

Policy Title:

Professional Learning Community

Code No. ***406.0***

In order to ensure students are prepared to be lifelong learners and caring, responsible citizens, the Board of Education commits to collaborative practices that ensure continuous improvement and progress toward a new “Tradition of Excellence.” To develop and implement a new “Tradition of Excellence” the Board of Education is committed to the philosophical constructs of a Professional Learning Community.

A professional learning community can be defined as a group of educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of a collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. The following fundamental elements are those that must be in place to ensure a successful professional learning community:

Learning is the Fundamental Purpose

The fundamental purpose of the Cedar Falls Community Schools is to help all students achieve high levels of learning, and therefore, all practices will be examined in light of their impact on learning. To that end:

- a) Collective knowledge will be developed regarding state standards to clarify what all students must know and be able to do as a result of each unit instruction.
- b) A collaborative culture through high-performing teams who are committed to working together to achieve the fundamental purpose of learning will be established. Collaborative teams will be given time during the contractual day and year to meet on a regular basis.
- c) Collaborative teams will clarify what students must learn, gather evidence of student learning, analyze the evidence, identify the most powerful teaching strategies/best practices, and transfer these strategies across all team members.
- d) Collaborative teams will work together interdependently to create and achieve common goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (SMART).
- e) Common assessments will be developed by teams to monitor the learning of each student in all essential outcomes. These assessments will be aligned to the required state and district tests.
- f) Time will be dedicated and structured to implement innovation/enrichment initiatives during the course of the regular school day and academic year.
- g) A system of mandatory interventions based upon the examined evidence that guarantees each student receives additional time and support for learning until he/she has met the agreed upon standards will be provided.

The Board of Education recognizes the value of the importance of strong collaborative relationships with its expanded community, families, residences, businesses, government agencies, and other educational systems to achieve the fundamental purpose of schooling. To that end:

- a) The Board of Education will actively promote and uphold the District's mission, values, and goals.
- b) The Board of Education commits to recruiting, developing, and retaining individuals who embrace the school's mission, values, and goals.
- c) The Board of Education will reach out to expertise in the broader community of Cedar Falls to educate and garner support for the Professional Learning Community.
- d) The Board of Education commits to the support of high-performing collaborative teams to better serve and support all students.
- e) The Board of Education understands and supports the development of personal and professional goal-setting, resulting from thoughtful and critical reflection which leads to continued learning and growth.

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