



professional

September 2008

LEARNING

High Priority School Leaders Offered Resources For Success

By Sam LoPresto

The Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators entered into a partnership four years ago to create and deliver a coherent and coordinated Statewide System of Improvement for Michigan's High Priority Schools.

An abundance of work has been done, and pieces of the system have been implemented in stages over time. A key piece of the system being implemented is free resources and professional development for Title I High Priority School principals and personnel. These resources are being provided with the goal of helping leaders in high priority schools proactively address the challenge of staying off the high priority school list in the future.

Title I High Priority School Principals recently received the following complimentary 1-year memberships:

- **MSDC** - Michigan Staff Development Council
- **NSDC** – National Staff Development Council Principal Leader Membership
- **Michigan ASCD** – Michigan Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- **ASCD** - Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Comprehensive Membership
- Title I schools identified for improvement in 2007-08 that are no longer identified for improvement in 2008-09 will receive a **\$1,500 gift certificate** to ASCD to purchase professional development resources to help sustain their improvement.



We want to welcome principals of High Priority Schools to our organization. MSDC is an organization committed to supporting your efforts to make substantive change in your buildings. Please take advantage of the expertise of our Board of Directors and members to support your professional learning efforts.

Take the opportunity to check out www.msdcconline.org to learn more about this organization. Contact us for resources and support in planning, delivering, and applying learning to affect school-wide change.

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."

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Operationalizing NSDC's Strategic Priorities

By Dan Jonker

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) has adopted five strategic priorities to affect change in schools through quality professional learning:

- 1) Affecting the policy context,
- 2) Documenting the evidence,
- 3) Narrowing the achievement gap,
- 4) Developing school leaders, and
- 5) Engaging thought leaders.

NSDC asks its state affiliates to embrace these strategic priorities and make annual efforts to impact change at the state and local levels as well.

As members of the Michigan Staff Development Council (MSDC), we should take every advantage in whatever context we find ourselves to promote the value of quality professional learning with state legislators and local school board members. We cannot do this, however, if we do not model quality professional learning in our own districts and document the evidence of that learning to share with policy makers.

As a state-wide professional organization that promotes quality professional learning, we are always eager to hear from members who can share evidence of how professional learning has changed educator behaviors in the classroom. In addition, we are very interested

in action research that has shown a correlation between professional learning and student achievement.

As we begin another school year, the Board of Directors of MSDC is committed to increasing communication among its membership.

We have reconstructed our website to be more interactive and we encourage members to take advantage of this communication tool. In addition, we want to be a resource to our membership.

We are excited to have high priority school principals as a part of our membership. We know they have unique challenges within their buildings, and we want to provide resources and technical assistance to help these leaders develop quality professional learning within their buildings. We know that learning organizations are organizations that excel.

As we continue to advocate for quality professional learning, we need to find opportunities to engage thought leaders from business, industry, government, and non-profit organizations in a dialogue about effective ways to build learning cultures within our schools to affect positive change for children.

Learning Opportunities You Will NOT Want to Miss!

Data Driven Dialogue: Practical Strategies for Collaborative Inquiry

November 6-7, 08 (part 1 of 2)
January 29-30, 09 (part 2 of 2)



MELG Building, Lansing

Facilitated by:
Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman

*"A Dynamic Team Captivates
Thousands of Teaching and*

Administrators"

Based on the book, *Data-Driven Dialogue: A Facilitator's Guide to Collaborative Inquiry*, this interactive seminar explores and applies a three-phase Collaborative Learning Cycle that guides professional inquiry.

Participants investigate strategies and structures that reduce defensiveness and create shared responsibility for student learning. The sessions offer practical tools for discovering assumptions, promoting data-focused inquiry, and developing shared understandings of both problems and possible solutions. These understandings become the foundation for effective planning processes.

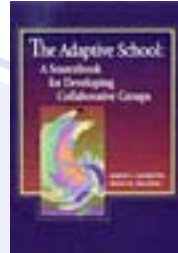
Topics include:

- Using data to focus a group's attention and energy
- Applying the Collaborative Learning Cycle
- Extending a repertoire of facilitative tools

\$710 (MSDC members);
\$750 (Nonmembers, includes 1-year membership)

SB-CEU: 2.4

Adaptive Schools: Developing and Sustaining Professional Learning Communities



November 19-20, 08 (Part 1 of 2)
February 5-6, 09 (Part 2 of 2)

Kent Intermediate School District

Facilitated by:
Carolyn McKanders, Co-Director of
Adaptive Schools; and Mark Ravlin,

Consultant

Learn how to build and sustain strong collaborative and caring school cultures in which results-oriented staffs work together for continual school improvement. Explore the latest practical findings in:

- organizational development,
- team learning, and
- handling changes that link collaborative work cultures to improved learning for all students.

The School Improvement Framework calls for significant collegial collaboration across its five strands. To accomplish this, school leaders and improvement facilitators will be called to develop communities focused on student learning. The findings are clear about the leverage such learning communities can exert on increasing both quality and equity of student learning.

This four-day interactive seminar is designed as two two-day workshops, combined with supported application of strategies between sessions. It teaches the models, maps, tools, and skills common to four school improvement roles: *facilitator*, *coach*, *consultant*, and *presenter* with emphasis on facilitation expertise.

Participants receive *The Adaptive School: A Sourcebook for Developing Collaborative Groups*, by Robert Garmston & Bruce Wellman.

\$610 (MSDC members);
\$650 (Nonmembers, includes 1-year membership)

SB-CEU: 2.4

www.msdconline.org for details and registration

MSDC Website Upgrade



MSDC is in the process of updating its organization website with improved functionality and added features to provide even greater service to its members. While the website will continue to contain all of the information and links that we have always provided, this upgraded online presence will provide additional capabilities such as:

- **Discussion Boards and Forums** for sharing information and asking questions of topic-focused groups or other members at large
- **Enhanced Search** capabilities that mine for the answers you're looking for
- **Instant Polling** to collect opinions and share immediate data to help you see what your peers are thinking and doing
- **Job Postings** that provide current leads on the professional job market
- **Resource Archive** of educational materials

including sample forms, organizational templates, information, and advice collected from districts across the state to share what works

- **Reorganized Structure** more easily accessible with fewer clicks and less hunting
- **Event Calendar** compatible with email systems for direct download of dates and details
- and more...

MSDC continues to explore better ways to respond to your needs and provide what you want, when you want it, in a way you can use it. Look for these Website improvements coming soon at www.msdcconline.org and feel free to contact us with questions, suggestions, or ideas about ways we can serve you.



www.msdcconline.org

Board Presidency Passes to Dan Jonker



Sam LoPresto (left) accepts a crystal bowl in appreciation from **Dan Jonker** (right) on behalf of the MSDC Board of Directors for serving as the association's president, 2007-08.

Jonker will be balancing his role this year as Board President with the responsibilities of his new position as superintendent of Allendale Public Schools.

Thank you, Sam, Dan, and the MSDC Board (see page 2) for the time, effort, dedication, and vision that continues MSDC's mission of advocating for quality research-based professional development policies and practices.