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# Policy Advocacy - Advocating For Redesigned Adult Learning In Support of Value-Added Teacher Evaluation

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POLICY ADVOCACY – ADVOCATING FOR REDESIGNED ADULT LEARNING  
IN SUPPORT OF VALUE ADDED TEACHER EVALUATION

Caletha H. White

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National-Louis University

December, 2017

A THREE-PART DISSERTATION

EXPLORING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AS MEASURED BY THE DANIELSON  
FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OUTCOMES:  
PURSUING AN UNDERSTANDING OF LEADING  
STUDENTS TO EXCELLENCE  
P.U.L.S.E. STUDY

REDESIGNED ADULT LEARNING TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF DEEP  
UNDERSTANDING OF THE DANIELSON FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING AND  
THE SHIFTS REQUIRED TO LEAD STUDENTS TO EXCELLENCE

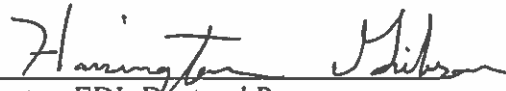
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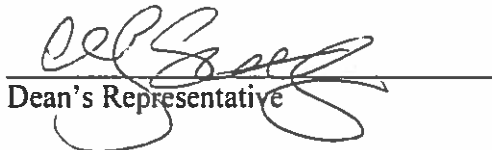
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This document was created as *one* part of the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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## ABSTRACT

Redesigning adult learning in order to move toward excellence in the classroom is critical to improving the state of the reform work occurring in our schools. Building coherence among teams of educators by linking staff development to student achievement is the goal of the advocated policy. Providing a professional learning network for educators to work in teams, engage in meaningful and relevant work and develop transformative practices for the classroom is essential to school reform. Creating practical learning networks for classroom teachers that are based on student achievement, current practice, and staff needs is the basis for the policy. The vision behind the adult learning network stems from the idea that on the first day of school every parent wants the ‘best’ teacher for their child and every child wants the ‘best’ teacher for themselves. The idea of ‘best’ rests upon what parents and students see as the teacher that will provide the greatest opportunities for success. The activities developed as part of the advocated learning network are created to support meaningful learning experiences that engage students by translating innovative adult learning into practice.

## PREFACE

One of the measures of success as the Director of Instructional Services in the school district is effective staff development. Throughout this study I have realized the importance of developing opportunities for teachers, teacher evaluators, and instructional leaders to work and learn together around questions and problems of practice to find solutions of practice. Throughout this policy advocacy project, I have deeply reflected upon the true meaning of professional development and replaced this term with professional learning to focus on the ‘learning’ that occurs through our practice. Educators across the school district in various schools and classrooms want to be excellent educators with robust tasks for students to apply learning to solve problems. Providing support for teachers to reflect, collaborate, model and analyze their practice and immediately connect to the classroom opens up a world of opportunities and possibilities for every educator to move toward excellence through sustainable, relevant and systematic learning networks.

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## SECTION ONE – VISION STATEMENT

During recent years many of our 50 states have enacted legislation that mandates school districts to implement teacher evaluation reform. In Illinois, the adoption of The Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) of 2010 or Public Act 96-0861, modified as Senate Bill 7, requires new evaluation models and the inclusion of “data and indicators on student growth as a significant factor in rating teacher performance into evaluation plans for all teachers.” (Illinois SB0315, p. 12). Since the passage of this legislation school districts across the State have begun to create teacher evaluation plans which include a measure of student achievement.

During the past two years, I have studied the relationship between teacher evaluation and student learning. According to White (2015), in order to consider the relationship between teacher ratings and academic achievement the first step is defining teacher excellence. White (2016) suggests providing a framework for change to support an effective teacher evaluation process.

This policy advocacy paper will focus on providing an awareness of local and state opportunities for policy reform based on my program evaluation and change plan. As I studied the program evaluation and change plan data during 2015 and 2016 I became aware of critical issues that require a response in order to improve the teacher evaluation plan in a small school district in the southern suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. According to the 2016 Illinois Report Card (Illinois, 2016), the district serves 1,980 students and employs 127 teachers responsible for the teaching and learning of a student population which is 83% black and 86% low income. The district teacher retention rate reported on

the Illinois Report Card is 60.4%. During the 2015 and 2016 school years the district has averaged 29 new teachers per year.

The quality of teaching and learning in the District is important for all stakeholders. A critical need has been identified in the number of students that meet the learning standards as measured by high stakes State testing. According to the Illinois Interactive Report Card (Illinois, 2015) in the spring of 2015 as shown in Table one, 27% of all students assessed in grades three through eight met or exceeded state standards in English language Arts as measured by the Partnership for the Assessment for Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Assessment. Additionally, 11% of all students assessed in grades three through eight met or exceeded state standards in Mathematics as measured by the PARCC Assessment.

The outcomes from White (2015) represent the overall performance ratings of eighty-one (81) teachers and his/her student growth score. Table one summarizes the district PARCC ratings while Table nineteen summarizes the local student achievement assessment outcomes.

Table 1					
Spring 2015 PARCC Assessment Scores					
	Did Not Meet Standards	Partially Met Standards	Approached Standards	Met Standards	Exceeded Standards
District Composite	23 %	33%	26%	17%	1%
<i>State Composite</i>	<i>14%</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>4%</i>
English Language Arts	17%	26%	30%	25%	2%

<i>State ELA</i>	14%	20%	28%	32%	6%
Mathematics	29%	40%	21%	10%	1%
<i>State Mathematics</i>	15%	28%	29%	25%	3%

According to the District’s local Northwest Education Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) assessments, as shown in Table two, 34% of the of students meet proficiency expectations in reading and 28% of the student meet

Table 2				
Spring 2015 NWEA MAP Proficiency Summary				
	Academic Warning	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Reading	15.5 %	50.8%	27.7%	6.1%
Mathematics	20.2%	52%	25.1%	2.6%

proficiency expectations in mathematics.

However, according to the 2015 teacher evaluation ratings in the school district shown in Table three, 96% of the teachers are rated excellent or proficient.

Table 3				
Overall Summative Teacher Evaluation Ratings				
Overall Rating 1.0 – 4.0 scale	Unsatisfactory 1.49 – 1.0	Basic/ Needs Improvement 2.49 – 1.5	Proficient 3.49 – 2.5	Distinguished/Excellent 4.0 – 3.5
N = 81	1 .012%	2 .024%	71 .876%	7 .086%

According to White (2015), the critical issues that demonstrate a need for policy guidelines became evident through data analysis which sought to prove or dis-prove the

relationship between teacher effectiveness ratings and student growth. Supplementary qualitative data provided through teacher and administrator interviews also supported the analysis. In 2015 the district adopted the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the approved teacher evaluation tool.

