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Patricia Kinsella
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To: School Committee
From: Patricia Kinsella
Re: Report on Institute Day - January 19, 2016
Date: January 29, 2016

Institute Day 2016 featured an admirably wide range of learning opportunities for faculty, and faculty reported high levels of satisfaction with both the quantity and quality of the learning in which they engaged. This report provides a brief overview of the day's activities and feedback from faculty.

This year, the district provided each school with the autonomy to determine its own agenda for the day. In all cases, this resulted in opportunities for faculty to carry out learning projects relevant to their specific job responsibilities. In addition, some buildings used a portion of the day for all-faculty workshops on one topic related to their whole school improvement plan.

In the Preschool, faculty focused on increasing their knowledge of and skill with early childhood activities that promote positive social interactions and academic pre-readiness skills. Preschool faculty also focused on increasing their ability to support students and families with transitions to and from school and to increase student leadership during the school day.

Hanscom Middle School, Brooks, and Smith each dedicated one half of the day to learning events in which all faculty participated. Hanscom Middle School continued its visioning exercise related to their new building and the goal of using its enhanced learning space to full effect. (The highlight of the day for HMS faculty was the tour each small group took of their soon-to-be-occupied new school.) Lincoln School 5-8 furthered their understanding of Developmental Designs in Middle School with an outside facilitator. Lincoln School K-4 focused for the morning on Social Thinking and Responsive Classrooms, programs designed to support students in developing internalized, pro-social behavior in school. Hanscom Primary School provided all faculty with the full day for small-group work, with several teams electing to use both the morning and afternoon sessions on one project.

The range of work projects was impressive. I was able to visit all sites during the day, and I was gratified to see the level of engagement and productivity on display. From "Integrating Math and Movement" to the new "Units of Study in Reading" to an Islamic art project, the professional learning LPS faculty carried out reflected their commitment to ensuring that all students participate in a rich curriculum with cohesive, well-planned instruction.

A sampling of faculty feedback from Institute Day 2016 follows.

- *I liked the time we were able to devote to one thing. It didn't feel like we were squeezing something in or doing it on the fly.*
- *We were able to join another group briefly when we realized there was some overlap. That resulted in great conversation and a plan for scheduled collaboration going forward.*
- *I loved having the time to work with the team to develop a collaborative project. With the time allotted, we were able to complete plans for a grade X/X shared activity with parents and students.*
- *I valued the team time... We went from thinking on a big scale to realize the small changes we are able to make as a team.*

- *It was a very successful Institute Day. Having a substantial “chunk” of time to spend with team members was extremely helpful for me. We were able to begin the process of examining our standards, identifying places where our subjects overlap, and sharing ways that we can use texts and common language to create cross-curricular connections for our students.*

Reviewing feedback from last year’s Institute Day, the district and schools made several changes that contributed to this year’s productivity:

- Buildings continued the effective strategy employed last year of allowing faculty some choice in how they spent the time.
- We distributed information about the building-based nature of the day earlier in the fall;
- All buildings made arrangements for faculty to eat lunch together. The district expresses its gratitude to the PTO at Hanscom Primary and Hanscom Middle Schools for their generous support of the Institute Day lunch.

We look forward to observing over the coming months as faculty enact the instructional methods, materials, and collaborative practices they worked on during Institute Day 2016. As we gather evidence of this work, we will share it with the School Committee.