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# Educators Learning Together: Promoting Meaningful and Motivating Professional Development in Christian Schools

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# Educators Learning Together: Promoting Meaningful and Motivating Professional Development in Christian Schools

**Abstract**

Each year, nearly all teachers in the United States participate in some form of professional development (Andree, Chung Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2009). Much research is available outlining best practices related to professional development in an effort to provide teachers with a positive learning experience so that they can use their expertise and acquired knowledge and skills to ensure that students learn. Schools are not implementing these best practices. As a result, many teachers express a sense of dread when they think about entering a professional development session. There are several reasons for this sense of dread, but there are also several components and strategies that align with Reformed principles that can be employed to provide teachers motivating and meaningful site-based professional development.

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Development in Christian Schools

by

Joshua E. Bowar

B.A. Dordt College, 2005

Thesis

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Educators Learning Together: Promoting Meaningful and Motivating Professional  
Development in Christian Schools

by

Joshua E. Bowar

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### **Abstract**

Each year, nearly all teachers in the United States participate in some form of professional development (Andree, Chung Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2009). Much research is available outlining best practices related to professional development in an effort to provide teachers with a positive learning experience so that they can use their expertise and acquired knowledge and skills to ensure that students learn. Schools are not implementing these best practices. As a result, many teachers express a sense of dread when they think about entering a professional development session. There are several reasons for this sense of dread, but there are also several components and strategies that align with Reformed principles that can be employed to provide teachers motivating and meaningful site-based professional development.

Beth has been teaching first grade for ten years at Trinity Christian School, and she loves it. One of the highlights of her year is teaching students how to read. She also enjoys sharing the love of Christ in every subject area and works hard at preparing and planning lessons that will meet the needs of her students. She considers herself a good teacher, but she knows her skills and strategies in teaching math could use a little improvement. Her students learn math, but Beth doesn't feel like she is as successful as she could be if she had more training. Math just doesn't excite her.

One thing that is exciting Beth is the professional development that her school is offering this year. In September, she became a member of a professional learning community that focused on teaching math. Beth enjoys being on this team because she feels it's really meeting her needs and she gets to discuss real issues with her colleagues. She also knows that in February she will have the opportunity to do action research with her partner teacher. They've planned to focus on best practices related to teaching subtraction. The best part, Beth feels, of all of these opportunities is that they are being offered during the school day. She has time to work with others, and she's seen some great results in her teaching. She even finds herself enjoying professional development. She's meeting with her professional learning community today, and she walks quickly to the meeting, excited about what she will discuss.

Mark has been teaching middle school social studies for three years at The King's Academy. He loves teaching about the American Revolution and World War II because he finds that it really interests the students, and he can apply the concepts taught during these units to their daily lives. Mark thinks of himself as a decent teacher, but he knows

he could use some help in classroom management. He keeps his classroom under control for the most part, but there are times when Mark wishes he knew how to handle certain situations like talking out of turn, cheating on homework, and students not wanting to work during the class period.

Mark has been frustrated with his school's professional development opportunities. The entire work time before the school year started was focused on the school-wide theme and new school procedures. The inservice in October featured an outside speaker that talked about reading across the content areas. Mark was interested in going to a conference related to classroom management in January, but his school did not have the funding to send him. In March, the school had another speaker come in to share about using SMARTBoards. Mark continues to lack interest in professional development because he feels that it's not meeting his needs. He doesn't even have time during the school day to talk to his colleagues about his problems. Today is another inservice time, with the principal going over a list of items that teachers need to know related to parent/teacher conferences. Mark first stops to get some coffee, then checks his mail, then makes a phone call, and then walks slowly to the inservice. He made sure to bring some papers along to grade.

Two stories. Two very different experiences. The unfortunate truth is that many teachers' experience is more like Mark's situation than Beth's. In many schools, professional development is not currently meeting the needs of many teachers, and teachers are frustrated with what is being offered. In fact, fewer than half of teachers find professional development to be of much value at all (Andree, Chung Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2009).

Each year, nearly all of the teachers in the United States participate in some form of professional development (Andree et al., 2009). Much research has been done outlining best practices related to this teacher professional development in an effort to provide teachers with a positive learning experience so that they can use their expertise and acquired knowledge and skills to ensure that students learn. But still, many teachers express a sense of dread when they think about entering a professional development session. Veterans and first-year teachers alike hold a semi-positive (at best) view of professional development. Teachers at many schools are not connecting with and, in turn, not benefiting from formal professional development efforts at the schools. While teachers are able to select many outside sources of professional development – graduate classes, workshops, trainings, summer classes, and other opportunities – most are required to attend and participate in site-based professional development. While teachers can choose to take a class or choose to further their degree, they cannot choose whether or not to participate in the site-based professional development of their school. It is a responsibility and requirement of teachers, one that is more often tolerated than celebrated.

Many reasons contribute to the lack of teacher motivation and perceived lack of meaningfulness of professional development: lack of choices, unrecognized talent and skill, failure to treat adult learners as adult learners, lack of applicable strategies and ideas that relate to the daily tasks of teachers, lack of implementation support, unheard teacher voice, and limited success – to name a few (Andree et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Knight, 2007; Torff & Sessions, 2008).

One more reason for a lack of teacher motivation and perceived meaningfulness related to professional development is that the important collaboration piece is often missing (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). Teachers learn as individuals, think about their new knowledge as individuals, and practice their new knowledge as individuals. A real sense of community – of teachers learning from teachers and sharing experience and knowledge with each other – is missing in many professional development programs, which is why many new initiatives and topics of professional development sessions are not implemented. Knight (2007) shares that “teachers engage in professional development every day—they just don’t do it with professional developers” (p. 3). Teachers are learning from each other all the time, sharing lesson plans, tests, and ideas, because there is a pressing need to learn in their classrooms. The challenge for schools is to take this sense of a pressing need and apply that to the development and implementation of the site-based professional development program that is being offered.

Meaningful and motivating professional development is not only problematic in public schools; it is also an issue of concern in private, Christian schools. It is important for Christian teachers to develop professional skills and attitudes through their professional development activities. In order to best meet the needs of their students and provide the best possible education for them, Christian teachers should see themselves as professionals, professionals that continually grow in their profession through furthering their skills and education. Christian schools should desire to provide quality learning experiences for their teachers so that those same teachers can provide quality learning experiences for the students at the school. Teachers should be motivated to teach – and continue to teach better. Teachers should be motivated to learn – and learn more. All

motivation for teaching and learning should be directed at the ultimate goal: educating God's students in ways that best fit their needs and encouraging them to grow in the knowledge of Him.

The challenge for schools, administrators, and professional development teams is structuring site-based professional development at the school level that is both meaningful and motivating for teachers. This study will seek to fill the observed research gap of applying best research-based practices in site-based professional development in an effort to improve teacher attitudes toward professional development within Christian schools. The study will seek to provide guidance for how site-based professional development can be planned and implemented so that teachers view their time spent in professional development as both meaningful and motivating.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions will drive the research of this study:

1. What goals for professional development related to teacher motivation and meaningfulness should permeate all professional development activities in a school?
  - 1a. Why is the current practice of site-based professional development not meeting the needs of practicing teachers?
  - 1b. What site-based professional development components are both meaningful and motivating for teachers?
  - 1c. What are possible ways to implement site-based methods that are both meaningful and motivating for teachers?

2. How do the suggested site-based professional development goals, methods, and implementation strategies fit within the Christian school's goals?

### **Definition of Terms**

Unless otherwise noted, the definitions provided in this research are those of the writer.

Professional Development (sometimes abbreviated as "PD"): The term "professional development" will be used when focusing on the site-based learning that takes place during an academic calendar year. This term includes inservice opportunities, faculty work times, and faculty projects. For the purpose of this study, this term does not include classes taken outside of school, workshops and trainings at other facilities, and learning done by teachers during the summer months.

Site-Based: The term "site-based" will be used to refer to those professional development activities that occur in the same building where the teacher teaches.

Inservice: The term "inservice" will be used to refer to formal times when teachers meet either as a large group or small groups to receive instruction related to their professional practice.

Professional Development Best Practices: These research-based best practices relate to strategies that lead to motivation and meaningfulness for teachers related to professional development.

Staff: The term "staff" is used interchangeably with the term "teacher" in this document.

## **Literature Review**

### **Site-Based Professional Development: The Current State**

Teachers perceive certain needs that should be met in order for them to best fulfill the duties and demands of their career. In a recent study (Finn, Swezey, & Warren, 2010), teachers listed several needs related to their professional practice, including the following: developing content area curriculum; understanding trends and issues in education; developing classroom management strategies and practices; carrying out research on teaching and learning; developing, using, and interpreting tests; evaluating effectiveness of educational programs; mentoring other teachers; and developing leadership skills applied to the classroom and school.

While the current structure in the United States is not conducive to meeting these perceived teacher needs, nations around the world are discovering that in order to improve student learning and to motivate teachers, they must invest in teacher learning and focus on teacher needs. Several high-achieving nations such as Finland, Sweden, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Australia have teacher learning programs that display many common features: time for professional learning and collaboration built into teachers' work hours; ongoing professional development activities that are embedded into the teacher's job-related context; many opportunities for both formal and informal learning; supportive mentoring programs for new teachers; and school structures that involve teachers in the decision-making process of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development (Andree et al., 2009, p. 29). These countries offer professional development that directly matches teachers' perceived needs with opportunities for teachers to address those perceived needs.

