



Loudoun County Public Schools

# **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM**

## **EVALUATION REPORT SUMMARY**

## Program Description

The Division of Professional Learning and School Support within the Department of Teaching and Learning in Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) provides leadership and coordination in administering a variety of professional learning programs to the school division which is consistent with Goal Area Action 2.1 (Ongoing Growth and Development) of the One LCPS: 2027 Strategic Plan for Excellence (LCPS, 2022). The Offices within the Division include Instructional Technology, Instructional Design and Innovation, and Professional Learning and School Support.

The Instructional Technology Office provides support to district initiatives that improve teaching and learning through the meaningful integration of instructional technologies. The Instructional Technology Team, along with the Instructional Technology Facilitators in each school, provides professional development to ensure teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to leverage the technologies available in their classroom.

The Office of Instructional Design and Innovation works with the content offices to align the instructional vision of LCPS within the development of curriculum and curriculum-aligned professional learning. The office promotes the development of resources aligned to the LCPS Instructional Framework and the outcomes of the LCPS Profile of a Graduate. The primary goal is to oversee the design, coordination, and delivery of K-12 curriculum-based professional learning opportunities for all school and division staff, including efforts relating to the LCPS Instructional Framework and LCPS Profile of a Graduate.

The Office of Professional Learning and School Support supports teachers and teams in schools at all levels to enhance teacher practice and student learning. Instructional Coaches support the implementation of the LCPS Profile of a Graduate to promote deeper learning for all students. The Instructional Coaches use the knowledge they have gained in professional learning throughout the year. Specifically, they use skills learned in the following professional learning sessions: Adaptive Schools, Cognitive Coaching, and Fierce Conversations.

## Research Questions

1. To what extent does school- and division-level professional development enhance LCPS staff members' abilities to meet student needs?
2. In which topics would LCPS staff members like to receive additional professional development?
3. What is the sentiment that school-based staff feel towards professional learning?
4. What is going well in regards to school-based professional learning?
5. What might be some improvements that could be made in regards to professional learning?
6. What are some barriers keeping school staff from receiving the professional learning that would be relevant to them?
7. What support is school-based staff receiving to implement the professional learning that they attended?
8. How do school-based staff find out about professional learning opportunities? What would be helpful in regards to communication?

9. What are some incentives for school-based staff that could be offered for engaging in professional learning?
10. What characteristics of professional learning are the most engaging for school-based staff?

## Conclusions

Evidence collected from annual school-based staff stakeholder surveys and focus groups with school staff yielded insights into the strengths of the Professional Learning program and potential areas of growth for the 2024-25 school year. More specifically, analyses of the data highlighted the following strengths: (a) high levels of agreement that professional development (both school- and division-levels) enhances the ability of staff to meet student needs, (b) plentiful options for professional learning in general, (c) satisfaction with the opportunities to collaborate across the division, (d) helpfulness of outside professionals and central office experts, and (e) utility of division-based professional learning opportunities such as Adaptive Schools, Cognitive Coaching, and Fierce Conversations.

Potential areas of growth included: (a) negative sentiment toward the division's professional learning in general, (b) communication about professional development opportunities, (c) follow up with staff and provide support after the professional development session, and (d) use survey data to identify professional development topics.

It is important to note that the evaluation design used to develop the research questions is subject to change as the work of Professional Learning program staff is integrated with other division initiatives. Consequently, the implementation and outcomes of the programs may similarly evolve given the nature of continuous improvement.

## Recommendations

1. **Increase school-level professional development:** Since school-level professional development received higher agreement rates than at the division level, consider increasing the frequency and variety of the school-level sessions. Tailoring these sessions to the specific needs of each school, by collaborating with the Office of School Improvement and working across the departments, could further enhance their effectiveness.
2. **Focus on the most popular topics:** Given that approximately one third of staff members expressed a desire for professional development in supporting positive student behavior, prioritize this topic in upcoming sessions. Additionally, ensure the other top-requested topics are addressed to meet staff needs. Determine how to incorporate these topics into the Countywide Staff Development Days, as well as provide opportunities for staff to learn both from experts in the field and from each other.
3. **Improve communication and accessibility:** Enhance the communication channels for professional learning opportunities. Ensure all staff members are aware of available sessions and how to access them. Consider using multiple platforms (emails, newsletters, intranet,

PowerSchool) to disseminate this information. Also consider assembling a cross-departmental workgroup to develop a structure that ensures all staff know how to locate professional learning relevant to their needs.

4. **Follow-up support and coaching:** Enhance the effectiveness of professional learning by ensuring staff members receive ongoing support and coaching to implement new skills and strategies. Develop a timeline for follow-up sessions after each professional learning event and schedule regular check-ins to discuss progress and address any challenges.
5. **Offer incentives:** Introduce incentives for engaging in professional learning. Explore career pathways for teachers who want to remain in the classroom yet continue to grow their practice.
6. **Foster collaboration:** Encourage collaboration by creating more opportunities for staff to meet and share best practices. This could be through professional learning communities (PLCs), CLTs, or collaboration opportunities with colleagues across the division.
7. **Provide high-quality professional learning opportunities:** Ensure the professional learning offered is high quality by providing intentional and strategic support to the providers of professional learning.
8. **Evaluate and adjust:** Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning through the use of surveys and other feedback mechanisms. More importantly, use these data to make continuous improvements to the program.

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