The vision of the District's future is deeply connected to the vision of creating students that demonstrate competency in meeting and exceeding state standards, creating teachers that are demonstrating excellence in teaching as measured by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and creating a community of leaders that engage in innovative activities which build teacher capacity and increase student achievement. Based on the teacher evaluation ratings in relationship to the local and state student achievement outcomes I am recommending policy guidelines to support professional learning for teachers and evaluators. When looking closely at the district data we find that 96% of the teachers are rated proficient or excellent while less than 35% of the students meet or exceed expectation in reading and/or mathematics. To close the gap between teacher ratings and student achievement I believe that professional learning activities will provide a platform for engaging discourse and best practice strategies to improve the overall instructional environment. According to Darling-Hammond (2011, p.32) after we evaluate teachers and analyze outcomes our next steps include deepening professional learning by

“Creating a strong infrastructure for professional learning that is:

- Responsive to teacher and principal needs
- Sustained and readily available
- Grounded in curriculum content

- Supportive of diverse learners
- Supported by coaching
- Connected to collaborative work in professional learning communities
- Integrated into school and classroom planning around curriculum, instruction, and assessment”

The policy is recommended to be adopted and implemented to ensure that professional learning activities will be provided which will educate all staff and make explicit connections between teacher evaluation and student learning to positively impact classroom instruction and academic outcomes. The purpose of the advocated policy will be for teachers to deeply understand the Domains, Components, and Elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and how to enhance their practice through this understanding. According to Danielson (2013, p. 29), “districts and states that are successful allow people sufficient time to gain a deep understanding of the framework and what good teaching looks like.” Tucker and Stronge, (2005.p. 2) share their work on teacher quality and “support the fact that effective teachers not only make students feel good about school and learning, but also that their work actually results in increased student achievement.”

This policy is also recommended for adoption to support the work of teacher evaluators understanding of a common language and common expectations for all teachers in an effort to increase inter-rater reliability within the district. Danielson suggests (2013, p. 29), “that changing the culture and capacity of a district involves professional learning and conversations with site administrators and teachers. A culture

of professional inquiry.” The activities defined in the recommended policy are centered around collaborative networks of professional learning.

It is my recommendation that a professional learning policy is adopted by the local school district in order to create a strong professional learning infrastructure, increase teacher agency and meet the learning needs of evaluators, teachers, and learners. The professional learning activities shall be known as the PULSE, Pursuing an Understanding of Leading Students to Excellence, Professional Learning Network (See Appendix A). The PULSE Network courses shall provide opportunities for professional learning which ultimately translate into improved teacher practice and an increase in A

In developing the professional learning policy several factors contribute to the need for advocacy centered around educational, economic, social and political frameworks which suggest a new focus on school improvement plans and practices targeting teacher development. According to Kane (2016, p.17), “changing teacher behavior occurs when we plan for improvement based on discrete behaviors, opportunities for practice and feedback, and a supportive social environment.” Our moral and ethical responsibility as guardians of local educational resources present a need to advocate for redesigned adult learning experiences for more effective schools to educate our students.

## SECTION TWO: ANALYSIS OF NEED

The advocated policy focuses on creating an environment to promote teacher evaluation school reform activities through a professional learning model. To fully understand the need for the advocated policy this section examines five disciplinary areas through the lens of education, economic, social, political and ethical analysis. The education of students within the school is the task of teachers, school administrators, district-level leaders, state and federal education agencies and elected officials. To support effective educational environments, an analysis of need is central to the task.

### Educational Analysis

The education of our nation's students is a significant task. Legislators, businessmen and women, publishers, community members and educators have ideas about how to successfully navigate teaching and learning experiences for students. The common theme often found among these constituents is the desire for children to excel. My goal is to continue to pursue an understanding of leading students to excellence. The educational environment in our schools today is filled with manuals of standards, textbooks, accountability plans for measuring student progress, data collection binders and detailed teacher lesson plans. What direction we take for excellence in the classroom depends upon many factors; however, the classroom teacher is the instrument for facilitating an effective instructional course for our students.

Highly effective teachers enrich the lives of children. According to Tucker and Stronge (2005),



we now know empirically that these effective teachers also have a direct influence on enhancing student learning. Years of research on teacher quality support the fact that effective teachers not only make students feel good about learning, but also that their work actually results in increased student achievement. (p. 2)

The work of the classroom teacher is essential to student learning. As I consider this key component of the education system it is important for the teacher to be skilled, engage in ongoing reflection regarding classroom practice and immersed in authentic learning experiences to hone the art of teaching. Pollock (2007, p. 2) who suggests that “individual teachers can have a profound influence on student learning even in schools that are relatively ineffective.” It is my belief that developing the strengths of the individual teacher is critical to effective teaching and learning. Marzano, Frontier, and Livingston (2011, p. 29) suggests that “a knowledge base for teaching is the first step a district or school must take if it is to support the development of teachers.

To ensure that teacher professional learning activities are framed within a system that supports the valuable work of curriculum implementation, professional collaboration, deep study of student progress and opportunities for observation and practice an educational policy is required to guide the school district. Annual teacher evaluation requirements focus on measuring the teacher’s effectiveness through a tier of quality ratings and the data collected from student assessments. The components of the PULSE Network Policy will be guiding tenants that will connect the quality of the teacher as measured by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, student achievement, and teacher learning experiences. Because what students do in the classroom is a response to what

teachers do in the classroom, a policy that supports strengthening teacher practice is important for educating our nation's students.

The activities of the PULSE Network reflect what teachers want. According to the Boston Consulting Group (2014, p. 4), "teachers say the ideal professional development experience is relevant, interactive, delivered by someone who understands my experience, sustained over time, and treats teachers like professionals. The experience focuses less on presentation and more on opportunities to apply learning through demonstrations or modeling and practice."

### Economic Analysis

Economically, advocating for a systematic framework for professional learning for teachers and school leaders allows a school district to maximize the financial allocations targeted for increasing student achievement through improving teacher practice. The district is entitled to U. S. Department of Education Title II funds and is required to plan activities centered on teacher and principal training. According to Elementary and Secondary Education Title II Guidance, Title II Part A Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund (ed.gov 2017, p.1),

The purpose of this part is to provide grants to State educational agencies, local educational agencies, State agencies for higher education, and eligible partnerships in order to —

(1) increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified

teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools; and

(2) hold local educational agencies and schools accountable for improvements in student academic achievement.

The recipients of the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grant program, or Title II, Part A are determined by a formula which includes poverty levels and population. However, the Title II, Part A program is undergoing changes with the newly adopted U.S. Department of Education Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). According to Klein (2017),

ESSA made some pretty major changes to the way Title II funding flows, as well as some programmatic tweaks. The new law changed the formula for distributing the money, basing the dollars more on a state's poverty level and less on its overall population.

