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laying the groundwork for student achievement

MSDC ➔

professional learning

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Student Achievement Through Staff Development

One of the expectations of quality professional learning is that “educators focus their professional development on issues of improving student learning.” While this expectation might seem obvious to most, the reality is that often times professional development has very little impact on student learning. The primary reason for this ineffectiveness is the lack of commitment and/or resources by administrators and staff developers to the transfer of learning from the professional development experience to classroom implementation.

Joyce and Showers (2002) have identified four components of training.

- ❑ Knowledge -- exploring the theory or rationale for the new skills and strategies
- ❑ Modeling -- ideally in a setting closely imitating the workplace
- ❑ Practice -- involving a substantial period of time (8-10 weeks with around 25 trials)
- ❑ Peer Coaching -- collaborating with colleagues to plan and develop lessons and materials to implement the training effectively, and observing colleagues in teaching the lessons

Their research, as explained in *Student Achievement Through Staff Development, 3rd Ed.*

(ASCD, 2002), showed the impact of following this four-step approach to training. Schools that implemented this model saw higher percentages of behavior change in teachers and greater student achievement.

As leaders in staff development, we should plan initiatives that will insure the transfer of learning from the training experience to classroom instruction. This means reviewing existing ways of doing business in schools to find innovative ways to use time and resources more effectively and abandoning old practices that will not achieve the intended outcome. Focus is absolutely critical. We cannot be jumping from one magic bullet to another. That approach wastes resources and demotivates staff members.

Data-driven planning, formative evaluation of professional learning activities, and a substantial commitment to practice and peer coaching beyond the initial training are critical to insuring that professional learning WILL improve student achievement. When we make these kinds of changes to our professional learning systems, we will be able to show clear evidence that the investment of time and money in quality professional development does yield positive results for students in the classroom.

Welcome James Scofield!

James Scofield is new to the MSDC staff. Taking over for Tracy Valentine, he will handle the administrative duties for the organization, membership tracking, and bookkeeping.

James currently works for MASA (MI Assn of School Administrators) as their Association Services Manager. He has a background in computer graphics, web design, and administration and is currently working with Tracy and the MSDC board to make a smooth transition into this role.

James recently met with the board and says he’s “impressed with the vision and momentum of its leadership and looks forward to maintaining their current services while working with them on some new projects and goals.”

James can be contacted by email at scofiel8@msu.edu or you can look for more information on the MSDC website at www.michigan-achieves.org/msdc.





Board Member Profile: Dr. Irma Hamilton

Mission Statement:

"MSDC advocates for quality research-based professional development policies and practices to increase the capacity of those who work to improve student learning."

MSDC Board of Directors

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Dr. Carole Schmidt, St. Joseph Schools

President Elect:

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Cheryl Poole, Eaton ISD

Dr. Rod Rock, Saginaw ISD

Dr. Judy Schaftenaar, Possibilities, Inc.

Dr. Joanne Simmons, MSU

Gloria Donaldson-Waters, GJ Waters & Assoc.

Dr. Hamilton's educational career spans over 34 years of service. Her experiences include positions as teacher, department head, assistant principal, principal, Supervisor of Secondary Education, adjunct professor in the College of Education at Wayne State University and most recently educational consultant.

Dr. Hamilton has been the recipient of a number of awards both personal and professional. Among them are the *Distinguished Alumni Award* from Northern Michigan University, *Principal of the Year* from the Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals, *Educator of the Year* from Phi Delta Kappa and the *Booker T. Washington Business Association Educator's Achievement Award*.

She has served on many committees and presented at confer-

ences at the local, state and national level. Most recently Dr. Hamilton was a member of the committee on Professional Development for the Michigan Department of Education's High School Redesign Initiative and presented at the conference on "*Promising Redesign Practices*" in May. She is also a member of the Michigan Department of Education's committee on the Michigan School Improvement Framework and presented at the initial state roll out in April.

Currently, as a consultant Dr. Hamilton works with schools, school districts and boards of education to create a framework and a culture that foster student learning. She utilizes her work and experience with Professional Learning Communities, Differentiated Instruction, Bloom's Taxonomy/Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, Balanced Leadership, Instructional Practices, Brain Based Learning, Dr. Lor-

raine Monroe's Black Board Configuration, Root Cause Mapping, Executive Coaching, and Parent Involvement Strategies to provide teachers and educational leaders with a tool kit of user friendly researched best practices to assist them in enhancing school improvement and raising student achievement.

Dr. Hamilton also works with community and faith based organizations to develop educational conferences to engage the community's involvement and support of quality education.

She looks forward to working with the MSDC Board as they create the rubric for professional development in Michigan.

