



TAUNTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*215 Harris Street
Taunton, Massachusetts 02780
Tel. (508) 821-1100
Fax (508) 821-1177*

Julie Hackett, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Steven Leonard, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent

John J. Cabral
Assistant Superintendent for
Finance and Operations

Academic excellence for every student, in every classroom, in every school.

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RE: Curriculum Meetings/Goals - FAQs

1. What should teachers focus on this year, and why is it important?

There is a great deal of work to be done, but we know that by focusing our efforts, much will be accomplished. With that in mind, we are asking that you concentrate your efforts on two strategies listed under the Post-Secondary Pursuits/Teacher circle (see attachment). The students, particularly those in low socioeconomic and other demographic groups, need our help. We can make significant improvements by establishing methods and routines for observing and refining teaching and team-based review of student work.

Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Communities, or “methods and routines for observing and refining teaching,” will give teachers and administrators an opportunity to explore what works and areas in need of improvement. PLCs should be focused on improving instruction and might include an area of focus, such as the development of a common unit and assessments, an exploration of the Common Core and realignment to grade level expectations, or the implementation of one of the five co-teaching models.

Data Teams

Data Teams, or the creation of “methods and routines for team-based review of student work,” are another important way we can help all students improve. Data Teams are similar to PLCs, the distinction being that student work is at the heart of the conversation. The Instructional Leadership Team at Parker School is an excellent example of the ways in which grade level teams have worked together to review and analyze student work and to make decisions about the ways in which they can improve. Many schools and teams of teachers across the district are already participating in these activities.

2. How do we get started? What resources will be available to us?

The Director of Virtual Learning and the Administrative Team are in the process of assembling resources and tools that will be made available to all teachers to guide you in this work. “Virtual Toolkits” for PLCs, Assessment, Common Core, Inclusion, and Data Teams will be created. These toolkits will include important articles, videos, templates, guidelines, protocols, and other resources that will help guide you in your efforts. In addition, individuals in the school system - a list of experts - will be identified as the human resources you can rely on to guide you in your work. As a community of learners, we can

all make contributions and add resources to the Virtual Toolkits to assist our colleagues in the district.

3. There is so much to do. When am I going to find the time to be part of a PLC or a Data Team?

Time is our most important resource, and a lack of it is often our greatest challenge. As such, we have made every effort to find opportunities for you to engage in the work. Here are four ways that you can participate:

- Curriculum/Staff Meetings - the Principals and Leadership Team members have worked together to develop common themes for 2011 -2012 (see below). All principals will focus their curriculum meeting topics on the common themes, and teachers will be given Staff Meetings to engage in the PLCs and Data Teams.
- Common Planning Time - opportunities for common planning time have been found in the elementary schools. Each week, you will have approximately 120 minutes in a six-day cycle to work on this. During this time, there will also be opportunities for principal-directed common planning time. This will give you and your PLC/Data Team members a chance to engage with your principal in a coaching dialogue.
- Professional Development Days - we will continue to focus our efforts on PLCs/Data Teams during PD Days. This year, we are shifting from district-based professional development to school-based professional development. This will free up additional time in order for you to focus on what's most important to you and to your school.
- District PLCs - these are after school professional development opportunities that are paid and available on a first-come, first-served basis. The PLCs focus on the aforementioned strategies related to Post Secondary Pursuits/Teachers, which include: (1) methods and routines for observing and refining teaching; (2) methods and routines for team-based review of student work. District PLCs have included topics such as: classroom management, inclusion, writing assessments; and many of you are participating in District PLCs right now. More opportunities will be available throughout the year.

4. What's in it for me? What incentives exist for us to do this work?

There are many incentives for doing this work. The intrinsic rewards include the ability to collaborate with your colleagues and share great ideas, opportunities to engage in reflective practice, and a chance to take a hard look at student work and find strategies to help your students improve. For those of you who choose, you can use the PLCs and Data

Teams to help frame your Professional Growth Plans. In addition, PDPs will be offered for PLCs and Data Teams (Dr. Leonard will be sending guidelines on the topic soon). By far, the greatest incentive is that teachers and administrators will have a voice in developing a common assessment system that extends beyond MCAS.

5. What is the Curriculum/Staff Meeting structure for 2011 - 2012?

This year, Curriculum Meetings will focus on a particular topic, and Staff Meetings will be time that teachers can use to work on their goals. In a few cases (Leddy, Parker, THS), principals reported that they have set their agenda for the year with the focus on the topics below. They will work with you to develop a plan for ways to interface their efforts around these topics.

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>CURRICULUM MEETING (1ST)</u>	<u>STAFF MEETING (2ND)</u>	<u>PD DAY</u>
October	Laundry List/Roll Out	PLCs/Work on Goals	N/A
November	Data Teams	Work on Goals	School-Based PD
December	Assessments (Math)	Work on Goals	N/A
January	Assessments (ELA)	Work on Goals	Mid-Year Review/Reflections
February	Equity and Excellence	Work on Goals	N/A
March	Inclusion	Work on Goals	School-Based PD
April	PLCs	Work on Goals	N/A
May	Data Teams	Work on Goals	N/A
June	Share Your Successes!	Work on Goals	N/A