The United States is gradually offering more opportunities for professional development similar to these countries, but currently most U.S. teachers do not receive this kind of professional development, even though research has shown that these characteristics lead to greater effects both on the teacher and the students in the classroom. Research indicates that the needs of teachers in the United States may not be met because professional development opportunities are not honoring the best practices shown by other countries (Andree et al., 2009).

Many examples are available that contrast other nations' efforts with efforts in the United States to improve professional learning for teachers. More than 85% of schools in Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland provide time for professional development in their teachers' workday (Andree et al., 2009). Built-in time is usually absent in the United States, which means that teachers have little or no time to collaborate with each other. Rigid schedules and many responsibilities often hinder teachers' ability to focus on meaningful professional development work during their regular school hours. Professional development happens before or after school, a time when teachers are either thinking about their day ahead or tired from the activities of the day. Since professional development during school hours is such a foreign concept, many teachers do not even consider using their planning time during the day to focus on developing professionally. Instead, they use the time to prepare for lessons, make copies, use the restroom, and other day-to-day tasks. Because time is not given to think broadly, many teachers think narrowly, focusing on accomplishing what needs to get done rather than what could be done (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996).

In most European and Asian countries, less than half of a teacher's time is spent instructing students; the rest is spent planning and preparing with colleagues (Andree et al., 2009). In the United States, more than 80% of a teacher's time is spent instructing students, and planning occurs individually (Andree et al., 2009). Teachers are not given the time necessary to evaluate their instruction and change it based on their needs and the needs of the students. Teachers are also unable to discuss methods and ideas with other adults, which means that they are not able to share their voice and ideas related to professional development and the life of the school. When teachers are not able to share their ideas with each other, they are also not able to develop as a result of collaborative work.

Also, action research is more prevalent in other countries than in the United States. In fact, in other countries many teachers are required to design and implement action research projects, and results are freely shared with other colleagues (Andree et al., 2009). Most teachers in the United States do not have time to perform such projects and do not have a continual focus on improvement. When teachers do not have time to focus on improvement, they tend to teach in ways that they are used to. Patterns and ruts can be made instead of following research-based best practices. Teachers can also become frustrated with their current situation and feel powerless to improve it because they do not have time to assess why certain behaviors are occurring in their classrooms.

In Finland and Sweden, teachers are often involved in professional development decisions, with teachers working in teams rather than a centralized form of leadership (Andree et al., 2009). While on these teams, teachers make decisions about the professional development offerings of the school and also the vision and goals of

professional development. Teachers develop professionally even while working in these teams. On the other hand, most teachers in the United States often participate in professional development that is a top-down, quick approach that may or may not meet their immediate needs. U.S. teachers often have limited influence in crucial areas of school decision-making, with fewer than half feeling like they had input into decisions related to professional development (Andree et al., 2009). Professional development programs that are planned with a limited amount of teacher voice tend to be less successful than those programs that are planned and supported by teachers.

A status report (Andree et al., 2009) on teacher development in the United States and abroad by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) cited several reasons why teachers in this country are not currently benefiting from the professional development that is being offered. First, the report stated that while effective professional development is intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice; focuses on the teaching and learning of a specific academic content; is connected to other school initiatives; and builds strong working relationships among teachers, most teachers in the United States do not have the opportunity to participate in professional development that includes all of these characteristics. Most teachers in the United States are not provided with opportunities to sustain work for a long period of time and build strong relationships with other faculty members through their professional learning. In addition to the findings of the National Staff Development Council, the findings of Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) show similar results (see Appendix A).

Second, the NSDC report shared that teachers need substantial professional development (about 50 hours) in a given topic to improve their skills and their students'

learning. Most professional development in the United States is much shorter, with many teachers reporting that they received no more than sixteen hours a year of professional development (Andree et al., 2009). Teachers in the United States are not given the time needed to dive deeply into professional development topics that are of interest to them.

Third, U.S. teachers report having little professional collaboration in designing curriculum and sharing practices. When collaboration does occur, it tends to be weak and not focused on strengthening teaching and learning. Schools are not providing adequate time and training in collaboration. Teachers that are not able to collaborate start to feel a sense of isolation, and professional development tends to slow or even stop entirely.

Finally, many U.S. teachers, unlike many of their colleagues around the world, pay for much of the cost of their professional development. Fewer than half of teachers received reimbursement for travel, workshop fees, or college expenses (Andree et al., 2009). Other nations invest in professional learning and build time for ongoing, sustained work and collaboration into the teachers' work hours. Teachers that have to pay for their own professional development may choose to not participate in professional development if their personal budget does not allow for such spending.

In order for a professional development program to be truly successful, a clear and cohesive vision that promotes motivating and meaningful learning experiences must be in place. Many schools lack a clear vision for professional development and what they hope to achieve. When a clear vision is absent, teachers do not have a path to follow, collaboration cannot occur effectively, and the school is unable to determine success or failure. Additionally, school leaders may have difficulty motivating others to continue growing when there is no clear objective to work toward.

Even with several models and much research available to assist schools in designing site-based professional development that is both motivational and meaningful for teachers, schools are not changing how they provide site-based professional development (Andree et al., 2009). For example, many schools use outside speakers or short-term programs. Teachers do not appreciate this “shot-gun approach that has been used to introduce...new ideas that [come] from someone else without teacher input and often [result] in no follow-through or support to implement the innovation and new strategy” (Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004, p. 4).

Schools are not redefining their vision of professional development so that they can restructure what is being offered. A restructuring is needed for many reasons. First, the current model is not meeting the needs of teachers. And, if the needs of teachers are not being met, the needs of students may not be met. Professional development has as its main goal a focus on improved student achievement, and students benefit from having their teachers supported in their calling to achieve this goal. Finally, the current model in the United States is not supportive of the success that is being seen in other countries. As outlined in previous research, other countries are providing an expanded amount of quality experiences for their teachers, and teachers in the United States are not being offered these same opportunities.

Without a restructuring of site-based professional development, a pessimistic attitude will permeate many plans and initiatives (Knight, 2007; Torff & Sessions, 2008). Edlin (2007) shared that this pessimistic attitude shows itself because teachers “may have spent too many of their valuable resources and hours on PD and inservices which were ineffective” and based on outside speakers and programs that were poorly implemented

(as cited in Finn, Swezen, & Warren, 2010, p. 11). Knight (2007) shared the frustration of one teacher that he says sums up the view of many teachers he interviewed for his research:

It's not like we are undergraduates. There are many people on our staff who are bright and who do read what's going on in the field, who do take classes on their own time, not because they have to but because they love to teach. And I do think that it's kind of demeaning [when a presenter appears not to] know about that.

(p. 2)

The idea that too much time has been spent on ineffective professional development is supported by findings from Torff and Sessions (2008) noting that teaching experience was the best predictor of teachers' negative attitudes about professional development; in the first two years, teachers were more supportive of PD, but that support steadily decreased as years of experience increased.

Because research-based best practices are not being implemented, teachers are not feeling connected to professional development. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) shared that "many staff development initiatives take the form of something that is done to teachers rather than with them, still less by them." Because teachers are not feeling connected to professional development, professional development is not seen as meaningful to them. If teachers do not see professional development as a meaningful and motivating experience, this professional development has little impact on their classroom practice. Hill (2009) reported that less than 25% of respondents to a professional development survey reported that PD activities they participated in had any impact on their instruction;

actually, a majority of the teachers in the study reported that PD actually reinforced their current practices (as cited in Finn, Swezey, & Warren, 2010, p. 11).

### **Professional Development: Motivating and Meaningful Components**

Research indicates that eight components need to be in place in order for site-based professional development to be meaningful and motivating for teachers (Andree et al., 2009; Boerema, Cook, Mingerink, & van Eyk, 2010; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996; Hall, 2005; Hickey & Harris, 2005; Hunzicker, 2010; Nwosu, 1998; Thompson et al., 2004; Van Brummelen, 2002; Yates, 2007).

First, teachers need to understand the current situation in their schools. Researchers have discovered that teachers enjoy knowing what they are doing well and what needs improvement. In order to discover what is going well and what needs improvement, teachers need to be evaluated and also have time to communicate with each other. Little (1982) found that “successful schools were characterized by frequent teacher evaluation and feedback, teachers talking with one another about teaching, teachers working together to design their classes, and teachers teaching each other about teaching” (as cited in Thompson et al., 2004, p. 4). Teachers need time to both discover and understand what is going well and what is not, giving them an opportunity to build a knowledge base related to their subject area or grade level; to strengthen pedagogical content knowledge; to reflect on their practice; to learn from research, evaluations, and data; and to develop new teaching strategies (Mundry, 2005). Teachers are often isolated during a day of teaching, working solely with students and often working alone in their classrooms (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). After a school day, teachers express a yearning

to communicate with each other about topics of interest in the school. Schools would do well to tap into this yearning and provide teachers with the opportunity to discuss evaluations and possibilities for improvement.

Second, professional development leaders need to understand and be able to apply a clear vision related to professional development that is based on teacher needs. The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) posed three questions related to the vision of professional development: 1. What are all students expected to know and be able to do? 2. What must teachers know and do to ensure student success? 3. Where must staff development focus to meet both goals? (Hall, 2005). Teachers need to know what they are expected to teach students and how they can assess success. Teachers need to know how to teach students in order to ensure success. Teachers need to know that professional development is going to provide them what they need to meet their goals.

In Christian schools, these three questions will greatly shape the professional development taking place. What students are expected to know may vary greatly from one Christian school to the next. What teachers must know and do to ensure success will depend on the vision and worldview of the school and the faculty. One thing that research indicates should remain constant is a focus on a clear vision when planning site-based professional development.

