

Identifying the Standards in Context: A Case Study

SUGGESTIONS: Read the following case scenario to identify examples of the North Carolina Professional Development Standards in practice. Make notes to review with a colleague and to engage in dialogue around the sights and sounds of the standards.

ABC Middle School

Wanting and needing this school year to be different from the previous, principal Phil Goode, decided to forego the typical full faculty professional development opening. Rather, Dr. Goode led the staff in an analysis of the students' achievement data. Prior to the staff work days, Dr. Goode and the district testing coordinator prepared multiple sets of the data for the grade levels, the content areas, and for each teacher.

Throughout the morning, the teachers dug through various sets of data and worked in a variety of vertical and horizontal configurations to examine thoroughly how the students had performed on the End-of-Grade tests. The day ended with teachers shifting their focus to specific actions grade levels, content areas, and the school as a whole would take for improvement.

The afternoon was designed for grade level meetings. In grade level teams the teachers would repeat the process and look specifically at data about their new students. The clear and communicated expectation for the afternoon was that each grade level work as a team and produce a specific plan for how student performance would be improved.

Studying both the composite and content-specific scores for the new eighth graders, the teachers use a data analysis protocol that Dr. Goode had provided. Each teacher also looks at the data for the students assigned to his/her classroom. Both strengths and areas for growth are identified. Writing and reading are clearly identified as areas that need to be targeted.

Working as a team, the teachers list their observations using chart paper and markers. A second 'walk' through the data assures them that they have identified the correct targets. The team decides that the next step is to identify specific reading and writing skills that need to be targeted. As they are engaging in this discussion, Dr. Goode stops in to check their progress and to express his appreciation for their hard work and commitment to the task and to students. Dr. Goode is pleased that the teachers are on target. He, too, believed reading and writing to be the areas of greatest need for the upcoming eighth graders.

Dr. Goode reminds the team of the schedule – plans are due Wednesday. Teams will meet on that day to share with the full faculty. Dr. Goode reminds the

team also that he is available to assist them as they deem necessary. He thanks the team again before leaving to visit the seventh grade teachers.

After Dr. Goode's visit, the eighth grade team decides to make reading comprehension and vocabulary along with writing the clear focus of their collaborative work. Their plan includes details for the first nine weeks of the school year. The plan includes giving a reading assessment within the first three days of schools. A select sample will be scored by the team at the end of the first week as their next professional learning meeting. Working still as a team, lesson plans will be developed to address specific areas of deficit. Students may be regrouped for instruction as well. The team decides to schedule a meeting with the school's media specialist. A list of texts for reading aloud will be selected along with a list of suggested and required independent reading. A list of target vocabulary is developed along with a set of questions to assess thinking and comprehension.

The team agrees to meet every Tuesday and Thursday during their team planning time to continue dialogue, data analysis, and planning. By the end of the first week of school the team hopes to have all of the first week assessments scored and analyzed; this will support and guide lesson planning and materials selection.

The eighth grade chair asks for a volunteer to help prepare the report due to Dr. Goode. The chair asks for a team of volunteers to prepare the presentation for the faculty. Dr. Goode has provided a template for the plan. He has asked for SMART goals related to the focus and for milestones along the way. The team stresses the importance of the plan being a living document understanding that the plan will likely need to be periodically revisited and revised.

When the grade chair presents the plan to Dr. Goode, he shares a copy of the seventh grade plan as they, too, have identified reading as an area for focus. The eighth grade chair suggests both the eighth and seventh grade teams meet for dialogue and planning.