The Trump administration doesn't see the program as effective. And its predecessor also questioned Title II. Former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan expressed concerns early on his tenure that the program wasn't getting much bang for its buck. But overall, he was in favor of tweaking Title II, not ditching it.

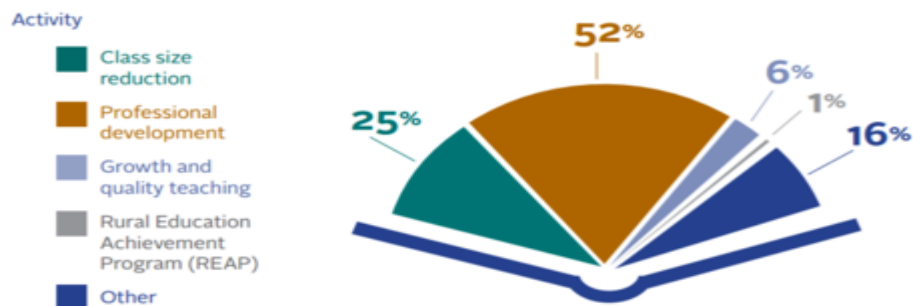
The Obama administration never proposed getting rid of the Title II program, or even cutting it substantially. But the program's budget went from nearly \$3 billion when Obama took office to about \$2.3 billion by the time he left. The Obama

administration asked for yet another, relatively small cut to the program in its last budget, for fiscal year 2017, which started on Oct. 1. And the Obama administration directed a portion of Title II funding to the Supporting Effective Educator Development Program, which doles out competitive grants for improving teacher quality. (p. 3)

According to Klein (2017, p. 1), Figure 3 shows data from a 2015-16 school year survey indicating how Title II, Part A funds are used in school districts across the United States. Klein (2017, p.2), goes on to say that

“Educators, from teachers to all the way up to state chiefs, have serious concerns about losing this money, even as some acknowledge it could be better targeted. There has been plenty of research suggesting that Title II could use a makeover. In 2015, the American Institute for Research argued that the professional development activities funded using Title II dollars haven't been as effective as they could be. The report recommends that Title II be refocused on "continuous improvement.”

**FIGURE 3.** Title II, Part A funds allocated, by activity: 2015–16



**Note:** Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Figure reads:** In school year 2015–16, 25 percent of Title II, Part A funds made available to school districts were allocated for class size reduction.

This policy advocacy, Advocating Redesigned Adult Learning to Support Value Added Teacher Evaluation Systems, proposes a makeover for Title II, Part A professional development activities in support of continuous improvement activities targeted for teacher and principal improvement through the district PULSE Network creating a strong infrastructure for school improvement. The district currently receives approximately \$100,000 in Title II, Part A funds and utilizes 57% of those funds for various professional development meetings, conferences, and workshops. Redirecting all of those funds to a systematic network for professional learning will engage teachers and principals in relevant school-based adult learning activities.

ESSA proposes changes and reductions to the allocation of Title II, Part A funds to districts; however, an alternative to losing the fiscal foundation for professional learning in high poverty, low achieving districts is to build PULSE Networks across the United States to support site based school improvement with components identified as relevant, successful and effective.

### Social Analysis

To bring a greater understanding to the need for advocating a policy that supports professional learning as it relates to social needs of the school community it is important to consider the positive impacts on different social groups within the school district. The relationship between school administration and school unions can define the culture of a school district. In my experiences with the educational system as a teacher, a school principal and district level administrator I have found that the human capital at work within the schools defines its successes. When teachers and school leaders are working

together as a professional unit with common goals for student success we find effective practice.

Advocating for a policy which redefines collaborative relationships centered around building the capacity of all elements of a school's human and social capital is a winning workplace for students, parents, teachers, school administrators, central office leaders, union leadership, and school boards. Building a coherent framework which is supported by all stakeholders provides a greater advantage for improving, sustaining and enhancing student achievement.

Hargraves and Fullan (2013, p. 36) suggest that “systems that invest in professional capital recognize that education spending is an investment in developing human capital from early childhood to adulthood, leading to rewards of economic productivity and social cohesion in the next generation.” Building a system supported by education policy to enhance adult learning engages teachers and educational leaders in work that speaks to the importance of their professional capital. The PULSE Network provides a platform for collaboration, learning, reflection and practice of the important actions that promote student learning and excellent educators. Hargreaves and Fullan (2013, p. 36) reminds us that “professional capital requires attention not only to political and societal investments in education but also to leadership actions and educator needs, contributions, and career stages.” Creating a learning network that provides on-going, well-developed, and relevant professional development which supports student achievement and teacher growth gives the much needed attention to our investment in education.

Through my experiences that have been celebrated with success in schools those particular frameworks included agreements between teachers, union leaders, administrators and school board members that had the best interest in mind of all four stakeholders in the social and professional relationship. The positive culture of the school which promotes healthy social relationships has been visible when teachers feel supported by the administration in achieving professional goals and student achievement goals.

Carrie Leana (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2013, p. 37) “found that schools with high social capital showed positive achievement outcomes. Schools with strong social and human capital together did even better.” The shared collaboration of working and learning together as a team of educators is powerful. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2013, p. 37),

Being in a school around others who are working effectively rubs off on teachers and engages them. Human and social capital are both important, but human capital is not as influential as social capital as a lead strategy. To enact change faster and more effectively, to reduce variation in effective teaching in a school or between and among schools in terms of networks, our advice is to use social capital. Use the group to change the group. This means developing how teachers as a team or group can best identify and respond to the needs of individual students.

The PULSE Network will provide a practice supported by policy including human and financial resources designated for professional learning which directly

engages educators in a trusting partnership that supports increasing teacher quality and student learning. The social capital, according to Hargreaves and Fullan (2013, p. 37), “becomes the collaborative power of the group.” Working together in networks designed around problems of practice provide opportunities to enhance social capital. According to Milner (2015, p. 180), “teachers go inside their classrooms, close their doors, and teach-with no chance for other teachers/educators to learn from and with them.” Milner (2015) goes on to suggest that district level reforms can allow teachers to build collective capacity and develop practices that have lasting benefits. These opportunities for adult learning, reflection, developing of a common vision and mind-sets are central to the advocated policy.

### Political Analysis

Advocating for a redesigned professional learning network to support value added teacher evaluation models supports the legislative requirements of the Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010, also known as Senate Bill 7, which requires new evaluation models and the inclusion of “data and indicators of student growth as a significant factor.” (Illinois SB0315, 2010). Since the passage of this legislation school districts across the State have begun to create teacher evaluation plans which include a measure of student achievement. This measure of student achievement provides a portion of the teacher quality rating for teachers in the school district. While the legislation required districts to complete specific actions to create a new evaluation model, it did not require districts to create new professional learning networks in support of the new models.