Third, the professional development program and all activities must be developed in order to fulfill the school's mission statement. Boerema, Cook, Mingerink, and van Eyk (2010) shared that a school with a clearly defined mission statement will be critical to the success of the professional development program. School staff members need to be able to share and appreciate the mission so that that they can fully support it with their

activities and teaching. Schools that have not visited their mission statement in a number of years may want to do so before they start to plan professional development activities. A professional development program should be part of the school's mission, and a clear statement should be included that articulates a plan for fulfilling the mission.

In Christian schools, a large focus of many mission statements is the activity of leading students toward Christ. If the professional development activities are not leading the teachers toward Christ and further developing their skills as Christian teachers, the teaching activities will most certainly do little in assisting teachers to lead their students toward Christ. Professional development activities should not be in conflict with the mission statement of the Christian school. Rather, they should support the mission and further implement ways to allow the mission statement to come to life.

Fourth, clear standards for and characteristics of professional development must be shared with teachers. Schools must first develop these clear standards and then find appropriate and meaningful ways to share the standards with their teachers. Research (Andree et al., 2009; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hunzicker, 2010; Yates, 2007) supports several characteristics for professional development (see Appendix B).

One characteristic that supports motivating and meaningful site-based professional development is that professional development must be required; all teachers must engage in professional learning in order to grow in the teaching profession. It must be research-based and include the tenets of good teaching. It must be collaborative, allowing educators learn by sharing knowledge. Educators should be engaged in collaboration physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially, working toward building positive and strong working relationships with their colleagues.

Professional development should also be forward-thinking; it should focus on ambitious student achievement goals. It should be instructionally focused, leading to increases in student achievement and progress. The professional development offered should expand the teaching methods repertoire of teachers in an effort to meet the needs of students who learn in diverse ways. Professional development should be participant-driven, allowing teachers to be leading inquiry, reflection, and experimentation.

Professional development should be supportive and supported. Funding should be available for the professional work of the teachers. Professional development should combine the needs of the teacher with school goals and should engage teachers and accommodate for teacher learning styles while honoring teacher input. It should be so deeply embedded in daily work that it is difficult to determine where the work ends and the professional development begins, and it should be connected to and integrated with comprehensive school change.

Professional development should be sustained, ongoing, and intensive; teachers need time (preferably during their workday) in order to fully benefit from professional development. It should require a high number of contact hours over several months' time, allowing teachers opportunities to interact with ideas and build on previous professional development experiences.

Additionally, professional development should be evaluated; it should be evaluated at several levels, including evidence of teacher motivation and improved student performance. Schools may choose to evaluate themselves by allowing teachers the opportunity to voice their opinions related to the current state of professional development based on these standards (see Appendix D). They can also plan

professional development sessions with these standards in mind (see Appendix E).

Fifth, a climate of professionalism, support, and trust must exist in order for the vision and goals of professional development to become effective. Van Brummelen (2002) stated that schools that have a positive climate for professional development and curricular change exhibit collegiality and foster leadership capacity, allowing staff members to work together, lead each other, and learn from each other. These schools also cultivate teachers, providing them with many avenues for personal and professional growth. Schools with a positive professional development climate are intentionally positive, always working to confront negativity. In order to have intentionality in the school, the school works to plan purposefully, moving forward with those who are ready but also working hard to get everyone united. The leaders of the school make sure to involve all the stakeholders, and they don't allow the pull of the past to draw the school back to old practices. These leaders also expect turbulence and setbacks and discover ways to ease the tensions caused by bumps and obstacles in the road to change.

Related to school climate, Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) added that teachers should be treated as total teachers, with schools making sure that all needs of teachers are being met. Schools also need to make sure that professional development is not top-down, coming only from the principal or administrator and done *to* the teachers rather than done *with* them or *for* them. Professional development also should not be fragmented or limited in scope and understanding of teachers; one-shot opportunities do not work as well as intensive and sustained study. Professional development should not encourage activities that are simply congenial; teachers need the opportunity to face tough issues together and learn during the examination of these issues. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996)

also shared that professional development should also focus on the teacher's purpose, the teacher as a person (and all of the emotions that come with being a person), the real world context in which teachers work (the classroom), and the culture of teaching.

Sixth, in order to create the most beneficial and meaningful vision and goals, a successful professional development program should include teacher involvement and leadership. Christian schools have been blessed with educators who not only have expertise and knowledge, but also have a passion and commitment to serve their God in a way that brings glory to His name. These teachers have been created with an immense amount of talent, talent that is meant to be used as they fulfill their calling as Christian teachers. Belasco and Stayer (1993) described the talents in an organization as intellectual capital, saying that "intellectual capital is the source of ideas and knowledge within any institution that can improve operations if used properly. Education, with its employee base of well-educated teachers, has an enormous amount of intellectual capital that is often left untapped" (as cited in Hickey & Harris, 2005, p. 13). Intellectual capital is one of the most precious resources that a school has. Teachers know more about their situation, how to help students, how to affect the overall atmosphere of the school, how to deal with parents, and how to teach well than other people in higher positions of authority.

Teachers are the leaders of their classes and should be respected as professionals (Hickey & Harris, 2005). If they are not, the school is missing out on a precious resource. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) called this phenomenon "untapped competence," sharing that "the unseen pool of existing expertise is one of the greatest untapped reservoirs of talent – it can fuel our improvement efforts, and it is right under our noses."

In fact, if teachers are not involved, professional development cannot be successful. As Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) shared, “however noble, sophisticated, or enlightened proposals for change and improvement might be, they come to nothing if teachers don’t adopt them in their own classrooms and if they don’t translate them into effective classroom practice” (p. 13).

Seventh, professional development must help teachers help students. If students are not being provided with the very best education and learning at a high level, teachers have room for improving their professional practice. Quality, site-based professional development can provide teachers with the resources they need in order to fulfill their mission in the classroom. According to Meiers and Ingvarson (2005), improvements in teacher quality and student learning have been linked in several studies (as cited in Yates, 2007, p. 218). Masters (2003) shared that teacher professional development has been identified as “the single most important means by which the quality of teaching and thence learning outcomes for students can be enhanced” (as cited in Yates, 2007, p. 218).

Professional development must be seen as an important part of the Christian school because Christian teachers should have a desire to meet the academic needs of their students. Christian teachers should demonstrate a respect for the students as image-bearers, and these image-bearers need to be trained in an effective way so that they can use their talents and gifts to worship and serve the King. Teachers have been given special responsibility to teach students under their care. They have been called to fulfill a very specific and special mission. They desire the very best for their students because, as stated in James 3:1, “Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” God has shown that

He holds teachers to a higher standard. He also loves His children and wants the best for them, which, in turn, demonstrates a high calling and task for teachers. God has shown that He expects great things from the teachers He calls to serve in His classrooms. When Christian teachers combine quality teaching with a desire to fulfill the will of God, powerful things can happen in a classroom, and God's students benefit.

Eighth, a school-wide community supportive of all staff members and professional development needs to be in place in order for positive, fruitful professional development to take place. Teachers need to feel supported in their work if they are to truly fulfill the responsibilities of their calling; these teachers also need to feel part of a larger community working toward a common goal (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). When Adam was created, he was called to work in the Garden of Eden and care for the Creation, but God noted, "it is not good for the man to be alone. I will create a suitable helper for him" (Genesis 2:18). God created the first community, signaling that Christians are to work in community, helping each other in their work. In the New Testament, God further commands His followers to live in a supportive community:

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is

my command: Love each other.

(John 15:12-17)

Further, Christians are called to build each other up and to support each other in the task of following Christ:

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

(1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

The pressing need for community and the direct command from God to live in community directly relates to site-based professional development. Christians are to delight in one another, respect differences, but continue to hold each other accountable for the work they do and the actions they take. Communities of learning and acceptance must take place so that everyone can develop professionally and feel comfortable doing so. Learning in these kinds of communities involves real sharing and trust, and teachers involved must feel comfortable participating with other teachers if professional growth is to happen.

Heckman (2010) shared that schools must be communities of grace, “a community, not for its comfortable self, but a community on a mission” (p. 12). Communities of grace exhibit core values, mentor and coaching programs, peer observations, team teaching, common planning time, learning groups, a withholding of judgment but a willingness to correct, an expectation that everyone positively participates, and above all, love:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

(Colossians 3:12-14)

Eight components of motivating and meaningful site-based professional development have been highlighted. From the perspective of a Christian educator, one more must be added: a Christian perspective and Christian principles must be integrated seamlessly into the site-based professional development program in order for it to truly be successful, making this a ninth component important in the Christian school.

Christian schools need to uphold what they believe when integrating faith and learning during professional development sessions. Nwosu (1998) supported integration of faith and learning (IFL) communities, noting that professional development can do much in a Christian school, and it can be a "channel for perpetuating integration of faith and learning in our schools just as the gospel was perpetuated during the days of the apostles" (p. 22).

### **Professional Development: Motivating and Meaningful Models**

There are many models that provide motivating, meaningful professional development (see Appendix C). Five main professional development methods align with the research-based components and characteristics of motivating and meaningful site-based professional development: online/virtual professional development, teacher

leadership, instructional coaching, professional learning communities, and the Professional Development School.

