionals, and have been empowered by a framework and process that enable them to confront any educational challenge that may be presented. While there may be some naysayers, many teachers have embraced these processes, and some would likely revolt if the administrative support for the PLC process were withdrawn from their schools.

As many of these same teachers begin entering into the school administrative ranks, they may be surprised to find that school administrators do not generally experience the same high levels of consistent and meaningful interdependent collaboration and support that they once felt as teachers. Most secondary principals would likely love to participate in more intentional, targeted collaboration, but “the devil is in the details.” With all that is expected, it can really be hard to figure out how to make leadership collaboration work on a consistent basis. Leading a junior high or high school is an extremely complex process with multiple moving parts. How can secondary school leaders organize their time and resources in ways that actually result in improved learning for students and adults?

Three High-Leverage Leadership Teams

According to DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker (2008), “the best way [for principals] to improve student learning is to invest in the learning of the adults who serve them” (p.
Leadership Teams That Focus on Increasing the Capacity of Adults in a School

Table 1

Leadership Teams That Focus on Increasing the Capacity of Adults in a School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Possible Participants</th>
<th>Primary Purpose</th>
<th>Meeting Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Leadership PLC Team</td>
<td>• Department Chairs&lt;br&gt;• Team Leaders&lt;br&gt;• Principal&lt;br&gt;• Assistant Principal(s) &lt;br&gt;• Instructional Coaches</td>
<td>Increase the capacity of teachers to effectively engage in the PLC process.</td>
<td>At least twice a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Level Administrative PLC Team</td>
<td>• Principal&lt;br&gt;• Assistant Principal(s)&lt;br&gt;• Instructional Coaches</td>
<td>Increase the capacity of team leaders to lead the PLC process of collaborative teams.</td>
<td>Weekly if possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal PLC Team</td>
<td>• Principal and/or Assistant Principal from different schools united by one or more common characteristics (e.g. same level, same catchment area, similar vision/mission/goals)</td>
<td>Increase the capacity of administrators to lead and support the PLC process at their schools.</td>
<td>At least once a month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the job of school leader becomes increasingly complex and challenging, principals and assistant principals could certainly benefit from consistently engaging with other school leaders from other schools in the practices and processes of PLCs.

The School Leadership Team
The first high leverage team is the school leadership team, composed primarily of some mix of department chairs, collaborative team leaders, assistant principals, and the principal. Eaker and Keating (2009) claim: “team leaders should be viewed by principals as the key link between administration and faculty” (2009, p. 52). The primary work of the leadership team is to increase the capacity of teachers to effectively engage in the PLC process. Let me repeat, the primary work of the school leadership team is to ensure that team leaders know how to support their teachers in the collaborative process. If team leaders leave a school leadership team meeting knowing the new schedule and the new add-drop policy, but are not sure how to help the teachers on their team to collaborate effectively, something went wrong in the meeting. Similar to teacher teams, each team leader on the school leadership team should be able to clearly answer each of the following four essential questions of PLCs (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008).

1. What do we expect the teachers on our teams to know, do, and value in a PLC?
2. How are we going to know if the teachers on our teams are meeting the PLC expectations?
3. How will we respond when teachers are not meeting the PLC expectations?
4. How will we help teachers continuously improve when they are meeting the PLC expectations?

The quality of leadership team meetings is so important because that is where team leaders will gain the needed clarity about how to support teachers in the PLC process. As the leadership capacity of team leaders increases, weekly teacher team meetings improve, which carries over to improved teaching and learning in every classroom.

