ABSTRACT

Gary W. Hales, EMPHASIZING PROFESSIONALISM TO ADDRESS TEACHER TURNOVER AT DILLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL. (Under the direction of Dr. James McDowelle). Department of Educational Leadership, March 2017.

The dissertation examines the effects professional learning communities can have on improving teacher retention in a high needs school. The goal is to positively impact teacher retention by emphasizing and encouraging professionalism. For the purpose of this study, professionalism is defined as providing teachers with the necessary structures and support to effectively transition teachers from isolated working environments to environments, which build school level support networks through collaborative, collegial interaction. Improvement science methodology was utilized to implement, structure, and support the professional learning communities. While improvement of teacher retention was the primary goal, a secondary goal was to also positively impact discipline and student achievement by providing a more positive, collaborative, and stable learning environment. Survey data was collected throughout the year, and North Carolina School Report Card Data was utilized to determine success of implementation. After one year of professional learning community implementation, data supported the positive impact on teacher retention in a high needs school. However, the secondary impact of improving student discipline and student achievement was not as successful after one year. A sustained, focused approach and continued training will be necessary to affect change to discipline and achievement and would require further study.

EMPHASIZING PROFESSIONALISM TO ADDRESS TEACHER TURNOVER

AT DILLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Naming and Framing the Problem

Improving teacher retention by emphasizing professionalism through the implementation of structured professional learning communities at Dillard Middle School is the goal for improvement. For the purpose of this study, professionalism is defined as providing teachers with the necessary structures and support to effectively transition teachers from isolated working environments to environments, which build school-level supportive networks through collaborative, collegial interaction. While teacher pay in North Carolina is legislatively debated, administrators must work to provide positive working conditions in schools that incentivize teachers in ways that support individual and organizational growth. In addition to building and supporting individual and collective teacher growth through professional learning communities, peer accountability also contributes to the collective growth of the school's vision.

Dillard Middle School (DMS) is located in Goldsboro, NC and currently houses 493 students in grades 5 through 8. The school is located in the inner city of Goldsboro and serves students from nine low- income housing projects where the majority of students live. Also, the majority of students utilize buses provided by Wayne County Public Schools, with the remaining students walking to and from school or riding with parents. With a population of more than 90% qualifying for free or reduced price meals, the school is supported by Title I funding. Of the 493 students, 92% are Black, 1.4% Multi-Racial, 5% Hispanic, and less than 1% White, Asian, and American Indian. While serving a large number of students living in poverty, DMS also has a high number of students identified as special needs. While the state average for students identified as special needs is 12.5%, DMS's population consists of 26% identified as special

needs. Less than 1% of the student population is identified as academically and intellectually gifted and as Limited English Proficient students.

DMS is a 60-year-old campus that has undergone many renovations including the auditorium, the addition of a STEM Lab, new flooring, and walkway coverings; the gymnasium is currently being renovated to include air conditioning. An onsite health care facility (WISH Center) provides students with free, timely health care during the school day and serves approximately 75% of the student population. DMS students also have access to an active athletic and music program.

The school itself has a significant history in the community, as it was previously the African-American high school before integration. The last graduating class of Dillard High School was in 1969, and the school is still supported by graduates of both Dillard High School and Goldsboro High School.

The Context for the Problem

Despite significant amounts of time and money spent on student remediation, student performance data (see Table 1) from the past six years continues to indicate academic deficiencies as defined by North Carolina End-of-Grade testing (NC School Report Cards, 2015).

DMS has also experienced significant student discipline issues with over 143.34 short-term suspensions per 100 students (NC School Report Cards, 2015). Despite a huge spike in the number of incidents, this number has remained consistent (see Table 2) over the past six years. A full-time resource officer employed by the Goldsboro Police Department and Wayne County Public Schools was hired in 2015 and is the first full-time resource officer employed in a middle school in Wayne County.

Table 1

DMS Student Proficiency Score Percentages

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
5th Grade Reading	40.1	43.8	45.3	9.7	13.5	11.7
5th Grade Math	55.6	62.1	65.9	7.1	6.2	8.7
6th Grade Reading	52.7	51.3	46.5	19.1	19.5	22.9
6th Grade Math	65.9	65.8	52.9	9.2	10.6	<5
7th Grade Reading	47.4	41.5	43	15.1	26.3	21.1
7th Grade Math	60	61.5	63.1	10.1	11.3	9.6
8th Grade Reading	50	49.3	52.8	15.2	17.3	17.6
8th Grade Math	79	68.7	76.4	5	<5	7.5

Note. Student proficiency levels continue to be below state and district levels each year with a widening of the gap in recent years. With the emergence of Common Core and North Carolina Essential Standards in 2013, DMS and other North Carolina schools saw a reduction in proficiency rates, with schools of poverty showing much less measurable success. Despite such low proficiency rates, EVAAS Data (2015) does indicate DMS students did see 2014-2015 growth in grade six, seven, and eighth grade math and reading, with grade six math and reading exceeding growth. Whereas, grade five did not meet growth in any area in 2015 (EVAAS, 2015). Source: NC School Report Cards, 2015.

Table 2

DMS Discipline Rates (Average Number of Short-Term Suspensions per 100 Students)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
DMS	76	88.01	107.24	11.76	90.08	143.34
District	43	40.05	38.92	35.36	36.74	42.07

Note. 2013 data is not accurate due to assistant principal not reporting data and a system had not been created to document the numerous office referrals (S. Emerson, personal communication, May 29, 2015). Source: NC School Report Cards, 2015.

School Schedule

WCPS transportation department utilizes a shared bus system within feeder patterns, and within the central attendance area, DMS is the first school to receive students in the morning. Therefore, employees with young children must pay for *before-school childcare* due to having to drop their own children off at daycare before 7:00 a.m., and DMS teachers also work an hour longer each day than their peers within the district.

DMS's school daily schedule, which was set by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction officials and school administration, was created to deter discipline incidents when students were changing classes. The new daily bell schedule alleviated mass movement of all grade levels for an allotted amount of time and allowed various grade levels to move at different intervals during the day. As reflected in the statistics on discipline, the number of discipline incidents continued to be an issue.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Assistance

In 2010, North Carolina received a Race to the Top grant to assist under-performing schools and provided school districts with specific school options to work towards improvement. Options ranged from (a) removing whole staffs with the option to only hire back 50% of those who left, (b) closing the school and opening under new management, (c) closing school and moving students to higher performing schools within the district, or (d) applying a transformational approach through added supports and incentives (NCDPI, 2010). Wayne County Public Schools selected the option of transformation and embraced North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's (NCDPI) efforts to assist DMS through added supports and incentives. Even with this approach, officials at NCDPI informed the principal, Ms. Emerson

(personal communication, April 7, 2015), that with a school transformation, teacher turnover could be expected to rise to 50% or more.

NCDPI has worked with DMS for the past four years providing administrative guidance and professional development (PD) to teachers one day a week during their planning periods. With the previous administration, the PD was initially provided to teachers after school, and with the current administration moving PD to planning periods one day a week. This PD has not been consistent in its content and delivery as individuals employed by NCDPI to deliver PD changed many times over throughout the four years (S. Emerson, personal communication, April 7, 2015).

In 2014, DMS completed its fourth and final year of the School Transformation Model under the federal Race to the Top grant. The four-year grant began in 2010 with a former administrator spending the first two years of the grant leading the school. The current principal was hired in 2012 to lead that last two years of implementation. Instead of utilizing NCDPI personnel assigned to lead professional development, the former administrator employed consultants to address the PD of teachers at DMS (S. Emerson, personal communication, April 7, 2015). Ms. Sonja Emerson, current principal, was hired in 2012 and was open to working with NCDPI staff. They provided PD once a week to teachers and assisted with managerial tasks such as the school day schedule. It is also interesting to note that only core area teachers were required to attend PD during NCDPI's intervention.

Analysis of Teacher Working Conditions Survey

The 2014 North Carolina Teaching Working Conditions Survey (NCTWC) is a tool provided and administered by the New Teacher Institute to provide feedback to schools and districts as a way to improve practices and provides the latest teacher feedback. Schools need at

least a 40% response rate for data to be considered valid and usable. State Superintendent June Atkinson (2014) feels that, "Results from past years' NC TWC Surveys have provided education policymakers and school leaders a robust roadmap to guide positive change and strengthen professional development, school improvement plans and teacher and administrator evaluations" (para. 2). DMS's response rate was 90.48%, and the survey produced information, which provides insight into the views of teachers in the school.

Time

Time is always an interesting component of any survey as teachers rarely indicate time is sufficient enough to complete all required paperwork, including lesson plans. The following data indicates specifics as related to time and class size provided at DMS.

- 74% of teachers agree that they have time to collaborate with colleagues, but when documenting time devoted to collaborative planning, 47% spend less than one hour or no time at all.

- 64% of teachers responded they spent three hours or less a week in individual planning.

- 29% of teachers feel class sizes are reasonable, and 30% of teachers indicate they are allowed to teach with minimal interruptions. There seems to be a correlation, but it is unknown if these interruptions are caused by school or students.

Facilities and Resources

This particular category provided relatively high numbers of satisfaction, generally exceeding the 70% range of respondents. The question related to appropriate instructional materials is the only area where less than 70% respondents were pleased.

- 71% teachers indicate they spend less than three hours per week in professional development, which aligns with the staff development being provided during planning periods on Tuesdays.

- 62% of teachers feel they have access to appropriate instructional materials, and 84% feel they have sufficient access to technology. Title I funding assists in providing teachers with individual tutors in the classroom and technology for the school.

Community Support and Involvement

The section of the 2014 Teacher Working Conditions Survey on community support and involvement indicates a strong disconnect in what the teachers feel and how the parents and community respond. The indicators listed below provide some insight into the specific areas of disconnect such as communication, involvement, and support. This section of the 2014 Teacher Working Conditions Survey on community support and involvement elicits teacher feelings of isolation with regard to parent and community involvement. There is a high percentage of teachers at DMS who indicate they encourage parent involvement and two-way communication, but many do not feel the community supports them. The indicators listed below provide some insight into the specific areas of dissatisfaction among teachers regarding their efforts and the reciprocation of community support.

- 39% of teachers feel that parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school, and 56% agree the community is supportive of the school.

- 92% feel the school maintains clear, two-way communication with the community and provides parents/guardians useful information about student learning.

- 95% say the school does a good job of encouraging parent/guardian involvement.

District accreditation data, collected in 2013, also mirrored this data with regards to Standard 2, Governance and Leadership. Standard 2, Indicator 2.5 states, "Leadership engages stakeholders effectively in support of the school's purpose and direction." While specific numbers were not available, it was noted in the report that staff satisfaction was higher than parent satisfaction. Because this was the first year collecting data, trend data is not available at this time to draw any longitudinal conclusions.

Managing Student Conduct

This particular category, as expected, produced relatively high numbers of dissatisfaction. The numbers, as with Community Support and Involvement, also demonstrate discrepancies in how teachers feel administrators handle discipline. Administrators are given high ratings, 80 to 90% affirmative, in the category of school leadership, yet only 53% feel they consistently enforce rules for students. Other areas of note include:

- 59% of teachers feel students understand expectations for their conduct, but only 6% of teachers feel students follow rules of conduct.
- 83% of teachers indicate they clearly understand the policies and procedures about student conduct, but only 53% agree that rules are consistently enforced.
- 53% say school administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct, but 77% say administrators support their efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.
- 86% agree that the school is a safe place to work.

Teacher Leadership

Percentages presented under the category of Teacher Leadership indicate high levels of satisfaction with regard to teacher ability to make decisions about curriculum, instruction, and assessments. There are only two areas of dissatisfaction noted.

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- 38% of teachers feel they have input on school budget.

- 40% feel that have input into the hiring of teachers.

School Leadership

With an administrative change occurring in 2013, this is the first opportunity for teachers to provide feedback through NC TWC survey. It is also an opportunity for the new administration to receive feedback on opportunities and areas of which to improve upon. Despite lower than average ratings in most categories, numbers related to current administrative practices of evaluation and support indicate extremely high levels of satisfaction, with ratings between 80 to 90%.

- 57% agree that there is an atmosphere of trust and respect in the school.

- 67% feel comfortable raising issues important to them.

Professional Development

This is an area of interest due to the inundation of professional development provided over the past four years by outside consultants and NCDPI. The current principal, Sonja Emerson, did move all professional development sessions to Tuesday during planning periods due to such an early arrival for teachers in the morning. While academic progress did not show positive results, numbers did indicate happiness with resources, time, collaboration, and effectiveness of professional development.

- 61% feel professional development was differentiated, and 65% feel they have enough training to fully utilize technology.

- 62% feel professional development was evaluated and results communicated.

- 89% feel that professional development enhanced their ability to improve student learning.

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Information regarding teachers' professional development needs and the percentage of teachers who received that specific professional development during the 2014 school year (see Table 3) provides valuable insight to whether professional needs were met.

Instructional Practices and Support

This section of 2014 NC TWC survey deals with the use of data to drive instruction, curriculum alignment, professional learning communities, and instructional encouragement. Numbers within this category indicate high levels of satisfaction with very few areas of concern.

- 88% of teachers state they utilize data to inform instruction.

- 100% say curriculum is aligned to Common Core Standards, with 92% indicating they work in professional learning communities to develop and align instructional practices.

- 100% of teachers feel encouraged to try new things to improve instruction, and 94% indicate having autonomy to make decisions about instructional delivery.

- 59% indicate they are assigned classes that maximize their likelihood of success with students.

Overall

The conclusion of the survey provides information regarding teachers' future intentions and how aspects of specific teaching conditions impact those specific future intentions the most. While teachers have indicated that their school is safe, clean and 79% indicate it is a good place to work and learn, there are troubling issues around the subject of student management.

- 59% plan to continue teaching at DMS with 18% indicating a desire to move to another school within the district.

Table 3

Professional Development Needs

Area	Percent who indicate need for Professional development	Percent who indicate having received professional development in area
Content	67%	65%
Common Core/Essential Standards	71%	70%
Student Assessment	53%	70%
Differentiating Instruction	74%	65%
Special Education-Students with disabilities	73%	36%
Special Education-gifted and talented	62%	38%
English Language Learners	33%	25%
Closing the Achievement Gap	68%	44%
Methods of Teaching	53%	70%
Reading Strategies	56%	55%
Integrating Technology into Instruction	64%	64%
Classroom Management Techniques	59%	39%

Note. Percentage numbers indicate the teachers' needs for professional development and the actual amount of professional development provided in those areas over the past two years. The numbers also indicate areas of high need in curriculum and instruction. Source: North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey, 2014.

- 41% stated that management of student conduct affected their decision, while 26% indicated school leadership.

- 61% also stated managing student conduct was most important in promoting student learning, while instructional practices and support was at 17%.

The 2014 NC TWC survey provides important information regarding the direction to take with improvement efforts. The areas of conflict include professional learning communities, instructional planning, communication with parents and community, professional development efficiency and implementation. While all areas cannot possibly be improved upon in one project, it is important to select an area, which may, in turn, impact other areas of need in positive ways. With negative student achievement results and high discipline rates, developing and sustaining an effective professional development program centered on curriculum, instruction, and assessments and requiring daily teacher collaboration will build peer support and professional peer accountability, which will ultimately improve teacher retention and improve student achievement results (Smith, 2006).

Teacher Retention

As previously stated, all problems at DMS cannot be addressed with any one initiative. Since NCDPI and school administration have worked to address, with little and if any success, student achievement, teacher retention must be the focus moving forward. DMS has experienced a steady rise in teacher turnover and a decrease in fully licensed teachers (NC School Report Cards, 2015). Although DMS closed the retention gap to 14% in 2012 (see Table 4), equaling the district and state teacher turnover level, a recent rise in teachers leaving DMS has moved the numbers beyond 20 percentage points in 2014 and 2015.

Table 4

One-Year Teacher Turnover Percentage Rates for DMS

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
DMS	26%	15%	14%	19%	21%	21%
District	16%	10%	11%	13%	16%	11%
State	12%	13%	14%	16%	15%	16%

Note. The Annual Reports of Teachers Leaving the Profession located on NCDPI website provides teacher turnover data that is different than that reflected on the NC school report cards released each year. The numbers on the report are actually lower than the numbers reflected here (Annual Reports, 2015). Source: NC School Report Cards, 2015.

The 2014-2015 school year started with 11 vacancies, which were filled with retired teachers serving as substitutes in many of the classrooms. There are 21 beginning teachers, with all but one of those teaching grades five and eight, which may directly correlate to lack of growth in those specific grade levels. In addition to an inexperienced teaching staff, 15 of those are also lateral entry teachers who have had no formal pedagogical training, whether good or bad. The percentage of fully licensed teachers has dropped from the state average of 94% in 2010 to 76.9% in 2014. Teachers at DMS have been asked to teach classes which they are not qualified (D. Durham, personal communication, March 10, 2015), which has also been the case in other schools struggling to fill positions and has proved to impede retention (Zhang, 2006).

The 2015-2016 school year also began with an enormous percentage of beginning teachers. Included in the 43 teachers employed, four are first year teachers and 14 are in years two or three, but all are considered beginning teachers. Of the 19 beginning teachers, 44% of total teaching staff, fifteen are lateral entry teachers who have had no formal pedagogical training, and there are four full-time substitutes employed until certified or lateral teachers can be hired. Of the 14 lateral entry teachers, thirteen are currently teaching core area subjects which include English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, all fifth grade subjects, and exceptional children. The four full-time substitutes are responsible for two exceptional children assignments, one fifth grade assignment, and one English language arts assignment. Because of the instructional inconsistencies caused by staff turnover and the number of new teachers, DMS teachers need an in-house support system to assist their professional needs.

Problem Statement

Too much teacher turnover at Dillard Middle School in Goldsboro, NC has contributed to inadequate student achievement results and numerous discipline incidents (NC School Report

Card, 2015). By focusing attention on the highly leveraged problem of improving teacher

retention through peer support and sustained professional development, student achievement and

student discipline should also improve.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The long-term goal to this complex, dynamic issue involves many factors and does not lend itself to an easy fix, but, teacher retention can be improved by emphasizing professionalism through high level professional learning communities, which will ultimately leverage and benefit student achievement and discipline improvement at Dillard Middle School (DMS) (Archbald, 2014; Bryk, 2010). Although variables exist, There are factors that can be controlled within a school, and "for performance to change, conditions must change" (Archbald, 2014, p. 19). While there are many issues at DMS, the focus of this study deals directly with improving teacher retention through the development and implementation of professional learning communities.

Merit Pay

Merit pay has been a tool many feel would assist in closing achievement gaps and would assist in bringing the best and brightest to the field of education (Woessmann, 2011). While there have been efforts to thwart teacher attrition using monetary benefits in many states including Massachusetts, Arkansas, Indiana, Missouri, and North Carolina, with North Carolina showing some success with its focus on all teachers (Maranto & Shuls, 2012), there have been mixed reviews of pay for performance plans improving student achievement (Jackson, Langheinrich, & Loth, 2012; Miller, 2011). Although not all merit pay or pay for performance initiatives demonstrated positive effects on student achievement, a trend that has been noted, even in failed attempts, is the positive effects on teacher behaviors which are worth exploring in any future pay for performance initiatives (Podgursky & Springer, 2007).