One model for promoting motivating and meaningful professional development is that of virtual/online learning and self-service lessons where teachers can access the information they need – when they need it – online from the school’s website, remembering that “new knowledge is just like fresh fish. It has a very short shelf life” (Hall, 2005, p. 38). The DeKalb County School System in Georgia introduced a customized online academy where all teachers and support staff can learn and collaborate at their convenience, giving teachers time to absorb new concepts and the opportunity to “access ongoing support to implement the instructional strategies they can from professional development” and using a blended approach of face-to-face instruction with online resources as a follow-up (Alexander & Henderson-Rosser, 2010, p. 25).

Online/virtual learning offers several positive elements that contribute to motivation and meaningfulness for teachers. First, teachers are given time to absorb new concepts. Like students, teachers need time to think about what they have learned and also discover ways to implement new ideas. Online/virtual professional development gives schools the ability to offer teachers access to ongoing support to implement the strategies they learn from professional development (Alexander et al., 2010). Second, online/virtual professional development offers schools a way to accelerate change. Hall (2005) notes that technology is not in itself a change agent, but the technology can act like a way to further what is already happening in the building. Schools that work toward motivating and meaningful professional development should first seek to get other programs and climates in place and use online/virtual learning as a supplement to the

direction of the school and the professional development program. Third, online/virtual learning allows teachers to develop professionally when they have time to and when they are motivated to do so. As Hall (2005) shares:

The movement from "moment in time" to "just in time" models is powerful. It has made the learning more relevant for the staff, and they seem to take hold of the knowledge and make better use of it. In the past, we deluged them in wonderfully scripted, documented, and probably quite entertaining workshops, but seldom did that get translated into classroom practice because the relevance and immediacy were not present for the teacher. Now with virtual/online learning options, teacher mentor/coaches, and self-service lessons, teachers can access the information they need when they need it and are ready to use it. This need...drives the relevance and motivation to learn. It also increases the likelihood that the new skill will be implemented in a timely way (p. 38).

Schools that further enhance their professional development program by providing online/virtual learning and resources give busy teachers options for when they are going to do their learning. Teachers, in response, may react positively to what they are being asked to learn.

Another model is teacher leadership. Motivating and meaningful professional development models recognize that teachers are an important part of the leadership of the school. Seeing teachers as leaders shows a respect for teachers and also gives them a voice in the process of professional development. Getting teachers more actively engaged through leadership will allow them to not only lead others, but also evaluate their own practice.

Harrison and Killion (2007) suggested several roles for teacher-leaders. Teacher-leaders could be responsible for sharing resources such as websites, textbooks, and units with others. They could also become an instructional specialist, helping colleagues implement effective teaching strategies, or a curriculum specialist, focusing on helping teachers teach curriculum in different subject areas. Other roles teacher-leaders could fill include working inside classrooms to help teachers implement new ideas and serving on committees that plan professional development opportunities or committees such as a school improvement team, a grade-level or department chair, or other school leadership possibilities. Mentoring/assisting novice teachers in their teaching practice and leading conversations based on data gathered in the school are other roles teacher-leaders could fill.

Christian schools could also consider providing leadership opportunities in the following areas: chapel, staff devotions, prayer time, distinctively Christian teaching, school-wide themes and character development programs, faculty support groups, and any other areas of need in the school. When teacher-leaders take an active role in the atmosphere and performance of their school, they develop professionally because they take ownership in the activities that are happening. They develop professionally by assisting others to develop professionally, and the school and the students also benefit.

Yet another model to implement motivating and meaningful site-based professional development is that of instructional coaching. Knight (2007) shared the many benefits of having an instructional coach on staff, someone who can come alongside teachers in their work environments and challenge and support them while they are researching, learning, applying new things, and sharing their knowledge with others.

Instructional coaches can assist in implementing ideas generated during professional development time. Specifically, instructional coaches focus on what is called the “Big Four”: behavior and classroom management, content knowledge, direct instruction techniques, and formative assessment.

Instructional coaches can be positive vehicles for professional development because they support teachers “in the trenches.” Teachers and the instructional coach work together, each helping to sharpen the other and keeping each other accountable for providing the best education possible in their classrooms. A sense of community exists, and teachers are given the encouragement and motivation that they need to try new things and also share their learning with others. Ideas and concepts can be implemented because teachers are able to model and observe others in the classroom. Data is gathered and analyzed in a group setting with many views being heard and explored, with coaches providing much-needed feedback for teachers and teachers learning from what is happening in the classroom. Coaches also provide opportunities for teachers to have meaningful conversations about education and what is working and what isn’t working in their classrooms. A high degree of collaboration exists, and both the coach and the teacher learn together.

Another model of professional development that focuses on continual improvement in motivating and meaningful ways is that of professional learning communities. Many schools, including Christian schools, are making the effort to create small groups of teachers that talk about and learn about teaching. Schools are working to become these communities in the hope that student learning will improve when adults commit themselves to talking collaboratively about teaching and learning and then taking

action that will improve student learning and achievement (Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004). Professional learning communities are a way to improve schools and teacher practice, and some believe that they are the most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement (Thompson et al., 2004). Professional learning communities promote learning in all school inhabitants: teachers, principals, professors, and parents. They share that the school's primary responsibility is to promote learning in others and in themselves.

Professional learning communities have a specific purpose and plan that intentionally improves student learning and are designed as a holistic concept, focused on three big ideas (DuFour 2004). First, teachers must work toward ensuring that students learn. The focus of a professional learning community shifts from what teachers need to teach to how teachers will know that students have learned. Second, a culture of collaboration must exist in the school. Teachers are collaborative, not simply congenial, working together in teams to analyze and improve classroom practice. Third, there is a large focus on results and purpose. Professional learning communities evaluate their success based on the results of their collaborative efforts. DuFour and Eaker (1998) stated:

Each word of the phrase “professional learning community” has been chosen purposefully. A “professional” is someone with expertise in a specialized field, an individual who has not only pursued advanced training to enter the field, but who is also expected to remain current in its evolving knowledge base...

“Learning” suggests ongoing action and perpetual curiosity...The school that operates as a professional *learning* community recognizes that its members must

engage in ongoing study and constant practice that characterize an organization committed to continuous improvement... In a professional learning *community*, educators create an environment that fosters mutual cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth as they work together to achieve what they cannot accomplish alone (as cited in Thompson et al., 2004, p. 2).

In professional learning communities, there are also many other research-based practices that include “study groups, networking, mentoring, coaching, and regular school day meetings that may occur during the process of classroom instruction or planning time” (Lee, 2005). Teachers can participate in groups that study school topics and job-related issues and tasks. They can also participate in varied groupings so that they are able to network with other professionals in their building. Mentoring relationships can provide fruitful times for teachers to develop together, as can coaching partnerships and opportunities. Teachers also can benefit from common planning times, times when they can focus together on the instructional and curricular needs of the students they serve.

One more research-based model of professional development that supports teacher motivation and meaningfulness exists. The Professional Development School (PDS) Model (Teitel 2003) provides teachers an opportunity to develop professionally while also training pre-service teachers. A PDS differs from a professional learning community in that it reflects “partnerships formed by teacher education programs and preK-12 schools intent on sharing the responsibility for the preparation of new teachers, the development of experienced faculty members, and the improvement of practice – all with the goal of enhancing student achievement” (Levine, 2002, p. 65). The goals of a

PDS include the improvement of student learning, the preparation of educators, the professional development of educators, and the inquiry of best practices.

Teachers are able to benefit at many different levels from the structure of a PDS. Not only are they working collaboratively with educators serving in higher education, but they are also responsible for training the next generation of teachers and partnering with these new teachers in an effort to also learn something themselves. Interns provide new and fresh information for the classroom teacher, and interns are also another set of hands and eyes to help during the daily classroom life. The teacher and the intern work together to assess students and discover problems in the classroom that can be solved through action research and applying best practices. The entire process is very teacher-directed and is also supported with the additional resources of having another professional educator in the classroom as well as the resources that the participating college or university provide, such as training, professional advice, observations, team teaching, problem-solving groups, time to reflect, and more.

Professional Development Schools also promote motivating and meaningful professional development through action research. Teachers can gain much from participating in collaborative action research. According to Brighton (2009) action research is a “reflective, systematic inquiry that focuses on a relevant problem in teaching or learning for the purpose of enacting meaningful change to address that problem” (p. 40). Action research comes from the teacher; the teacher must decide what needs exist in his or her own classroom, and he or she becomes more familiar with the topic by doing some research and talking with other colleagues. The teacher carefully constructs a plan that is both practical and beneficial and collects data from student artifacts, assessments,

colleague observations, personal reflections, student interviews, and more. Teachers benefit from collaborating with other professionals as they analyze and make sense of the data collected, and they share the results of their action research project for the benefit of other teachers. Teachers learn from other teachers and gain a sense of collegiality in the school.

In a method similar to action research, Pink (2009) encouraged projects called FedEx projects. These FedEx projects are given this name because a product must be delivered by the end of the working time. Companies have given employees release time from their regular workload to explore topics that will help them meet their needs. What has happened as a result of these projects is a strong motivation shown by employees and an array of interesting and useful projects. Pink asserted that when given the choice of what to study and how to study it, people are more motivated to learn. Teachers could greatly benefit from this example from the business world, as they would be able to work together on topics that are of most interest to them.

