



Integrating Professional Learning Focus into the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness System

Student achievement is directly correlated to teacher quality and school leadership. “For teachers and school and district leaders to be as effective as possible, they continually expand their knowledge and skills to implement the best educational practices.” (Mizell, 2010)

The evaluation process, when used properly, is a vehicle for educator growth. Meaningful feedback, collaboration, and mentoring are all part of the improvement cycle for any professional. Parallel to these efforts is the need for continual, meaningful professional learning opportunities. Research has shown that educators who participate in well-designed professional development activities get better results from their students (Guidance for the Reading First Program, 2002). This rationale is why integrating individualized programs of professional development into the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE) system is so important.

House Bill 2957 establishes that every policy of professional development adopted by a school district board of education shall provide for the development of a Professional Learning Focus (PL Focus) for each teacher and administrator. Recognizing that many districts may already have similar processes implemented while others may require specific guidance for creation of a PL Focus, the following guidelines have been established to ensure consistency across districts while allowing for local control:

- ***A Professional Learning Focus must be established every year regardless of exemption status***
 - PL Focus should be introduced and explained to participants at the beginning of the year
 - This may be completed on an individual basis, by teams, or whole group
 - PL Focus should be established by the end of the first quarter of the school year
 - “Established” means designed collaboratively by participant and evaluator as well as approved by evaluator
 - Documentation should take place on the district-approved PL Focus template
- ***This document can be altered during the school year. The PL Focus can be enhanced as needed.***
 - PL Focus documentation should be completed by the end of the school year. However, the intended goal may extend over multiple years.
- ***Anyone evaluated under TLE must complete a Professional Learning Focus***
- ***PL Focus is developed by the teacher or administrator in collaboration with the evaluator***
 - PL Focus should not be dictated by the evaluator. The idea is to allow the teacher or administrator to actively engage with learning practices that are evidence-based, research practices that correlate with increased student achievement and meet the professional improvement needs of each participant.
- ***PL Focus is tailored to address a specific area identified through the qualitative component of the TLE (i.e. Tulsa Model, McRel, Marzano)***
 - At least one specific indicator/element should be documented as the primary PL Focus
 - The identified indicator/element does not have to be the lowest performance area of the evaluation

- **Participants are supported by resources available and supplied by districts and Oklahoma State Department of Education**
 - Participant should help identify, within reason, resources that could aid in the implementation of the PL Focus
 - PL Focus activities may include but not limited to:
 - Presenter-led workshops
 - Individual or faculty studies of books, scholarly articles, and video productions
 - Peer observations
 - Committee studies to address student achievement issues
 - Work related to a specific subject area or areas associated with obtaining an advanced degree or professional certification
 - Action research projects designed to improve student achievement
 - Participation in local, regional, or state initiatives associated with the development or implementation of curriculum standards
 - Work related with obtaining National Board Certification
- **PL Focus cannot increase professional development point requirements**
 - The intent is to focus on professional training rather than to increase it
- **Rating scale will not be attached to Professional Learning Focus**
 - The intent is not to grade the PL Focus, but to make personalize learning a goal for all participants each year
- **School districts are responsible for monitoring compliance. Documentation should include:**
 - Identified area of focus (associated with indicator or element from district-approved TLE qualitative framework)
 - Identified resources requested to attain goal
 - Minimum of one documented checkpoint visit
 - Best practice is to complete at least two checkpoints during the year
 - Reflective component where the educator may provide feedback related to their PL Focus
 - Signature and date lines for evaluator and educator
 - Templates will be made available, but districts may choose to create their own document
- **Professional Learning Focus documentation should be attached to final evaluation**
 - Verification of proper PL Focus implementation may be required during accreditation visits