From 2001-2004, a bonus of $1,800 for math, science, and special education teachers did assist in lowering North Carolina's teacher attrition in many of North Carolina's disadvantaged schools, but it also focused on all teachers, beginning and experienced, rather than only new

teachers where the most attrition occurs (Clotfelter, Glennie, Ladd, Vigdor, & Duke University, 2005; Maranto & Shuls, 2012). As stated above, there are conflicting views on whether merit pay positively impacts student achievement and teacher retention and recruitment. According to the 2012 study conducted in one Indiana school district by Jackson et al., merit pay did not affect student achievement and conflicted with the belief that merit pay would drive teachers to increase differentiation and increase participation in professional development. In contrast to the Indiana study with regard to professional development, the Collaborative Project Pilot Project, which was piloted in 2007 in five North Carolina school districts, did produce positive survey results with regards to the positive impact professional development had on the schools included (Miller & Grobe, 2013).

A drawback to the merit pay initiative has been how to effectively evaluate teachers using a fair metric, which encompasses all aspects of a teachers' job beyond student achievement measures (Clabaugh, 2009; Liang & Akiba, 2015; Miller & Grobe, 2013, Podgursky & Springer, 2007). Two other negative consequences to consider with regard to merit pay are (a) those who will teach exclusively to the test and (b) those who will no longer want to collaborate and share ideas due to the competition of performance (Clabaugh, 2009; Liang & Akiba, 2015).

Improving teacher retention in a high needs school may require more innovative thought, because (a) continuously hiring teachers who are ill-prepared for the work, (b) moving teachers who do not have the passion for the work, nor (c) have initiating merit pay initiatives sustained the positive change needed (Learning First Alliance, 2005). A prime example is provided at DMS through the transformation model grant, DMS teachers were offered $1,000 signing bonuses and end-of year bonuses of $1,000 to leverage improvement in teacher retention, but no improvement was noted.

While merit pay or pay for performance initiatives have been tried at DMS, other schools, and other states with various levels of success, the current state of affairs at DMS does not lend itself to the use of the merit pay or pay for performance options. Therefore, other teacher incentives need to be provided to effect the necessary changes to improve teacher retention at DMS.

School Transformation

From 2010 to 2014, DMS was one of 118 schools under a Race to the Top (RttT) grant received by North Carolina Department of Public Instruction targeted due to a performance composite below 60% for two or more years (NCDPI, 2015). Performance composite refers to the number of students demonstrating proficiency on state end-of-grade exams. Different models are associated with the RttT grant and include:

- A turnaround model framework where state control is enacted, the staff is removed, and no more than 50% can be rehired.

- A restart model where Local Education Agencies (LEA) can choose to close a school and reopen it under charter management or another educational management organization.

- A school closure model where an LEA closes a school and enrolls those students in higher achieving schools within the local LEA.

- A transformational model where supports and incentives are provided (NCDPI, 2010).

A transformational model was chosen by Wayne County Public Schools. The categorical principles, mandates, and supports associated with the transformation model are (1) teachers and

leaders, (2) instructional and support strategies, (3) time and support, and (4) governance (NCDPI, 2010).

Teachers and Leaders

Under a turnaround model, the principal is to be replaced, although the administrative change did not occur until two years into the grant. The former principal initiated a $1,000 signing bonus, but the new principal felt the money was not affecting retention issues within the school. She received approval to add a $1,000 retention bonus to be paid at the end of each year (S. Emerson, personal communication, June 17, 2015). Teachers had the opportunity to receive additional monetary incentives if they met certain criteria as defined by (a) evaluations, (b) participation in professional development, (c) school growth, and (d) individual growth. Teachers were also able to earn extra compensation by working ten more days than other North Carolina schools not under the mandate. Despite the opportunity to receive more monetarily, teacher retention data indicates an increase in turnover from 14% in 2010 to 20.5% in 2014 (NC School Report Cards, 2014).

Instructional and Support Strategies

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provided DMS instructional and leadership support. The focus of the support was (a) to implement an instructional model that met student needs, (b) to provide embedded professional development, and (c) to have staff continuously collect and utilize data to inform instruction. Initially, these instructional and support strategies occurred in an after school program once a week, but current administration, in 2012, moved professional development to planning periods one day a week, since teachers had to be at work so early in the morning. That professional development was centered on content and differentiating instruction (S. Emerson, personal communication, June 17, 2015).

Time and Support

This specific support focuses on (a) increasing learning time for students and teachers, (b) increasing parent and community engagement, and (c) providing "social-emotional and community oriented services and supports" (NCDPI, 2010, p. 9). Extra time was provided to the school by extending the school day and by adding an additional five student days and five teacher workdays. Again, the 2014 NC School Report Card data reveals that extending the school day and adding additional days of employment did nothing to improve teacher retention or student achievement results. Turnaround schools that experienced success in the initial Race to the Top Grant worked to provide student supports ranging from (a) acceleration, (b) remediation, (c) enrichment, and (d) mentoring (Thompson, Brown, Townsend, Henry, & Fortner, 2011), and these same schools also experienced success in reaching out to parents to better communicate and meet them where they are, not just at school (Thompson et al., 2011).

Governance

The idea of governance deals with having the administrative autonomy to implement necessary changes and receive the necessary supports to create and sustain the reform efforts. Ideally, the district supports school leadership, who in turn, supports teachers, providing them the necessary autonomy in each classroom. External support from district officials and school boards allows principals the opportunity to make informed decisions, and when supported by community members, schools began to see success as noted in North Carolina (Thompson et al., 2011) and in New York (Chenoweth, 2007).

What Matters to Teachers

The desire to have basic needs satisfied has proven more important to teacher satisfaction than salary (Zhang, 2006). Five areas that continue to permeate the research deal with (a)

Support from principal (Alexander, 2010; Betancourt et al., 1994; Billingsley & Others, 1995; Chittom & Sistrunk, 1990; Ingersoll, 2001; Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007); (b) Collegial environment and emotional support (Maranto & Shuls, 2012; Odell & Ferrano, 1992; SERVE, 2006; Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007); (c) School structures around student discipline, motivation, class size and planning time (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll, 2001); and (d) Professional growth and autonomy (Maranto & Shuls, 2012; Shann, 1998; Zhang, 2006).

Support from Principal

Leadership is essential to the success of any school and good leadership empowers teachers to develop their own leadership qualities (Elmore, 2000 & Learning First Alliance, 2005). Leaders at Imperial High School, located in Imperial, California, have improved the teacher retention rate and improved student achievement results by building teacher capacity through shared decision-making and collegiality (Chenoweth, 2009). By allowing teachers to have a voice, leaders can create cultures of support and innovation amongst staff.

It is also important to note the importance of leadership itself at the top of an organization and within an organization. Administrators can themselves grow as they work to develop leadership qualities within individual teachers, and while one can learn from mistakes and skills can be developed, leadership cannot be taught in a classroom or workshop as a skills approach model suggest (Northouse, 2016). Too many environmental factors correlate to many problems at DMS, and there are not enough skilled employees to effectively solve all the related issues, which ultimately impacts the effectiveness of any leader at the school (Northouse, 2016). I do agree with Northouse (2016) that certain leaders possess highly effective traits that coincide with certain leadership situations like effective school leadership; for example, there are highly effective educational leaders who would not be effective running corporations and vice versa

(Northouse, 2016). The goal is finding, developing, and placing those individual leaders in the correct setting to produce full benefits of their leadership development.

Effective leaders have the ability to (a) articulate a vision, (b) chart the course, and (c) encourage and support teachers to execute the vision and direction by providing a focus and stability for teachers to function at a high level (Bryk, 2010; Drago-Severson, 2007). Turnaround schools that have experienced success in North Carolina had administrators in place who had a specific vision and who were able to provide clear expectations for that vision (Thompson et al., 2011).

The leaders of successful schools are not seen as tyrannical rulers who rule with an iron fist nor can they be leaders who aim to please everyone (Thompson et al., 2011), but they should be leaders who cultivate a culture of collegiality and student worth (Bryk, 2010; Smith, 2006). While a more direct approach will be needed to initially mobilize the staff to confront issues, the staff must accept the internal belief in the change needed, and it is the leader's responsibility to provide the safe work environment that allows them (a) to be creative, (b) innovative, and (c) to learn from failure (Heifetz, 1994). Effective leadership moves followers to embrace the work and moves change throughout an organization (Bryk, 2010; Hord, 1997; Smith, 2006). There are teachers at DMS who may have lost their desire to improve as noted in interaction with students and low academic standards by which students are held. Over the past four years, teachers have been *beaten down* by a system of inconsistencies, which include (a) numerous consultants inundating them with inconsistent professional development (b) constant change causing a lack of instructional focus and (c) a divisional mentality of us against them between teachers, students, and community (Teacher Working Conditions Survey, 2014).

Collegial Environment and Emotional Support

"If relationships improve, schools get better" (Fullan, 2002, para. 11), and one segment of

that relationship is between teachers in the building. Collegiality is essential to a successful focus

and execution of a school's vision, and it is also proven to increase teacher retention and

recruitment (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Maranto & Shuls, 2012; SERVE, 2006). But with

teachers, especially new teachers, in low-performing schools, they usually find themselves with

the toughest assignments with the least amount of support (Learning First Alliance, 2005). The

support from colleagues and administration is vital to success, both academically and

emotionally, and it is the administrator's responsibility to provide the opportunity for teachers to

collaborate with one another so that a supportive, collegial environment can be developed

(Darling-Hammond, 1996; Hord, 1997; Smith, 2006). With any collaborative effort, structures

need to be in place to ensure high-quality discourse, while at the same time allowing teachers the

opportunity for expression free from ridicule and free from fear or failure. By creating an

environment that allows teachers' the opportunity to interact professionally, an atmosphere of

respect is generated, and that atmosphere perpetuates a system of support, not only from the

principal but also from peers (Smith, 2006). It has also been noted that schools that have

experienced transformational success had well-developed professional learning communities

which help to provide supports through collegial interaction (Thompson et al., 2011).

School Structures

School structures such as (a) daily schedules, (b) planning times, (c) routines and

procedures, and (d) student management systems all play an important role in defining a school's

culture and environment. These simple concepts can actually increase teacher morale and

improve student discipline if controlled and structured correctly, but a top down authoritative

voice cannot do it alone. It takes a collaborative effort of shared responsibility amongst all staff to truly restructure schools successfully. The schools in North Carolina that have not experienced success under the turnaround models continued to experience high levels of student discipline issues, whereas those who created a shared vision amongst staff and executed that shared vision positively impacted student behavior and academics (Thompson et al., 2011).

School discipline policies that are consistent and support learning need to be adopted and upheld by teachers and administrators, but many structures are created to *make it easier* on teachers and do not take into account what is better for students (Chenoweth, 2009). While these structures regarding routines, procedures and consequences are important, the most important school structures that have led to successful school reform are the structures that provide the time for teachers to build relationships with each other, students, and administrators through collaboration, discourse, and sharing (Darling-Hammond, 1997; 1996).

Professional Growth and Autonomy

When teachers' professional growth needs are met and they are provided the autonomy to be creative, retention is increased and job satisfaction increases (Zhang, 2006). Providing a rigorous professional development program that is consistent from year to year will begin to sustain the instructional methods used by teachers and academic outcomes most desired in students (Bryk, 2010). This approach must be focused to sustain teacher turnover and support the work of teachers learning new skills. Teachers who experience collegial environments that provide support with instruction, curriculum, and assessments are more willing to remain at the current school (Chenoweth, 2009). It is also important to note success in school reform in New York City, such as Julia Richman High School, where small learning communities were formed

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allowing more teacher governance and ownership and also providing the necessary autonomy to make informed, collective decisions based on expertise (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Teacher Retention

DMS has experienced a recent rise in teacher turnover, which correlates to a new administrator being hired in 2013. DMS's teacher turnover issues are numerous and include being in a rural school district and being a school of high poverty, which impacts hiring and retention (Ingersoll, 2003; Learning First Alliance, 2005). The complexity of the problems at DMS goes beyond simple managerial issues of scheduling, internal teacher moves, or other routine or procedural items, but instead with the case of teacher turnover at DMS or any other school, administration needs to be careful not to raise retention rates just to improve numbers (Jacob, Vidyarthi, Carroll, & TNTP, 2012). School leaders need to make sure the best teachers are in place to educate our students, and in retaining teachers, leaders do not need to create complacent environments which result in loss of teacher effectiveness (Ingersoll, 2001).

The issue of teacher retention is one that cannot be overlooked as students are directly impacted by constant change. Witnessing too many teachers come and go before being able to establish any steady relationships may make a student become more and more reluctant to accept the role of teachers (Zhang, 2006.) As teachers migrate from DMS to other schools within the county, DMS students are then subjected to another newly trained teacher or a substitute serving as stand-in until someone qualified or willing takes the job (Jackson, Langheinrich, & Loth, 2012; Zhang, 2006). The recognition that students in low performing schools need qualified teachers is an understatement, but yet it is not the case in most situations, including DMS, where the lack of high quality teachers continues to perpetuate the inadequate performance of these

students in said schools (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Haynes, 2014; Learning First Alliance, 2005).

Professional Learning Communities

Peter Senge introduced the idea of Learning Communities in 1990 with a focus on business, and it did not take long for the educational community to adopt and adapt those same beliefs (Blankstein, 2004; Kelly, 2009). Despite whether the organization is a business or educational institution, the organization will prove more successful when everyone is not only focused on individual improvement and growth, but more importantly, they are focused on the improvement and growth of the larger organization (Senge, 1993). Senge (1993) refers to this as creating a "Knowledge Based Organization" (p. 9), where there is movement away from top-down managerial decision making to an organizational structure where a shared vision, meaningful discourse, and personal responsibility for success are entrenched and valued.

Thomas Sergiovanni expanded upon Senge's principle of "Team Learning" and translated it to education hierarchal structures (Blankstein, 2004). Sergiovanni sees the need to break down traditional leadership structures in education in order to create environments where educators internalize the work and drive the living vision of the educational community (Brandt, 1992). When the teachers have transitioned to the stage of internalizing and owning the work as a team, the need for top down management systems becomes less of a need in the educational settings (Brandt, 1992).

Shirley Hord (1997; 2015) provides six important characteristics of a true professional learning community (PLC), which include:

a. Supportive shared leadership. The principal and teachers work in conjunction with one another to create opportunities for teacher leadership and growth.

b. Shared values and vision. The vision of the school is not created in isolation by a few; it drives the PLC and its focus.

c. Collective learning and application. Professionals need to continuously learn and grow to improve student learning, and this can be accomplish through sharing and openness of ideas within a PLC.

d. Peers supporting Peers. To improve student instruction, peer observations are an important tool in improving and building collegiality and trust.

e. Supportive conditions. There is mutual respect amongst all members of the community.

f. Structural Conditions. Time must be allotted for PLCs to meet and must be viewed as time that is not to be interrupted.

Because of the need to change leadership structures in order to create true PLCs, Nelda Cambron-McCabe (2003), Department of Educational Leadership, Miami University, makes an argument for the need to refocus educational leadership programs to make sure they include opportunities for faculty to communicate openly and honestly to move the work forward and to create a sense of ownership among members and to translate that to the training of educational leaders. This training would assist leaders in learning how to break down barriers within a school and move a school faculty to open, honest discourse that challenge the status quo and has them take ownership of the issues at hand (Cambron-McCabe, 2003).

It is the school leader's job to provide teachers the climate that places value on school structures that provide collegiality, support, and the opportunity to grow professionally (Hord, 1997; 2015). Since the opportunity to earn extra money through signing bonuses and end of year incentives did not assist the teacher turnover problem at DMS, a new sustainable approach to

formalize professional learning communities is a way, and one of the most important aspects, in building those characteristics that make a difference in the lives of teachers (Bryk, 2010) Individual teachers can improve their practice in isolation, but to retain them, the leader of the school must set the conditions that supports teachers and provides them with the professional climate that breeds collegial support as well (Bryk, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 1996).

Blankstein (2004) sees true professional learning communities as requiring more thought and energy than just providing opportunities for teachers to meet; they require a focused school mission and "discipline to maintain a focus on student learning" (p. 51). Schools where professional learning communities exist have cultures where teachers in the communities create their focus, share in the work, trust each other, and take ownership of the work (Blankstein, 2004). All students within the school are able to reap the benefits of a high level education, because the teachers have a vested interest in the entire school, which is much more conducive than one group of kids receiving a high level education in an isolated classroom (O'Neil, 1995).

As collegial professional learning communities improve interaction between teachers, it also creates school climates where observations from peers is appreciated, sharing of lessons for peer review is normal, and co-teaching opportunities exist and thrive (Darling-Hammond, 1996). To tear down walls of isolation and create supportive, collegial environments where teachers want to work, these in-house professional growth opportunities must become the norm (O'Neil, 1995). These professional environments build upon individual and collective successes, which can ultimately lead teachers to internalize the work more deeply.

Self-Awareness

Dillard Middle School (DMS) is unique in that it is located in a rural school district, but it is located in the heart of Goldsboro, NC and serves a high number of low-income, minority

students, which gives the feel of an urban environment. Schools located in urban environments find themselves at the center of a rising debate concerning public education and the lack of academic results. While schools in urban settings struggle with student results and teacher turnover, there are pockets of success such as the case at University Park Campus School located in Worcester, Massachusetts (Chenoweth, 2007). University Park Campus School faculty and students have proved their success by boasting high 100% passing rates on state 10th grade assessments between 2002 and 2005 (Chenoweth, 2007). The teacher leadership is very important at University Park in holding students to high standards, but it also takes a principal who serves as an instructional leader and one who provides opportunities and time for teachers to collaborate on instructional planning and practices that also ensures success (Smith, 2006).

Teacher expectations are different for students of poverty and color (Winfield, 1986). Teachers look at achievement in white students as being internally motivated, but approach black students with the attitude that too many external factors such a lack parental involvement and environment affect learning (Wiley & Eskilson, 1978). Winfield (1986) utilized a case study methodology to study five schools whose demographics were "predominately minority and low-income students from their surrounding neighborhoods" (p. 255) and found successful teachers "assumed" (p. 264) responsibility for student learning; they did not "shift the responsibility (p. 264) (Thompson et al., 2011).

There is no doubt that DMS has many issues, which money and time has not been able to address. It is important to provide teachers with working conditions that (a) provide administrative and peer support, (b) provide structures that support collegiality and innovation, and (c) allow teachers the opportunity for professional growth. While teacher turnover continues to plague DMS and many schools and districts across the country, it is time to take an approach

that no longer blames the student for inadequacies, but one that builds upon administrative and teacher morality to do what is right and take responsibility for results (Coppieters, 2005; Kelly, 2009; Northouse, 2016). To build that sense of morality, a cohesive vision for progress centered on professional learning must be established and sustained to truly impact teacher retention and long-term achievement results. Teachers cannot survive in isolation, but they can thrive in an environment where professionalism is redefined and supported.