As I pondered this concept of political action through legislation the idea of a more coherent framework became important. The PULSE Network policy moves the Senate Bill 7 legislation to a more fully developed model of practice supporting educators in their quest for excellence in the classroom. Working together at the classroom level to enact legislative changes provides an opportunity for greater successes in teacher evaluation and student achievement accountability in a way that supports daily practice.

Along with the current debates regarding the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) related to Title II programs for improving teacher quality comes the conversation around how to save these federal dollars to support states and local education agencies. As noted by Klein (2017) our federal legislators debate the effectiveness of Title II.

I believe that redesigning adult learning to include the PULSE Network allows for more relevant, systematic and successful programs to improve teacher quality in school district supported through Title II funds. The PULSE Network requires the school district to create a coherent structure for professional learning supported through on-going collaboration, reflection, and analysis of what works in classrooms. Targeting funding from Title II aligns the goals of federal programming to effective local level implementation. The planned outcomes include analysis of pre- and post-measures of student achievement in reading and mathematics. I anticipate a positive relationship between teacher quality and student outcomes as we build the professional skills of leaders and teachers related to teaching and learning. The goal of supporting the professional development funded by Title II, part A will be the increase in student achievement as measured by local academic indicators and high stakes testing.

## Moral and Ethical Analysis

Considering our role as educators we have an obligation to provide opportunities for students that enrich their learning experiences. Our mission is to provide an innovative and challenging learning experience which promote the success of all student and stimulate their curiosity. Educators and school administrators serve as the leaders of fair and objective guidelines within the school community. Our ethical framework is a conscious reflection of appropriate professional behavior and responsibility to maintain standards of excellence. If we believe in each student's fundamental right to pursue education and our obligation to provide an equal educational opportunity to all students, then we must believe in developing teachers to their full potential.

The PULSE Network will be the model for professional learning for educators in the classroom and those serving as instructional leaders. As Childress, Doyle and Thomas (2009, p. 22) suggest, changing conditions in schools requires concrete steps “so that downward performance trends would begin to bend upward, such as: developing a system of shared accountability and workforce excellence through targeted training and action research.” The PULSE Network will create opportunities for teachers to engage in reflective activities within a collaborative culture as they promote best practices and analysis of what works in classrooms.

As leaders of learning, we are morally responsible to provide supports for classroom teachers and school principals to engage in effective practice. We have a commitment to build professional capacity. Elmore as cited in Gleason and Gerzon (2013, p. 104) suggests “that for every additional level of expectations placed on

teachers, there should be corresponding supports.” An analysis of our moral and ethical responsibility includes this assertion. Expecting teachers to improve their instructional practice requires us to provide systems of support including multiple tiers of learning opportunities.

The Association of American Educators (AAE) provides a Code of Ethics for Educators (2017) which contains four basic principles relating to the rights of students and educators. According to the AAE (2017, p. 1), Principle II indicates that “The professional educator assumes responsibility and accountability for his or her performance and continually strives to demonstrate competence; specifically, through continued professional growth.” Thus, the PULSE Network is developed with the mission in mind to provide a targeted pathway promoting effective practice as an accountability measure for each educator to work toward sustaining and improving their individual and collective practice.

## SECTION THREE: ADVOCATED POLICY STATEMENT

### Goals and Objectives

The goal of the district professional learning policy is to establish an effective professional learning network focused on improving the quality of instruction leading to increased student achievement. The district professional learning policy will promote engaging adult learning experiences, opportunities for practice and supportive environments for adult learning. The objective of the PULSE Network is for teacher behavior to change in ways that improve classroom practice and student achievement outcomes. While teacher performance has now been linked to student achievement in states across the nation, educators continue to grapple with ways to support this new mandate.

The goal of the policy supporting the PULSE Network is to provide a framework for learning-oriented activities as an approach to developing educators within the school environment. According to Drago-Severson (2009, p. 13), “we need new ways of shaping schools to be true learning centers, places where adults and children are well supported in their learning and development.” Drago-Severson (2009, p 13) goes on to suggest that “there are four pillar practices – establishing teams, providing adults with leadership roles, engaging in collegial inquiry, and mentoring” which provide adults with effective and differentiated approaches to learning in schools.

The goals of the district PULSE Network are aligned with the belief that well supported adult learning includes the high-quality indicators centered around these

pillars. The PULSE Network goals and objectives are developed to ensure that professional learning opportunities are central to the practice of effective instruction. Currently, the district policy documents do not address sustained differentiated professional learning within an explicitly developed framework of inquiry focused on school improvement. The current district policy for staff development provides for a program to be developed to improve skills and knowledge, improve student learning objectives and maintain a high level of job performance and satisfaction.

The needs of the educators in our current systems across the nation have increased. While classroom teachers, school principals, and district leaders have a commitment to teaching and learning as evidenced by their pursuit of higher education, certification and licensure it is clear through various research studies including the Culminating Findings from the Measures of Effective Teaching Project's Three Year Study (Cantrell and Kane, 2013), The Widget Effect project (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern and Keeling, 2009) and The Hamilton Project (Gordon, Kane and Staiger, 2006) that we need advanced systems of support to sustain environments of excellence in our schools and to evaluate teachers effectively and fairly.

With adding the new PULSE Professional Learning Network to the current district policy, we extend the policy to support staff development as part of a continuum of adult growth to build capacity through continuous collaborative connected activities and workshops throughout the school year. The Staff Professional Learning Policy Goals and Objectives (Appendix B) are multi-faceted with the purpose of enriching adult

learning, strengthening educator practice, and improving opportunities for student success.

### Stakeholders' Needs, Values and Preferences

The many stakeholders that are impacted by a policy which supports adult learning in schools include teachers, school principals, district administrators and most importantly, students. The school district overall including parents, community members, and board of education members will also benefit from improved learning environments. In this new standards-driven and value-added evaluation educational environment, the needs of the classroom teacher to implement effective instruction are the focus of the PULSE Network policy. The reforms required to support teaching and learning in our schools are best supported through policies which build teacher effectiveness.

According to Griffith (2014, p. 3), “The National Governors Association distributed a brief that focused on policies to build the effectiveness of educators through preparation programs, licensure and certification, evaluations and professional development.” Griffith suggests that governors take action to support success by improving educator effectiveness and create a structure to coordinate and implement activities and adopt the necessary policies. This would suggest that the stakeholders include a broader group extending to state superintendents and educational leaders as an integral part of success for all students across states. All stakeholders reap the rewards of investing in education through collaboration, improved practice, and college and career ready students. To educate our students in environments that support on going teacher

development fully supported by district policy is valuable to all stakeholders.