The School-Level Administrative PLC
A second high-leverage leadership team is the school-level administrative team. This team is primarily composed of the principal and assistant principals. Most school-level administrative teams consistently meet to coordinate, plan, divide responsibilities, put out fires, schedule, and decompress. The school would fall apart and stop functioning if the administrative team stopped attending to these absolutely critical management issues. However, if the administrative team attends only to management issues, it is not doing its job. For this reason, some schools have found it helpful to hold a separate school-level administrative PLC team meeting, a time for school administrators to dedicate exclusively to examining the work of teaching, learning, collaborating, and leading within the school. The primary focus of the administrative PLC team is to increase the capacity of team leaders to lead the PLC process of collaborative teams. This is not a time to review policies, student discipline, or parent complaints. Again, it will likely be useful for the school administrative team to ask the four essential questions of PLCs with respect to team leaders (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008):

1. What do we expect the team leaders to know, do, and value in a PLC?
2. How are we going to know if the team leaders are meeting the PLC expectations?
3. How will we respond when team leaders are not meeting the PLC expectations?
4. How will we help team leaders continuously improve when they are meeting the PLC expectations?

Following are a few possible questions administrative PLCs at the school level may want to consider:

- Who is on our school leadership team? Do we have the right people on the bus? Do any personnel changes need to be made to the leadership team? Is it the right size (see Wharton, 2006)?
- How are we spending our time in our
It takes time, effort, and a willingness to be vulnerable to other principals. It can also be very difficult to have patience in the process.
By voluntarily engaging in a principal PLC, school leaders communicate to teachers, team leaders, and administrative teams the high value they place in PLC processes.

Be selfish: as part of a cluster of schools, you can use that network to improve your own school by accessing new ideas…Be selfless too: most humans get satisfaction from contributing to the wider good. Have your cake and eat it too” (2014, p. 99). Indeed, the literature teaches us that “principals and superintendents who belong to networks for leaders and focus on staff learning and support get the best results” (Kirtman, 2014, p. 54).

By voluntarily engaging in a principal PLC, school leaders communicate to teachers, team leaders, and administrative teams the high value they place in PLC processes. In the classic novel To Kill a Mockingbird, Atticus gives his daughter Scout some invaluable advice: “You never really know a man until you understand things from his point of view…until you climb into his skin and walk around in it” (Lee, 1960, p. 39). Participating in this process gives principals a new respect for what teachers are being asked to do; principals who work in PLCs know how to better support teachers, team leaders, and other administrators in their PLC work.

Conclusion

During an era in which school leaders have to do more with less, “teamwork remains the one sustainable competitive advantage that has been largely untapped” (Lencioni, 2005, p. 3). Effective use of these three high-leverage leadership teams remains largely untapped in most schools and districts. Just as “schools develop as PLCs when their staffs actually work at the process rather than train for the process” (DuFour et. Al, 2010, p. 261), school leaders should work together at leveraging school leadership teams, school-level administrative PLCs, and principal PLCs, spreading the synergy, excitement, mentoring, learning, and renewal of the PLC revolution to everyone within the school.

References


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Framing and Reframing the Conversation

Floyd Stensrud, EdD

Hanging in the entranceway to my home is a beautiful picture of Monument Valley that my brother Larry drew. It was drawn using prisma colors and took nearly a year to complete. If you look carefully, you can see the intricate use of color to portray not only the incredible landscape, but you can also see how carefully the colors were used to accentuate a three dimensional look as if you were there. Interestingly, the picture hangs on a white wall, which by itself offers nothing to really look at. But the picture gives life to another wise bland hallway causing you to focus on what is pictured within the confines of its frame. And if you were to see an actual picture of this angle of Monument Valley and the artist’s interpretation, you would see two totally unique and different perspectives although both are from the same vantage point.

If you were to see an actual picture of this angle of Monument Valley and the artist’s interpretation, you would see two totally unique and different perspectives although both are from the same vantage point.

The same is true when it comes to putting people in our mental frame. There are times when we view others from the whole, broad, landscape perspective and cast judgment on the entirety of what we see without giving consideration to the specific details and focusing on, or framing in our mind’s eye, what we really should be seeing. Schön (1987) calls this “problem setting . . . . When a practitioner sets a problem, he chooses and names the things he will notice” (p. 4). Interestingly, it may be our ability to frame things that allows us to properly set the problem in the first place so that we can in fact name it and see it.

