



Middle School Design and Improvement
Initiative

2016-2017 Professional Learning Plan

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To maximize student achievement in the context of improving the quality of teaching and learning, the Norwalk Public Schools must go beyond the traditional model of *professional development*. Through an innovative learning design focused on building instructional capacity that is differentiated, middle school teachers will engage in an intentional and copious *professional learning* plan focused on three goals to build instructional capacity.

Goal 1: Align Teaching and Learning with Standards

Goal 2: Strengthening the Instructional Core (Teacher, Student, and Content)

Goal 3: Narrowing the Achievement Gap for Tier II and Tier III Students

Professional learning in context is providing teachers with strategies, methods, and tactics that facilitate sustainability and efficacy in the classroom. Thus, the adult learning design's core is using a blended model of traditional workshops coupled with coaching and modeling to deepen instructional capacity. This approach facilitates a continuum of learning activities that build capacity in the core areas of teaching, learning, and interventions. Moreover, the NPS professional learning design provides direct support in the classroom to teachers, while providing low-risk feedback to transfer new skills into the classroom.

Goal 1: Align Teaching and Learning Standards

Educational Partners: Center for Secondary School Redesign, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH), International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE), and NPS Curriculum Office

Adult Learning Design: Adult blended-learning model consisting of traditional workshop activities, on-site coaching modules that are job-embedded, and targeted lesson observations with feedback.

Timeline: Professional learning activities will occur during the Middle School Design Institute (summer institute in August 2016), staff meetings on Mondays, district professional development days, grade-level common planning time, and distant learning activities with specific time designations by the educational partner.

Workshop and Coaching Activities: Designed specifically for Middle School Teachers, participants will engage in workshops and coaching activities that are aligned to teaching methods/approaches specifically in an extended learning time block. Workshop/coaching focuses will include:

- Differentiating Instructional Methods within an Extended Learning Block **(Facilitator: Center for Secondary School Redesign)**
- Creating a Rigorous Learning and Relevant Environment Using the “R/R Framework” **(Facilitator: HMH/ICLE)**
- Interdisciplinary Teaming Strategies to Deepen and Foster Teacher Collaboration **(Facilitator: Center for Secondary School Redesign)**
- Fostering Student-Centered Pedagogy and Learning **(Facilitator: Center for Secondary School Redesign)**
- Flexible Instructional Structures for Student Success **(Facilitator: Center for Secondary School Redesign)**
- Understanding the 6-12 Common Core State Standards **(Facilitator: NPS Curriculum Office)**
- Designing Lessons with the Common Core State Standards in Mind **(Facilitator: NPS Curriculum Office)**
- Defining Rigor within an Extended Learning Block **(Facilitator: Center for Secondary School Redesign)**
- Using Data to Drive Instructional Decisions **(Facilitator: HMH/ICLE)**

Rigorous Curriculum Design Institute: June 2017 (Design and Construction of 6-8 ELA and Math Curriculum)

- Prioritizing of 6-8 ELA and Math Common Core State Standards
- Identification of Curriculum Maps (Topical, Skills, or Thematic)
- Unwrapping of CCSS Standards
- DOK and Blooms Alignment
- Development of Essential Questions, Concepts, Skills, and Big Ideas
- Authentic Performance Task Development with Supporting Rubric

Goal 2: Strengthening the Instructional Core

Educational Partners: Center for Secondary School Redesign, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH), International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE), and NPS Curriculum Office

Adult Learning Design: Peer-observations, internal observations with feedback, lateral content-area study groups, book-studies, external/internal coaching, case-study analysis, traditional workshops, instructional rounds, learning walks, modeling sessions with cohort discussions, and job-embedded coaching.

Timeline: Professional learning activities will occur during the Middle Grades Design Institute, district professional development days, internal/external coaching support (on-going and embedded weekly), Monday staff meetings, and common planning time sessions.

Workshop Activities: Designed specifically for Instructional Leaders and Teachers, participants will engage in workshops and coaching activities to align teaching methods/approaches specifically to teaching in an extended learning time block. Workshop focuses will include:

- Tools, Strategies, and Protocols for Effective Common Planning Time Meetings (**Facilitator: Center for Secondary School Redesign**)
- Building Professional Learning Communities to Increase Student Achievement (**Facilitator: HMH/ICLE**)
- Creating Authentic Learning Environments for Students within the Extended Learning Block (**Facilitator: Center for Secondary School Redesign**)
- Framing the Next Generation Science Standards: Providing experimental learning within an extended learning block (**Facilitator: NPS Curriculum Team**)
- Digging Deep with Content to Develop Higher Level Questioning (**Facilitator: NPS Curriculum Team**)
- Modeling High-Impact Instructional Strategies in an Extended Learning Block to Prepare Students for College and Career Ready (**Center for Secondary School Redesign**)
- How to Embed Rigor and Relevance in All Content-Areas (**HMH/ICLE**)
- Student-Centered Learning: What Does this Look Like in the Classroom (**Facilitator: Center for Secondary School Redesign**)

Goal 3: Narrowing the Achievement Gap for Tier II and Tier III Students

Educational Partners: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH), International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE) and NPS Curriculum Office

Adult Learning Design: Project Manager expert coaching, lesson modeling sessions, simulated models, co-teaching with specialists, data analysis for best practices, examination of student work, hybrid learning with HMH/ICLE, team coaching, teacher-planning sessions.

Timeline: District professional development days, external coaching support (on-going consisting of four days a week), Monday staff meetings, common planning time sessions, and designated days for teaming activities.

Workshop Activities: Designed specifically for teachers who serve as “Literacy and Numeracy Interventionists”, participants will engage in workshops and coaching activities to deepen the scale of tier II and tier III. Professional Learning Activities include:

- Setting-Up a Blended Learning Model for Small Group Rotations (**Facilitator: HMH/ICLE**)
- Read 180 Universal: Deepening Knowledge, Routines, Instruction and Technology (**Facilitator: HMH/ICLE**)
- Read 180 Universal: Using Data to Differentiate, Monitor, and Celebrate (**Facilitators: HMH/ICLE**)
- Read 180 Universal: Implementing an Effective Blended Learning Model for Success (**Facilitators: HMH/ICLE**)
- Getting Started with Math 180 (**Facilitators: HMH/ICLE**)
- Sustaining and Implementing the Rotational Model in Math 180 (**Facilitators: HMH and ICLE**)
- Using the Role of Talk to Support Learning of Mathematics (**Facilitators: HMH and ICLE**)