Connecting teacher evaluation, professional learning and student learning is critical to creating and sustaining an environment of excellence within the school community.

A policy implementation plan will be critical to meeting the needs of all stakeholders to share procedures, goals and objectives, activities and evaluation plans. All stakeholders will value a system that improves classroom practice, supports a rigorous education of students understanding the core standards and increases district competencies on state assessment outcomes. Creating a community centered around committed professional learning linked to teacher evaluation and high levels of academic achievement will invigorate the families in the neighborhoods, improve teacher recruitment efforts and solidify the investment of the board of education in guiding a community of excellence.

## SECTION FOUR: POLICY ARGUMENT

### Favorable Considerations

Redesigning adult learning to include a comprehensive and sustained staff development program provides advantages for the school district. The PULSE Network is grounded in the belief that engaging in collegial inquiry aligned with teacher growth goals identified through the evaluation process will improve student achievement outcomes. The policy will support 30 hours annually of intensive, focused reflection and active learning strategies leading to adult development through a positive collaborative process. The professional learning experiences will be facilitated through professional learning communities directly related to teacher practice in the classroom. The PULSE Network will also require learning throughout the school day through peer coaching experiences. Darling-Hammond (2009, p. 49) suggests that “sustained and intensive professional development was related to student achievement and that the largest effects were found for programs offering between 30 and 100 hours spread out over 6 – 12 months.” The PULSE Network will allow for collective, job-embedded teacher learning throughout the year focused on transforming teaching practice in the classroom.

According to Darling-Hammond (2012, p. 36), “opportunities to study and learn specific strategies that are central to individual practice are important. The best systems create time for teachers to work and learn together during the school day.” Darling-Hammond (2012) goes on to suggest that high quality professional learning opportunities are connected to teachers’ work with children and are intensive, sustained, and continuous over time.



The school district will build collective capacity through an environment of accountability through a policy which supports systems of support for professional learning to strengthen teacher practice and improve student achievement outcomes.

#### Unfavorable Factors

Reasons exist within the political and financial climate that may lead to a lack of support for the PULSE Professional Learning Network. The guidelines within the policy state that staff will complete 30 hours annually of professional learning. The staff will be paid an hourly stipend for 15 hours of attendance. The stipend payment to the district staff will require allocating additional financial resources to support staff development. In addition, industry experts may be contracted to facilitate some of the professional learning workshops and activities. The consultant contractual agreements will also present a financial obligation for the district.

The district is entitled to U. S. Department of Education Title II funds and is also required to plan activities centered on teacher and principal training. However, the current political discussions present the potential option of decreasing or eliminating Title II funds. The decrease or elimination of funding would negatively impact the implementation of the PULSE Network. According to Camera, (2017),

The Trump administration's fiscal 2018 budget proposal calls the program, known as Title II, Part A or the Supporting Effective Instruction grant program, "poorly targeted and spread thinly across thousands of districts with scant evidence of

impact." Its axing is one of the biggest single-line items up for elimination in the president's sweeping \$9 billion cut to federal education programs. (p.1)

If the district's Title IIA funding is decreased or eliminated all of the professional learning work will need to be supported through state and local funding.

With the focus on teacher effectiveness and programs which improve teacher quality through professional development being closely scrutinized by political leaders it is important for us to shift the negative perception of traditional staff development to networks of learning such as the PULSE Professional Learning Network designed to align activities with student proficiency, measurable outcomes and relevant teacher accountability practices. Camera (2017) goes on to suggest that districts begin to re-envision professional development. Possibilities such as the PULSE Professional Learning Network is a step toward re-design to robust, differentiated and learning-linked staff development.

Other negative factors may include teacher resistance to the required 30 hours of professional learning workshops. While legislative representatives advocate for reform to support improving teacher practice through new teacher evaluation systems the burden of the shift in implementing redesigned models rests on the district. Veteran teachers have for many years relied upon the traditional evaluation process focused on teacher actions in the classroom. A major shift is required as we examine teacher practice through the lens of the four domains of the Danielson Framework for Teaching with added student growth measures. Resistance may increase to the new evaluation system with the addition of required after-school learning networks, in-school peer learning and

in-depth data-based collaboration meetings. Time for study, analysis and reflection are valuable commodities that require planning, scheduling and additional time away from family and personal activities.

## SECTION FIVE: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### Needed Educational Activities

Implementation of the advocated policy to support professional learning reform in the school district will require a focus on explicit activities supporting teacher development. The primary activities critical to the success of the advocated policy include redesigned staff development activities. The policy, when implemented, will support substantial changes to the method of delivery of staff development and the role of the teacher in the staff development process.

First, the district professional development director will be responsible for developing an annual calendar of 30 hours of coursework for staff to engage in professional learning activities which include professional learning community meetings, peer learning in the classroom, data analysis workshops, video reflection sessions, and Danielson Framework for Teaching study groups. It will be essential for the calendar of activities to include industry experts, teacher leaders, and district administrators as facilitators of learning. To ensure continuity and ongoing collaboration, the professional development director will also work closely with the technology director to establish an online learning forum for continuous engagement when staff are not participating face-to-face professional learning.

To effectively develop PULSE Network courses the principals and professional development director will work together to analyze local and state student achievement data, Danielson Framework for Teaching teacher evaluation ratings and student growth

outcomes to align staff development activities with areas of critical need. In addition, an analysis of principal rating trends related to the Danielson Framework for Teaching domains will provide insight into evaluator distinctions and areas for administrative collaboration and reflection. The analysis outcomes will serve as the district improvement plan targeting actions that will strengthen evaluator skills and close achievement gaps.

Secondly, the district professional development director will allocate funding from Title II A to support the improvement of instruction through high quality professional learning activities, payment of stipends for staff participating in the PULSE Learning Network and fees for professional development facilitators, resources, and materials. A comparative analysis of the voluntary staff participation and the professional learning stipends for staff will be provided to inform all stakeholders of the financial investment in human capital.

Finally, the education activities will focus on sharing with the larger school community by creating tools for communication to all stakeholders. Opportunities for school improvement updates during monthly board of education meetings, parent meetings, staff meetings and administrative team meetings will be regularly scheduled throughout the school year for teachers and principals to report PULSE activities and outcomes. To ensure that a high-quality education remains the central focus of the PULSE Learning Network all teaching staff and school principals will create journals to document their journey of learning and utilize during the school improvement process for

reflection, study, and sharing of strategies as we move toward excellence in every classroom.

