



## **Professional Development**

### **General Goals:**

The primary goal of the Office of Professional Development is to facilitate the development of a high quality, comprehensive set of opportunities designed to create a community of adult learners, committed to enhancing student success and meeting the identified needs of certified and classified employees.

With the challenges of No Child Left Behind, a growing diversity of stakeholders, the aging educational workforce, and the growing knowledge relative to learning and student improvement, it is imperative that public school districts engage in systematic and coordinated change and advancement through professional development that acknowledges and respects the history of the district while leading in the creation of a new vision for strengthening the preparedness of the next generation for successful participation in the economy of the world-wide community. It is crucial that efforts to become more customer-driven and student-performance-oriented be integrated into all aspects of district service in order to realize the goals of Performance Excellence and the District mission of "quality learning experiences for every student, every day, without exception." Such goals may be accomplished through directed and coordinated professional development opportunities.

### **Current Projects/Activities**

Some of the immediate goals of the Office of Professional Development involve the development of a menu of current offerings that categorizes them according to purpose. Categories may include the following:

- educational leadership and district mission for school improvement
- creating and nurturing a culture of high expectations for all students
- understanding and implementing district and state curriculum objectives
- infusion of diversified strategies and alignment of resources for student support

The next goal will be to evaluate these offerings to establish a link to school improvement and improved student performance. A subsequent goal will be to eliminate or replace those that are ineffective or minimally effective so that all efforts support the highest levels of student performance.

Next steps would involve aligning the professional development programs to the Baldrige Criteria and Core Values for continuous improvement. The professional development activities will add value to the work of all employees and drive the needed change that must be implemented in order to realize improved student performance outcomes.

### **Opportunities and Challenges**

Under the direction of the Chief Academic Officer, one responsibility involves the facilitation, collaboration, and alignment of several pivotal offices in the Tulsa Public Schools. The initiatives must meet the immediate needs in the Journey to Performance Excellence and the various School Improvement Plans that are developed under the supervision of the Area Superintendents and in accordance with measurable student outcomes. The offices that must be included in this process include: Leadership Development, Curriculum & Instruction, Instructional Technology, Instructional Media/Library Services, GEAR UP, Diversity & Equity, and Special Education.

### **Collaborate with Leadership Development:**

Educational leadership development begins by creating teacher leaders, and progresses by identifying, recruiting, training, & mentoring building leaders for all developmental levels. Teacher leaders are then molded, guided, & supported

in their development for transition into district leadership with a focus on improved student achievement outcomes that are specifically-defined and measurable.

#### Collaboration with Curriculum & Instruction:

Tulsa Public Schools has made significant progress in developing a progressive set of curricular objectives through Target Teach. The District must continue this commitment by organizing and aligning the skills of the resource teachers to teach, model, and coach instructional specialists and teachers across the District. This mentoring will develop skills and understanding for teachers to use research-based instructional strategies and delivery systems that produce higher levels of student performance.

A secondary role involves providing leadership to develop broad categories of thematic focus for each high school feeder with vertically aligned supporting themes in the middle and elementary feeder sites. These efforts could provide a scaffolding of experiences to which students may connect their learning while offering access to grant opportunities that build specialization of theme, and relationship with corporate/community partners. Three of the nine high schools have embarked on the development of overarching themes; the other six high schools could be supported in developing unique themes with ninth grade academies that incorporate an overview of TPS high schools and the variety of themes that are available.

#### Collaboration with Instructional Technology Services:

In order to connect instructional technology that supports student achievement, it is critical that there be a close alignment between the district curriculum and the applications of integrated learning systems and other instructional technology resources. This alignment must then be supported by instruction, modeling, and coaching of faculty/staff to incorporate the resources and to monitor/measure student performance.

#### Collaboration with Instructional Media/Library Services:

Collaboration of classroom teachers and media specialists must be facilitated. Incorporating best practices for enhancing the curriculum with engaging library and multi-media resources will provide authentic experiences. Students may then build contiguous relationships for long term retention of academic content and skills through the development of deeper and extended meaning.

#### Collaboration with Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP):

GEAR UP involves opportunities to visit and engage with other students and university personnel on higher education campuses. An additional component which needs to be developed is a strong focus on building skills – academically, socially, and intellectually. Particularly, the focus must be on skills necessary to gain secondary experiences that will support college readiness – resources such as Covey's Habits of Highly Effective Teens, alignment of course selection via EPAS and Discover from ACT, career exploration/internships, and recruitment into specialty programs. Efforts should support individual student goals with measurable outcomes.

#### Collaboration with Diversity & Equity:

With the increasing diversity of students in the Tulsa Public School district, it is imperative that leadership be supported to monitor the progress of diverse populations. The professional development goals must involve reducing the disparity in discipline and achievement, collaborating to develop parental and community capacity to support student improvement, and defining/coordinating opportunities to support the development and improvement of instructional skills. Support for the recruitment of personnel who represent the diversity of students and community while building an environment of **acceptance, respect, and high expectations for all must be a priority.**