

**Endowment Grant Proposal**  
**Portola Valley School District**  
**Professional Development Program**

**Duration:** 2011-2012 School Year

**Applicant:** Tim Hanretty and Carol Piraino

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# **PROPOSAL BACKGROUND**

## **Guiding Principles**

The following principles will guide teacher professional development strategy in the Portola Valley School District.

- Professional development will directly and positively impact student learning.
- Professional development will support the growth of the individual teacher as well as the growth of the organization.
- Professional development will be teacher directed with administrative support.
- Providing teachers with choice is important.
- The structure of professional development will include personal and group accountability system.
- The professional development structure will provide for grade level as well as K-8 collaboration.
- Technology will be embedded into all aspects of professional development.

## **Expectations for Teachers**

- Teachers will have an active role in curriculum design and development.
- Teachers will have an active role in analyzing student results, tying assessment directly to actions, using data to drive instruction.
- Teachers will model continuous learning, stay current with current research on teaching and learning, and actively contribute to improving the district.

## Components of the Professional Development Plan

- Monthly staff meeting at each site devoted to site-based initiatives, operations, and planning.
- Professional learning communities across grade levels which will meet twice monthly to explore a topic of importance to the work of the district and of interest to the individual teachers.
- Monthly district meetings which will be devoted to strategic plan work and development.
- Grade level and job-alike meetings which will occur weekly during common prep time for 6th-8th grade teachers and on Wednesdays from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. for others. Grade level teams will receive support from the technology team, the special education inclusion coordinator, and the district leadership team during these meetings.

## Schedule of Activities

This is the schedule for next year's professional development program:

Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
	7 SITE	5 SITE	2 SITE	7 SITE	4 SITE	1 SITE	7 SITE	4 SITE	2 SITE	6 SITE
	14 PLC	12 PLC	9 PLC	14 PLC	11 PLC	8 PLC	14 PLC	11 HOL	9 PLC	13 SITE
	21DIST	19DIST	16 DIST	21 HOL	18DIST	15DIST	21 DIST	18 DIST	16 DIST	
24 SITE	28 PLC	26 PLC	23 HOL	28 HOL	25 PLC	22 HOL	28 PLC	25 PLC	23 PLC	
31 DIST			30 DIST			29 DIST			30 SITE	

## Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

For PVSD purposes, a professional learning community is a group of teachers (approximately 6-8 teachers each) with a shared interest and a shared commitment to learning more about a topic and bringing that knowledge directly to bear on their work in the classroom. These communities will include teachers from all grade levels. Their work will be largely group-directed with frequent reporting back to all colleagues through Wikis, staff meeting presentations, etc. Group activities may include researching topics, collaborating with colleagues from other schools, attending workshops and lectures, conducting peer observations, etc.

## **Proposed Professional Learning Community Topics: 2011-12 School Year**

(note PLCs may run for two years)

- Brain research and implications for instruction
- Learning by design - backwards mapping curriculum development
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and innovation
- Emotional intelligence
- Gender-based education
- Online/blended learning possibilities to enhance student learning
- 1:1 environments and implications for instruction and learning
- Health and wellness
- Multiple intelligence
- Teacher created option

### **Components of each PLC**

- Teaching and learning connection
- Technology component
- Reading, research, personal and group reflection component
- Action research component