### Staff Development Plan

The primary focus of the advocated policy is professional development reform. Acknowledging and empowering the lead learner in the paradigm of schools is the first step toward reform, school improvement, and sustainability. The school principal is the lead learner, the instructional leader and the coach to move teams of educators toward excellence. According to White (2016, p. 6), the “critical leadership actions are:

- Developing principals as instructional leaders
- Increasing educator understanding of the Framework
- Developing inter-rater reliability
- Implementing consistent instructional collaboration opportunities
- Increasing teacher agency
- Increasing expectations for learning
- Developing content knowledge and data-informed instruction
- Creating shared accountability for teacher quality evaluation and rating”

The PULSE Learning Network advocated policy guidelines include activities that will support these key components through differentiated workshops and professional learning community meetings with teaching staff. Developing principals and their ability to serve as instructional leaders guiding professional growth activities in their schools require specific strategies and actions such as these. Providing focused and differentiated

professional development for principals to hone their skills as evaluators with a deep understanding of the Domains, Components and Critical Attributes of the Danielson Framework for Teaching will be integral throughout the PULSE Professional Learning Network. In addition, creating inter-rater reliability within the team of district evaluators will be an important part of the shared accountability for teacher and student success.

Effective processes and systems of support are important, according to Darling-Hammond (2011, p. 32), after we evaluate teachers and analyze outcomes our next steps include deepening professional learning by,

“Creating a strong infrastructure for professional learning that is:

- Responsive to teacher and principal needs
- Sustained and readily available
- Grounded in curriculum content
- Supportive of diverse learners
- Supported by coaching
- Connected to collaborative work in professional learning communities
- Integrated into school and classroom planning around curriculum, instruction, and assessment”

Darling-Hammond, Bae, Cook-Harvey, et al (2016) suggests that there are key features of effective professional development which lead to significant effects on student achievement. The suggestions for the district professional learning change plan to move staff toward sustaining teacher quality ratings and improving student achievement are inclusive of the features suggested by Darling-Hammond, et al (2016, p. 37) to include approaches that:

- focus on deepening teacher’s content knowledge and instructional practices;
- function as a coherent part of a schools’ improvement efforts, align with curriculum assessments, and standards, so that teachers can implement the knowledge and practices they learn in their classroom;
- occur in collaborative and collegial learning environments in which teachers participate in professional learning and together grapple with issues related to new content and instructional practices;
- provide authentic activities rooted in teachers’ inquiry and reflection about practice within the context of the curriculum and students they teach;
- link to an analysis of teaching and student learning, including the formative uses of assessment data; and
- are supported by coaching, modeling, observations, and feedback.

According to Darling-Hammond, et al (2016), the greatest improvements in student achievement have been associated with professional learning aligned with the six approaches above. The desired outcome of the newly adopted staff development policy is high quality teaching which leads to improved student outcomes in core academic subjects. According to Antonetti and Garver (2015), visiting classrooms to look at the learning occurring, talk to students, listen to student interactions, look at student work and observe students will help teachers in the staff development process to refine effective professional practices. Aligning the PULSE Network professional learning activities closely with classroom walk throughs and analysis of learning will be the framework for developing excellence.



## Timeline

To increase the success of the newly adopted policy reforming professional learning practices in the school district an implementation timeline and explicit schedules are critical. Because the PULSE Professional Learning Network is primarily centered around current academic outcomes and teacher evaluation ratings it will be important to create a timeline that aligns with the school assessment and evaluation schedules.

Before the staff development activities can begin the advocated policy will be shared with the district administrative council by the Director of Instructional Services. The administrative council consists of the Superintendent of Schools, all district-level administrators, building principals and assistant principals and curriculum coordinators. The council meets for an annual retreat each June to reflect on current year strengths and plan to address areas of critical need for the upcoming year. During this June retreat the Director of Instructional Services will have the opportunity to optimize the planning for professional development by sharing the advocated policy during the reflection and analysis as a tool for school improvement. Following the June retreat, the Superintendent of Schools will recommend the policy to the Board of Education at the June Board of Education Meeting.

After adoption, the Director of Instructional Services will work closely with the administrative council district level administrative team to review teacher evaluation data and local school achievement data reported by building principals to develop the implementation timeline. During the months of June, July, and August the team will meet twice per week to develop:

- a communication plan and marketing materials
- union leadership meeting agenda for adopted policy overview
- a staff development meeting schedule
- vertical and horizontal professional learning teams
- focus topics based on academic areas of critical need and Danielson Framework for teaching Domains and Components based on teacher evaluation ratings
- focus topics for administrator professional learning
- professional learning facilitators, specialists and workshop leaders
- materials and resources required to support staff development activities
- technology support resources for on-line learning, video education resources, and accounts for staff development credits
- professional development budget and Business Office tracking process
- PULSE Professional Learning Network progress monitoring and evaluation tools.

The Director of Instructional Services will lead the team as the coordinator of the PULSE Professional Learning Network.

This new network of learning will be a significant change in the district from the professional development activities that have occurred in the past. The Superintendent of Schools will host a meeting for all stakeholders during the first week of the new school year in late August to share the newly adopted policy, the core components of the policy and staff development plan, participation requirements for staff, access to the on-line

platform, and to answer questions. This professional development kick-off meeting with serve as the opportunity to share the beliefs the district has adopted supporting our commitment to supporting excellence in teaching and learning.

### Program Budgets

Funding for the advocated policy will require the district to designate professional development funds for all staff members for stipends to attend after school PULSE Network activities. Currently, the district primarily supports professional development through the U. S. Department of Education Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Title II Part A funds for Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund. As part of my role in the district as the Director of Instructional Services, I manage Title II A budgets. Over the past two years our budgets have included professional development allocations. The district allocated 73%, or \$84,380, of their Title II A funds to professional development during the fiscal year 2016 and 83%, or \$82,570, of their Title II A funds to professional development during the fiscal year 2017. Approximately 55% of the FY16 and FY17 professional development budgets were expended on fees for industry experts to deliver on-site professional development and for staff to attend various workshops and conferences. The Title II A required activities also includes retention of teachers through new teacher mentoring and staff development. The remaining FY16 and FY17 Title II A budget was allocated to those activities.

The district will continue to allocate the Title II A funds for professional development to support the PULSE Professional Learning Network activities. However, the new policy paradigm shift will be for the district to pay stipends to all staff

members attending after school network monthly courses. All teaching staff shall attend fifteen voluntary hours and be paid the current agreed upon collective bargaining agreement hourly stipend for fifteen hours of attendance. Teaching staff must complete all 30 hours, complete required assignments and extended learning activities to receive the stipend. Therefore, the current budget detail will include stipends for fifteen hours for all staff in addition to fees for professional development resources and materials, tools to support implementation, and fees for professional development facilitators.

Approximately 135 teachers will receive the current collective bargaining agreement hourly stipend of \$30 per hour for 15 hours of coursework resulting in an expense of approximately \$60,750 for the district. This will be supported by Title II A and local funds, if necessary.