It is the moral obligation of a teacher to improve the lives of his or her students and it is an obligation that cannot be taken lightly. This moral code can be strengthened within a collaborative environment and the collegiality of professional learning communities can help to regulate the ethics of the group when forming work that improves conditions and moving the work forward to a point where the work becomes internalized (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 2005). When the work does become internalized, teachers can share expertise and ideas to truly create systemic change within their classrooms and schools. (Strike et al., 2005, p. 105) It is important that the collective group has a singular vision for the direction and improvement of their students and drives that vision forward as a seamless unit.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLGY

Improvement Science as an Approach for Change

Transforming an embedded school culture is not an easy task to accomplish due to the human and community intricacies involved. Time must be provided as the initiative moves through the change phases, as there will be ebbs and flows of positive and negative experiences. Successful schools support teachers, provide opportunities for growth, and provide the autonomy to utilize innovative instructional methods without fear of reprimand or fear that a test score is the only measure of their worth (Zhang, 2006). Once teachers feel instructionally supported, they will ultimately attempt new pedagogical strategies that will ultimately benefit student engagement (Maranto & Shuls, 2012). The use of improvement science is the focus of this work as teachers move from working in isolation to working as a cohesive unit with a refined vision for improvement within in a larger system of reform (Carnegie, 2015). Quantitative analysis will be used to measure improvement in teacher retention, with the possible additional benefits of an increase in student achievement results and a decrease in discipline. Surveys will be important in learning how the implementation and sustainability of embedded professional learning communities (PLCs) were of value to teacher professional growth and support.

Study Participants

Dillard Middle School (DMS) was selected for this work due to its recent rise in teacher turnover and increasing number of lateral entry teachers. After receiving approval from Wayne County Public School superintendent, discussing school issues and the current state of affairs with the current administration, as well as conducting observations, the current DMS administration was approached about the possibility of implementing new design structures that focus on teacher improvement. Being well received by DMS administration, faculty, parents, and

community members, current DMS administration felt strongly about the positive impact such a change could have within the school (S. Emerson, personal communication, June 24, 2015). The participants will be all current and newly hired teachers and administrators within the school.

This study involves work around the following questions:

1. Can teacher retention be improved in a high needs school through the development and implementation of professional learning communities?

2. Can improvement of teacher retention through implementation of professional learning communities and daily peer interaction also positively impact student discipline and student achievement results?

Measure of Improvement

As previously noted, the continued focus and attempts to improve student achievement at DMS have not lead to success on end-of-grade tests, discipline, or teacher retention as noted in the data. By changing the focus to teacher retention through the development and implementation of professional learning communities, teacher retention will improve as a result. Expectations for improvement will be three percent each year, eventually leveling off to match or exceed district turnover rate. This study will feature a small-scale proof of concept in that if the enhancement of professionalism proposed in this improvement study is successful it might be generative of similar improvement projects in the school district.

Improvement Science

Improvement science is the methodology that is going to be utilized, as an active approach is needed to affect change at DMS. Test scores, teacher retention, and discipline all show deficits that can no longer be ignored and a more proactive approach is warranted before conditions worsen. The main focus at DMS has been to remediate students through (a) student

tutoring during the school day and after school, (b) an allotted amount of time each day devoted to remediation efforts, and (c) the hiring of tutors to work each day with teachers in each classroom. This instructional rut has not yielded results nor has North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction's interaction through a Race to the Top grant with enormous amounts of professional development. The professional learning community initiative will focus on (a) curriculum, (b) instruction, and (c) assessments to improve classroom practices of the teaching staff, and in conjunction, it will also build a collaborative, supportive system for teachers.

A series of Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles will be utilized to begin shifting district and school leadership to new thought processes around teacher instruction and student learning. This change must begin at the district level to build support for a sustained program shift that causes initial disruption to systems that have been entrenched for years. Anytime there is change, there is disruption, but with stakes being so high at DMS, we can no longer allow such systems to hinder the progress of true reform.

An example of such reluctance is the transportation department's hesitation to move away from the tiered bus system shared among feeder patterns within the district. While the tiered system may be most beneficial for the transportation department and funding reliant on efficiency ratings, it is proving detrimental to the students and staff at DMS. This action step required (1) approval from all stakeholders at the school level, (2) approval from Wayne County Public Schools leadership, and (3) Wayne County Board of Education approval. A number of PDSA cycles are being utilized to outline initial work to create systemic changes at DMS to ultimately improve teacher retention through a system of collaborative support.

PDSA One

Since there has been some initial resistance to a change in structure at DMS, it became extremely important to build momentum with stakeholders for the change. The initial PDSA cycle involved communication with all stakeholders at the school level to initiate change to a school schedule and instructional focus. With the constant bombardment of initiatives and continuous staff turnover, it was important to offer the staff some incentive to engage. The incentive comes in the form of a logistical school schedule change that allows staff to start the day later. Teachers at DMS have had to be in their classrooms by 7:00 a.m., and many, with young children, were losing money due to having to pay for before-school childcare. This schedule change moves DMS from the traditional 180-day calendar to a 185-day calendar, and it removes all but two teacher workdays during the year. This change allows teachers to begin their days with positive staff interaction through professional development as opposed to student issues and provides them with the necessary time to engage in professional improvement.

Figure 1 displays a PDSA cycle that provides an overview of the initial work done to create a schedule that allows for the creation of professional learning communities at DMS. Due to a tiered bus system shared within the feeder pattern, changing the traditional bus schedule at DMS did prove to be an initial barrier, but one that was overcome with cooperation from the Wayne County School Board. The tiered bus system is utilized in all attendance zones within specific feeder patterns within the district. Within the central attendance area where DMS is located, DMS was the first to receive students, the three elementary schools were next, and the one high school was last to receive students. It is of note that this schedule has been tested at two innovative high schools within the district and has proven successful with regards to teacher retention and support.

Plan: Initial work begins with current administration, teachers, and stakeholders to create a teacher schedule that allows for development of PLCs.

Do: Develop proposed schedule to be approved by the Curriculum and Instruction and Finance committee before being approved by the Board of Education.

Study: Data has been studied to determine that past and current initiatives are not improving teacher retention or accountability results.

Act: The proposed schedule was proposed and accepted by the Wayne County Board of Education.

Note. This PDSA cycle begins at the school level to create the need for a schedule change. Once approved at the local level, the process moves through the various district channels before appearing before the Board of Education.

Figure 1. Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) Cycle One.

A small-scale proof of concept is found with overwhelming teacher and district support, and in the success of two innovative schools previously mentioned. Staff at DMS are excited about the opportunity to collaborate with peers to share ideas and grow personal skills (S. Emerson, personal communication, June 24, 2015), and Wayne County Public Schools administration and Board of Education felt that if successful, this structure should be implemented in all schools (C. West, board chair, personal communication, June 24, 2015). Approval was granted by the Wayne County Board of Education on July 6, 2015, and the work now focuses on structuring the daily schedule to accommodate professional learning communities (PLC) around the specific vision of improving teacher retention to effect long term and sustainable improvements in student achievement.

PDSA Two

This PDSA cycle is centered on social constructivism where teachers and students can grow their knowledge and skills through open and honest interaction and discussion, which also assists teachers in their personal transformation to a facilitator by allowing students to truly engage with each other and the content (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). This cycle begins with the structured common planning teachers will be expected to attend and engage in daily. This work also includes a partnership with Wayne School of Engineering staff. Wayne School of Engineering (WSE), one of the districts highest performing schools, utilizes this sustained instructional approach and has done so for the past nine years, and some teachers at WSE are willing to dedicate their time to support teachers at DMS by providing professional development and instructional support through peer observations. Figure 2 details a PDSA cycle that will be used to implement, study, and make changes if necessary to the teacher enrichment program.
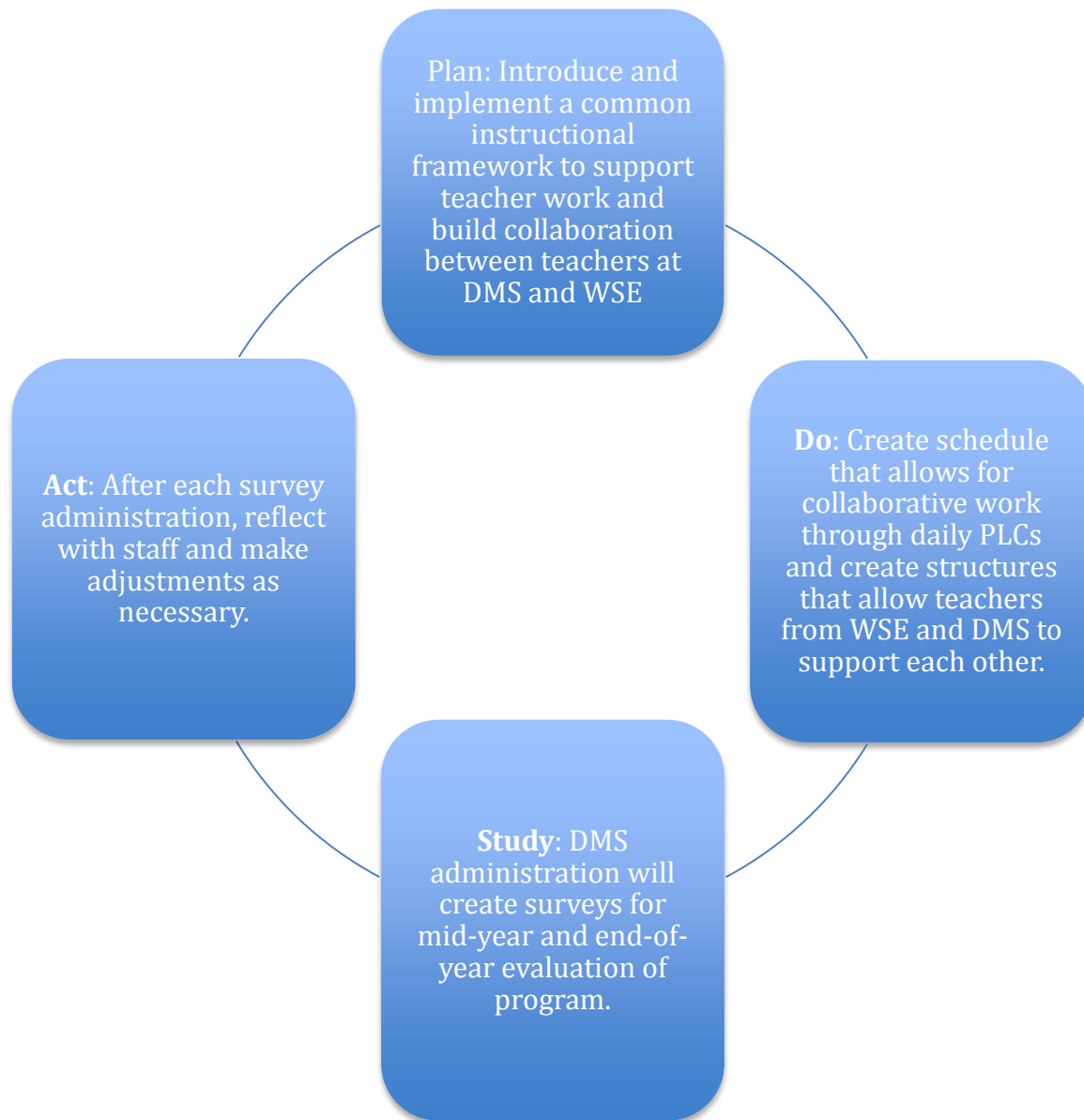
Note. This PDSA cycle focuses on the implementation of the teacher enrichment program during the 2015-2016 school year. The implementation of this program will be evaluated mid-year and at the end of the year, not to dissolve, but to make minor changes, if needed, to promote stronger collaborative communities.

Figure 2. Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) Cycle Two.

School days will be restructured to allow teachers the opportunity to work together daily in true PLCs, and the administration has stated they will make a sustained, concerted effort, over the course of many years, to ensure success of the program. A structured program of teacher development will be executed which includes (a) Critical Friend's Protocols, (b) departmental action plans, (c) professional development, and (d) reflection. Each day during the week, a specific and structured approach provides teachers direction, which assists in maintaining fidelity to the program and drives professional improvement. The aforementioned Critical Friends is owned and trademarked by the National School Reform Faculty and provides "a structured process or set of guidelines to promote meaningful and efficient communication, problem solving and learning" (NSF, 2014). The weekly schedule is consistent and includes:

- Mondays will be dedicated to lesson tuning using Critical Friend's Protocols.

- Tuesday will be dedicated to departmental planning to allow for vertical articulation to build cohesive academic curriculums, and improve content knowledge.

- Wednesday will be dedicated to assessment work as teachers analyze student work to make sure fidelity to the standards is being maintained and that students are producing high quality work around each standard.

- Thursdays are dedicated to sustained, meaningful professional development as teachers work to learn and implement a common instructional framework, a common language and set of instructional practices.

- Fridays are dedicated to positive reflection on the week.

Bernard M. Bass (1980) referred to some "self-evident truths" (p. 433) regarding work in teams such as (a) the outcomes will be better, especially the more capable the individuals within the group are; (b) the outcome is a sum of all members and the more diverse the membership, the

better; (c) the team will move at a pace of the slowest member; and (d) the product or performance will only be as good as its strongest member. By adopting this approach and by redefining the professionalism in the building through open and honest discourse, teachers will be able to grow professionally and build an internal support system, which will immediately impact teacher retention and have long-range effects on student achievement (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012).

Just as a leader has to create a shared vision amongst faculty, a teacher must create the same atmosphere around subject matter he or she teaches creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, which allows students to actively engage in the work (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). To develop such an atmosphere, a professional development program will be established around a common instructional framework, created by Jobs for the Future in their support of early college design, which aids in student engagement and discourse and builds teachers' capacity to differentiate and scaffold instruction (Common Instructional Framework, 2015). Student engagement will be increased by the use of protocols centered on this common instructional framework and include, (a) collaborative grouping, (b) classroom talk, (c) writing to learn, (d) questioning, and (e) literacy groups (Common Instructional Framework, 2015). Each specific framework will provide succinct examples of activities that can be utilized to enhance positive student experiences, which will require students to become active learners.

Teachers also need and will receive training and support each week on ways to differentiate and scaffold instruction for students. While a differentiated approach equates to more work for a teacher, it is necessary to provide each student a challenging education. Too much attention is focused on keeping all students within a class together or all classroom periods of the same subject together so planning is easier. An important aspect to differentiating for

student success is scaffolding. Scaffolding provides students who may not be as academically strong in a particular subject an entry point to engage in the work (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Many times students disengage because they do not understand the subject, so it becomes easier to become a discipline problem.

The changes and focus described have been tested in two innovative schools within the district and have yielded positive results for students and staff. Whereas both schools were able to create positive school cultures and productive collaborative environments as brand new schools and hire new staff to fill positions, it will prove more difficult to recreate these settings at DMS due to its already embedded culture, and DMS staff will not necessarily embrace continuous change and instructional interference. Because of expected reluctance to continuous change, leadership will need to use initial stature of position to focus staff on the tough work that needed to effect real change with the hope of relinquishing an authoritative approach as staff adapts and adopts the necessary confidence and qualities to become less dependent or authority and become better able to lead themselves (Heifetz, 1994).

Successful schools have staffs that take responsibility for student learning and have leadership that supports a collaborative culture and teacher support (Chenoweth, 2007). Even though schools may be similar demographically or serve a similar economic population, all schools are not created equal, and there is not one strategy that a particular school can use to improve (Chenoweth, 2007; Thompson et al., 2011). The schools that create and cultivate a positive culture for students and staff and promote collaboration and creativity amongst students and staff are the ones that have proven successful with students of color and poverty (Chenoweth, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 1997). Dillard Middle School has focused an enormous amount of energy and time remediating students, which has ultimately led to a decline in student

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achievement. By changing the focus to teacher enrichment, teacher retention and student engagement should see immediate positive results as a result of a more focused, supportive, and collaborative teacher environment.

A small-scale proof of concept to determine the success of a teacher program will include the use to surveys to demonstrate teacher satisfaction with the professional growth program. While initially meeting teacher approval due to schedule change, a period of reluctance and discomfort may initially be felt due to high level of discourse required, satisfaction in the overall program at the end of the year should yield positive feelings and a willingness to continue at DMS to continue the work. Along with the increased teacher satisfaction, DMS teacher retention rate will continue to improve by three to five percent each year to meet or exceed the district average for retention.

<center>**Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development**</center>

Because of the continuous organizational reforms initiated and never sustained at DMS, the staff has developed a mentality of survival. With any new initiative, teachers will initially be resistant, although they may not voice it, so it is important to provide them a sustained improvement approach where they see true benefits to themselves before seeing the larger picture of true reform to better the students (Dufour & Eaker, 2005; Northouse, 2016). While initiating, developing, and sustaining the long-term improvements needed at DMS to better the education and lives of the students and community, a sense of morality, such as Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development, will be called upon to embark in the hard work necessary to effect true reform. The six stages of Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development are (1) Obedience and punishment, (2) Individualism and exchange, (3) Interpersonal accord and conformity, (4) Maintaining the social order, (5) Social contract and individual rights, and (6) Universal

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principals, and it is important for teachers move through each stage as they work to find the internal motivation to do what is right for the students at DMS and community.

Obedience and Punishment

This stage of Kohlberg's Moral Development has individuals doing their job for fear of consequences and punishment (Northouse, 2016). Teachers in this stage will acquiesce to the implementation of another initiative without trouble because they fear the implications of not complying.

Individualism and Exchange

Individuals at this stage of moral development only act in self-interest and not in the best interest of the community (Northouse, 2016). This stage began with the initial work to alter the school schedule to benefit staff and meet their personal needs, which should ultimately lead to their engagement as "exchanging favors" (Northouse, 2016, p. 332).

Interpersonal Accord and Conformity

In building true collaborative professional learning communities, teachers will be expected to share opinions, voice concerns, and respectfully challenge each other. At this stage, individuals will conform to the group expectations to adapt to the community norms without causing issues to others (Northouse, 2016). The professional learning community, at this stage, will run smoothly, but individuals will not challenge each other to improve.

Maintaining Social Order

There will be a concern for the professional learning community to run smoothly, due to the feeling it is the right thing to do because administrators want it to be done (Northouse, 2016). Along with personal conformity, this stage of development does not allow the work to progress

at a high level. Individuals who do not challenge the status quo only perpetuate issues embedded in school cultures.

Social Contract and Individual Rights

An individual at this stage has fully developed his or her moral character and is not afraid to voice opinions (Northouse, 2016). At this level of development, true work can begin transform curricular, instructional, and assessment practices. Teachers need to be presented new views and ideas on how to engage and deliver content to students.

Universal Principles

This stage represents individuals with strong convictions but also those who are willing to give others voice. Teachers at this level feel very comfortable provided advice and receiving advice, which promotes professional learning communities to function at an extremely high level. When all individuals get to this stage, the work becomes intense, valued and individuals within the community support each other daily.