Likewise, Andree, Darling-Hammond, and Wei (2009) shared a practice in Japan and China called the research lesson or the lesson study. Groups of four to six teachers observe one another's classrooms and work together to refine lessons. Teachers prepare a "best" lesson that demonstrates their competence in working with a specific strategy or working toward meeting a specific goal. A group of teachers then observes while the lesson is taught and document the lesson through video, a checklist of observations, or another form. After the lesson, the teachers discuss what happened together, ask questions, and provide suggestions for improvement. Sometimes the refined lesson is given by another teacher and observed a few days later. What is learned during these

observations is also shared with other teaching faculty in order to promote faculty growth. These research lessons encourage teachers to refine lessons, form a community of learning with other teachers, reflect on what they are doing, learn new things, and improve the learning of students.

## **Discussion**

### **Summary**

This study sought to fill the observed research gap of applying best research-based practices in site-based professional development in an effort to improve teacher attitudes toward professional development within Christian schools.

The research focused on these guiding questions:

1. What goals for professional development related to teacher motivation and meaningfulness should permeate all professional development activities in a school?
  - 1a. Why is the current practice of site-based professional development not meeting the needs of practicing teachers?
  - 1b. What site-based professional development components are both meaningful and motivating for teachers?
  - 1c. What are possible ways to implement site-based methods that are both meaningful and motivating for teachers?
2. How do the suggested site-based professional development goals, methods, and implementation strategies fit within the Christian school's goals?

There are several research-based reasons why teachers currently are not benefiting from site-based professional development, including lack of time, lack of job-embedded opportunities, limited teacher voice, missing focus, missing implementation support, and unrecognized teacher talent.

In order to implement effective site-based professional development, schools need to apply a clear vision based on teacher needs, develop professional development in order to fulfill the school's mission statement, identify and communicate clear standards for and characteristics of professional development, work to create a climate of professionalism, involve teacher voice and leadership, and develop a school-wide community that is supportive of all staff members.

Schools need to keep in mind the research-based characteristics of motivating and meaningful site-based professional development. Many models support the best research-based practices of site-based professional development. These models include online/virtual professional development, teacher leadership, instructional coaching, professional learning communities, and the Professional Development School.

In order for site-based professional development to be meaningful and motivating for Christian teachers, the highlighted problems need to be addressed, the characteristics of powerful site-based professional development need to be incorporated and implemented, and strategies for implementing these characteristics need to be used and supported. Above all, a Christian perspective needs to permeate all steps of the professional development process.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

This study has some very beneficial implications for both classroom and school

life. Professional development programs may change as a result of discovering what strategies work best. In order for that change to happen, some major and minor shifts in paradigms may have to take place regarding what and how professional development is delivered. Schools will need to be able to pinpoint what is currently being offered, assess the effectiveness of the current offerings, and make changes if needed. Many schools will likely discover areas of weakness and need to make changes.

Christian schools need to be willing to examine themselves in an effort to discover and understand why current site-based methods are not meeting the needs of the practicing teachers in those schools. Schools need to be willing to step outside themselves in order to get a clear picture of the needs of their school and their teachers. In his book *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge (1990) shared that there are five disciplines of a learning organization: systems thinking (the body of knowledge and tools that help us see patterns that may hamper change and how they can be changed), personal mastery (organizations learning through individuals who learn, and the idea that it is no longer acceptable for students to be the only ones learning in the school), mental models (deeply ingrained assumptions that influence how you see the world and may hamper change), shared vision (everyone being able to hold a shared idea of the future), and team learning (focusing on learning through dialogue and conversation). The first step in planning out a vision and goals for professional development that supports teacher motivation and meaningfulness is an awareness and acceptance of these five disciplines.

In a response to Senge's model, site-based professional development school leaders must first take stock of the current state of affairs in their building – looking into how people think, how teachers learn, what people think, what people desire, and how

teachers can work together. By first looking into what currently exists, leaders will be able to create a vision and set goals for what could – and should – be. By also investigating the areas of personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, and team learning, school professional development leaders can continue the process of evaluation; they can also begin the process of implementing change based on site-based needs.

Professional development leaders need to examine systems thinking. What message (both formal and informal) is the school sending as to what they believe about Christian education? These leaders also need to investigate personal mastery. How effective are the disciplers being at encouraging disciples? Another area of focus should be mental models. What worldviews permeate the school related to teaching, instruction, students, assessment, and other educational topics? Finally, shared vision and team learning should be examined. Does the faculty embrace a shared vision of educating His children? Does the faculty have ample opportunities to learn together?

Christian schools would also do well to incorporate the “what, so what, what now” model. Schools need to be able to step outside of themselves to see what is happening. Is the school functioning as a God-ordained institution? What is the current state of affairs in the building? How are things working? Then, they need to be able to answer the question of why things are happening the way they are. Does the status quo fit with the school’s vision and mission? What things should be done? What things work best for the school? Finally, they need to be able to form plans for how changes will be made, focusing on the ultimate goal of meeting the needs of teachers so that teachers can meet the needs of the image-bearer students. Once the school has understood the current state and figured out what matters, what do they do with that information? Schools need

to decide what would be best for their current situation. Plans need to be made, followed, and then assessed.

Nwosu (1998) also gives several requirements for Christian schools working toward developing a professional development program. First, the Bible must guide all teaching and learning processes, and teachers must remember that the work of education and redemption are the same. The Bible is filled with stories that can guide educators in their daily walk. Teachers learn about how to treat others in many of the parables of Christ. The Psalms share the range of human emotions and the struggles of many. The rise and fall of many kings and rulers teach both positive and negative ways to lead and serve.

Second, two kinds of knowledge need to be gained: declarative (cognitive understanding) and procedural (the ability to perform a skill). Teachers need to learn and know the concept and have a chance to practice it in a real context, always remembering that “learning *about* something is different from learning to *do* something” (Nwosu, 1998, p. 9). Teachers that do not have the opportunity to be supported while applying a new idea will not continue to use that new idea because “without practice and internalization, transfer does not happen” (Nwosu, 1998, p. 9).

Third, the concept of professional development fits within the idea of discipling, teaching others how to serve God well in the different areas of their lives. Teachers and students alike need the opportunity to learn more about how to teach and learn in a way that pleases our Master Teacher. Followers become leaders. Many biblical examples can be found that demonstrates the importance of discipling and training leaders. Before Moses died, he trained Joshua. Elijah trained Elisha. Paul took many missionary

journeys, and he took several people with him on these journeys, training these people who then trained others. Paul even wrote specifically about the importance of teaching others on one occasion when he wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things that you have learned from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

Nwosu (1998) also shares that Jesus Christ can be seen as the greatest professional developer. In Luke 4:18-19, Christ shared His mission: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoner and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Christ spent his time developing people in many ways, including physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. People who came into contact with Him were left better than when they met Him.

The culmination of the professional development work of Christ can be seen in his work training the twelve disciples, choosing them and working patiently with them until they were ready to lead and train others. The people he chose (some tax collectors and fishermen) were not seen as known leaders. But Christ saw potential, and “He chose them and worked patiently with them until He brought out the best in them” (p. 12).

Site-based professional development in Christian schools should also have the task of bringing out the best in the teachers that it serves. In order to do that, schools must take into account the various biblical principles and examples shared when both planning and implementing professional development. As Christ taught through the example of the disciples, teachers should be taught, rebuked, built up, and shown the way. Christ shares in John 14:12 that professional development allows followers –

teachers – to excel when all needed aspects are in place: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do...

Teachers will need to be involved in deciding what professional development is being offered in the school. Involving teachers in the decision-making process shows a respect for those teachers as professionals in the school setting. It encourages collaboration, and teachers will be more likely to participate in events planned by other teachers.

Schools will also shift their thinking related to how professional development is delivered. Instead of one-shot opportunities or sessions that provide for little feedback or implementation time, schools will need to provide long-range plans and goals for professional development. Teachers that have been led through these one-shot professional development sessions many times start to believe that knowledge is gained behind closed doors in their classrooms because “real professional growth and development...happens to you, not with you,” which reduces teaching to a technical skill (Kooy, 2003, p. 5). Teachers learn as individuals, think about their new knowledge as individuals, and practice their new knowledge as individuals. A real sense of community, of teachers learning from teachers and sharing experience and knowledge with each other, is missing in many professional development programs, which is why many new initiatives and topics of professional development sessions are not implemented.

Teachers need time to work together if professional development implementation is to be truly successful. Schools will need to provide their teachers with time to learn concepts worth learning and also apply those concepts in their current teaching positions.

If teachers are expected to provide a quality education to students, they need to be given quality time to prepare for their task. They will perceive their time well spent when they are able to participate in professional development that aligns with the research-based standards. This time will also have a direct benefit to the students, as teachers will be more motivated to implement instructional strategies that meet the needs of students when the teacher needs are being met.

Time for feedback needs to be given so that teachers can work together, forming a spirit of collegiality, trust, and support during the entire professional development process. Time for prayer, sharing, and discussion about biblical application and how to apply the Bible to learning in every subject area should be given. Teachers could be paired up in an effort to coach each other as part of a community of learners, a community of faithful believers working to further advance education for Him. Special meeting times need to be set for all staff members to get together to discuss progress and provide ideas and also reflect on the school's mission and Christian perspective. Nwosu (1998) shared many ideas for effectively using the time provided during these meetings, including giving time for exchanging ideas about faith implementation to find out what integration of faith and learning looks like and sounds like in the classrooms, giving time for discussing the various modes of integration, discussing various approaches to integration, developing specific plans for the application to teaching, practicing specific strategies for teaching content and values, and giving time to share frustrations and concerns or give testimonies of discoveries or successes.