During the summer budget planning process, the Director of Instructional Services will meet with the Superintendent and Chief School Business Official to develop a supplemental professional development district budget supported through local funding if the Title II A budget does not cover the required expenses. In addition, the PULSE Professional Learning Network will focus on differentiated learning activities facilitated by local administrators and teacher leaders. Fees for industry experts and attendance at workshops and conferences not aligned to the network will be minimized through this paradigm shift. Coherence will be the focus.

While the PULSE Network will add to the local budget, Odden (2012, p. 87), suggests that “resources for ongoing professional development should be a top priority, even in these tight fiscal times. Instructional practice will not increase systemically

unless it is the focus of ongoing systemic attention in a comprehensive professional development program.” The PULSE stipend budget of \$60,750 for staff attending professional learning activities is less than the prior two years Title IIA expenses of \$82,570 in FY17 and \$84,380 in FY16. The remaining \$20,000 will be budgeted for resources, professional facilitators outside of the district staff and materials to support the Network activities. Odden (2012, p. 89) goes on to suggest that

the key policy implication is for states to include in their school finance formulas sufficient funds for new teacher induction/coaching programs or to require 5.4 percent of each district’s operating budget be set aside for key professional development resources – 10 pupil-free days, instructional coaches and dollars for training.

The district’s current operating expense per pupil is \$13,600 for 1,981 students. Garnering support for targeted budget allocations of 5.4% or \$680 per pupil will provide additional funding for effective comprehensive professional development as Odden (2012) suggests.

#### Progress Monitoring Activities

The Director of Instructional Services will coordinate progress monitoring activities to determine the effectiveness of the PULSE Professional Learning Network. The progress monitoring plan will include all staff members participating in the Network and all district administrators. Updates on the activities and progress monitoring will be

shared with all district stakeholders at monthly Board of Education Meetings five times per year.

The Network will be organized into six vertical teams throughout the school district with the Director of Instructional Services serving as the administrative leader of the vertical teams. According to Childress, Grossman, and King (2011), schools belonged to verticals and worked to develop action plans aligned with the district's objectives. The PULSE Network will be organized in a similar manner. Each vertical team will consist of the school principal and assistant principal/instructional leader, and will be organized as a pre-kindergarten team, primary school center or elementary school. The progress of each vertical team will be monitored bi-weekly through analysis of Network activities including staff and student surveys, classroom walk through reflections, video education reflection, on-line learning participation, student achievement outcomes in reading and mathematics and teacher formal observation ratings. Monthly horizontal meetings will be held with the Superintendent to determine areas of focus through data analysis, collaborative sharing of best practices and qualitative reflection.

According to Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009, p. 48), professional development research “highlights the importance of collaborative and collegial learning environments that help develop communities of practice to promote school change.” Vertical teams in each school will provide the opportunity for focused and supported adult learning within the school. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009, p. 48) suggest that “when whole grade levels, schools or departments are involved, they create a critical

mass for changed instruction at the school level.” These benefits will create an advantage for teacher-invested site-based school reform.

The verticals will work toward coherence by aligning processes, leveraging all resources and ensuring that the right staff are in the right places to support excellence across the vertical network of learning to solve problems of practice. Our goal is to create synergy in our work to move toward innovative ways to reform schooling in the district. According to Alonso (2016, p. 3), the challenge of improvement is to “achieve excellent performance in every school and every classroom and make best practice into common practice.” By monitoring our efforts through robust reflection, on-going surveys, collaborative peer feedback, educator video feedback and consistent achievement data analysis that is clearly defined and understood by all stakeholders we shift toward deeper teaching and learning for students and staff in a new and different way.

## SECTION SIX: POLICY ASSESSMENT PLAN

### Evaluation of Outcomes and Results

An integral part of monitoring the progress and assessing the outcomes of the PULSE Professional Learning Network will be the evaluation of student achievement data and teacher evaluation ratings. While student achievement data and teacher evaluation ratings are indirect outcomes of the adult learning activities, they represent the improvement efforts of the Network. Because the basis for the content of the Network courses is centered around achievement and teacher ratings, the evaluation will also focus on those two areas. Childress, Elmore, Grossman, and King (2011) suggests that

In order to achieve their mission of increased performance for all students regardless of race, class, or prior academic performance, leaders in public school districts should develop theories of change about how to strengthen the instructional core. For example, a number of districts believe deeply that high quality professional development for teachers is the most highly-leveraged way to improve student performance. They articulate their theory of change as: The most direct way to increase student learning is to improve teachers' instructional practice. Therefore, if we help all teachers improve their instructional practice, then we will accomplish high levels of achievement for all students. (p.4)

Evaluation data will be collected at specified points throughout the school year. Student achievement data will be documented in the fall of the school year documenting the number of students attaining benchmark goals on the Northwest Education



Association Measures of Academic Progress RIT score in reading and mathematics. Data will again be collected in the spring of the school year to evaluate the gains students have made in meeting the end of year benchmark goals. In addition, teacher evaluation ratings in the four domains will be documented for the previous year and current year to determine if ratings are shifting to excellent on the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The aim of the professional learning policy is to decrease the discrepancy between student achievement gains and teacher evaluation ratings. In evaluating the outcomes close attention will be focused on the closing of the gap between the two.

### Stewardship Responsibility

The Director of Instructional Services will coordinate the evaluation efforts and work closely with the Director of Technology and building principals to create pre- and post-reports which reflect how students and teachers are performing prior to and after teacher participation in the PULSE Professional Learning Network.

Each vertical team administrative leader will develop presentations describing the differentiated adult learning activities, professional learning community collaboration goals, video learning activities and instructional practices successful within their teams. The reports will include growth data in reading and mathematics and a comparison of teacher evaluation ratings before and after participation in Network courses. The Superintendent and Director of Instructional Services will work collaboratively with each vertical team leader to identify strategies that were successful and identify areas of critical need. If the Network activities within the vertical are not producing the desired outcome of improved student achievement and improved instructional practice

demonstrated through the data, a planning team will convene to analyze the activities. Together, an improvement plan will be developed. The Superintendent will also identify successful vertical teams and invite those leaders to share strategies that align with similar critical needs.