Leadership

"The legitimate instructional leaders, if we have to have them, ought to be teachers. And principals ought to be leaders of leaders: people who develop the instructional leadership in their teachers." Thomas Sergiovanni as Quoted in interview with Ron Brandt, 1992.

An important aspect of this structural change and one that cannot be overlooked is the importance of leadership within the building at DMS (Hord, 1997). The instructional leaders at DMS cannot be authoritative dictators who try to control every move teachers' make, but they must be transformational leaders who work to "move followers to higher standards of moral responsibility" (Northouse, 2016, p. 338; Smith, 2006). The school level administrators will need to take a *hands-on* approach as they support teachers through the initial discomfort associated

with high level discourse and also protect them from outside distractions that detract from the work.

Leadership is essential to all successful organizations. With regard to complex organizational systems like those found in schools, it takes a leader who is willing to work with all stakeholders to forge a strong vision and mission. A school leader cannot implement true change without the assistance of his or her staff, and it will take strong leadership to transform stakeholders into *owners* of the difficulties. Two leadership styles that prove most effective in transforming staff are Transformational and Adaptive Leadership models. It will prove critical for the administrative team at DMS to adapt a leadership style that moves to empower staff to make informed decisions and carry out those decisions centered on the mission and vision of the school.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a "process that changes and transforms people" (Northouse, 2016, p. 161), and one that is extremely important in making long-term changes around a clear mission and vision (Northouse, 2016). Northouse (2016) mentions the connectivity between the leader and followers, and that through this connection, a bond is formed around common goals where the leader works to "help followers reach their full potential" (p. 162). This approach would be extremely useful at a school where the work is difficult, but rewarding, and morally right, but difficult. Positive long term results will not occur by providing short term solutions and rewards; those positive results will be realized through the bond that is formed around the difficult work each, leader and follower, will feel throughout the change process (Northouse, 2016).

One criticism of transformational leadership relates to the leader-centered approach (Northouse, 2016). At DMS, leadership is creating a new vision and direction without the staff creating it themselves, which is not new to DMS, but one that is necessary to create an environment of systemic change. Without the knowledge and background, the staff would not be able to navigate the logistical issues at the district level, as their knowledge does not transcend the world outside of DMS. Once the logistical items, out of the control of staff, have been resolved, teachers can focus on changing their structures, ideas, and beliefs to impact positive change on their specific environment.

Adaptive Leadership

Similar to transformational leadership but considered follower-centered (Northouse, 2016), adaptive leadership is another leadership theory that could be utilized to provide support to staff and move teachers to a more independent level where each teacher can rely on the other for curriculum and instruction improvement. Such a substantial change will not occur overnight at DMS or any other organization that is used to constant mandates and lack of individual control. Not only are there logistical changes with systems that need to change, there are embedded beliefs and values that will prove most difficult. In order to for teachers to evolve with regard to internal change of thought and ideas, the work, with support, must be given to the teachers (Northouse, 2016), and as previously mentioned, it is important to provide teachers at DMS a safe environment to (a) be creative, (b) be innovative, and (c) learn from failure.

An essential element to adaptive leadership is providing a safe environment that will allow teachers the opportunity to become more open and willing to work to improve upon their strengths and weaknesses without fear of reprimand. Stress levels will be extremely high in the initial and early stages of collaborative work and it is important that leadership find balance to

support teacher efforts while also moving them forward in confronting the tough issues (Northouse, 2016).

While adaptive leadership is criticized as a prescriptive approach lacking specific action-reaction decisions (Northouse, 2016), the process is actually organic in nature reliant on the situation presented. As emotions are involved, a prescribed set of steps will not work with people, as it will in fixing a computer. This leadership style supports the people, but places the responsibility back in the hands of the individual to build capacity within the individual and organization (Northouse, 2016).

Summary

When Wayne County Public Schools Board of Education approved the school schedule change to allow for the time and development of professional learning communities (PLC) at Dillard Middle School (DMS), it placed the work squarely on the shoulders of the current DMS leadership and staff. It now becomes DMS leadership's responsibility to see that the PLC meetings are held daily, professional development offerings are focused, and the common instructional framework strategies are being applied in the classroom. While there may be initial discomfort for teachers in sharing ideas and communicating areas of individual need, teachers will begin to become more comfortable and willing to engage in focused, high level discourse to strengthen their practice. This support will allow teachers to build their own community of learners within the school, which will ultimately improve teacher retention at DMS.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite numerous interventions including assistance from North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and monetary incentives, Dillard Middle School (DMS) has experienced consistent teacher turnover issues, which may also contribute to its decline in student achievement and high discipline rates. In order to combat this teacher retention issue effectively, whole school and district change initiatives were needed to overhaul current systems in order to build an environment conducive to teachers' personal and professional growth and support. The importance of teachers feeling supported, being treated as professionals, and having a voice in the organization with which they work (Hord, 1997; 2015) cannot be understated for its importance in contributing to a teacher's willingness to internalize the work (Coppieters, 2005; Kelly, 2009; Northouse, 2016). It is also equally important for the structures of the school to be beneficial to teachers so that professional learning communities can be embedded within the school culture (Byrk, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 1996).

The purpose of this study was to improve teacher retention by emphasizing professionalism through the implementation of daily professional learning communities (PLC) through the methodology of improvement science. For the purpose of this study, professionalism is defined as providing teachers with the necessary structures and support to effectively transition teachers from an isolated working environment to an environment, which builds school-level supportive networks through collaborative, collegial interaction. Because DMS's teacher retention percentage has continued to eclipse 20% the previous two years, an intervention was needed to add consistency and collegiality to the staff. This approach to improving teacher retention builds upon teacher professionalism and ownership of school goals versus previously applied approaches focused on structural changes to deal with discipline (S. Emerson, personal

communication, April 7, 2015). It is also the goal for teachers (a) to collaborate daily to improve content knowledge, (b) to improve and expand instructional practices, and (c) to build teacher interaction to promote peer collaboration opportunities. An additional purpose of the PLCs is to improve the level of academic rigor and instructional methods utilized so all students in the building benefit from a sound education to ultimately raise student achievement and reduce suspension rates.

The purpose of the PLCs is to create conditions, Shirley Hord (1997; 2015) noted in her work and research, which include: (a) Supportive shared Leadership, (b) Shared values and vision, (c) Collective learning and application (d) Peers supporting peers, (e) Supportive conditions, (f) Structural conditions. Frequent structured PLCs can assist in enhancing professionalism by building collegiality, providing peer support, and strengthening instruction (Bryk, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Hord, 1997; 2015; O'Neil, 1995). Not only is the structured time allocated for teachers to meet extremely important and a great first step, it is equally important to structure each meeting so teachers can focus their work on student learning through professional growth (Blankstein, 2004; Troutt, 2014). While teachers can improve individually, teacher working conditions that build collegiality and support will assist in retaining them (Bryk, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 1996). When teachers are provided these professional environments, they begin to take ownership of the organizational goals and vision, and the need for top-down management structures are lessened (Brandt, 1992).

Improvement Science Results

Improvement science methodology was utilized to improve teacher retention at DMS with the hope that the teacher retention percentage would be increased by at least 3% each year to meet or exceed the district percentage each year. Too many programs have been implemented

without consistent follow up and follow through to sustain any significant changes over the years. Declining teacher retention rates, student achievement rates, and increased student discipline incidents required an approach that focused on the most important resource in the school, teachers. While intentions have always been earnest, results have not proven fruitful; therefore, two Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles were implemented during the 2015-2016 school year in order to accomplish the installation, structure, and sustainment of PLCs at DMS.

The focus of the study involves work around the following two questions:

1. Can teacher retention be improved in a high needs school through the development and implementation of professional learning communities?

2. Can improvement of teacher retention through the implementation of professional learning communities and daily peer interaction also positively impact student discipline and student achievement results? Small-scale proofs of concepts will be captured through the use of (a) surveys, (b) program continuation, (c) spread of program, and (d) data as reported in 2016 North Carolina School Report Cards. With regard to surveys, all teachers, instructional assistants, and administration were encouraged to complete. While some questions did not apply to instructional assistants, they indicated to the principal that they wanted the opportunity to provide feedback on areas to which they could respond like school schedule, staff morale, and student discipline (S. Emerson, personal communication, February 23, 2016). Therefore, the final survey did provide the option for participants to whom the question does not apply to choose that option.

Study Question One

Can teacher retention be improved in a high needs school through the development and implementation of professional learning communities?

Study question one results and effects will be articulated through the following two sections that look at the specific PDSA cycles implemented at DMS. The direct effects of the PLCs on student achievement and discipline will be noted later in the chapter.

PDSA One

The first PDSA cycle was implemented the summer of 2015, which included work with the DMS principal to alter the school day schedule, school calendar, and tiered transportation system. The planning began by devising a school day schedule that allowed teachers the opportunity to collaborate daily, while meeting North Carolina's school calendar law of 1,025 instructional hours or 185 school days. The plan also involved a shared busing system for central attendance area schools, so the director of transportation was involved in developing schedules and estimating additional cost. Once all stakeholders agreed upon a school day schedule, it was presented to two separate committees, Curriculum and Instruction and Finance, before its final approval by the Wayne County Board of Education on July 6, 2015. It is worthy to note that the same proposed schedule, which includes daily PLCs has been utilized over the past ten years at Wayne County Public Schools' two most successful schools according to accountability results (NC School Report Card, 2015).

As Wayne County Board of Education Chair, Chris West, stated on June 24, 2015, if schedule change and implemented structures that created opportunities for professional learning communities were successful, the structure should be implemented in all schools. Teachers and staff at DMS were provided a survey at the beginning, middle, and end of the year, which asked specific questions concerning their feelings towards the new school day schedule. It is also worthy to note that with the new schedule, staff at DMS lost five teacher workdays in moving to a 185 school day schedule, which could have a negative impact as teachers and staff progress

through the school year. North Carolina law requires 1,025 instructional hours or 185 school days, and since DMS calendar was previously approved and not to affect the tiered transportation system even more, scheduled teacher workdays were converted to student days. Teachers and staff were asked to respond to survey questions using a Likert Scale that dealt with their feelings on the schedule, its benefits to students, and if positive changes have been noted in staff morale. The percentages of teachers and staff who strongly agree or agree with the schedule benefiting them and students and their perceptions of the programs impact on staff morale (see Table 5) remained consistently positive throughout the year despite the loss of teacher workdays. Although, the principal, Sonja Emerson, did note that staff indicated to her verbally that the loss of teacher workdays was difficult on them as the year progressed (S. Emerson, personal communication, March 10, 2016).

Measures of Improvement

As the interventions unfolded throughout the 2015-2016 school year, notable, positive small-scale proofs of concepts were ascertained. The following is a list of those positive results:

1. The structural change has provided positive, valuable short-term results at DMS, and as a result will continue next year. Because of this success, the principal was able to leverage a transition back to a 180-day calendar, which provides all teacher workdays while still including the morning PLC session for staff.

2. Because of the success of the implemented daily schedule at DMS, the schedule will be mimicked at Goldsboro High School, a low performing high school DMS students attend after completing middle school.

3. For the first time under current administration, no teacher resigned during the school year and DMS exceeded the 3% teacher retention goal.

Table 5

Teacher and Staff Perceptions of New Schedule

	Initial	Mid-Year	End-of-Year
The new school day schedule has been beneficial to me.	82.8%	86%	83.6%
The new school day schedule has been beneficial to students.	78.9%	86.1%	81.6%
There have been positive changes in staff morale.	70.2%	69.8%	71.4%

Note. Complete survey data can be viewed in Appendices A-F.

PDSA Two

The second PDSA cycle is built upon social constructivism to encourage interaction between all teachers, ownership of organizational vision and goals, and personal transformations of new pedagogies to engage students (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). The structure included work between teachers at DMS and work between teachers at DMS and Wayne School of Engineering (WSE). The daily PLC meeting structure was initially created to include:

- Lesson Tuning on Mondays using Critical Friend's protocol.

- Departmental Planning on Tuesdays to improve vertical articulation, cohesive curriculums, and content knowledge.

- Assessment work on Wednesdays to analyze student work to maintain fidelity to grade level standards and high quality student work.

- Professional development on Thursdays to implement a common instructional framework, a common instructional language and common practices.

- Reflections on Friday to celebrate weekly celebrations.

The principal at DMS utilized anonymous staff surveys throughout the year (see Appendices A-F), to determine staff feelings and feedback at the levels of pre-professional learning, mid-professional learning, and post-professional learning. Again, a Likert Scale format was utilized to gauge staff attitudes as they progress through the process and year, and the surveys focus on the key elements of:

1. Opportunities to collaborate with colleagues.
2. Opportunities to share and receive feedback through Lesson Tuning, a Critical Friends protocol.

3. Opportunities to observe lesson tuning, lessons, and instructional strategies modeled at WSE.

4. Effects on student behavior and classroom engagement.

5. Impacts of Common Instructional Framework (CIF) training on instructional practices.

The survey results (see Table 6) provide the percentages for participants who strongly agree or agree with the statements provided. These questions were utilized to offer small-scale proof of concept with regard to the implementation and sustainment of professional learning communities at DMS. They also provide insight into the professional development provided by teachers at WSE throughout the year and its impact on teacher instructional practices.

There was strong indication that the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues was beneficial to teachers and they indicated being open to sharing and receiving ideas. While attitudes on lesson tuning, student behavior, and classroom engagement were rated lower with respect to collaborative behaviors, many remained neutral (see Table 7), which could be the result of an apprehension to initiatives, a mentality of "*this too shall pass*," or just not knowing for sure the true impact of the initiative.

Despite over 90% of teachers indicating they are open to sharing and receiving ideas, it is interesting to note the principal saw the need to improve staff dialogue during the lesson tuning sessions (S. Emerson, personal communication, June 27, 2016). Because there were some "*naysayers*" on staff and the majority of individuals were still not offering suggestions or delving deeply into lessons presented during lesson tuning sessions, the principal had a "*heart to heart*"

Table 6

Implementation and Sustainment of Professional Learning Communities

	Initial	Mid-Year	End-of-Year
The opportunity to collaborate with colleagues was beneficial to me.	81%	86%	82.6%
Lesson Tuning held on Monday mornings was beneficial to improving my lessons.	63.2%	65.1%	61.9%
I am comfortable providing feedback to my peers during lesson tuning.	N/A	88.3%	85.7%
I am comfortable receiving feedback from my peers during lesson tuning.	91.2%	97.7%	90.5%
I am still open to sharing ideas and receiving them from colleagues.	91.2%	95.4%	97.8%
I have noticed a change in student behavior.	63.8%	51.2%	30.6%
I have noticed an improvement in student classroom engagement.	63.8%	67.5%	52.3%
Common Instructional Framework Training has been beneficial to improving my instruction.	N/A	79.1%	72.1%

Note. Complete survey data can be viewed in Appendices A-F. Specific questions concerning lesson tuning and professional development could not be asked in initial survey and questions. Also, the initial survey garnered thoughts on the program and elicited feelings on the program itself, as it was in the early stages of implementation. Example: The opportunity to collaborate with colleagues was worded, "I am excited about the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues."

Table 7

Neutrality of Views

	Initial Neutral	Mid-Year Neutral	End-of-Year Neutral
Lesson Tuning held on Monday mornings was beneficial to improving my lessons.	26.3%	20.9%	26.5%
I have noticed a change in student behavior.	19%	32.6%	44.9%
I have noticed an improvement in student classroom engagement.	24.1%	23.3%	34.1%

Note. Complete survey data can be viewed in Appendices A-F.

conversation to reiterate the purpose and reorganized some groupings at mid-year break (S. Emerson, personal communication, June 27, 2016). Mrs. Emerson (personal communication, June, 27, 2016) also stated she reorganized the lesson tuning groups by placing a few more content specific people together in each group to encourage constructive dialogue.

While there are specific instructional areas where positive results are showing, there remain two areas of concern, student discipline and classroom engagement. Although short-term discipline data shows a slight decrease from the previous year, 143.34 in 2015 to 133.13 in 2016, and Mrs. Emerson (personal communication, June 27, 2016)noted discipline was "down this year", the teacher survey data supports the continued impact student discipline is having on teacher frustration as only 30.6% teachers indicated a positive shift in discipline. North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey (2016) data indicated some improvement from 2014 results, 5.6% to 26.8% indicating students follow rules of conduct, but, as shown in recent survey data, more work needs to be done. Student engagement percentages declined throughout the year and this is also an area of concern. The professional development offered by WSE teachers was included to improve instructional practices, which should increase student engagement and ultimately decrease discipline.

Professional Development

Two WSE teachers provided specific professional development (PD) using Jobs for the Future's Common Instructional Framework (CIF) (2015) each month throughout the 2015-2016 school year. While marketed towards early college design, the CIF provides a framework to improve instructional practices. These two teachers were chosen to deliver PD based on their daily, personal use and deep understanding of the framework. Also, these two teachers have introduced the framework strategies and mirrored personal use over the past four years to visitors

to WSE, and they have even been invited to share their experience with other school districts. The teachers created subsections of each instructional strategy on their website, cifstrategies.weebly.com, so teachers at DMS would be able to reference resources provided to them.

One topic was presented and modeled at each specific professional development session. On September 17, 2015, a general overview of the common instructional framework and teacher needs and desires were gathered; On October 8, 2015, Collaborative grouping strategies were shared; On November 19, 2015, Scaffolding was shared; On December 10, 2015, Questioning was shared; On February 4, 2016, Writing to Learn strategies were shared; On March 3, 2016, Classroom Talk strategies were shared; and on April 21, 2016, Literacy Groups were shared.

The general overview of the CIF September PD session consisted of three guiding questions:

1. What is CIF?
2. How can CIF strategies benefit my students?
3. Which CIF strategies are you most interested in learning about?

Three protocols, Let's do Lunch, Wagon Wheel, and Gallery Walk (see Appendix G), were modeled and included teacher participation. The three protocols were used to gather information on the three guiding questions and elicited some valuable conversation about benefits and obstacles. Teachers noted that lack of (a) student focus, (b) lack of motivation, (c) noise (d) space, and (e) time as major issues to classroom implementation of collaborative strategies. Teachers also noted many positives to the strategies as well, such as a way (a) to focus student conversations, (b) to use as assessments, (c) to use with word problems in math, and (d) to use literary analysis questions. While these strategies can be utilized in all classrooms and subject

areas, there was a small fraction of non-core area teachers who expressed the lack of relevance to their subject matter. Also, there were fears associated with student led classrooms through facilitated instruction, which are understandable, but despite those fears, the overall attitude of the group remained positive after the first session.