Board Member Profile: Gloria Donaldson-Waters

Gloria Donaldson Waters exemplifies the changing definition of retirement. She retired from the Southfield Public Schools as Director of Human Resources in 2003 after serving the public schools of metro Detroit for 37 years.

Since retirement, Gloria has worked as a consultant for the CELT Corp. on a major Detroit Public Schools initiative utilizing technology at the classroom level to connect data with assessment, instruction and curriculum. As

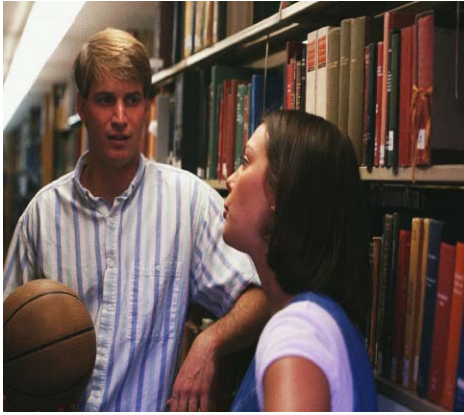
Regional Director for Pathways to College, Gloria worked with principals, teachers and counselors to identify inner-city, college bound students and families to keep them in the pipeline for highly competitive colleges and universities. Currently, she works as an ABCS coach and consultant in Wayne and Oakland county. With her experience as a high school administrator, she is extremely excited about the opportunity to work with districts as they implement changes required by the new *Michigan High School Graduation Requirements*.

Even in retirement, Gloria remains a lifelong learner, completing *Coaching School Results* training and certification, adding to her expertise as a coach for school leaders at the local, district and state level. Her ultimate goal is certification by the International Federation of Coaches. During the summer she serves as Summer Faculty for the *Harvard Graduate School of Education Institutes for School Leaders*.

We are excited about the expertise and wisdom that Gloria brings to the MSDC Board!

Sharing Best Practices

MSDC's *Professional Learning* e-newsletter is a monthly publication of the MSDC Board of Directors. MSDC members are encouraged to contribute articles that showcase effective practices in staff development occurring around Michigan.



If you have an article on an effective staff development practice you would like to share, please send it as an electronic file to Dr. Dan Jonker, MSDC e-newsletter editor, at djonker@oaisd.org. Articles should be between 150-300 words and digital photographs are welcome. The MSDC Communications Committee reserves the right to edit articles to meet publication standards and guidelines. Articles must be submitted five days prior to the first of each month during the school year (Sept-June).

Freedom to Learn to Sponsor Balanced Leadership Consortia

The Freedom to Learn program has partnered with McREL, the Michigan Department of Education, several Michigan ISDs, and MIEM to offer the Michigan Balanced Leadership Consortia in 2007. McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning), has developed this consortium through leading-edge research on school, leader and teacher impact on student achievement. McREL has almost 40 years of experience with providing high-quality professional development that offers leaders with proven, practical guidance on what they can do to improve student achievement in their schools.

The Balanced Leadership Consortia will bring together school leadership teams from across Michigan to provide them with ongoing professional development through a series of knowledge- and skills-building workshops. The Consortia will consist of **four, two-day sessions** with an opportunity after each session for interested participants to attend a third day to participate in a training of the trainer session (ToTI). For more information about the content of this consortia, go to <http://www.mcrel.org/topics/serviceDetail.asp?serviceID=64>.

These workshops will be partially sponsored by Freedom to Learn, MDE and MIEM. The intended audience is superintendents and principals whether or not they are in the Freedom to Learn program. District leadership teams would also benefit from this learning. In addition to SBCEUs, college credit will be available from Ferris State University.

The following dates and locations are confirmed:

Wayne RESA

January 30 - 31, 2007

ToTI February 1, 2007

Genesee ISD

February 13 - 14, 2007

ToTI February 15, 2007

Oakland Schools

March 7 - 8, 2007

ToTI March 9, 2007

Wexford-Missaukee ISD (Cadillac)

April 17 - 18, 2007

ToTI April 19, 2007

The registration fee for the Michigan Balanced Leadership Consortia for all 8 sessions will be \$500. To register, go to

<http://www.gomciem.org>.

Contact FTL's Kate Kennedy at 517.335.0449,

katekennedy@ferris.edu or

Sam LoPresto, 517.327-9263,

lopresto@gomasa.org for more information or if you have questions.



President Carole Schmidt presents a gift on behalf of the MSDC Board to Past President Ben Boerkoel for his leadership of the organization and the Board of Directors through a transitional period

Ben's Musings

The following is a summary of Ben Boerkoel's thinking as he sees the role of MSDC as a professional organization within Michigan. If you have comments you would like to make in response to these ideas, please send your comments to Dr. Dan Jonker, editor of "Professional Learning," at djonker@oaisd.org.