Schools will need to shift their thinking related to who delivers the professional development. Instead of bringing in outside speakers, teachers should be given the

opportunity to lead professional development sessions. Those teachers should be given the opportunity to take leadership roles in the school, offering their professional services and expertise to their colleagues in meaningful and helpful ways. Not only will schools need to shift their thinking related to what professional development is delivered, but they will also need to shift their thinking related to why professional development is delivered. Teachers will need to be involved each step of the way, and those teachers will need to have their voice heard related to planning and implementing any site-based professional development program.

Administrators and professional development committees may not be willing to make changes right away, as they may be uncomfortable changing from what has been happening for many years in the area of professional development. It is difficult to make a break from the past because in order to do so, schools will need to make at least a small admittance that what was being done in the past was not the best for the teachers involved. Christian schools should be able to respect the rich history of their school but also look forward to meeting the needs of the current teachers and current students. Christian schools should be a model of change, seeking to always be relevant to the current needs they are meeting. Change is hard. Change does not happen quickly.

But change must happen. The research is very clear that the current practice of site-based professional development is not working. It is not meeting the needs of teachers, and it is not motivating and meaningful for these teachers.

### **Professional Development Models: A Reformed Perspective**

The professional development models and best-practice strategies promoted by research also need to be examined to determine which fit within a Reformed view and philosophy of education in order to fit with the school's mission and purpose. Three key areas must be considered: sovereignty, covenant, and kingdom (Beliefs, 2009).

The concept of sovereignty emphasizes the idea that everything relates to God – everything. Everything that happens in the world is under God's control and is part of God's plan (Beliefs, 2009). Recognizing the sovereignty of God also recognizes the fact that humans are sinful and need a God who is sovereign. Humans need to be able to admit that they are sinners, that they are powerless to help themselves, and that they need God's intervention. God does not accomplish His will apart from human faith and human action. Reformed Christians recognize that God calls them to be in relationship with Him, and they must also offer their lives in total service to Him and His plan. Because they want a relationship with God, they also want a relationship with His creation – namely, His people. Reformed Christians identify that they have an important part to play in God's plan, which is why they should take their roles very seriously.

The term covenant relates to the idea of a contract or an agreement between two parties. God makes covenants to His people to protect them, guide them, and care for them (Beliefs, 2009). The Reformed tradition holds that covenants are carried out not only with people, but also with entire communities. Reformed Christians show a deep respect toward the different covenants that God has made with His people, and they work toward keeping their end of the agreement. Even though God has the power to fulfill

covenants on His own, Reformed Christians work toward fulfilling the covenantal contract out of a love and joy for the blessings that God has bestowed. Reformed Christians believe that Christian education is covenant education. Everyone works together in the benefit of everyone else, providing support in many different ways to further encourage the development of learning and growing.

The term kingdom refers to the human culture in the world, the culture and the world that God has created (Beliefs, 2009). God's kingdom does not have defined borders. It is not restricted to a certain location; God has rule and influence over all areas of life. Reformed Christians believe that God calls them to further advance His kingdom, using the entire world to carry out of the mission of restoring God's creation. There is no division between the sacred and the secular; all parts of life can be reformed, and God is involved and working in all areas. Because God is involved in all areas, Reformed Christians believe that they should be involved as well.

Several of the research-based best practice methods of professional development that lead to teacher motivation and meaningfulness fit well into the Reformed hallmarks of sovereignty, covenant, and kingdom. These models include online/virtual professional development, teacher leadership, instructional coaching, professional learning communities, and the Professional Development School.

Online/virtual professional development provides teachers with a broad scope of topics, allowing teachers to select information that is most beneficial to them in their current classroom practice. God can be seen in all of these activities, and teachers can respect the diversity and sovereign reign of God through their study of the various classroom topics. Teachers work with each other, but may not meet face-to-face. They

may post and converse with each other, working toward building a relationship, a covenant. Teachers can gain knowledge from each other in an efficient and timesaving manner, which respects the needs of all members involved in the covenant. By giving teachers the opportunity to work online, this form of professional development allows them to learn more about other areas of the kingdom – both near and far. Teachers are able to share how they are making a difference in their part of the kingdom and also learn how other teachers are working in another part of the kingdom. Knowledge and shared experiences are spread easily and quickly, and teachers develop professionally.

Schools that include teacher-leaders in professional development provide training for teachers so that these teachers can provide leadership in various aspects of the school community. When planning a professional development program that includes teacher leadership, schools are reflecting the sovereignty of God by showing that God works through these teacher-leaders. Administrators and other personnel with higher titles are not the only adults in the building that are able to use their God-given talents to plan and execute various professional development activities. God has given everyone certain gifts, and these gifts should be used for the benefit of others. When using these gifts with others, certain covenants are established, and teacher-leaders earn relationships based on respect. They not only lead other teachers, but they also develop professionally by learning while leading. Win-win relationship forms, and the school and students benefit. When teachers are given the opportunity to lead and serve in areas in which they feel passionate, they are better equipped to further God's kingdom in their school. They are more passionate about what happens in the school and how teachers are being trained and

challenged, and they also challenge themselves to continue improving the work they do in their corner of the kingdom.

Another model that directly relates to a Reformed perspective of professional development is instructional coaching. The instructional coach and the teacher work together in the classroom in a relationship that recognizes the sovereignty of God by seeking assistance in any area of the classroom that needs it. The pair clearly sees that all areas of the classroom must work together in order for students to be able to learn, and they must clearly recognize that all areas of the classroom must submit to God's power and will in order for all areas of the classroom to work together. The instructional coach and the teacher work in relationship together, seeking help from each other, but also from God. They play an important part together in the redemptive nature of the work of the classroom. They build a covenant relationship with each other as they work together to provide the best education possible for His covenant children. They work together and respect each other because they have a common goal: the improvement of education for the students in the classroom. By working together and focusing on student improvement, the instructional coach and the teacher are able to further their understanding of the kingdom of God, and they are able to reform their small part of that kingdom. Also, they are able to share their successes and failures with the broader teaching community in an effort to further spread what they have learned about God's kingdom. The partnership works together in an effort to recognize that positive and healthy relationships can serve as a way to better classroom performance and also spread God's kingdom.

Professional learning communities encourage the discussion of topics related to anything that teachers see as a need in their school. The professional learning communities recognize problems in their school, but they also recognize that they cannot solve the problems alone. They need the guiding hand and Word of God to help them in their efforts. They also work toward building relationships with other staff members, recognizing that everyone has a part to play in the work of the school and the work of redeeming it for God. The group respects the concept of a covenant to discover how their teachers and school can best meet the needs of their students, God's covenant children. The group builds a covenant with each other, building a relationship of trust so that they can talk about hard issues related to the school and also discuss where they may fall short in meeting their original goals or the mission and vision of the school. Professional learning communities recognize that everything they do in a school relates to the kingdom of God. There are no borders or boundaries for what they discuss and what they work to change. The work of the professional learning community is to further advance Christian views of education and see that these views are put into practice, thus furthering God's kingdom in the school and also in the school community. God is involved in all areas of the school, so the professional learning community should be as well, working toward continually improving so that His kingdom can thrive.

The Professional Development School (PDS) promotes a holistic view of education, from the intern to the mentor to the student to the school community. In this way, Christians can celebrate and promote the sovereign nature of God. They can reflect a message that God is in every part of the school and that every part of the school can work together for His purposes and plan. There is much relationship-building involved in

the PDS model, which reflects the Reformed Christian's view that God's creation – His people – should strive to work in community and have beneficial relationships that both recognize the power of God and the presence of God in all areas of life. A covenant is formed between all parties involved in the PDS. From the student to the intern to the mentor, the parties work together for the positive implementation of the program. Each group (teachers, pre-service teachers, and teacher education faculty) challenges the other to improve in an effort to provide the best education possible to God's students. The kingdom of God is both supported and advanced in this way.

The PDS structure can benefit Christian schools. The process is beneficial to the Christian school by providing another way to build community and another way to provide for the needs of teachers. The PDS structure also respects the needs of the interns and puts its focus on the students in the classroom and how all members of the Christian school community can work together to ensure that God's students are learning at the highest level possible.

Action research, a component of professional learning communities and the Professional Development School, supports a Reformed perspective of professional development. First, when a teacher takes on the mindset of action research and when a teacher starts understanding that there are many different areas in a classroom that lead to or hinder student success, they are recognizing the idea that everything should be under God's control. Because God is sovereign, there is not one part of the classroom that He does not have authority over, and there is not one part of the classroom that shouldn't be in line with His will. The idea of sovereignty gives teachers the freedom and encouragement to seek out areas in their classroom that need improving. They fulfill a

covenant with God that they took when they decided to become a teacher. They joyfully seek to deliver education in a way that best benefits the students involved. Reformed Christian teachers also seek to advance the kingdom of God in their classroom by doing research about how God created students, how students learn best, and ways that they can improve classroom practice. When they discover ways that help God's students, they are also able to advance the kingdom by sharing their findings with other colleagues. When teachers focus on trying to understand how God created the students in their classrooms, they are more effectively working toward meeting the needs of the students in those classrooms. They are also developing their own skills and abilities, and are motivating themselves to become better teachers for the sake of improvement and learning.