The second session held in October focused solely on collaborative grouping strategies. "In Collaborative Group Work, students engage in learning by constructing group solutions, texts, experiments, or works of art" (Common Instructional Framework, 2015). The guiding questions for this session were:

1. How should I group my students?

2. What type of activities can I utilize to incorporate group work?

3. How can I maintain classroom discipline while incorporating group work?

4. How is collaborative grouping beneficial to my class and my students?

Two activities, Magic Sum and Tea Party (see Appendix G), were simulated with teachers, while others were briefly covered. The two-modeled activities were heavily accepted and garnered excitement about classroom use. Classroom management strategies were also discussed and teachers were given strategies such as task sheets, roles, rewards, and competitions. Collaborative grouping PD also elicited conversations about ability grouping within each of the activities. The session ended with a 3-2-1 protocol (see Appendix G) in which participants were asked to list three things learned, two things you will try, and one question you still have. The participants completed this activity on index cards as their ticket out of the door. Responses were positive as the participants enjoyed the grouping strategies they received and many plan on using the shared strategies. Of the 29 respondents, 96.5% were positive, and 24.1% expressed concern about collaborative grouping being used "*with our students*."

Scaffolding was the next CIF strategy provided to instructional staff at DMS. "Scaffolding helps students to connect prior knowledge and experience with new information and ideas" (Common Instructional Framework, 2015). The guiding questions for this session were:

1. What is scaffolding?

2. How can I use scaffolding in my classroom?

3. How does scaffolding help my students?

The session began with teachers completing a KWL chart using post-it notes which depicted what they know, what they want to know, and at the end, what they learned. There were mixed results with regard to responses on what they already know such as "A way to build knowledge" and "Help understand prior knowledge." Some of the responses to what they wanted to know are as follows, "How to use it in the classroom" and "How this applies to my unique students." The session covered protocols such as ABCs, Frayer Model, Prediction Diction, and Cloze Reading (see Appendix G) and the presenters simulated the ABCs protocol (see Appendix G) for the group.

The December professional development session focused on Questioning. "Questioning challenges students and teachers to use good questions as a way to open conversations and further intellectual inquiry" (Common Instructional Framework, 2015). By focusing on effective questioning, teachers and students can deepen their understanding and use of content. Bloom's Taxonomy was referenced throughout the session and Four Question Protocol and The Hot Seat Protocol (see Appendix G) were demonstrated. The teachers were provided helpful hints such as (a) having class index cards with student names that are used for student responses, (b) pre-planning questions ahead of time, (c) referencing Bloom's Taxonomy when questioning or

creating questioning, and (d) building questions at different levels to have students engage in more complex thought. The session ended by having the teachers identify one common instructional framework strategy they feel was successful and to identify one area of improvement. Because improvement is needed in getting reluctant students engaged, such strategies as Let's Do Lunch (see Appendix G) assist in moving these reluctant learners to active participants.

The February session covered the strategy Writing to Learn. "Writing to Learn enables students to experiment every day with written language and to increase their fluency and mastery of written conventions" (Common Instructional Framework, 2015). Writing to learn encompasses both low stakes and high stakes writing. Low stakes writing focuses more on content and less on formal writing, which the high stakes writing takes into account. The guiding question, "How can writing be incorporated in all classes and all learning levels?" drove the professional development session. A graffiti walk (see Appendix G) was utilized to gather participant responses to four questions:

1. What challenges do you face with writing in the classroom?

2. Do you use low and high stakes writing, and if so, how?

3. What kinds of writing strategies do you use in your classroom?

4. What are the benefits of writing in the classroom?

Teachers demonstrated various levels of understanding as shown in their responses to the graffiti walk with written statements such as, "I have never heard of this;" "don't always worry on grammar and spelling, focus on imagination;" or "daily journal responses to prompts." Other low stakes and high stakes protocols were shared with the staff, and an exit ticket using the Essence

Protocol (see Appendix G) was used for teachers to express what they had learned about writing in the classroom.

Classroom Talk was shared as the fifth element within the common instructional framework in March, 2016. "Classroom Talk creates the space for students to articulate their thinking and strengthen their voices" (Common Instructional Framework, 2015). The two guiding questions for the session were:

1. How can I use Classroom Talk in my classroom?

2. What types of classroom strategies can I use in my classroom?

The agenda covered three different types of Classroom Talk strategies such as silent, small group, and whole group. Some particular silent protocols discussed were Collaborative Annotation and Silent Discussion (see Appendix G). A small group Plate Discussion (see Appendix G) was simulated so participants could take part in an activity, which they could mimic within the classroom. Teachers took the role of Observer, Student, Principal, and Teacher for the activity. Participant views definitely change depending on the role they were taking at the time as demonstrated in the student responses, which included, "Some of my teachers have changed their boring methods and are adding more entertaining lessons" and "I have more opportunities to collaborate and learn from my peers."

The last session of the year was on the incorporation of Literacy Groups. "Literacy Groups provide students with a collaborative structure for understanding a variety of texts, problem sets, and documents by engaging them in a high level of discourse" (Common Instructional Framework, 2015). The guiding questions were:

1. What are Literacy Groups?

2. How can I use literacy groups in my classroom?

The agenda consisted of providing background information on Literacy Circle Notes and Roles, Book Club Protocol, and Six Thinking Cards Protocol (see Appendix G). The Six Thinking Cards protocol was simulated with the teachers as they were asked to reflect upon an article on rigor and respond to questions according to color. During the last activity, teachers reflected independently and collectively on the overall professional development program. Some of the most popular protocols mentioned were Gallery Walk, Wagon Wheel, and Silent Discussion Protocols (see Appendix G). The following written statement by a teacher at DMS summed up the positive effects of the professional learning community and professional development very well.

> "Students will know what to expect from all teachers because we will be on the same page. I feel that by utilizing these strategies on a regular basis by all teachers-students will continue to grow and they will become eager for more. We have raised the bar and they are reaching it."

Survey results on the professional development offered to DMS teachers once a month (see Table 8) provide the percentages of those who strongly agree and agree and those who remained neutral on the topic. The teachers were also able to articulate in writing the most beneficial aspects of the common instructional framework training (see Appendix E). All six instructional strategies were mentioned as being beneficial to those who responded. Some of the feedback included:

- "Collaborative grouping has helped me fine tune my classroom management piece. I am able to strategically place students in groups where I am aiding their strengths while assisting their weaknesses."

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Table 8

Perceptions of Common Instructional Framework Training

	Initial	Mid-Year	End-of-Year
Common Instructional Framework Training has been beneficial to improving my instruction.	N/A	79.1%	72.1%
Neutrality of Views	N/A	Neutral 16.3%	Neutral 18.6%

Note. Complete survey data can be viewed in Appendix A-F.

- "Writing to Learn was most beneficial to me because I learned how multiple low and high stakes writing opportunities and how to incorporate those opportunities in not only ELA classes but other content areas to include electives areas."

- "Scaffolding because there are so many students with needs scaffolding allows me to meet each student where they are."

- "Classroom talk allows more student engagement."

Professional Learning Community Program

The final survey also offered teachers the opportunity to articulate in writing final thoughts on the beneficial aspects of the PLCs on school culture, student learning, and teacher support. With regard to the influence of PLCs on school culture, seventy three percent of survey participants felt the PLCs had been beneficial in improving school culture at DMS. Only three participants felt that there was no benefit and ten remained neutral. Participants were provided the opportunity to provide written feedback indicating specifically how the PLC has benefited school culture (see Appendix E). The following are excerpts taken from the end-of-year survey results (see Appendix E):

- "Everyone is more focused and driven to exceed growth. Last year I saw that they wanted growth, but this year we are hungry and are pushing ourselves and students."

- "It has been beneficial because it created open dialogue between colleagues that might not have been there otherwise. Also it allowed the opportunity for teachers to come together when they have a 'fresh' mind and share ideas instead of always meeting after school to collaborate."

- "We do not feel isolated. The PLC time has created built in time to collaborate."

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The purpose of PLCs is to create supportive, structured school environments where teachers can share ideas through a collaborative approach to build a peer network within each school (Hord, 1997; 2015; O'Neil, 1995). The sample teacher responses above provide support to the idea that PLCs can assist in changing school environments from places of isolation to places of collaboration and support.

The next question focused on the feelings the PLCs had on benefiting student learning at DMS. Similar results to school culture were noted, as 71.5% felt it was beneficial; three disagreed and 11 remained neutral. Some positive examples of written feedback (see Appendix F for all feedback) provided by participants on how the PLCs benefited students include:

- "Everyone's on the same page. I can incorporate reading into math because I know what's going on in their reading classes. I can ask the art teacher to do a project with his students to reinforce my math lessons and we talk after."
- "It allowed a risk free environment for teachers to share data of formative assessments and allowed teachers to be able to analyze student work in order to understand the effectiveness of their instruction."
- "We learned our teammates better and became like a family."
- "Equal expectations from teachers."

Again, PLC research by Senge (1993), Hord (1997; 2015), O'Neil (1995), and Blankstein (2004) is supported by the participant feelings and is denoted in their desire to improve not only themselves but student learning as well.

Teacher support has been noted in previous responses with references to collaboration, peer support, and environments, but participants were given the opportunity to respond directly to the support PLCs have offered. Again, similar results were noted as 71.5% agreed; four

disagreed and ten remained neutral. Participants were encouraged to express their feelings (see Appendix E) on what specific supports assisted them the most as noted in the following examples:

- "Collaboration with Content Specific Strategies to maximize and improve overall student learning."

- "Adding instructional tools to my tool belt."

- "It has given me resources to improve teaching."

- "Just a since (*sic*) of not being alone and great ideas."

While the majority of participants provided positive feedback, there were consistently three to four participants, as noted on survey results from various stages throughout the year, who expressed disagreement throughout the year. While there will always be those individuals who do not accept change, this small percentage should not be enough to deter efforts to move forward and continue the PLC program.

Measures of Improvement

As previously mentioned, the measure for improvement was to improve DMS's teacher retention by 3% each year to eventually meet or better the district percentage. The noted measures of improvement continue to prove the PLC research (Byrk, 2010; Cambron-McCabe, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 1996; Hord, 1997; 2015, O'Neil, 1995; Senge, 1993) as DMS exceeded the 3% teacher retention goal in the first year of implementation. The results of the survey data has also contributed to the small scale proof of concept that teacher retention can be improved through the development and implementation of PLCs. While the schedule provided the structure for the PLCs, the organization of the time was extremely important for teacher interaction and support. The definite benefits of a PLCs at DMS are noted by (1) survey results,

(2) continued PLC structure, (3) continued partnership with Wayne School of Engineering, (4) continued professional development on Common Instructional Strategies, (5) no teacher resigning mid-year, and (6) a 3.5% increase in teacher retention.

<p style="text-align:center">Study Question Two</p>

Can improvement of teacher retention through the implementation of professional learning communities and daily peer interaction also positively impact student discipline and student achievement results?

Study question two deals with the effects the teacher retention improvement at DMS had on lowering student discipline numbers and improving student achievement. While teacher retention has shown improvement and exceeded the 3% improvement in teacher retention, student discipline and student achievement did not initially show such marked improvements, as expected. While positive impacts to teacher retention can be impacted with structural changes to create collegiality through space and time, to positively impact student achievement and improve student discipline will take years of consistent behavioral management training and instructional training, which cannot be accomplished in one short year of work.

Discipline Data

Student discipline at DMS did improve (see Table 9), but the overall effects on short-term suspension numbers were not significant. The end-of-year survey data where 30.6% of staff felt student discipline improved correlates with the high number of short-term suspensions and could indicate teachers need strong supports in the area of classroom management strategies.

Behavioral management training and training on working with students of poverty could prove beneficial to improving daily disciplinary issues. Not only do teachers need to be equipped with effective teaching strategies, the need to be equipped with effective strategies to deal with

Table 9

Most Recent DMS Discipline Rates

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
DMS	76	88.01	107.24	11.76	90.08	143.34	133.13
District	43	40.05	38.92	35.36	36.74	42.07	32.35

Note. 2013 data is not accurate due to assistant principal not reporting data and a system had not been created to document the numerous office referrals (S. Emerson, personal communication, May 29, 2015). Source: NC School Report Cards, 2016.

students who may not look, talk, act, or live as they do. When this training is coupled with sustained professional learning communities, peer interaction, and Common Instructional Framework (Jobs for the Future) training, a positive school culture can then be created and molded to assist in lowering the suspension number. True school change takes place when teachers and students begin to work together and when each party begins to take ownership of the areas of which he or she can control. While the implementation and sustainment of professional learning communities assisted in improving teacher retention at Dillard Middle School, further exploration of specific behavioral supports is worth implementing and studying.

Achievement Data

While proficiency increased slightly in six of eight tested areas, these numbers continue to demonstrate a large discrepancy of students not achieving on grade level (see Table 10). Despite continuing to show growth in grades six and seven math and reading using EVAAS Data (2015 & 2016), DMS, again, received a state letter grade rating of F in 2016. Grade eight also continued to lag behind in both proficiency and growth. As with discipline data, improvements in achievement have been noted, although small, and demonstrate a positive trend. With a sustained and focused approach to the structure and focus, continuous improvement should be noticeable. The professional learning community time and structure can be beneficial in increasing teacher content and instructional knowledge, but this evolution will not occur overnight. There is no easy fix to complex issues, but it is important to allow the instructional training time to embed itself in the daily framework and psyche of the teaching staff to create positive learning environments, which empower students to think and respond deeply about content.

Table 10

Most Recent DMS Proficiency Score Percentages

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
5th Grade Reading	40.1	43.8	45.3	9.7	13.5	11.7	12.7
5th Grade Math	55.6	62.1	65.9	7.1	6.2	8.7	20.0
6th Grade Reading	52.7	51.3	46.5	19.1	19.5	22.9	30.5
6th Grade Math	65.9	65.8	52.9	9.2	10.6	<5	12.6
7th Grade Reading	47.4	41.5	43	15.1	26.3	21.1	26.7
7th Grade Math	60	61.5	63.1	10.1	11.3	9.6	11.9
8th Grade Reading	50	49.3	52.8	15.2	17.3	17.6	14.6
8th Grade Math	79	68.7	76.4	5	<5	7.5	6.3

Note. Source: NC School Report Cards, 2016.

<center>**Recommendations**</center>

While this study has yielded positive results regarding improving teacher retention at Dillard Middle School (DMS), there are and will always remain areas where improvements can be made. Without a critical lens and without working in a constant state of improvement, complacency can overtake our efforts and/or we try to add additional mandates, which convolute the efforts of teachers by tacking on more burdens. Because I have lived in this work for the past ten years and learned valuable lessons, my recommendations for DMS are to (1) continue with the same structured environment and professional development focus for at least 5 years or until practices become daily habits, (2) provide Critical Friends Training to all staff using Title I funding, (3) encourage more teacher interaction with Wayne School of Engineering (WSE) teachers, and (4) encourage more administrative participation in daily professional learning community (PLC) meetings.

Recommendation One

It is human nature to take positive momentum too far by installing new mandates and structures, but new initiatives can also easily disrupt that same momentum. With that being said, DMS administration and teachers need to continue the same structure and professional development focus over the course of many years. As I stated above, I have lived this same structure and focus, and it took five-plus years to instill and install our instructional framework where it became a habit of mind for staff. This consistent and constant focus also provides consistency of staff when teacher turnover does occur, whereas the staff can more easily and readily assist new hires in their adaptation to the instructional environment. The initiatives and training that occurs year-in and year-out rarely provide a focused instructional approach whole staffs' adopt.

<center>73</center>

Recommendation Two

Over the course of the year, the principal noticed that teachers were only providing positive feedback to each other during professional development sessions (S. Emerson, personal communication, June 27, 2016). She stated that this did improve when she made some personnel adjustments to the groupings by adding teachers of the same curriculum together versus having more diverse curricular groupings (S. Emerson, personal communication, June 27, 2016). It is my suggestion that Critical Friends' Training be provided to whole staff, if possible, or lead teachers, who can, in turn, train the others. The National School Reform Faculty (NSRF) provides this training and trainers can travel to school or district sites, and it is recommended that Title I funding be used to cover the cost of this training. This recommendation is not an advertisement for NSRF, but this training could speed the pace of the teachers with regard to their willingness to provide constructive feedback to improve practices. After all, the goal is to move all parties through Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development (Northouse, 2016) from the Obedience and Punishment Stage to the Universal Principles Stage where individuals are comfortable providing and receiving advice. When teachers reach this final stage, professional learning communities can function at a high level.

Recommendation Three

One area that could definitely be improved upon is the relationship between DMS and WSE teachers. A relationship was developed between the two WSE teachers who provided professional development to the whole staff at DMS once a month. There were also a small number of teachers from DMS who visited WSE one time during the year to observe school culture and instructional practices. This limited interaction did not develop the fruitful collegiality I had hoped for in the beginning of this study, and a DMS teacher echoed this

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sentiment in the final portion of the survey, "more collaboration among teachers from Dillard and WSE through modeling of lessons for each school's students and more one on one or content specific driven PD." Because of the need for more specific supports, more teachers and/or whole curricular departments from WSE will be providing content driven professional development to teachers at DMS. The instructional framework support currently in place will continue, and per DMS teacher and administrative request, the WSE English department will be supporting DMS teachers with vocabulary development through additional PD sessions (S. Emerson, personal communication, June 27, 2016).

Recommendation Four

As noted in Chapter 3, leadership is an extremely important aspect to this structural and instructional change. As administration works to move the staff through Kohlberg's Stages of Development (Northouse, 2016), it is extremely important for them to engage with the staff. What I mean by this statement is that administrators need to "*sit with and beside the staff*" and not "*stand above them*" in an authoritative manner. This transformative or adaptive form of leadership (Northouse, 2016) will assist teachers by allowing them to see administrators in a different role. By changing the view of the role of administration, teachers will begin to open up and take more risk with regard to instructional practices and sharing of those practices without fear of reprimand. Because of the strong bonds that can be developed, these two types of leadership behaviors can transform organizational culture by creating collaborative environments where teachers internalize the work and begin to own the school's mission and vision (Northouse, 2016; Strike et al., 2005). This approach means that the administrators need to be involved in tuning groups, grade level or departmental planning sessions, celebrations, etc. This approach is about putting the work in the hands of the teachers to build capacity of both the

individual and organization (Northouse, 2016). It may be worthwhile for universities who

provide graduate level programs in school administration to explore leadership style training and

scenarios, which provide students with ways to support teachers through shared leadership

approaches.

Summation

With the positive impact on teacher retention this study achieved in one year of

implementation, the results are just a small indication of what is attainable with regard to positive

growth in teacher retention, academics, and reduction in discipline. While daily structures and

professional learning communities definitely assist in achieving small-scale proofs of concepts,

each important element may vary according to school setting and/or focus. The one key element,

and one, which I feel, cannot be ignored is the importance of leadership (Hord, 1997) to support

teachers and to maintain and sustain the school improvement focus. As with earlier efforts to

positively impact instruction at DMS, the focus and approach to professional development was

not consistent and did not positively impact instruction, nor did it positively impact teacher

retention as noted in the data. As an instructional leader, I have witnessed the positive impact a

consistent and sustained approach to modifying school structures and consistent professional

development can have on creating teacher leaders (Elmore, 2000; Learning First Alliance, 2005)

who morally own the work (Blankstein, 2004; Brandt, 1992; Northouse, 2016, p. 338; Smith,

2006) and who do not place blame on the students. As I have witnessed in my own work over the

past ten years, positive results will be yielded if leadership makes a concerted effort to make sure

the following five focus areas are developed, (a) Support from principal (Alexander, 2010;

Betancourt et al., 1994; Billingsley & Others, 1995; Chittom & Sistrunk, 1990; Ingersoll, 2001;

Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007); (b) Collegial environment and emotional support (Maranto &

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Shuls, 2012; Odell & Ferrano, 1992; SERVE, 2006; Wynn, Carboni, & Patall, 2007); (c) School

structures around student discipline, motivation, class size and planning time (Darling-

Hammond, 1997; Ingersoll, 2001); and (d) Professional growth and autonomy (Maranto & Shuls,

2012; Shann, 1998; Zhang, 2006).