Frames can narrow our focus and provide unique perspective on the issue at hand rather than getting caught up with the temptation to use a broad stroke approach. Framing the problem or issue with that person also allows us to avoid labeling the person as lazy, so to speak, and instead offer a more descriptive definition of the problem or issue. Perhaps this person does not complete work on time or does not respect peers or students with whom they work. This approach may also help us “create value” (Mnookin et al., 2000, p. 30) for the person and change our attitude to a more productive way of seeing rather than condemning the individual based on an unfair label. Describing the behavior or the concern and not labeling the person will also avoid pitfalls that may be viewed as defama-
A frame narrows my scope to focus on only that which the artist wants me to see.

For example, let’s say you are dealing with Jane, a person who has been a hall monitor at the school for 20 years and who, as of late, has caused you concern because of the way she has been treating students but who is also pretty tough to approach because of her ability to make you feel intimidated or uncomfortable. You have a preconceived frame about this person that says she does not like students but works with them on a daily basis, and you perceive that even the students are intimidated. You may be tempted to label Jane as ornery or unapproachable, or worse! Sharing your frame with others may assist you in describing the concern rather than labeling the person. You may want to consider framing the issue around why she is ornery or unapproachable and strategize how to converse about this matter with Jane.

Let’s say that as the principal of your school, you decide to convene a meeting with your administrative team to find a solution to this personnel issue. You discuss the case and want to discover what the best decision would be for Jane and the students you serve. You attempt to frame the issue or concern to avoid any labels that others may be tempted to attach to Jane. During the conversation, however, one of the assistant principal’s, who has been at the school for seven years, pipes up and says, “Please remember that you are talking about Jane. She has been that way from time immemorial and will not be changing any time soon.” The administrator says this with a chuckle as if to say that you are basically nuts to think that Jane will ever change. Without seeing that curve ball, you now have two frames to set in your mind. One for Jane and one for your assistant principal, who currently sees no hope for Jane’s potential rehabilitation.

This administrator just created a caricature of Jane and has framed her in such a way that leaves zero options for change. Miller and Rollnick (2013) define this mental behavior as “precontemplation” meaning that, even though this administrator is in a position to help the situation, he cannot do so under the circumstances because of his own inability to see that Jane, in this case, cannot or will not ever change her behavior. Whatever is in Jane’s mind about the way she is doing things that is not helpful to students must be evoked through appropriate conversation. The administrator would find any alternative to helping Jane as naïve at this point.

So, as a school leader, what do you do? First, you may decide to dialogue with your administrative team to see who else feels this way and then, second, talk through their collective perspective about Jane. You might start the dialogue this way:

“Does anyone else feel this way about Jane, that there is really nothing that we can do to help her?”

“Yeah, pretty much. I think we all feel that way,” says the pre-contemplative administrator looking at the others.

“So there is nothing that can be done to help Jane,” you say addressing your team with an “amplified reflection” (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p. 199).

“Well I wouldn’t say nothing can be done,” says the other administrator. “I mean, I don’t know if anyone has really ever tried to talk to Jane about this situation because she is so hard to confront. I know I haven’t.”
Frames can narrow our focus and provide unique perspective on the issue at hand rather than getting caught up with the temptation to use a broad stroke approach.

Describing the behavior or the concern and not labeling the person will also avoid pitfalls that may be viewed as defamatory.

“And we have no record of notes suggesting anyone has every conversed with her about this situation,” you reflect with your team.

“Not to my knowledge, no,” replies the other administrator.

“What if you and I,” looking at the pre-contemplative administrator, “talk with Jane about this issue and involve her in possibly developing a plan to change the behavior? Would you be willing to be included in this dialogue?”

