Teachers Teaching Teachers: Creating a Sustainable In-House Professional Development Program

By Lisa Rosenstein, Head of School, Amy H. Dugré, and Jo Ben Whittenburg
Traditional Professional Development (PD)

- Teachers attend conferences
- Teachers attend in-services (summer/during school year)
- Outside speakers/consultants
Limitations of Traditional Models

- high cost
- low quality
- low attendance
- fewer teachers reached
- fewer students reached

- low buy-in
- fragmented
- top-down
- one-size-doesn’t-fit-all
- passive
A Balanced Approach

Mandatory PD

Hands-on, minds-on, time-intensive, curricular-based

Voluntary PD

Collegial, intimate, time to wrestle with new ideas

Learning Cadres

Interest-driven, consistent, time for deeper exploration
How we have evolved…

1994 - Present
Curriculum Design & Building

1998 - Present
Technology Learning & Integration

2007 - Present
Teachers Teaching Teachers
Research, Inquiry, & Expertise Extended
Willows Academy
Mandatory PD

• Curriculum enrichment & development

• Skill, technique, and expertise building

• Intense, hands-on learning

• Immediately applicable to classroom practice
Willows Academy

- 100% of Teachers reached
- 3 or more times a year
- 29% of teachers lead
Learning Lunches
Voluntary PD
Learning Lunches

- Facilitate cross discipline, department, and teacher dialogue
- Learn about innovative ideas in education
- Reflect on teaching practices, curriculum, and student learning
- Promote creative application of ideas on classroom practices
Learning Lunches

• $12.50 = cost per teacher

• 1/3 of faculty attend

• 60% increase in Middle School faculty participation
Learning Cadres
Time & Space for Deeper Exploration

- **Teacher Questioning** – improve teacher/student interaction; probe for student understanding
- **Fine Motor** – develop skills with struggling K students
- **Math** – ensure continuity between grade levels
- **Maker/Programming** – empower all to tinker, create, and innovate while learning by doing
Benefits of Our Approach

• Promotes student innovation, inquiry, and independent learning

• Increases faculty retention

• Develops teacher commitment to professional growth
Benefits of Our Approach

- Extends resources = financially sustainable
- Provides time and space for teachers to develop student mindset
- Nourishes the minds and bodies of our teachers
- Demonstrates a shared commitment to the improvement of learning
“Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another.”

-John Dewey
Thank you

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