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APPENDIX A: DILLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL'S NEW SCHEDLE SURVEY

Dillard Middle School's New Schedule

As we advance in this new endeavor, I would like to collect evidence throughout the year pertaining to our progress. Please take the time to take this anonymous survey regarding that progress. Thank you.

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to me.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to students.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

I am excited about the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

The opportunity to witness lesson tuning as modeled at WSE was beneficial.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

The "LessonTuning Protocol" used Monday mornings will aid my classroom instruction.

- o ◯ Strongly Agree
- o ◯ Agree
- o ◯ Neutral
- o ◯ Disagree
- o ◯ Strongly Disagree

The lesson tuning process on Monday mornings has aided my classroom instruction.

- o ◯ Strongly Agree
- o ◯ Agree
- o ◯ Neutral
- o ◯ Disagree
- o ◯ Strongly Disagree

I am open to sharing ideas and receiving them.

- o ◯ Strongly Agree
- o ◯ Agree
- o ◯ Neutral
- o ◯ Disagree
- o ◯ Strongly Disagree

I have noticed positive changes in staff morale.

- o ◯ Strongly Agree
- o ◯ Agree
- o ◯ Neutral
- o ◯ Disagree
- o ◯ Strongly Disagree

I have noticed a change in student behavior.

- o ◯ Strongly Agree
- o ◯ Agree
- o ◯ Neutral
- o ◯ Disagree
- o ◯ Strongly Disagree

I have noticed an improvement in student classroom engagement.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

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APPENDIX B: DILLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL'S NEW SCHEDULE SURVEY RESULTS

59 responses

Summary

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to me.

Strongly Agree	**37**	63.8%
Agree	**11**	19%
Neutral	**4**	6.9%
Disagree	**3**	5.2%
Strongly Disagree	**3**	5.2%

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to students.

Strongly Agree	**35**	61.4%
Agree	**10**	17.5%
Neutral	**8**	14%
Disagree	**2**	3.5%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	3.5%

I am excited about the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues.

Strongly Agree	**31**	53.4%
Agree	**16**	27.6%
Neutral	**9**	15.5%
Disagree	**1**	1.7%
Strongly Disagree	**1**	1.7%

The opportunity to witness lesson tuning as modeled at WSE was beneficial.

Strongly Agree	**24**	42.1%
Agree	**12**	21.1%
Neutral	**18**	31.6%
Disagree	**2**	3.5%
Strongly Disagree	**1**	1.8%

The "LessonTuning Protocol" used Monday mornings will aid my classroom instruction.

Strongly Agree	**25**	44.6%
Agree	**13**	23.2%
Neutral	**16**	28.6%
Disagree	**0**	0%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	3.6%

The lesson tuning process on Monday mornings has aided my classroom instruction.

Strongly Agree	**21**	36.8%
Agree	**17**	29.8%
Neutral	**15**	26.3%
Disagree	**2**	3.5%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	3.5%

I am open to sharing ideas and receiving them.

Strongly Agree	**39**	68.4%
Agree	**13**	22.8%
Neutral	**4**	7%
Disagree	**0**	0%
Strongly Disagree	**1**	1.8%

I have noticed positive changes in staff morale.

Strongly Agree	**24**	42.1%
Agree	**16**	28.1%
Neutral	**8**	14%
Disagree	**6**	10.5%
Strongly Disagree	**3**	5.3%

I have noticed a change in student behavior.

Strongly Agree	**14**	24.1%
Agree	**23**	39.7%
Neutral	**11**	19%
Disagree	**8**	13.8%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	3.4%

I have noticed an improvement in student classroom engagement.

Strongly Agree	**20**	34.5%
Agree	**17**	29.3%
Neutral	**14**	24.1%
Disagree	**6**	10.3%
Strongly Disagree	**1**	1.7%

APPENDIX C: DILLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL'S MID-YEAR REVIEW SURVEY

Dillard Middle School Mid-Year Review

As we continue this endeavor, I would like to collect evidence throughout the year pertaining to our progress. Please take time to respond to this anonymous survey regarding that progress. Thank you.
* Required

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to me. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to students. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

I am still excited about the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

Lesson tuning held on Monday mornings has been beneficial to improving my lessons. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

I am comfortable providing feedback to my peers during lesson tuning. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

I am comfortable receiving feedback from my peers during lesson tuning. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

I am still open to sharing ideas and receiving them. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

There have been positive changes in staff morale. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

I have noticed a change in student behavior. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

I have noticed an improvement in student classroom engagement. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

Common Instructional Framework Training has been beneficial to improving my instruction. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

What common instructional framework session has been most beneficial to improving my instruction and why? (You can provide more than one if necessary) *

Your answer

☐

If you could change one thing about the collaborative planning time, what would it be?
Your answer

☐

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APPENDIX D: DILLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL'S MID-YEAR

REVIEW SURVEY RESULTS

43 responses

Summary

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to me.

Strongly Agree	**29**	67.4%
Agree	**8**	18.6%
Neutral	**3**	7%
Disagree	**1**	2.3%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.7%

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to students.

Strongly Agree	**27**	62.8%
Agree	**10**	23.3%
Neutral	**3**	7%
Disagree	**1**	2.3%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.7%

I am still excited about the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues.

Strongly Agree	**24**	55.8%
Agree	**13**	30.2%
Neutral	**4**	9.3%
Disagree	**0**	0%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.7%

Lesson tuning held on Monday mornings has been beneficial to improving my lessons.

Strongly Agree	**12**	27.9%
Agree	**16**	37.2%
Neutral	**9**	20.9%
Disagree	**4**	9.3%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.7%

I am comfortable providing feedback to my peers during lesson tuning.

Strongly Agree	**9**	20.9%
Agree	**29**	67.4%
Neutral	**3**	7%
Disagree	**1**	2.3%
Strongly Disagree	**1**	2.3%

I am comfortable receiving feedback from my peers during lesson tuning.

Strongly Agree	**18**	41.9%
Agree	**24**	55.8%
Neutral	**1**	2.3%
Disagree	**0**	0%
Strongly Disagree	**0**	0%

I am still open to sharing ideas and receiving them.

Strongly Agree	**26**	60.5%
Agree	**15**	34.9%
Neutral	**1**	2.3%
Disagree	**1**	2.3%
Strongly Disagree	**0**	0%

There have been positive changes in staff morale.

Strongly Agree	**11**	25.6%
Agree	**19**	44.2%
Neutral	**8**	18.6%
Disagree	**3**	7%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.7%

I have noticed a change in student behavior.

Strongly Agree	**12**	27.9%
Agree	**10**	23.3%
Neutral	**14**	32.6%
Disagree	**5**	11.6%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.7%

I have noticed an improvement in student classroom engagement.

Strongly Agree	**10**	23.3%
Agree	**19**	44.2%
Neutral	**10**	23.3%
Disagree	**2**	4.7%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.7%

Common Instructional Framework Training has been beneficial to improving my instruction.

Strongly Agree	**16**	37.2%
Agree	**18**	41.9%
Neutral	**7**	16.3%
Disagree	**1**	2.3%
Strongly Disagree	**1**	2.3%

What common instructional framework session has been most beneficial to improving my instruction and why? (You can provide more than one if necessary)

N/A

Reading strategies, and incorporating math into reading.

all of them

The Writing to Learn and the Question Professional Development

Implementing vocabulary strategies

the wayne school of engineering ladies sharing what they do in their classrooms

collaborative grouping

None of the sessions have been very beneficial to me.

working with the 5th grade teachers.

Fridays Reflections

Low Stakes Writing

Collaborative Grouping

I get constructuve feedback from peers and able to get new ideas which have helped my instruction.

New activity ideas to help keep students engaged.

Grouping students. I love to allow students to discuss their material with other students. It was a struggle at first getting the students to be successful, but they are much more successful now

Lesson plan tuning & Tues./Wed. PLC's

lesson tuning

ELA PLA sessions

I think the 32-16-8 strategy has been most beneficial to my science class and the magic number start and the gallery walk for my math class. These engage students on different levels and cause then to be responsible for their own learning.

The PD every Tuesday and Wednesday has been amazing.

Collaborating with other staff

Wagon wheel

Jot, 32-16-8, magic number

How to properly write essential questions.

I do not have one particular that I liked most. I have been able to take something from each session and use.

Management and teaching strategies

Cross curriculum training.

Different strategies for different learners.

Strategies on creating grouping.

The grouping session was very helpful. I also enjoyed the session about spicing up morning work.

Rigor

I found it very interesting to include the gallery walks and passing the plate PD into my instruction.

Learning new ways to do grouping. Our students are active and mobile learners.
Professional Development WSE professional trainings
Those that are provided by your staff, with the activities they use was helpful.
The feed back we receive
Classroom strategies within the classroom setting, also literacy strategies as a cross-curriculum strategy
Gallery walk, as it provided a new and engaging strategy for me to work with my students.
The Tuesday and Wednesday sessions.
Lesson plan tuning because it improved my lesson plan writing.
Preparing myself to be successful in the classroom

If you could change one thing about the collaborative planning time, what would it be?

The time work well for me. Excited about being apart of the change. I'v grown a lot as a person and teacher.
nothing
No changes
Leave one day a week to allow staff to work together in small groups of 2 or 3 on collaborative or actual implementation of ideas.
principals attend them
Do without it,not benefitting me or the students
not to have it everyday, maybe 3 days out of 5.
That we actually have time to really plan.
I would like to see more examples of how to present the curriculum to meet the needs of all students and to ensure our lessons are rigorous enough to demonstrate growth and proficiency.
I wish I could get "real" feedback on my lessons. They only feedback received is everything looks great. I think the staff could benefit on HOW to give constructive criticism without worrying about hurting someone's feelings.
Maybe require a breakdown of lesson plans even deeper for content areas.
Collaborate with all staff on ELA/Math ideas so everyone can integrate better.
Have more time to put strategies in place while collaborating with colleagues.
For PLC's to only be 2-3x a week in the morning instead of every day of the week.
NA
I would make lesson plan tuning have a written feedback sheet so that each lesson would be rated for the items we are learning to critique. Such as with the science fair there were set scoring sheets that made us look more critically at the projects. I think a shooting sheet for lesson plans work help us look deeper into how much rigor is occurring.
Making sure every teacher is participating.
That we weren't so separated. One plc should be with your team at least once a month.

At some point an opportunity to collaborate with my subject area only.

Bring in more activities to use for each lesson.

Mix grade levels

I would rather come in even later and stay later. I think being on the same schedule as School of engineering is better.

None

more actual planning, improving the plans themselves less in-theory planning

More about how to use data to drive instruction

I would free up some time to allow teachers time to work diligently in their classrooms. With all the PD being shared, there is no absolute way to put it into practice because there is no time to truly brainstorm how to incorporate most that have been shared. Working under stress with no time to work in your room during any of these mornings is very draining. Once a week, a day should be set aside for organizing the classroom and doing lesson reflections.

We wouldn't have it.

We should have one day in which we can collaborate with our grade level subject teachers to effectively plan and utilize new teaching techniques for our subject area.

uninterrupted planning

Not everyday, maybe 3 days out of the week.

Not having to meet everyday. It's very draining having to meet everyday of the week.

more time in the classroom receiving one on one training

Nothing at all, I think it is great just as it is.

Real collaborative planning is going to take a while to implement. Be patient.

Nothing. Everything's great!

N/A

Nothing

APPENDIX E: DILLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL'S END-OF-YEAR REVIEW SURVEY

Dillard Middle School End-of-Year Review

Thank you for your willingness to engage in school improvement and engage with Wayne School of Engineering. It is hard to believe a year has come and gone. After reading the message below, we, Mrs. Emerson and I, ask for your final input on our work together. If your role did not allow you to participate in the professional learning community, we have added the option "Does Not Apply;" with regard to written responses, please provide same response. Thank you,

Dear Participant,

I am a student at East Carolina University in the Educational Leadership department. I am asking you to take part in my research study entitled, "Emphasizing Professionalism to Address Teacher Turnover at Dillard Middle School."

The purpose of this research is to improve teacher retention through the implementation of daily professional learning communities. By doing this research, I hope to learn 1) Can teacher retention be improved in a high needs school through the development and implementation of professional learning communities? and 2) Can improvement of teacher retention through implementation of professional learning communities and daily peer interaction also positively impact student discipline and student achievement results? Your participation is completely voluntary.

You are being invited to take part in this research because of your current employment as a teacher at Dillard Middle School. The amount of time it will take you to complete this survey is no longer than 30 minutes.

If you agree to take part in this survey, you will be asked questions that relate to the implementation and quality of the professional learning community, professional development, new schedule, teacher morale, student engagement, and student discipline.

This research is overseen by the ECU Institutional Review Board. Therefore some of the IRB members or the IRB staff may need to review my research data. However, the information you provide will not be linked to you. Therefore, your responses cannot be traced back to you by anyone, including Dillard Middle School administration and me.

If you have questions about your rights when taking part in this research, call the Office of Research Integrity & Compliance (ORIC) at phone number 252-744-2914 (days, 8:00 am-5:00 pm). If you would like to report a complaint or concern about this research study, call the Director of ORIC, at 252-744- 1971.

You do not have to take part in this research, and you can stop at any time. If you decide you are willing to take part in this study, please provide your responses to the anonymous survey.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my research.

Sincerely, Gary Hales, Principal Investigator   * Required

Dillard Middle School End-of-Year Review
* Required

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to me. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to students. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

The opportunity to collaborate with colleagues was beneficial to me. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree
- o Does Not Apply

The most beneficial aspect of collaboration was... *
Your answer

Lesson Tuning held on Monday mornings was beneficial to improving my lessons. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree
- o Does Not Apply

I am comfortable providing feedback to my peers during lesson tuning. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree
- o Does Not Apply

I am comfortable receiving feedback from my peers during lesson tuning. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree
- o Does Not Apply

I am still open to sharing ideas and receiving them from colleagues. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree
- o Does Not Apply

There have been positive changes in staff morale. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

I have noticed a change in student behavior. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

I have noticed an improvement in student classroom engagement. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree
- o Does Not Apply

Common Instructional Framework Training has been beneficial to improving my instruction. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree
- o Does Not Apply

What common instructional framework session(s) has been most beneficial to improving my instruction and why? Collaborative Grouping, Scaffolding, Questioning, Writing to Learn, Classroom Talk, or Literacy Groups (You can provide more than one if necessary) *
Your answer
☐

If you could change one thing about collaborative planning time, what would it be? *
Your answer
☐

Overall, Professional Learning Communities have been beneficial to improving culture at Dillard Middle School. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

How has the Professional Learning Community proven beneficial to improving school culture? *
Your answer
☐

Overall, Professional Learning Communities have been beneficial to student learning at Dillard

Middle School. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

How has the Professional Learning Community proven most beneficial to students? *
Your answer
☐

Overall, Professional Learning Communities have provided necessary supports to teachers at

Dillard Middle School. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

What specific support(s) has the Professional Learning Community provided to you? *
Your answer
☐

Looking ahead to next school year, I want to continue Professional Learning Communities at

Dillard Middle School. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree

What additional supports, if any, do you feel you need in order to be successful next school

year? *
Your answer
☐

(If you were able to observe a teacher at Wayne School of Engineering, please respond.) The opportunity to observe a peer at Wayne School of Engineering was beneficial to me. *
- o Strongly Agree
- o Agree
- o Neutral
- o Disagree
- o Strongly Disagree
- o Does Not Apply

If you observed a teacher at Wayne School of Engineering, what was most beneficial about the experience? *
Your answer

How could the partnership with Wayne School of Engineering be strengthened? *
Your answer

BACK

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

APPENDIX F: DILLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL'S END-OF-YEAR REVIEW

SURVEY RESULTS

49 responses

Summary

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to me.

Strongly Agree	**28**	57.1%
Agree	**13**	26.5%
Neutral	**5**	10.2%
Disagree	**2**	4.1%
Strongly Disagree	**1**	2%

The new school day schedule has been beneficial to students.

Strongly Agree	**25**	51%
Agree	**15**	30.6%
Neutral	**6**	12.2%
Disagree	**1**	2%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.1%

The opportunity to collaborate with colleagues was beneficial to me.

Strongly Agree	**24**	49%
Agree	**14**	28.6%
Neutral	**4**	8.2%
Disagree	**2**	4.1%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.1%
Does Not Apply	**3**	6.1%

The most beneficial aspect of collaboration was...

Tuesday and Wednesday morning Content Area PLC

vertical alignment and cif strategies

Being able to meet with other grade levels for vertical alignment of specific content as well as being able to listen to and sometimes implement ideas from other teachers that I did not think of.

The sharing of ideas and being able to receive them from other grade levels was great.

Getting ideas and strategies to teach and classroom management.

does not apply

learning new effective ideas

the sense of community

the suggestions and ideas presented in order for us to become better educators

Monday Morning PLC.

learning strategies from others

Working in my content area PLC

Sharing Ideas

Having time to collaborate and plan with the regular education teachers of the students I serve through the EC program was very beneficial. I feel that I gained a better understanding of the grade level curriculum as well as the instructional methods being used with my students in the regular education setting. It facilitated communication about the progress these students were or were not making.

Gaining resources

Sharing activities, opinions, ideas, and a hat of resources.

This does not apply.

learning how to make my daily instruction more data driven and effective in order to meet the needs of my students. Collaborating with co-workers and learning from each other has also provided me the opportunity to add many additional tools to my teaching toolbox that otherwise I would not have had the opportunity to do. When teachers have the opportunity to bounce ideas off one another great ideas are born. I do think it can be fine tuned to become even better in the future.

I didn't see where I benefit.

Lesson llan tuning

learning new ways to present material and having input from others during planning

An increase in cooperation across core areas

Tuesday and Wednesday department PLC's facilitated by Manning Musgrave.

hearing others ideas and input and expanding content through group discussion

Getting a chance to interact with new staff more.

Having our own teachers performing workshops that are in different our areas.

Getting suggestions on how to implement new strategies.

Receiving constructive criticism which led to growth and new innovative teaching ideas.
The time to bond with colleagues.
Staff could expect to meet daily.
Working with other content areas
Not having to find time during the day or after school to collaborate . I also enjoyed come constructive criticism.
DNA
Being able to hear different perspectives from others
planning time
Collaboration on Lesson Plans
The opportunity to share with peers was witnessed and supported by colleagues
resources
More communication between grade levels
Learning new techniques
Learning from others
Meeting and greeting with teachers that had concerns about certain issues to resolve them.....great fellowship also...
Getting new ideas
Sharing across academic areas
Sharing information among teachers and cross grade levels
Communication
I am a new employee to DMS but it has helped me to get to know everyone.
Receiving feedback and learning new ideas to use in instruction.
This gave teachers a chance to dialogue with colleagues whereas daily schedule time would not have otherwise permitted.
Trying different ideas.