And off you go! You are now in a position to frame the situation with your team to see if they are on board with the frame or if things need to be dialogued further to alter the frame or to “reframe” (Fisher & Ury, 2011, p. 187) the issue or problem so that you are all on the same page. Taking suggestions from your team to reframe the thinking avoids the temptation to reject their ideas over your own (Ury, 2007). In addition, including the administrator in the conversation with Jane who is questioning whether Jane can be helped, may also assist him or her in overcoming their pre-contemplative thought process about her with a new frame in mind as well as providing you back up.

Your conversation with Jane will involve a bit more planning and thought than what it took to work through the problem with your team’s thinking about her. Where Jane is currently, according to the others, may be in a pre-contemplative mode regarding her own behavior. Your task will be to “evoke” (Miller & Rollnick, 2013, p. 21) from Jane what it is about her behavior that she must see before a conversation about change can occur. You might start with what you personally are observing that is causing you to question her behavior with a skill known as “Elicit-Provide-Elicit” (p. 139). This skill involves you first soliciting from Jane whether it is okay to ask her a question about her behavior. In other words, you are asking for her permission to continue the inquiry.

“And Jane, would you mind if we discussed some things that I am observing about your behavior towards students for few minutes? I understand that this may not be easy to talk about right now,” (I am seeking to “Elicit” a response from Jane by asking for her permission to discuss a delicate issue. Remember, we are talking about what we observed and not just labeling the person).

“Sure. We can talk. What about?”

“You. I have noticed some behaviors in your interactions with students that I find troubling. Do you know what behaviors I might be referring to?” (Here I am providing information to steer the direction of the conversation and then eliciting to see if she realizes that there is a problem.)

At this point, she has a few avenues she can take with her response back to me. If she acknowledges that she has been having some issues for a time and that she knows her behaviors are inappropriate toward students, you may have a large percentage of the game won. Because of her acknowledgment, you can more easily involve her in a conversation that would include a plan to change and monitor the behaviors. If she chooses to go down the other path suggesting that she does not know what you are talking about, then you can see rather quickly that she is in the pre-contemplative mode and that you may have to illustrate for her what you are noticing and bring her attention to it. Let’s say she doesn’t get it. How might the conversation look?

“No. I don’t know what you are referring to. I thought things were going pretty well.”

“Do you mind if I illustrate what I have noticed with an example?” (Eliciting)
“Sure. Go ahead.”

“Two days ago I saw you in the hall approaching some boys with your arms open telling them that if they did not get moving to class they would have to deal with you personally. What did you mean by that?” (Providing and Eliciting)

Now you can proceed with the dialogue that is somewhat direct but amicable in that you have asked for permission before you started rather than just plowing into the conversation putting Jane on the defensive.

“Well those students never move! And I am tired of asking, so now I’m telling!”

“And you feel that they are ignoring you.” (Reflecting)

“Yes, and I am tired of it! I have tried to be nice, but they are not cooperating.”

“What can we, as administrators do to help you out more with these situations in the hall?” (This question allows Jane to see that you realize her frustration and are willing to partner with her on correcting the problem by asking for her input. This may also help you, the principal, along with your once pre-contemplative administrator, reflect on her frame (Schon, 1987) in order to reframe your own perception and work to partner with Jane, which she may never have experienced before. She may be frustrated due to a lack of support from the administration. Your ability to frame and reframe the situation could be a game changer.)

Once we have a particular frame in mind in terms of how we want to see something or someone, it becomes very difficult to change that frame, particularly if the frame is used to label the person rather than the issue or the problem. Sharing the frame with others allows for insights to be gained and damaging labels to diminish. Sometimes those frames can cause deep emotion that can cloud our judgment, and allowing others in on the frame allows us the opportunity to adjust the frame, or in other words to Reframe. Framing and Reframing allows you to see the need to change your own thinking and provides an opportunity for you to talk about the issue or problem and step to the side of the individual needing your help (Ury & Fisher, 2011). To return to the opening metaphor of my brother’s picture, the results could be monumental.

References


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