

#8. THEY PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION TO THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING STAFF.

- Teachers do not just drift into tenure protections.

THEY PROVIDE TEACHERS WITH THE TIME TO MEET TO PLAN AND WORK COLLABORATIVELY.

- A schedule that have coherent instructional days and time for teachers to work together
- Teacher meetings are carefully structured – review data, go over student work, develop lesson plans, and map curriculum...eventually lighten the workload of teachers by allowing them to share responsibility for instruction.

THEY PROVIDE TEACHERS TIME TO OBSERVE EACH OTHER. THEY THINK SERIOUSLY ABOUT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

- To deepen teachers' content knowledge, understanding, or pedagogical skill.

THEY ASSUME THAT THEY WILL HAVE TO TRAIN TEACHERS MORE OR LESS FROM SCRATCH AND CAREFULLY ACCULTURATE ALL NEWLY HIRED TEACHERS.

“In September, 2006, the staff was getting ready to **implement a “professional learning community’ model...** ‘It is what we were doing before,’ Principal Esparza said, ‘but with more structure.’”

GRANGER HIGH SCHOOL Granger, Washington

“ ‘I am a recruiter.’ He <Principal Esparza> has concentrated on **bringing to the school teachers who believe their students can achieve at a high level...**To those teachers who objected that they didn’t think they should be expected to do home visits, Esparza responded with the same practiced speech he has used many times since in other situations. ‘You are a great teacher. We have a difference in philosophy. I’d be happy to write you a recommendation.’ ”

GRANGER HIGH SCHOOL, Granger, Washington

“ ‘The achievement gap...this has to change. If I don’t have the people to change it, I’ll get them.’” Superintendent Register

BENWOOD INITIATIVE Chattanooga, TN

“Then Register decided to allow Swoffard to reconstitute the Benwood schools. Reconstitution was an opportunity to completely overhaul the staffs at the Benwood schools, and it was legally possible because under TN law the superintendent has the power to assign staff.”

BENWOOD INITIATIVE Chattanooga, TN

“eligible for a free two-year master’s program if the teacher was willing to commit to staying at Benwood for four year’s after earning the master’s...it would keep teachers at Benwood schools for a minimum of seven years – quite a few agreed.”

“an emphasis on information teachers can put into practice right away, not simply abstract theoretical information. Topics include how to create classroom assessments, how to use assessment data, and literacy... We got the theory on Saturday and – boom – we used it on Monday.”

BENWOOD INITIATIVE Chattanooga, TN

“Teachers meet as part of their grade level for 45 minutes every day – the school’s schedule is build so that they meet when the students are in ‘specials’...and they also meet regularly as part of cross-grade teams”.

BENWOOD INITIATIVE Chattanooga, TN

“The atmosphere at Hardy is one of collaboration and teamwork.”

BENWOOD INITIATIVE Chattanooga, TN

“...professional learning communities where they ‘talk about essential learning, come up with common assessments, go over results together, and come up with additional supports students need...Smith said ‘The professional learning communities,’ he added, ‘have given the teachers a real voice. They’re not working in isolation anymore. And you see it when you go class to class. They are all talking about the same things.”

FRANKFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Frankford, Delaware

“ ‘Specials’ ... are scheduled so that grade level teachers across the academies can meet to plan lessons.”

M. HALL STANTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Philadelphia, PA

“Each academy has a team leader who works with classroom teachers to plan lessons, look at student data, work with small groups, provide model lessons, and help plan school- and academy-wide activities. The team leaders are colleagues of the classroom teachers, not supervisors...The authority lies solely in their ability to be helpful to teachers...The team leaders are also literacy, math, and science specialists. ‘We’re supposed to teach the teachers, not the students.’”

M. HALL STANTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Philadelphia, PA

“...two half-day professional development programs per month...the district sent trainers to the school to provide focused professional development in the curriculum and training in such areas as using student data to drive instruction.”

M. HALL STANTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Philadelphia, PA

“In addition to the district training, teachers meet in grade-level teams every day – sometimes with the team leaders – to plan lessons.”

M. HALL STANTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Philadelphia, PA

“The key to all this curriculum mapping, data examination, and expertise sharing is the time that is carved out of the week for teachers to spend together working as a team. By assigned paraprofessionals and other adults in the building to take over classrooms 45

minutes before school ends once every week, each grade-level team has that 45 minutes for planning, plus the following 30 minutes of the contractual day for a total of an hour and 15 minutes. These meetings of what the school calls 'professional learning communities' mean that all teachers in a grade level, plus the reading, writing, and math specialists, the ESOL teachers, and the special education teacher assigned to that grade level, meet to focus on instruction."

EAST MILLSBORO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, East Millsboro, Delaware

"'We've always been a successful school,' agreed teacher Bullock, 'But we've improved since the professional learning communities.'"

EAST MILLSBORO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, East Millsboro, Delaware

"Albano's key management strategy is hiring good teachers and then keeping them. 'We select the best in the profession and they retain them.'" Albano said he is able to retain them because they know they're appreciated and part of something special... Albano gets 50 teachers to feel that 'the best time of their life is spent here.'" "Teaching applicants meet with a committee of teachers and parents and teach a model lesson in front of a classroom of children and five adults before they are hired...Albano, in other words, has created a school in which teachers feel comfortable both in teaching and in learning to be better teachers...encourages teachers to take risks."

LINCOLN ELEMENTARY, Mount Vernon, NY

"The school's schedule is build around opportunities for teachers to work together."

ELMONT MEMORIAL JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, Elmont, NY

"Department chairs sort through the applications and forward perhaps eight to the appropriate assistant principal, who will ask the applicants to teach sample lessons. Two applicants will then be forwarded to the principal, who interviews the finalists to see if they have an 'Elmont heart'....By taking such care with hiring, Elmont is sure to begin with a teaching staff committed to working together, improving instruction, and having high expectations for all students."

ELMONT MEMORIAL JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, Elmont, NY

"These vertical, cross-grade level meetings also provide an important forum for teachers to discuss instructional issues. Shirley and Mullins trained teachers in how to make the meetings productive and successful. Teachers then set expectations for the meetings including the requirements that teachers will express any concerns at the meeting rather than in the parking lot and will provide the principal with minutes and finished products, such as lessons with grading rubrics."

OAKLAND HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Russellville, Arkansas

"To make sure teachers have enough time to work collaboratively, the school's schedule is carefully built so that once a week students in each grade level go to back-to-back 'specials' – physical education, music, art, science, or counseling --- thus allowing the teachers at that grade level to meet for two hours with the principal and assistant principal."

CAPITOL VIEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Atlanta, Georgia

“Teams of teachers are at the core...Not only are the teams the place where teachers plan curriculum and instruction, they are also where teachers make sure no student is lost.”

PORT CHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL, Port Chester, NY

“Different teams have slightly different schedules, but usually three meetings a week are devoted to discussing the curriculum and planning lessons and instruction, developing assessments, and discussing assessment data; two meetings a week are devoted to discussing individual students who are struggling.”

PORT CHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL, Port Chester, NY

“ ‘Relationships and collaboration make the difference.’ Wojitasiak ‘This is a place of respect and caring.’ Sheppard

DAYTON’S BLUFF ACHIEVEMENT PLUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, St. Paul, MN