Lesson Tuning held on Monday mornings was beneficial to improving my lessons.

Strongly Agree	**14**	28.6%
Agree	**12**	24.5%
Neutral	**13**	26.5%
Disagree	**1**	2%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.1%
Does Not Apply	**7**	14.3%

I am comfortable providing feedback to my peers during lesson tuning.

Strongly Agree	**17**	34.7%
Agree	**19**	38.8%
Neutral	**4**	8.2%
Disagree	**2**	4.1%
Strongly Disagree	**0**	0%
Does Not Apply	**7**	14.3%

I am comfortable receiving feedback from my peers during lesson tuning.

Strongly Agree	**21**	42.9%
Agree	**17**	34.7%
Neutral	**3**	6.1%
Disagree	**1**	2%
Strongly Disagree	**0**	0%
Does Not Apply	**7**	14.3%

I am still open to sharing ideas and receiving them from colleagues.

Strongly Agree	**25**	51%
Agree	**19**	38.8%
Neutral	**1**	2%
Disagree	**0**	0%
Strongly Disagree	**0**	0%
Does Not Apply	**4**	8.2%

There have been positive changes in staff morale.

Strongly Agree	**15**	30.6%
Agree	**20**	40.8%
Neutral	**10**	20.4%
Disagree	**3**	6.1%
Strongly Disagree	**1**	2%

I have noticed a change in student behavior.

Strongly Agree	**4**	8.2%
Agree	**11**	22.4%
Neutral	**22**	44.9%
Disagree	**11**	22.4%
Strongly Disagree	**1**	2%

I have noticed an improvement in student classroom engagement.

Strongly Agree	**7**	14.3%
Agree	**16**	32.7%
Neutral	**15**	30.6%
Disagree	**5**	10.2%
Strongly Disagree	**1**	2%
Does Not Apply	**5**	10.2%

Common Instructional Framework Training has been beneficial to improving my instruction.

Strongly Agree	**12**	24.5%
Agree	**19**	38.8%
Neutral	**8**	16.3%
Disagree	**1**	2%
Strongly Disagree	**3**	6.1%
Does Not Apply	**6**	12.2%

What common instructional framework session(s) has been most beneficial to improving my instruction and why? Collaborative Grouping, Scaffolding, Questioning, Writing to Learn, Classroom Talk, or Literacy Groups (You can provide more than one if necessary)

N/A

collaborative grouping

Collaborative Grouping

Collaborative grouping has helped me fine tune my classroom management piece. I am able to strategically place students in groups where I am aiding their strengths while assisting their weaknesses.

class talk

Writing to Learn was most beneficial to me because I learned about multiple low and high stakes writing opportunities and how to incorporate those opportunities in not only ELA classes but other content areas to include elective areas.

Scaffolding, because it allows the students to learn progressively, from easy to complex, and at the end they can create new sentences that they can apply to their real life.

does not apply

Classroom Talk allows more student engagement.

questioning

Collaborative grouping because students need to learn to work together and teach each other concepts

n/a

all of them were very helpful

LiteraCy Groups

Questioning and Scaffolding

Grouping

Scaffolding, questioning, and classroom talk are especially helpful and beneficial to students.

This does not apply.

Writing to Learn

Scaffolding and classroom talk

Literacy groups, scaffolding

Writing to learn.

Scaffolding because it gave some many different ways to build on the students prior knowledge

classroom talk was more beneficial than any of the sessions because it gives students a voice.

Scaffolding, because there are so many students with needs scaffolding allows me to meet each student where they are.

The most beneficial common instructional framework session would be collaborative grouping, scaffolding, and questioning. This is information enabled to perfect my lesson plans regarding these instructional techniques. I found that students were more engaged and retained information.

The lesson tuning-I have been able to use some of the formats and information from other teachers in my own lessons.

Does not apply.

I have not been able to use them in my class

Collaborative grouping.

DNA

The scaffolding demonstrations and discussions

Collaborative grouping because one gets to share and use information with others.

Scaffolding

All 6 sessions were informative to staff. I was able to see the use of some of these CIF within classroom delivery.

Powerschool with Robert Yancy

Writing to learn. It has helped show me where my students are at reading and writing and how I can help.

Literacy groups

All the above.....got a chance to understand others Point of view.

Literacy group ideas were very beneficial.

Collaborative groupings

Collaborative grouping, interaction and sharing of ideas

Classroom talk

Questioning, classroom talk, and literacy groups.

Collaborative Grouping was helpful and allowed teachers time to see how best to group students with representation of all learning levels in each group.

If you could change one thing about collaborative planning time, what would it be?

Nothing

N/A

i am not sure.

more in classroom examples of how the strategies are supposed to look

How often we meet especially with the same content areas and make some changes to the Lesson Tuning process, not the framework of lesson tuning, but how to best fit what teachers need at DMS in order to be effective with their lessons in their classes.

Can't think of something I would change

does not apply

3x per week

strengthen lesson plan tuning to be vertically aligned rather than a spectrum of contents/levels having to meet daily

more actual lesson planning over all

a day for grade levels so we can integrate lessons

Meeting everyday is too much

I would have preferred a group leader who provided more guidance. I feel like a period of time was lost to our particular group due to ineffective guidance from the facilitator. Once a change was made to include other staff members, I feel the time become more productive.

That we could come out of it feeling better about ourselves as teachers and valued for our contribution to the school rather than feeling like nothing we do is good enough or is recognized as being helpful.

More time

This does not apply.

nothing

No more than 2 days a week

I would make it even earlier in the day

The actual implementation component seems to be lacking.

more follow up

Not meeting everyday. I don't know of any industry that meet everyday. It would be nice to be given sometime to actually focus on implementing some of the strategies we learn each week.

During the course of the day, not first thing in the morning, I hate it during that time,I am not focused on what Hales has going on at his school, if our school is suppose to be so different, why are you trying to make us like them? Clearly I dont understand, during the early part of the morning i am ready to get in my classroom and get instruction started for my students.

Have more time to develop specific lessons based on the new strategies and suggestions learned.

I would like it to be twice a week only. Lesson plan tuning on Monday, Tuesday (collaborative planning), Wednesday (planning with in grade level), Thursday (collaborative planning), and Friday as normal.

I would love to have more than 5 minutes to get the classroom prior to student arrival.

Do have it as frequent and have in the afternoon.

working more with other content areas

DNA

I'd keep it the same

Longer time periods.

Add a list of specific questions to ensure the lesson plan has all the necessary components.

More intentional for content areas

more actual hands on planning

Make sure people are on time

Allow more collaboration between teachers without having new ideas being thrown at us from a million different directions.

More time

By grade levels.

Nothing I loved them

Have one day off to actually do some lesson planning

Actually have a day set aside where all grade levels with in that content and plan.

Rotate in making sure all sessions are focused on a specific content area or two until all have been covered.

Overall, Professional Learning Communities have been beneficial to improving culture at Dillard Middle School.

Strongly Agree	**16**	32.7%
Agree	**20**	40.8%
Neutral	**10**	20.4%
Disagree	**1**	2%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.1%

How has the Professional Learning Community proven beneficial to improving school culture?

N/A

In many ways

Everyone is more focused and driven to exceed growth. Last year I saw that they wanted growth, but this year we are hungry and are pushing ourselves and students.

It has been beneficial because it created an open dialogue between colleagues that might not have been there otherwise. Also, it allowed the opportunity for teachers to come together when they have a "fresh" mind and share ideas instead of always meeting after school to collaborate. The amount of strategies and information we all share has helped me improve my lessons and my classroom management.

does not apply

improves vertical alignment

We do not feel isolated. The PLC time has created built in time to collaborate.

I think we see the importance of becoming better teachers and how that affects how people see us and how we see ourselves.

n/a

Created more of a family atmosphere, people really got to know one another

better teamwork; being able to implement strategies from content PLCs

For some

I believe that we are more aware of vertical alignment and how important it is to be aware of how each grade levels curriculum builds on the previous one's.

I don't really know.

Teachers understand the need for diversity in the school

Though not directly involved I have witnessed new ideas shared being implemented in various classrooms resulting in more diverse teaching strategies.

Collaboration/Team Work

It has allowed us to come together more oftern!

We are working together as a team to serve the students in planning and implementing lessons.

We can brainstorm ideas and share material.

It has set high expectations

It has improved teamwork and given the faculty a sense of esprit de corp.

we are more likely to work together and reach out for help

Not quite sure.

My opinion it as not been beneficial, I have seen nothing positive from this experience.

It allows everyone to come together and give or receive input from others with more experience.

I believe that we have seen a slight culture shift but a greater shift is needed. There are those that are still unwilling to share or grow.

Provides an opportunity for staff to learn best practices.

I haven't seen any change.

It allows for better lesson activities

I feel allowing people to have more time to work together brings a better understanding for peoples likes and differences.

DNA

It has, but I think that it needs to find a way to include more about issues with discipline.

Collaborating with colleagues one wouldn't usually have the time to.

We are all on the same page

Yes as staff have developed a stronger support system with each other

teamwork

Gives us time to collaborate and learn different instructional strategies

culture has not changed a lot.

Not sure

Meeting with people in the community of other race and helping one another.

Changed the way staff viewed student instruction.

By allowing to cross plan

Teachers can collaborate with one another and share ideas

The connection with the students

It has shown improvement with in staff only.

I believe that this is a more focused question for Administration.

The attempts to improve school morale.

Overall, Professional Learning Communities have been beneficial to student learning at Dillard Middle School.

Strongly Agree	**14**	28.6%
Agree	**21**	42.9%
Neutral	**11**	22.4%
Disagree	**1**	2%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.1%

How has the Professional Learning Community proven most beneficial to students?

N/A

Students enjoy the different activities and lessons

Everyone's on the same page. I can incorporate reading into math because I know what's going on in their reading classes. I can ask the art teacher to do a project with his students to reinforce my math lessons and we talk after.

It has provided multiple learning strategies for students to learn content. It gave teachers ideas and strategies that they might not have otherwise thought about because either they are new to the profession of teaching or may struggle with the content they teach themselves. It allowed a risk free environment for teachers to share data of formative assessments and allowed teachers to be able to analyze student work in order to understand the effectiveness of their instruction.

The teachers are expose to new ideas about how to get the students engaged in the classroom and to the lesson.

does not apply

teachers share ideas and resources

Teachers are more focused on instruction after leaving PLCs first thing in the morning.

I am not sure

n/a

Children came in later and more refreshed ready to start their day

teacher instruction has improved

Teachers may be more equipped

Teachers became aware of how lesson planning and teacher have to be intentional and data driven.

More student involvement

More resourceful teachers

See above answer.

Increase my teacher effectiveness

We learned our teammates better and became like family

It is making the higher level learners and thinkers

117

It has given educators the tools to effectively teach standards

Overall improvement in instruction.

they can since our commendatory so therefore they may in return work better with one another

As I stated before, my opinion, it has not been beneficial.

The students like engaging, creative lessons. During the PLC we discuss strategies we could use to increase the students engagement.

I have seen a difference in my classroom and I believe that other staff members have seen more student engagement.

Provides an opportunity for staff to pass on best learning practices to students.

Don't know.

They can do more mixed content assignments

Better lesson plans .

yes

It gives teacher more avenues to share and reach students in a more diverse way.

Students are better taught by teachers and more eager to learn and not as sleepy.

Equal expectations from teachers

Teachers and staff are more academically focused and have developed a support system for academic and social concerns with students

more classroom activities - hands on learning

Less time for them to get into trouble.

It has helped the students receive more differentiation in their learning.

More opportunities to learn

By supporting the new Center where the students can have somewhere to go to keep them out of trouble.

Yes, because it gave teachers fresh ideas we could implement immediately.

Reinforcement of learning concepts

Sharing of teachers' experiences and methods help all students

Helps improve a better learning environment

I do not think much has changed with our students.

If each teacher has grasped onto at least 1 thing newly taught, then, their students would have likely benefited well.

Some students get a better understanding about certain subjects.

Overall, Professional Learning Communities have provided necessary supports to teachers at Dillard Middle School.

Strongly Agree	**16**	32.7%
Agree	**19**	38.8%
Neutral	**10**	20.4%
Disagree	**2**	4.1%
Strongly Disagree.	**2**	4.1%

What specific support(s) has the Professional Learning Community provided to you?

N/A

Multiple resources

Examples of the materials needed, but the students still lack adequate textbook, an environment that lets them know they are something(the bathrooms, lockers, etc are "raggedy" and so the students act the part), limited technology where other schools in the area are over abundantly flooded and they DON'T use them, etc. How are students and parents supposed to understand that Dillard is not the same school when we look the same and have the same materials to instill learning? My students judge each other by their looks and what their wearing because that's their developmental age and culture, so why would they see Dillard as a place to learn when they see other schools are better than ours in just the building itself. They feel lesser than others in the county just from the appearance let alone test scores. The partnership with Wayne School of Engineering was great, but I would have liked to have see the strategies they taught modeled in a class with our students.

Collaboration with Content Specific Strategies to maximize and improve overall student learning

The information based on researches and articles.

does not apply.

adequate planning

Adding instructional tools to my tool belt

It has given me resources to improve teaching.

Mostly, the information that was shared with me I have been doing or have been shared by other PLC leaders

the grade level team and shared resources

an awareness of other grade levels and content areas

None specific

I was able to interact with content facilitators that provided support as I new a learned the curriculum for a grade level that I had not served before.

I don't feel supported

Much needed training

Does not apply to me specifically.

Strategies to improve math instruction

We truly support each other

It has provided me additional ways to present materials and gives me ideas on how to make the lessons better

It has given me insight into how to better craft my lessons

Confirmation that my lessons are designed to achieve their planned ends.

Just a since of not being alone and great ideas

Allows me to be honest with myself and learn from others in areas I may be lacking.

I believe we have received more support but now we need time to plan to implement it.

Best learning practices and opportunity to network with co-workers.

Not applicable.

using writing more

feedback

DNA

It helps to understand other perspectives on similar practices

Sharing lesson plans.

Given me a voice in learning

Beginning teachers are given additional support to become an integral part of the school and its culture.

collaborating with team members

Positive encouragement. Able to bounce ideas off of one another

They have given new ideas and strategies that have helped the school.

More input from others

Bring new ideas to the table to make us better educators

Ides on how to incorporate group work that got the classes up and moving.

Support

I was able to "see" what other teachers were doing and that gave me ideas about how to use different approaches I had not though of before.

Communication

Learning how to use and drive data for instruction.

Looking ahead to next school year, I want to continue Professional Learning Communities at Dillard Middle School.

Strongly Agree	**17**	34.7%
Agree	**15**	30.6%
Neutral	**13**	26.5%
Disagree	**2**	4.1%
Strongly Disagree	**2**	4.1%

What additional supports, if any, do you feel you need in order to be successful next school year?

None
none
N/A
I am not sure
More technology, enough for each kid to have a device; students here tutoring Caver heights students throughout the year in reading and math, more live examples of the strategies being done with our kids so we can see how it relates to them
I think the entire school need more family involvement and behavior specialists.
does not apply
Intentional differentiation of PLCs to accommodate various staff levels
I think the methods were pretty good.
n/a
more actual lesson planning, writing lessons with peers
individual feedback specific to my instruction
Having participated in a 5th grade group this year and not being familiar with what the 6-8 groups did, it is difficult for me to answer this question.
More support for classroom discipline
Does not apply to me specifically since I am not included.
Problem Based Learning, Research based inclusion method that is effective including staff development, how to design common formative assessments based on data and how to use that data to drive instruction, academic vocabulary strategies
In classroom training!
I liked what we did this year, continue with the format.
Classroom management that is genuine and school specific
All the PD for this year has focused on teacher development. Student behavior is still a real problem.
just knowing you have the support of others

How to teach challenging students who lack foundation skills.

How to teach the exceptional child, how to modify lessons for them.

I feel like a made some mistakes in the beginning of the year with the classroom management. I also feel like I could use help in lesson planning itself.

More training on using and applying data to instruction.

I am not sure at this point considering that we are unsure about all of the changes that will take place at DMS in 2016-2017.

None.

More time to collaborate

TLC

DNA

I think it should continue like it is (dont know what to add)

More planning time.

Stronger discipline to limit distractions for those who want to learn

Intentional focus for ongoing PLCs based on student instructional needs

more observations of alternate teaching styles

Receive it at a slower pace so we can master new ideas and concepts better.

Support to have a successful school.

More ideas that are fresh.

I'm not sure we need anything else

Nothing

Consistency from all staff

It would be nice if content teachers of specific subjects such as Social Studies could collaborate together one day a week. Math with math and so forth....

More uniform lesson plans for the whole county and not Dillard Middle being required to do something different than the rest.

Classroom and Behavior Management

(If you were able to observe a teacher at Wayne School of Engineering, please respond.) The opportunity to observe a peer at Wayne School of Engineering was beneficial to me.

Strongly Agree	**4**	8.2%
Agree	**9**	18.4%
Neutral	**6**	12.2%
Disagree	**3**	6.1%
Strongly Disagree	**1**	2%
Does Not Apply	**26**	53.1%

If you observed a teacher at Wayne School of Engineering, what was most beneficial about the experience?

N/A

does not apply

Does not apply.

I did not observe a teacher.

seeing the real life application in the seventh grade science standards

Not Applicable

The ability to witness the theory in practice.

It helped me see how independent students can be.

I observed but I honestly only learned that with much smaller classes and more technology driven lessons, then the students will be more opened to learned.

did not observe

Sample Lessons

I would like to see more of the different ways they use project based learning and cooperative groups.

Not observed

This does not apply.

How they came in and did there work with no questions

I did not

I don't believe that my experience at DMS equates with any experience at WSE.

did not

Having teachers at that school come and take notes from the teachers at Dillar, they can learn something from us as well, they don't know it all..

The opportunity to see different things being discussed in class. I learned that in order to make things relevant to students you may need to bring in other topics that are not distinctly listed in the curriculum.

I was able to see how a true student driven learning environment looks like. It was a wonderful experience and gave me faith that it is possible even with our students.

Learning different activities to help facilitate learning.

Different teaching styles would help me better improve my craft.

DNA

na

Does Not Apply

Did not apply

didn't observe

Seeing all the strategies that they used in their classrooms and how they applied differentiation in the classroom.

Learning from others
Did mot visit.
N/a
I Only observed lesson tuning, that was beneficial
Learning other ways of teaching
I was able to learn new ways in which to have students engaged in their learning.

How could the partnership with Wayne School of Engineering be strengthened?