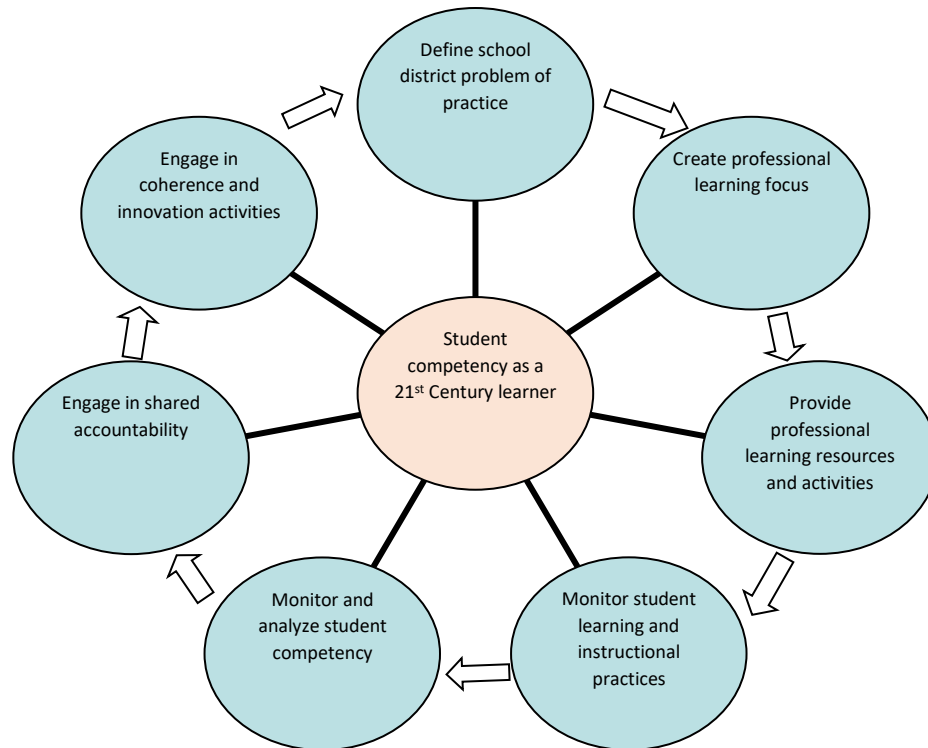
The Superintendent of schools will share presentation highlights from each vertical team with the Board of Education on an annual basis to inform all district stakeholders of the work of teachers, instructional leaders and principals to sustain and improve student achievement. Individual student and teacher identifiers will be omitted when highlights are shared with the larger educational community.

## SECTION SEVEN: SUMMARY IMPACT STATEMENT

The policy I am advocating for is authentic, engaging, relevant and differentiated professional learning through collaborative networks organized as vertical teams. The purpose of this policy is to improve teacher practice and link that improvement to student achievement gains. Mehta (2016, p. 1) suggests that deeper and more powerful learning occurs when “people synthesize information, work in teams, manage themselves, spot problems and create new directions.” The goal of the advocated professional development policy is for teams to work together to pursue an understanding of leading students to excellence (PULSE) to transform classroom practice and improve student achievement. Creating practical learning networks for classroom teachers that are based on current practice and staff needs is the basis for the policy

At the core of this policy is student competency as a 21<sup>st</sup> century learner (Figure 1). The obligation of educational leaders to provide opportunities for adult learning experiences that are meaningful and relevant, that support value added teacher evaluation and that organize learning through effective strategies is consistent with the PULSE Professional Learning Network guidelines. The vision behind the Network stems from the idea that on the first day school every parent wants the ‘best’ teacher for their child and every child wants the ‘best’ teacher for themselves. The idea of ‘best’ rests upon what parents and students see as the teacher that will provide the greatest opportunity for success. The activities developed as part of the Network are created to support learning experiences that engage students by translating adult learning into practice.

Figure 6: PULSE School Improvement Communication Wheel



The transformation of professional learning from something teachers get to something teachers actively engage in for self-improvement supports the needs and values of teachers, school leaders, and students. The implementation of the PULSE Professional Learning Network is consistent with the vision of every student and parent wanting the ‘best’ teacher. As I consider the work of teachers across schools and in classrooms throughout our district, I believe that every teacher has the potential to be the best teacher and lead students to excellence through their commitment, facilitation of learning and desire to teach. Every teacher can pursue excellence.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Advocated District Professional Learning Policy

### Pursuing an Understanding of Leading Students to Excellence (PULSE) Professional Learning Network Guidelines

The Superintendent shall establish a plan that provides for 30 hours of annual professional learning activities which specifically support the district adopted teacher evaluation plan and the district adopted local assessment measure. All teaching staff and administrative staff responsible for formal observations shall be required to attend the professional learning activities annually.

The superintendent or designee shall maintain records and provide certificates of continuing professional development units for staff upon completion of the annual 30-hour professional learning requirement.

The professional learning activities shall be known as the PULSE Network, Pursuing an Understanding of Leading Students to Excellence. The PULSE Network courses shall adhere to the following guidelines:

- Provide professional learning courses on-site in minimum two-hour increments.
- All teaching staff shall attend fifteen voluntary hours and be paid the current agreed upon collective bargaining agreement hourly stipend for fifteen hours of attendance. Teaching staff must complete all 30 hours, required assignments and extended learning activities to receive the stipend.

- PULSE courses will be facilitated based on the following core ideas:
  - Professional learning community meeting format for at least 75% of the course
  - Facilitated by industry experts, district administrator and/or teacher leaders
  - Participatory hands-on and interactive strategies/activities and video
  - Relevant to Danielson Framework for Teaching and/or state/local assessments
  - Offered at least monthly throughout the school year
- Professional resources which extend the course shall be included in each of the PULSE Network courses.
- Attendees will be required to participate in on-line activity between courses.
- Attendees will be required to complete video/reflection assignments related to study of the district adopted teacher evaluation plan and/or district adopted local assessment for each course.
- Attendees will be required to participate in professional learning community student achievement data analysis meetings to support the PULSE Network professional learning session activities. The data analysis will be required outside of the courses. Staff will not be paid for required data analysis activities.

- Evaluators will be required to schedule in classroom peer to peer learning/coaching/lesson observation activities focused on the adopted teacher evaluation plan and/or the adopted local assessment framework a minimum of four times per year.
- Qualified Teacher Evaluators may recommend additional mandatory hours of professional learning for staff receiving teacher evaluation ratings of needs improvement or unsatisfactory. These additional mandatory hours will be completed without payment of a professional learning stipend.

The Superintendent has the authority to recommend non-renewal of teaching staff to the Board of Education for non-participation in the PULSE Network.

## Appendix B: Professional Learning Policy Goals

Goal 1: The district will establish a professional learning network aligned with the school improvement plan and the current teacher evaluation plan.

Goal 2: The district professional learning network will be established in vertical teams promoting opportunities for practice and supportive environments for adult learning.

Goal 3: Teachers, Instructional Leaders and Principals will participate in differentiated ongoing professional learning activities linked to student outcomes and the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Goal 4: Professional learning activities will be enhanced through peer observation, video lessons, and weekly professional learning community meetings.

Goal 5: Teachers, Instructional Leaders and all District administrators will engage in collaborative adult learning experiences focused on improving student achievement on state and local assessments and increasing the number of excellent teachers as rated through the Danielson Framework for Teaching.