While focusing on sovereignty, covenant, and kingdom, teachers must be involved in the planning process. Including teachers in the professional development process clearly respects the needs and desires of those teachers. Schools cannot effectively know and understand the needs of the Christian teachers it employs without involving them in important discussions and decisions. If teacher needs are not met, the school is working against the way that God has created teachers, and the school is also not respecting teachers as fellow image bearers, image bearers that have been blessed with talents, gifts, and applicable opinions and insights. God has created these adults – Christian teachers – in a certain way, and not recognizing or celebrating the way that God created them will ultimately lead to a poor-performing professional development program. To recognize the beauty of God's creation in the adult Christian teacher is to worship the One who created teachers. When professional development programs do not take into account the diverse needs, emotions, and chemical structures that come along

with adult Christian teachers, these programs are working against God's creational structure and order. These programs are not fulfilling the mission statement of the school, and they are also not working to encourage the adults involved. As a result, these programs do not motivate Christian teachers, and Christian teachers do not see them as meaningful programs for affecting and supporting their professional practice.

After implementing research-based best practices for site-based professional development, Christian schools will need to be able to evaluate whether or not what was implemented made a difference. Christian schools have the motivation of discovering whether or not the professional development is working because they want to respect their teachers and respect the students that the teachers are serving. God has given a precious and limited amount of time to teachers and students, and schools must seek to best use this resource that they have been given.

Guskey (2002) offered suggestions for using five critical levels of evaluation that offer information that can be used to make thoughtful decisions related to professional development processes and effects, ensuring that professional development is motivating and meaningful (see Appendix F). Level one deals with participants' reactions. Questions during this section of evaluation should focus on whether or not the participants liked the experience (Was your time well spent? Were the activities well planned and meaningful? Did the material make sense? Was the information useful?) and whether or not their basic human needs were met (Was the coffee hot? Was the room temperature comfortable? Were the chairs comfortable?). This data is usually gained through questionnaires.

Level two deals with participants' learning. Questions in this level focus on the knowledge gained during a professional development session (What did you learn? What were the main ideas of the session?). An assessment can be given or teachers can be interviewed. Level three relates to organization support and change. Questions here focus on whether or not the professional development session supports the goals and mission of the school (Did the session promote change aligned with the mission and goals of the school? Were changes supported at all levels? Were resources available? Were teachers given the opportunity to work together?). Schools may choose to examine minutes from follow-up meetings, conduct surveys, and interview participants to gather data at this level.

Level four deals with participant's use of new knowledge and skills. One main question is asked at this level: Did the knowledge learning during a professional development session make a difference in the day-to-day practice of the teacher? In order to gather data, schools must allow time to pass after the session. Data can be gathered through surveys, structured interviews, direct observations, reflections, journals, or portfolios. Level five, the final level, deals with student learning outcomes. Questions at this level address the quality of education for the students (How did the professional development activity affect the students? Did the students benefit? Were there any unintended outcomes?). In order to gain data in this level, teachers will need to assess things such as grades, tests, portfolios, student attitude, interviews with students, interviews with parents, classroom behaviors, and more.

Christian schools would do well to add a sixth level of evaluation, a level focusing on the Christian perspective and mission of the school. Questions during these

levels would focus on how the professional development is helping teachers fulfill their call as Christian educators (How does the session address the specific needs of teachers and students as image bearers? How does the session support the mission of the school? How does the session support Christian principles and a Christian worldview? Did you find the activity motivating for you as a Christian teacher? Did you find the session meaningful in your work as a Christian educator?). Data for this level could be gained through teacher surveys, conversations, interviews, journals, and observations.

Guskey (2002) recommends working backwards through the levels of evaluation, planning the student outcomes first and then determining what practices work the best, considering what organizational supports need to be in place, deciding what knowledge teachers must have in order to implement the practices, and finally thinking about the physical experiences and what structure/activity of professional development will benefit the teachers when planning what will be shared during a professional development session. Decisions made at each level impact the success of the other levels. Christian schools should also include the sixth level of evaluation at the beginning of the process.

The delivery of professional development in Christian schools may vary from one school to another, depending on the needs and desires of the teachers involved and the goals of the school, but one thing that must remain constant in all Christian schools is the quality of site-based professional development. Because Christian schools have been called by God to provide an excellent education and training for His disciples, these schools need to be able to stand out in front, promoting a vision for site-based professional development that is motivating and meaningful, always working to support what is best for the teacher and, in turn, what is best for the students.

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## Appendix A

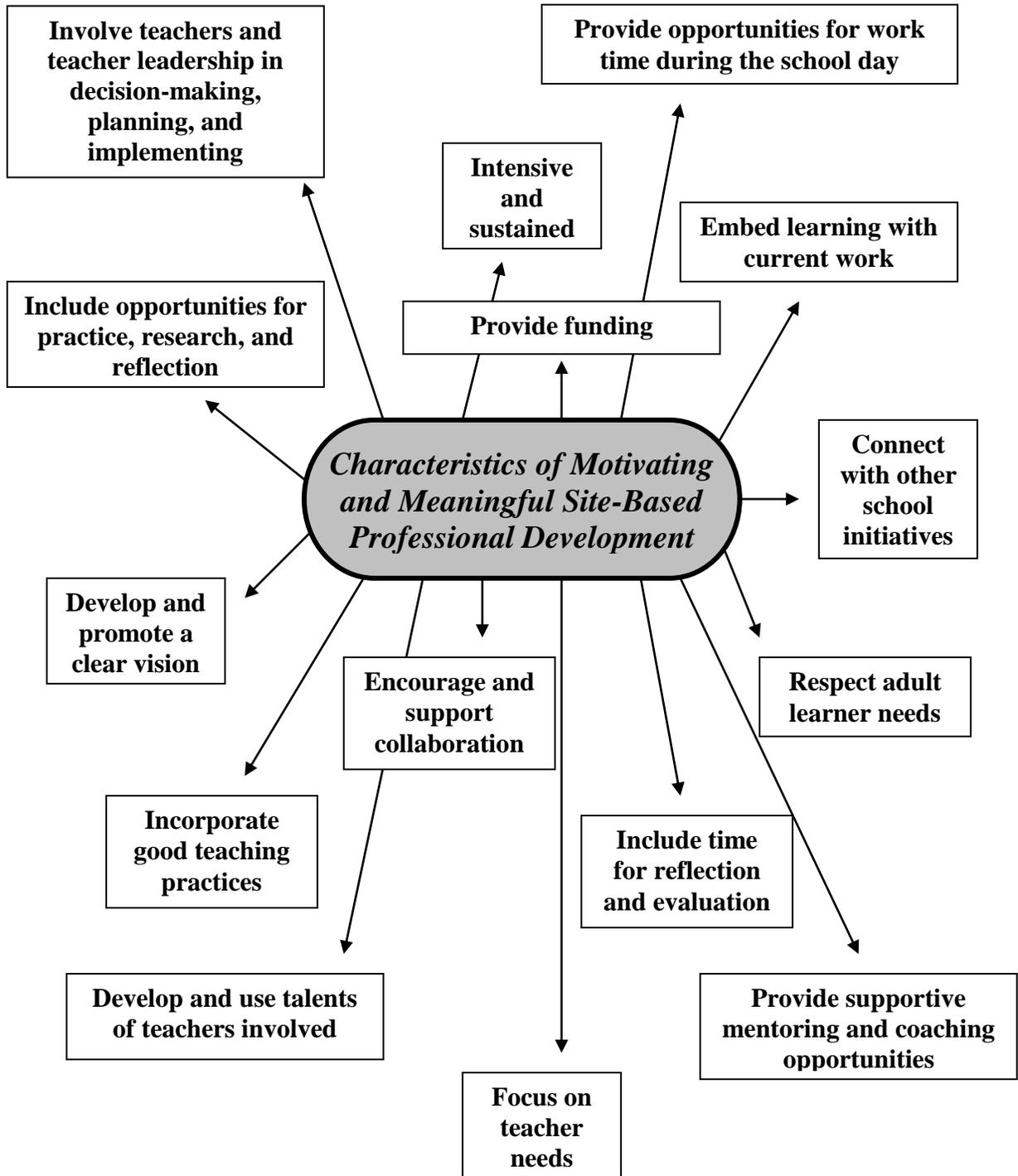
### What Research Supports Related to Site-Based Professional Development

Research Supports Professional Development That...	Research Does Not Support Professional Development That...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deepens teachers' knowledge of content and how to teach students.</li> <li>• Helps teachers understand how students learn specific content.</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for active, hands-on learning.</li> <li>• Enables teachers to acquire new knowledge, apply it to practice, and reflect on the results with colleagues.</li> <li>• Is part of a school reform effort that links curriculum, assessment, and standards to professional learning.</li> <li>• Is collaborative and collegial.</li> <li>• Is intensive and sustained over time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relies on the one-shot workshop model.</li> <li>• Focus only on training teachers in new techniques and behaviors.</li> <li>• Is not related to teachers' specific contexts and curriculums.</li> <li>• Is episodic and fragmented.</li> <li>• Expects teachers to make changes in isolation and without support.</li> <li>• Does not provide sustained teacher learning opportunities over multiple days and weeks.</li> </ul>

Included from Darling-Hammond, L. and Richardson, N. (2009, February). Teacher learning: What matters?. *Educational Leadership*, 66(5), 49.