N/A
More co-teaching between the schools
More collaboration among teachers from Dillard and WSE through modeling lessons for each school's students and more one on one or content specific driven PD.
We could have some of their teachers do one or two classes here with our students and we can help at WSE and be exposed to that environment.
does not apply
more collaboration
Intentional planning, reviewing of lesson plans, collaboration between students on project based learning.
I think they could come and actually show us how a lesson looks in a real classroom.
They need to attempt to do the things they are "teaching" us to our students, not to students that actually want to learn and have all the technology available to them.
I feel like it helped so much I do not know what would strength it
Model lessons with our students
See more of the staff
I would like to see the teachers from WSE model lessons at DMS in our classrooms. I think it would be beneficial for our teachers to see our students participating in these types of activities. Our staff can be easily discouraged when they observe other teachers at schools where students may not be as low or behaviorally challenged as our students can be. Seeing the different instructional style being in used in their classrooms would be more encouraging, I believe.
Peer observation by teachers from WSE with constructive feedback.
More trending topics for serving our population.
This does not apply.
I do not feel there was a true partnership formed. In order for it to be more beneficial I feel the teachers at Wayne School of Engineering should form a relationship in which teachers feel comfortable asking questions and leaning on for support and ideas in order to become highly effective teacher. I also feel that WSE model teachers should come and model lessons at DMS for the teachers with DMS students.
More time in the classroom, seeing them teach our kids

Pair teachers up from both schools. Provide times for observations in both settings

Having WSE staff model a lesson at Dillard to demonstrate situation specific strategies

All partnerships can be strengthened, but I don't know that there is a partnership between DMS and WSE in the truest sense of the word.

more planning time for vertical alignment

Have some of our teachers model for them. Dillard also have some highly qualified and talented teachers who we could also show WSE various teaching technique as well.

This answer is stated in the previous queston.

More opportunities to observe classrooms and opportunities to discuss strategies with those WSE teachers.

Allowing Wayne School of Engineering to view us teach and collaborating together with them.

Maybe we should have an English Language Arts and science teacher participate in the Thursday morning PLCs.

Have more interaction between the Dillard Middle School students and Wayne School of Engineering staff/students.

They need to be able to model their activities with out students

observations

DNA

Have our students and teachers to visit and see how those classes are conducted and how it looks in a different environment.

More observation opportunities to watch WSE teachers in action.

WSE staff should have the opportunity to teach/interact with the actual students of DMS, not only staff.

Ongoing collaboration between the staff is beneficial. WSE staff should also observe teachers in the Dillard classrooms so as to provide more focused feedback and support

teacher exchange

They come model inside the classroom. They need to experience our students.

Being able to observe for a longer period of time and have more one on one time to learn from them.

Not sure

Makin sure the feeder school student get what they need to attend WSE.

Provide more opportunities where DMS staff could visit WSE.

I don't know

IDK

A different teaching technique.

Allowing them to come to Dillard and observe what we do.

I would love to see this partnership in all other school in Wayne County and not just Dillard Middle.

APPENDIX G: SPECIFIC PROTOCOLS MODELED

LET'S DO LUNCH

Description: A protocol for establishing a set of partners who will work together to discuss and/or complete a particular project.

Application: Protocol is best used with large groups.

Process: Participants are given a daily schedule and must find partners to have lunch with thereby filling in each appointment date listed on the schedule. Individuals are expected to exchange lunch date times with one another and lock in their mutual appointments. The facilitator determines the amount of time participants have to discuss and complete an assignment. This exercise is completed when all luncheon dates have been fulfilled.

The number of lunch date partners one has to obtain is predetermined by the amount of time that will be used to discuss a topic as well as the number of partners that each participant must meet with in order to complete the exercise.

My Luncheon Appointments
Name: _____
First Luncheon Appointment: _____   Second Luncheon Appointment: _____   Third Luncheon Appointment: _____   Fourth Luncheon Appointment: _____

(Collaborative Group Work Protocols, 2008)

WAGON WHEEL (Discussion, Questioning)

Description: Students are actively engaged as both "giver" and "receiver" of information.

Application: This technique occurs when the teacher asks critical questions and students can expand, elaborate, and share their ideas with others.

Process: Create multi-level questions based on the topic. Divide students into two groups, forming inside and outside circles. Pose a question to the class, directing the two students facing

each other to talk for a brief time (usually 30–60 seconds). Tell students that at the signal, the outer circle rotates one position to the left to face a new partner. Ask another question, allowing for conversation to continue. Have students write and turn in a summary of the wheel.

(Learner Centered Strategies, 2016)

GALLERY WALK (Collaboration, Discussion, Writing)

Description: This systematic approach allows students to work together in groups in order to expand, elaborate on and share their ideas with others.

Application: A gallery walk is used when students need to answer critical questions.

Process: Develop several questions/problems and post each question/problem at a different table or at a different place on the wall. Assign each group a different color marker that the group uses throughout the entire activity. Allow one to three minutes to respond to each topic and after the allotted time, shift students to the next "station." Repeat this procedure until all groups have visited all charts. In whole group, review chart content by asking students to judge which response was the most important point from all charts and explain the reason.

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

MAGIC SUM POSTER PROJECT

Description: This collaborative project encourages creativity and accuracy.

Application: Accuracy, Creativity, ad Teamwork

Process: Each student will choose a card from a deck of color-coded math problems. Students will form groups by the color of their problems. Each individual must solve his/her own problem, then add their solutions to come up with one final sum for the group. Groups will check with teacher to ensure their sum is correct before making their poster. If their sum is incorrect, they must work together to find the error.

Once they have the correct sum, they will create a poster with their sum displayed in the middle with each problem, work, and solution in its own section. They must also choose a creative theme for their placemat.

Magic Sum Poster Project Rubric

	1 pt	3 pts	5 pts
Accuracy- All problems are completed with correct answers.			
Work Shown- Each problem has work that represents how the answer was found.			
Neatness- Poster is neat and easy to read.			
Creativity- A creative spin has been utilized.			
Teamwork- The group worked well together to complete the project.			

(Author Unknown adapted by *B. Stewart and C. Sutton, personal communication, September 29, 2016*)

TEA PARTY (Discussion, Questioning, Collaboration)

Description: Students communicate by reflecting and sharing information with each other.

Application: This protocol encourages and generates discussion about a topic and is best used with large groups.

Process: Write a question or a quotation about the topic on index cards, having enough for each student, and place the cards in a box or on a table. Direct the students to select one card and write a reflection on its content and its relationship to them personally. Tell students to mingle and share quotation or question and reflections from their cards in pairs (three to five minutes per pair, fifteen minutes total). Have students then form triads or quads to further discuss the topic and implications for them. End activity with a whole group share session.

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

3-2-1 PROTOCOL (Feedback, Writing)

Description: The 3-2-1 Protocol is a student-centered summarization activity.

Application: Use the 3-2-1 as an effective method to conclude a class session.

Process: At the end of the class session, ask students to take out a sheet of paper, fold lengthwise, tear and share. Tell them to write down three things they learned, two things that were interesting or noteworthy, and one question that they still have. Use as an exit ticket out the door.

ABC'S (Feedback, Discussion, Collaboration)

Description: This game-style protocol is fast, furious, and fun!

Application: Use this as a review or a pre-assessment activity in any subject.

Process: Divide class into groups of four; allow each group to choose a paper-writer and a whiteboard-writer. Give each group a white board, marker, paper, and pen. Instruct students that the object of the activity is to record a unique term for each letter of the alphabet that is relevant to the chosen topic within a given amount of time (five minutes). Encourage students to be quiet when discussing because they do not want to "give away" answers to the other groups. Announce topic to students. After five minutes, say "Stop, paper-writers pass list to whiteboard-writers who will copy A-G." Direct them to then hold up terms to show the class their answers." Tally only unique terms and repeat process to get through H-N, N-S, T-Z. Remind students that the teacher has final say in all terms submitted.

(Learner Centered Strategies, 2016)

THE FRAYER MODEL (Writing, Feedback)

Description: The Frayer Model is a chart with four sections that includes a section for a definition, some characteristics/facts, examples, and non-examples of the word/concept.

Application: Use this model in both language and mathematics instruction.

Process: Before using this organizer, rehearse with a general term. Hand out a Frayer template to each student (Addendum H) and give students the words or concepts to be examined, as well as the time limits to complete the template. Direct the students to form pairs and share their products with each other, adding or deleting information as necessary. Remind students to bring any unresolved issues to the whole class for discussion.

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

Frayer Model
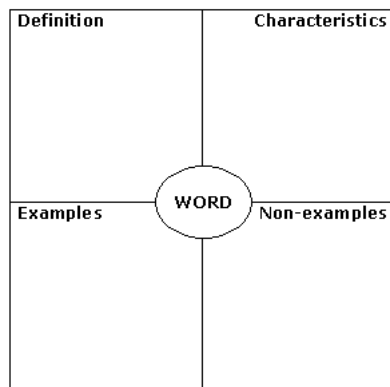
PREDICTION DICTION

Description: This activity combines a student's prior knowledge and inference skills to predict a possible outcome.

Application: Make use of this protocol when "thinking beyond the text" is desired.

Process: Model protocol first by reading a passage and inserting predictions at appropriate points. Tell students to read passage of text, list what is already known about the subject, and then list clues (title, headlines, chapter headings, and illustrations) to help predict what may happen next. Ask students to share possibilities and remind them that predictions do not always come true.

(Learner Centered Strategies, 2016)

CLOZE ACTIVITY (Feedback, Writing)

Description: In Cloze, students are given a passage with strategic words deleted and are asked to fill in the gaps. This activity is best used in vocabulary-rich subjects.

Application: Use Cloze as a teaching strategy for determining what students already know about a topic and/or assessing for comprehension.

Process: Choose text that students will use and delete words that are topic specific, making sure there are enough clues in the text. (It is recommended to double-space and use 12 to 14 fonts in the student document.) Remove at least one word that indicates the order of ideas. To promote class discussion, include among the deleted words some that may generate several alternatives. Teach students ways to find clues that may identify the deleted words. Give each student a copy of the prepared text. Tell students to work on their own, writing one word in each gap in their copy of the prepared text, reminding them to highlight the 'clue' in the text. Once finished, direct the students to move into small mixed groups to discuss responses and to decide which alternatives are better. In whole class discussion, review the prepared text and ask students to justify word choices.

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

FOUR "A" QUESTION PROTOCOL (Questioning, Reading, Collaboration, Feedback)

Description: Adapted from the National School Reform Faculty, the Four "A" Question protocol gives students an opportunity to interface with an article or articles in a rigorous way.

Application: The Four A Question protocol is best used as a way to promote deeper understanding of text as well as formulate opinions.

Process: Select an article(s) for students, preferably with a decided point of view(s). Before students arrive, post the following questions:

What Assumptions does the author of the article hold?
What do you Agree with the article?
What do you want to Argue within the text?
What parts of the article do you want to Aspire to?

Have students read the article and take notes in response to the Four A questions. Direct students to get into groups of four and have them divide the four questions among themselves. Starting with the Assumption question, ask students within each group to answer the questions and allow for further discussion within the group. Once the groups have discussed the four questions, bring the class back together to find commonalities and differences among groups.

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

IN THE HOT SEAT (Questioning, Discussion)

Description: In the Hot Seat is a fun activity to get students involved in a novel way.

Application: Use this method to check comprehension.

Process: Prior to class meeting, prepare questions related to the topic and write each question on one sticky note. Place the sticky notes underneath student desks so that they are hidden from view. Ask open-ended higher-level thinking questions. Begin lesson and at the appropriate time, inform students that some of them are sitting on "Hot Seats" and will be asked to answer questions related to the topic; have students check their desks. One by one, ask students to read their question out loud and attempt to answer it.

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

GRAFFITI WALK (Collaboration, Feedback, Writing)

Description: This protocol resembles the "Gallery Walk," except the information is more foundational.

Application: The Graffiti Walk works very efficiently as an anticipatory set, a closure activity or an energizer during any lesson where recall of facts is desired.

Process: Divide students into groups of three or four. Give each group of students chart paper and a marker color unique to their group, one marker per student. Announce the topic and allow all students to write on their chart paper at the same time, resembling graffiti, for three to five minutes. Stop students and post efforts on the wall. Ask students to make a comparison of the charts.

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

ESSENCE (Writing, Feedback, Collaboration)

Description: In this challenging protocol, students write several summaries of a lecture, repeatedly reducing the length.

Application: Use this interactive lecture protocol with factual, conceptual, or informational content that can be effectively summarized.

Process: Ask students to listen carefully to the presentation (or video, etc.), taking notes. Create teams of three or four. After the lecture, ask teams to prepare a 32-word summary of the lecture. Listen to the summaries from different teams and select the best one. Ask teams to then rewrite the summary in exactly 16 words, retaining the key ideas and borrowing thoughts and words from other teams' earlier summaries. Repeat the process, asking teams to successively reduce the length of the summary to eight, four, and two words. Finally, ask each student to write an individual summary of appropriate length and turn in.

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

COLLABORATIVE ANNOTATION

Description: This protocol encourages writing and sharing of ideas.

Application: Use Collaborative Annotation to go In-depth on a topic and to use writing- to-learn

Process: Have participants read the article or articles. Ask them to write 3-4 sentences to share with the group about their thought on the reading, what they found most important and any questions they have on the topic. If the group is small, ask participants to sit in a circle. If the group is large, break participants into groups of 4-5 and ask them to sit in a circle. Once in circles, have participants pass their writing to the person on their left. Ask participants to read the writing they were given and to respond in writing on the same piece of paper, expanding on what previous participants wrote. Give participants 5 mins to write. Repeat this process until participants have back their original pieces of writing. Then have participants read all of the comments on their writing. After they finish reading, have participants write for 5-10 minutes about the comments answering the questions: what did I find the most interesting? What did I learn? What questions do I still have about this topic? Ask for volunteers to share their writing, the comments they received and the answers to the reflective questions.

(Collaborative Group Work Protocols, 2008)

SILENT DISCUSSION (Reading, Questioning, Discussion, Writing)

Description: This tool allows students to participate in a discussion through low-stakes writing.

Application: Students create and respond to questions related to a text they have previously read.

Process: Assign a text for students to read. Provide them with a silent discussion form divided into timed "rounds." In round one (one to three minutes), have each student create two questions and pass his paper to the right. In round two (two to three minutes), have each student answer one of the questions and add two of his own. In round three (three minutes), tell students to answer two of the unanswered questions above and add two questions of his own. In round four (three minutes), ask students to answer one of the three questions not yet answered and respond to at least one answer given by another student by elaborating, agreeing, or disagreeing. Remind students to use Bloom's Revised Taxonomy Pocket Guide to generate multi-level questions (Addendum B).

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

PLATE DISCUSSION

Description: This tool allows for alternate perspectives to be taken into account.

Application: Students take on alternate perspectives and encourages classroom talk.

Process: Plate Discussion: Create small groups of 4-5. Create perspectives/rolls for each member of your group: Example: President, Vice President, American Citizen, Foreigner, and Observer. Give each group a plate with one of each perspective. Propose a question and then all the group members three minutes to answer the question from the perspective of the individual/group on their plate. Remember the observer is not allowed to speak at all during the 3 minutes. Have everyone stop discussing and for one minute remain silent and write the most important statement they made in the three-minute discussion on their paper plate. If you were the observer, then you would write on your plate the most important and impactful comment heard during the discussion. Switch plates. You can use the same questions or provided a new question. Allow three minutes for discussion and one minute for writing. Continue until everyone has been each perspective/role.

(*B. Stewart & C. Sutton, personal communication, March 3, 2016*)

LITERATURE CIRCLES (Reading, Collaboration, Discussion)

Description: As highlighted in ReadWriteThink.org, Literature Circles are formalized reading/writing groups in which each student has a defined role to play within the group.

Application: This format is used when students are analyzing a novel or other piece of significant literature.

Process: Form student groups. Introduce literature circles by explaining they are "groups of people reading the same book and meeting together to discuss what they have read" (Peralta-

Nash and Dutch 30). Emphasize the student-centered collaborative nature of the reading strategy by discussing how the strategy places students "in charge of leading their own discussions as well as making decisions for themselves" (Peralta-Nash and Dutch 30). Share some of the ways that students will work independently (e.g., choosing the text the group will read, deciding on the questions that the group will discuss about the text). Introduce the Literature Circle Roles (Addendum U) to the class and answer any questions that students have about these roles:

Discussion Director: creates questions to increase comprehension and asks who, what, why, when, where, how, and what if.   Vocabulary Enricher: clarifies word meanings and pronunciations and uses research resources.

Literary Luminary: guides oral reading for a purpose and examines figurative language, parts of speech, and vivid descriptions. Checker: checks for completion of assignments, evaluates participation, and helps monitor discussion for equal participation.

Preview the way that literature circles work for students, sharing the Literature Circle Process. Explain that the class will practice each of the roles before students try the tasks on their own.

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

MR. COLEY'S BOOK CLUB (Reading, Collaboration, Discussion)

Description: In Mr. Coley's Book Club, students within a group analyze and discuss a book they are reading.

Application: Use this fun method to delve into novels and short stories.

Process: Choose a novel or a short story for students to read. Assign (see www.MrColey.com "Literature Circles") groups of four or five. Determine student roles and hand out subsequent role sheet for the Connector, Illustrator, Word Finder, Discussion Director, and Correspondent (Addendum S). Guide the process to make sure students are following guidelines such as pace, depth of analysis, and equity amongst the students within the group. When students are finished, allow groups to share with each other.

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

DE BONO'S SIX THINKING CARDS (Discussion, Collaboration, Reading)

Description: Adapted from De Bono's Six Thinking Hats, this is a structured group activity in which different perspectives are explored amongst a group of six students.

Application: This protocol is especially useful for exploring controversial topics.

Process: Model this process before you use it the first time. Divide students into groups of six.

Direct students to read article, passage, or watch a video, taking notes. Hand out different colored card tents to six students. Create a chart so that students know what each colored card needs to do in the discussion. (Yellow card tent: express the positive aspect of the topic; Red card tent: express emotions connected to topic; White card tent: give neutral facts connected to topic; Green card tent: create additional questions for others to answer about the topic; Black card tent: express negative comments in regards to the topic; Blue card tent: facilitate discussion amongst all participants).

(Learner-Centered Strategies, 2016)

APPENDIX H: INSTITUITIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board Office
4N-70 Brody Medical Sciences Building· Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** · www.ecu.edu/irb

Notification of Initial Approval: Expedited

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: Gary Hales
CC:
          Jim McDowelle
Date: 4/20/2016
Re: UMCIRB 16-000191
          EMPHASIZING PROFESSIONALISM TO ADDRESS TEACHER TURNOVER AT DILLARD MIDDLE SCHOOL

I am pleased to inform you that your Expedited Application was approved. Approval of the study and any consent form(s) is for the period of 4/20/2016 to 4/19/2017. The research study is eligible for review under expedited category # 5. The Chairperson (or designee) deemed this study no more than minimal risk.

Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The Investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

Approved consent documents with the IRB approval date stamped on the document should be used to consent participants (consent documents with the IRB approval date stamp are found under the Documents tab in the study workspace).

The approval includes the following items:

Name	Description
Proposal 10.docx	Study Protocol or Grant Application

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.