

# Cape Elizabeth School Department

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## Memo

To: Superintendent Chris Record and School Board Members

From: Michelle McClellan, Assistant Superintendent

Date: October 12, 2021

Re: Professional Learning and Development

*Learning is an experience. Everything else is just information.*

*~ Albert Einstein*

It is hard to believe we've passed the first six-weeks-of-school benchmark. It's an energy-driven time when foundations are laid to support a successful school year. While our primary focus is building these efforts with our students, equally important is the focus on building strong professional learning communities with and among our faculty and staff. Cape is blessed with outstanding teachers who are committed to providing high quality educational experiences for our students everyday. Given the level of professionalism in our staff, the focus during professional learning sessions is on continuous growth and enhancing collective efficacy. Professional Learning (PL) sessions are designed to align with and build toward long-range desired outcomes. With this in mind, the planning between administrators, teacher leaders, and myself maintain the following areas of focus.

- Strengthen culture: We have incredible professionals working in our schools! The goal is to increase the existing capacity for and regularity of strong collegial conversations focused on improving learning experiences for our students. Through a scaffolded approach to professional conversations, an increased level of trust and engagement produces the best and sustained outcomes in our classrooms.
- Be responsive: Through entry conversations with Dr. Record and myself, and direct feedback through surveys and feedback loops, staff needs have been identified. Both the district and school level plans are based on and include the needs staff have identified as priorities. These continuous feedback loops will inform our ongoing plans and provide an opportunity to check and adjust plans as needed along the way.
- Maintain balance: Acknowledge the potential "muchness" in this time and make sure staff gets what they need without a sense of overburdening. Provide time and structures for staff to focus on work that is relevant and supportive of the needs at this time.

- Develop a long-range plan: Working closely with the building administrators and teacher leaders ensures the development of a long-range professional learning plan both at the school and district levels.

**Examples of Professional Learning Experiences this school year.**

<p><b>Opening Days</b> August 26-27, 30-31</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>We're back!!</i> Dr. Record's opening remarks introduced new members of the administrative team and set the stage for district priorities.</li> <li>● Taking Stock of our Students achievement in the wake of a year of hybrid instruction - Staff reviewed Spring NWEA results to assist in planning for the year.</li> <li>● COVID-19 procedures - review of mitigation strategies to keep our schools safe and students in school learning.</li> <li>● Stressing better - Dr. Delvina's workshop provided relevant and insightful approaches and strategies to help manage and thrive in times of stress.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Early Release</b> September 28th</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual training of policies and procedures - online learning modules allowed this required training to be self-paced and completed with greater efficiency and autonomy.</li> <li>● Custodial and maintenance staff workshop focused on enhancing positive and supportive workplace interactions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Professional Learning Day</b> October 8th</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Vertical Team Discussions - Middle School and High School teachers engaged in collegial dialogue focused on curricular alignment at the grade and department level.</li> <li>● Assessing and Reporting - Pond Cove teachers examined alignment between grade level learning targets in reading and classroom assessments.</li> <li>● NWEA training for staff who will be involved in state testing this month.</li> </ul>

**Continuing the work based on feedback: Next Steps**

- Vertical discussions will extend across the buildings - between 4th & 5th and 8th & 9th grade teachers. This exciting work will bring greater curricular alignment for our students. The design of these discussions will be responsive to the needs identified upon review of the 10/8 PL day survey.
- Pond Cove teachers are ready and excited to work on identifying and developing assessments that closely align with learning targets, bringing even greater consistency and clarity to reporting student progress to families.
- The new District Professional Learning Committee will convene to review teacher feedback and design our long-range Professional Learning calendar. Teacher feedback will continuously be solicited and used by this committee to inform future plans and offerings.
- School level leadership teams, department and grade level teams, and district committees, (such as PEPG and DEI) support the cause of learning and teaching - our primary purpose. Leveraging these efforts to support the development and continuous improvement of our staff is critical.

**Listen, Learn & Lead** - We're deep in a time of assessing/checking and adjusting - to make teacher learning

relevant, a priority, and directly connected to providing high quality educational experiences for every student, every day. It's important to set the right course, to be deliberate and timely in our offerings, and to check and adjust our course along the way.