Indicator: The LEA/School promotes a school culture in which professional collaboration is valued and emphasized by all. (5084)

A number of researchers find that principal support for and involvement in teacher professional development activities characterize effective schools, findings that parallel the human capacity-building work of leaders in turnaround organizations in the corporate and government sectors generally and in restructuring schools in particular. Administrator attention and support has also been linked to more effective implementation of professional development activities and institutionalization of improvement efforts generally. Principals in effective schools are committed to helping teachers improve their skills and teaching strategies. They focus staff development activities on the entire staff and on the specific goals and curriculum programs of the school. They are especially adept at using informal coalitions of teachers in implementing new programs. They take an active role in planning, participating in, and evaluating professional development activities with their staffs. Research also reveals that learning-focused leaders provide both direct aid (e.g., concrete technical assistance and materials) and indirect support (e.g., encouragement) to teachers as they attempt to integrate skills learned during staff development programs into their repertoire of instructional behaviors. Effective principals facilitate opportunities for professional growth by enabling teachers to attend conferences, establishing mechanisms that facilitate the exchange of professional dialogue, and personally sharing ideas and materials with staff.

Leaders of schools on the crest of the improvement curve actively promote the formation of a learning organization, the development of staff cohesion and support, and the growth of communities of professional practice. At the broadest level, these leaders endeavor to create a culture of collaboration and the systems, operations, and policies that provide the infrastructure for that collegial culture. At this level, they also are active in building shared beliefs about the importance of community. They nurture collaborative processes (e.g., shared decision making), forge schedules (e.g., common planning time), and create organizational structures (e.g., team leadership) that permit and encourage shared mission and direction, collaborative work, and mutual accountability for school goals and student learning. These leaders are particularly attentive to ensuring that there are a variety of mechanisms for teachers to communicate and work among themselves. And, to be sure, these women and men are active participants in the various school learning communities, often serving key linking and pollinating roles in the process. They understand, and help others understand, that communities of professional practice offer the most appropriate vessels for professional learning and the forging of new instructional skills. Finally, they take advantage of the fact that they are in a unique position to garner and allocate resources to bring communities of professional practice to life.

Source: Murphy, J. (2007). In H. Walberg (Ed.) *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement*. Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation & Improvement and Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Professional development should parallel the school improvement plan and evidence of research-based practices in the classroom as determined by systematic classroom observations by the principal and by peers. When the school improvement plan calls for new expertise to enable the school to move in a new direction or to address a particular problem, professional development is a means for elevating the skill and knowledge of administrators, teachers, and staff. When classroom observations by the principal or other teachers (as in peer observation and collegial learning) indicate a general need for improvement across the faculty, well-planned professional development is a way to improve. When classroom observations by the principal or another teacher show an individual teacher's areas that need improvement, that teacher's personal development plan can include training or coaching to assist the teacher in the area of need.

The research-based teaching practices described in principles 7, 8, and 9 above (and listed as indicators in another module in this handbook), provide the elements of a classroom observation instrument. The principal or another teacher would meet with the observed teacher before the observation to review the indicators and again after the observation to discuss the observer's impressions. The teacher and the observer then create or update a professional development plan for the teacher, listing: (a) observed strengths and ways the teacher might share his/her expertise with other teachers, and (b) areas that need improvement and steps toward improvement. The observer assists the teacher in carrying out these next steps.

Continuous improvement of each teacher's skills is achieved through a variety of means including whole-faculty workshops, consultations with Instructional Teams, the principal's work with individual teachers and with teams, and through collegial learning – teacher to teacher (including peer observations, study groups, coaching, and mentoring). While teacher evaluation is something apart from professional development, evaluation should include examination of the teacher's proficiency with the same indicators used to plan professional development for each individual teacher and for the faculty as whole.
Source: Redding, S. (2007). In H. Walberg (Ed.) *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement*. Lincoln, IL: Center on Innovation & Improvement and Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Tools:
►**Indicators of Restructuring,** *The Mega System,* pp*.* 117-125,
www.centerii.org/survey

Resources:
►**Changing and Monitoring Instruction** and **Systems for Improved Teaching and Learning**, *Handbook on Restructuring and Substantial School Improvement*, pp. 77-104

►**Learning—It's a Big World Out There,** *The Mega System* pp. 65-135,
www.centerii.org/survey

►**Making time in the school day for structured collaborative practice**. Mass Insight Building Block Strategies: Effective Teachers and Teaching, (Please contact organization – file not found on web)

►**Creating a culture of collaboration by building trust, time & procedures for the sharing of instructional practice**. Mass Insight Building Block Strategies: Effective Teachers and Teaching, (Please contact organization – file not found on web)