Assumptions:

1. All students are not achieving at the highest levels of their abilities.
2. To increase student achievement, teachers need to teach differently.
3. For teachers to teach differently, they need time to reflect on their current practice and time to learn how to do things differently.
4. To encourage a change of practice, administrators must provide leadership a) in changing the school culture to support reflective teacher conversation, and b) in helping teachers understand the changes in teaching practices that are needed by providing appropriate data and sharing best practice research.
5. To support administrators and teachers in their work, the educational culture and organizational systems must change.
6. Appropriate changes in educational culture and organizational systems will help increase the capacity of teachers and administrators to change teaching practices that will lead to increased student achievement.

Therefore, the MSDC works to build the culture, the capacity, and the systems in districts and organizations to support those who work to improve student learning.

I believe the value of MSDC lies not so much in the fact that we have the right answers for how to do all of this but that we know the right questions to ask based on the NSDC Standards that enable districts and organizations to discover the answers that are right for them. In planning our work, the essential question then becomes: How does this help to build that culture, that capacity, and those systems in districts and organizations that will lead to improved student learning?

My thoughts:

If our goal then is to increase *influence* and *credibility* for quality Professional Learning, *influence* would mean statewide acceptance and recognition of MSDC as the pre-eminent authority on quality professional learning. *Credibility* would be exemplified by other professional associations asking the question: "Have we worked with MSDC to ensure that our Professional Development practices are exemplary practice?"

Congratulations to MSDC Member Sue Stephens and Learning Team Partner, Jennifer Strickland -- Selected to Participate in 2006 Microsoft US Innovative Teachers Forum



Laingsburg High School's Jennifer Strickland and Shiawassee RESD's Sue Stephens were selected from a national pool of candidates to participate in the 2006 Microsoft US Innovative Teachers Forum. The US Innovative Teachers Forum is one of a series of regional events hosted by Microsoft around the world as part of the Microsoft Innovative Teachers Program. The forums are designed to recognize and reward outstanding examples of educators collaborating and sharing expertise to build collective knowledge.

Strickland and Stephens were one of twenty five learning teams invited to the US Forum. In recognition for their outstanding efforts Microsoft paid for their travel to the Microsoft Corporate Campus in Redmond, Washington, to

participate in the event on September 21st and 22nd. A subset of U.S. Forum participants will be selected to represent the United States at the worldwide Microsoft Innovative Teachers Forum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in November 2006.

Called ABC (*Acceleration Book Chat*), the award winning project electronically connected teachers and students between two high schools in Michigan and Florida, the project was chosen because of its innovative approach for improving literacy skills of adolescent males. Even though 1000 miles separated them, males in two single gender classes engaged in literacy discussions and collaborative project completion via the Internet. Because the book they were reading (*Acceleration* by Graham McNamee) focused on the apprehension of a serial killer, the boys conducted Internet

searches on FBI profiling and engaged in electronic conversations with a police officer about police procedures.

The Innovative Teacher Team traveled to Microsoft corporate headquarters in Redmond, Washington at the end of September for the three-day National Forum and Recognition.

Since 2002 the Microsoft Innovative Teachers program has connected a community of educators who share a common interest in enhancing teaching and learning through the use of technology. The program provides classroom learning and professional development resources, and recognizes and rewards teachers who demonstrate exemplary use of technology in the classroom, with their peers, and for their own professional development and productivity.

MSDC Board Addresses Strategic Plan

At the October meeting of the MSDC Board of Directors, the members spent committee time addressing the goals and action steps of the organization's strategic plan. Board members divided into three groups (Communications, Education & Advocacy, and Membership) to review the activities within their respective committees that address the strategic plan goals. They spent time discussing whether those activities should be revised or new activities added, and what should be accomplished during the 2006-07 school year.

Committee members for each subcommittee include:

Communications -- Shug Brandell, Steve Hecker, Sam Lopresto, Rod Rock, and Dan Jonker (chairperson)

Education & Advocacy -- Irma Hamilton, Jeremy Hughes, Fran Loose, Carole Schmidt, Joanne Simmons, Gloria Donaldson-Waters, (Co-chairs) Amy Colton and Cheryl Poole

Membership -- Ben Boerkoel, Bob Harris, Eugene Norris, and Judy Schaftenaar (chairperson)

In an effort to make the Board's work more transparent to the members of MSDC, Board meeting Agendas, Minutes, and Committee Reports will be available on the MSDC website at www.michigan-achieves.org/msdc.

Members of MSDC are always encouraged to share their ideas, comments, and suggestions with Board members and the chairs of the subcommittees.

Please continue to check the MSDC website for updates on the Strategic Plan, subcommittee efforts, and membership initiatives.



Gloria Donaldson-Waters, Cheryl Poole, and Dr. Irma Hamilton review strategic planning action steps for the Education and Advocacy Subcommittee of the Board