

Curriculum Focus Groups

First: the thinking/rationale for CFG activities:

- Teachers should engage in activities of their own choosing that meet their specific needs.
- CFG activities can be unique for each teacher (or team) to accommodate adult learning styles/preferences.
- CFGs should help teachers develop their instructional practices in some way.
- CFG activities should directly connect with what you are already doing in the classroom so they ~~do not~~ feel like a massive diversion. **The classroom is the lab.**
- Teachers should feel empowered and autonomous, but supported, in their activities.

Tasks of the CFG's:

*starred bullets are required items in support of the District Improvement Plan, BUT still allow for some freedom

- Create, analyze, and/or revise a performance task around higher order thinking*
- Instructional Rounds/Learning Walks (within dept or inter-disciplinary)
- Analyze any data you want using the data protocol* (1 cycle)
- Collaborative planning
- Create common assessment
- Grading calibration
- Analyze best practices in grading, classroom management, etc.
- Other professional development activities such as:
 1. Lesson Study
 2. Reading a book or article
 3. Inter-visiting in the building or at another school ("critical friends")
 4. Record yourself teach and watching to evaluate practices
 5. Going to a peer's "workshop" or inviting an expert to the school
 6. Designing an experiment or action research project to conduct in your class
 7. Keeping a reflective journal or blog
 8. Using online webinars or web-based materials

Potential Discussion Topics:

1. Quality Instruction—curriculum, instruction, and assessment
2. Homework
3. Lesson Design that Motivates
4. Technology Integration
5. Effective feedback on writing
6. Dealing with "holes" in a student's math knowledge
7. Universal Design for Learning

Documentation:

Twice a month, after meeting, one teacher communicates (via email, google doc, google form etc.) to the supervisory housemaster brief answers to these three questions:

1. Who attended?
2. What was discussed?
3. What are your next steps?