Appendix B

Characteristics of Motivating and Meaningful Site-Based Professional Development



## Appendix C

### Motivating and Meaningful Professional Development Models and Explanations

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Virtual/Online Learning</b>	Teachers work in an online setting by studying a topic with other teachers through the use of online message boards, email, posting, etc. in either a synchronous or an asynchronous way.
<b>Teacher Leadership Training and Development</b>	Teachers are provided training in leadership principles and are given specific and meaningful opportunities to use these leadership principles in the school setting.
<b>Instructional Coaching</b>	A coach is provided to assist teachers as needed in their classrooms, assisting in topics related to content, instruction, classroom management, and formative assessment. The teacher guides their own use of the instructional coach.
<b>Professional Learning Community</b>	Teachers meet in focused learning groups related to specific topics. Teachers work together to learn more about an educational topic, to perform action research, or to work toward school change and improvement.
<b>Professional Development School</b>	Teachers are paired up with an intern from a college that co-teaches with them during a lengthy period, sometimes up to one school year. The mentor teacher provides guidance to the intern while also gaining professional development and new ideas from the intern. Action research is also performed.

**Appendix D**

**Survey for Use When Finding the Current State of Site-Based Professional Development**

**What’s Professional Development Like in Our School?**

Please include your honest feedback on this form.

Your voice will be a crucial component considered when planning professional development offered at our school.

<p><b>1. What opportunities for professional development are currently available to you?</b></p>		
<p><b>2. What opportunities for professional development do you use?</b></p>		
<p><b>3. Do you enjoy participating in the professional development of our school? Explain.</b></p>		
<p><b>4. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the professional development offered during our inservice times.</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Very Unsatisfied  <input type="checkbox"/> Unsatisfied  <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied  <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly Satisfied  <input type="checkbox"/> Very Satisfied</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><b>5. What opportunities for professional development do you find most meaningful? Why?</b></p>		
<p><b>6. What opportunities for professional development do you find most motivating? Why?</b></p>		

<p><b>7. Do you feel that teachers are involved in planning and implementing professional development? Explain.</b></p>										
<p><b>8. What professional development opportunities would you like to see become available in our school?</b></p>										
<p><b>9. What areas of improvement do you see related to the professional development at our school?</b></p>										
<p><b>10. When thinking about professional development, what needs do you have?</b></p>										
<p><b>11. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.</b></p>										
<p><i>Our school has a culture that strongly supports professional development that is meaningful and motivating.</i></p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td rowspan="4">Explain:</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Disagree</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Agree</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree	Explain:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree	Explain:								
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree									
<p><i>Our school has a staff interested in professional development.</i></p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td rowspan="4">Explain:</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Disagree</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Agree</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree	Explain:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree	Explain:								
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree									
<p><i>Professional development is a priority for me.</i></p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td rowspan="4">Explain:</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Disagree</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Agree</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree	Explain:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree	Explain:								
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree									
<p><i>The administration supports professional development that is motivating and meaningful.</i></p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Strongly Disagree</td> <td rowspan="4">Explain:</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Disagree</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Agree</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Strongly Agree</td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree	Explain:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Disagree	Explain:								
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree									
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly Agree									

<p><i>Our school provides enough time for professional development during the school day.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>Our school provides enough time for teacher collaboration during the school day.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>Professional development at our school supports my professional needs.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>Professional development time at our school is used wisely.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>Professional development is intensive and sustained over time in our school.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>Our school provides opportunities for practice, research, and reflection.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>Our school provides learning opportunities that relate directly to my current work.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>Our school provides adequate funding for professional development.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>Professional development at our school is connected to other school initiatives.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>

<p><i>There is a clear vision for professional development that is both developed and promoted.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>The professional development offered at our school respects my needs as an adult learner.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>Good teaching and learning practices are incorporated in the professional development of our school.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>Time for reflection and evaluation are included in our school's professional development opportunities.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>The talents of our teachers are developed and used during our professional development opportunities.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>
<p><i>Supportive mentoring and coaching structures are used in our school.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/> Agree  <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree</p>	<p>Explain:</p>

**12. Please use this space to include any further explanations related to the answers you gave or the ratings you selected.**

**Appendix E**

**Site-Based Professional Development Planning Form**

**Professional Development Opportunity:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Where:** \_\_\_\_\_ **When:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How does the professional development opportunity fit with our vision of professional development at our school?**

**How does the professional development opportunity fit with our school’s mission and purpose?**

**Does the professional development opportunity:**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<i>Focus on teacher needs related to content knowledge and instructional skills</i>		
<i>Include opportunities for practice, research, and reflection</i>		
<i>Embed opportunities in the work that takes place during the school day</i>		
<i>Provide time for learning during the work hours</i>		
<i>Develop and promote a clear vision</i>		
<i>Connect the work of professional development with other school initiatives</i>		
<i>Allow for intensive and sustained learning over several sessions</i>		
<i>Emphasize a sense of collaboration and a strong working relationships among teachers when solving important problems and learning</i>		
<i>Respect the needs of the adult learners involved and remember good teaching practices</i>		
<i>Include time for reflection and evaluation</i>		
<i>Develop and use the talents of the teachers involved</i>		
<i>Support funding of professional development opportunities</i>		
<i>Provide supportive mentoring and coaching opportunities</i>		
<i>Involve teachers and teacher leadership in the decision-making, planning, and implementation process</i>		

**Resources Needed and Available:**

**Planning Details (Include Other Pages if Needed):**

## Appendix F

## Evaluation of Effectiveness of Site-Based Professional Development

Evaluation Level	What Questions Are Addressed?	How Will Information Be Gathered?	What Is Measured or Assessed?	How Will Information Be Used?
<b>1. Participants' Reactions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Did they like it?</li> <li>-Was their time well spent?</li> <li>-Did the material make sense?</li> <li>-Will it be useful?</li> <li>-Was the leader knowledgeable and helpful?</li> <li>-Were the refreshments fresh and tasty?</li> <li>-Was the room the right temperature?</li> <li>-Were the chairs comfortable?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Questionnaires administered at the end of the session</li> </ul>	Initial satisfaction with the experience	To improve program design and delivery
<b>2. Participants' Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Did participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Paper-and-pencil instruments</li> <li>-Simulations</li> <li>-Demonstrations</li> <li>-Participant reflections (oral and/or written)</li> <li>-Participant portfolios</li> </ul>	New knowledge and skills of participants	To improve program content, format, and organization
<b>3. Organization Support and Change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Was implementation advocated, facilitated, and supported?</li> <li>-Was the support public and overt?</li> <li>-Were problems addressed quickly and efficiently?</li> <li>-Were sufficient resources made available?</li> <li>-Were successes recognized and shared?</li> <li>-What was the impact on the organization?</li> <li>-Did it affect the organization's climate and procedures?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-District and school records</li> <li>-Minutes from follow-up meetings</li> <li>-Questionnaires</li> <li>-Structured interviews with participants and administrators</li> <li>-Participant portfolios</li> </ul>	The organization's advocacy, support, accommodation, facilitation, and recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To document and improve organization support</li> <li>To inform future change efforts</li> </ul>

<p><b>4. Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills</b></p>	<p>-Did participants effectively apply the new knowledge and skill?</p>	<p>-Questionnaires -Structured interviews with participants and administrators -Participant reflections (oral and/or written) -Participant portfolios -Direct observations -Video-taped lessons</p>	<p>Degree and quality of implementation</p>	<p>To document and improve the implementation of program content</p>
<p><b>5. Student Learning Outcomes</b></p>	<p>-What was the impact on students? -Did it affect student performance or achievement? -Did it influence students' physical or emotional well-being? -Are students more confident as learners?</p>	<p>-Student records -School records -Questionnaires -Structured interviews with students, parents, teachers, and administrators -Participant portfolios -Student work examples</p>	<p>Student learning outcomes: Cognitive (Performance and Achievement)  Affective (Attitudes and Dispositions)  Psychomotor (Skills and Behaviors)</p>	<p>To focus and improve all aspects of program design, implementation, and follow-up  To demonstrate the overall impact of professional development</p>
<p><b>6. Christian Perspective</b></p>	<p>-Did the event further the Christian perspective supported by the school? -Did the event helpful fulfill the mission of the school? -Did the event support Christian characteristics?</p>	<p>-Questionnaires -Structured interviews with teachers, students, parents, and administrators -Student work examples -Teaching observations</p>	<p>Incorporation of Christian perspective  Application of Christian perspective  Incorporation of school's mission</p>	<p>To inform future decisions about incorporating Christian perspective  To inform future plans for fulfilling the school's mission and communicating the Christian perspective</p>

Included and Adapted From Guskey, T. R. (2002, March). Does it make a difference? Evaluating professional development. *Educational Leadership*, 59(6), 45-51.

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**Education**

M.A. Curriculum and Instruction, Dordt College (2011)

Middle School Teaching Endorsement, Morningside College (2008)

B.A. Secondary English Education, Dordt College (2005)

**Academic Employment**

Teacher (5), Sioux Center Christian School, Sioux Center, IA (2009-present)

Technology Coordinator (K-8), Sioux Center Christian School, Sioux Center, IA (2007-2009)

Teacher (6-12), Lake Worth Christian School, Boynton Beach, FL (2005-2007)

**Presentations**

“Drama, Drama, Drama” – workshop presented at the Heartland Christian Educators’ Convention focused on incorporating drama into the classroom curriculum (October 2010)

“60 Writing Ideas in 60 Minutes” – workshop presented at the Heartland Christian Educators’ Convention focused on writing across the curriculum (October 2010)

“5<sup>th</sup> Grade Sharing” – a facilitated presentation at the Heartland Christian Educators’ Share Day (February 2010)

“Do you have a license for that thing?” – workshop presented at the Heartland Christian Educators’ Convention focused on Internet safety in middle school (October 2008, 2009)

**Professional Membership**

National Council of Teachers of English

National Middle School Association

Association for the Supervision of Curriculum Development

National Association for Professional Development Schools