

To: Board of Education

From: Kirsten Wondra, assistant director, curriculum, instruction & assessment, ext. 2622

Re: Enhanced Professional Learning

Date: October 6, 2016

Background:

Professional learning for staff in Lawrence has been based on a combination of current trends and research in pedagogy, instruction and learning, combined with board goals and building needs. However, based on feedback from our professional education staff, the current model of our professional learning days was not meeting their needs to the extent desired. The Teaching and Learning Department also noted that our current model did not allow for educators to experience personalized learning through a blended format.

Additionally, feedback from new staff on our induction process presented us the challenge of needing to be more specific to our new staffs' individual needs and positions, as well as their length of experience as educators. A new staff BlackBoard course was implemented to accomplish these goals for induction.

As reported last February, our educators are being asked to make a large shift to truly personalize student learning through the blended learning model. Last year, the Teaching and Learning Department sought to alter the traditional "sit and get" model of professional development and to personalize the professional learning of our educators through a blended learning approach. The new model empowers educators to utilize their individual goals and needs to customize their learning – be it in a particular content area, learning strand or session format.

Upon reflection of the efforts last year, we needed to find a balance between sessions specifically aligned to board goals and the need for personalization and choice for professional staff. Learning Maps were implemented for all certified personnel that identified four Focus Areas: Equity, Social/Emotional/Behavioral, Academics, Personalized/Blended Learning. Our goal for professional learning is that it is designed to improve all employees' effectiveness in their role and enhance professional growth for the ultimate purpose of supporting student growth and innovation; to promote a personal approach to learning; and to foster collective responsibility for achieving Lawrence Public Schools' mission, vision and goals. Providing these Focus Areas allows for choice, in addition to adhering to the collective progress and implementation of the goals of the Board of Education.

Current Report:

An overview will be presented outlining the evolution of district professional learning from a direct instruction approach to a personalized and blended format.