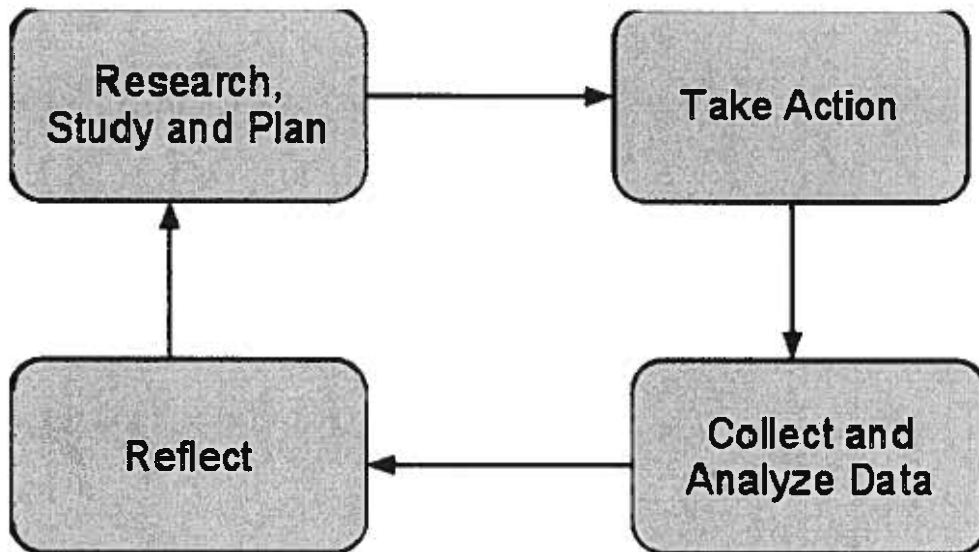
### **How It Will Work**

1. Teachers will select a first and second choice from the list of PLC topics (ideally this will occur in June, 2011).
2. The administrative staff will review choices and create roughly balanced PLC groupings.
3. The PLC groups will be provided with an outline of responsibilities for the year at their first meeting of the year in September. These responsibilities will include the following: creating group goals; identifying specific areas of focus for the group; identifying a facilitator, recorder, time keeper (these could be shared or rotating roles), etc.; collecting data and research information related to group focus; reporting back on findings related to group goals; revising group goals as needed (see action research cycle below).
4. Each member of the leadership team will work with and support one or two of the PLC groups throughout the year.
5. Following each PLC meeting, each member will post reflections on a blog and one member (recorder) will post group minutes in a public space (wiki, website).

6. Each PLC group will also present work to the whole staff once or twice during the school year.
7. Teachers will be invited to submit requests to the leadership team to attend conferences, workshops or classes related to their PLC topic area.
8. PLCs will be invited to submit requests to the leadership team to meet in addition to the Wednesday afternoons. Such meetings will occur during non-instructional hours.

### **Action Research Cycle**

Each PLC will employ action research as part of their practice. It is possible that PLCs will run for two years, and the first year may be mostly devoted to the research, study and plan portion of the action research cycle. However, it is expected that during the two year period that teachers will institute new practices and collect data regarding these practices.



### **District Initiatives**

One meeting each month will be set aside for work on district-wide initiatives. This work will be directly related to the goals in the strategic plan. There will be eleven (11) district meetings during the school year. These sessions should be devoted to work on the following ongoing district goals.

#### **Effective Learning Environments for Student Learning**

Establish a climate that promotes fairness, respect, social development, group responsibility, and happiness.

- Develop and follow norms for respectful, productive communication among all stakeholders.
- Implement school-wide programs to promote social-emotional learning and a positive climate in classrooms and on the playground designed to reduce student-to-student bullying and student feelings of isolation.

#### **Content Delivery**

Develop a PVSD K-8 Writing Scope and Sequence for full implementation by the start of the 2012-13 school year.

#### **Additional District Initiatives**

Work will begin on implementing the **Common Core Standards for Mathematics** and modifying math instruction in Portola Valley accordingly. An outside expert will be identified to support our work in this area. 2011-12 will be a planning year with staff training and support occurring, for the most part, during the 2012-13 school year.

Teachers will also work on the **Universal Design** initiative to promote full inclusion of students with learning difference within the general education environment. Most of this work will occur during grade level and job alike meeting times.

### **Grade Level and Job-Alike Meetings**

Grade level teams will continue to have time worked into the schedule either during common planning periods (6th-8th grades) or on early release Wednesdays (K-5th grades) to meet weekly to discuss students, lesson development, assessments, and other topics of importance to their team.

The district inclusion specialist, technology specialist, and program specialist will all be available to grade level teams on a regular basis to work with teachers on universal design, student support, and program development.

Topics currently in development to support grade level teams include:

- Positive Behavior Systems
- Technology Tools for Diverse Learners
- Designing Lessons for Understanding
- Effective Assessment and Evaluation Systems

In addition, the professional support staff will be available, by request, to support teachers on topics of interest to them as needed throughout the year. For example, the second grade team may request that the district technology specialist research and share suggested iPad applications for teaching subtraction or the seventh grade team may request that the inclusion specialist help brainstorm solutions to engaging all learners in a particular topic, etc.

### **Description of Proposal**

The District is seeking PVSF Endowment funds to support the implementation of our professional development plan. The specific components requiring financial support are described below.

### **Workshops/Conferences/Materials**

We would like to provide each Professional Learning Community with a fixed dollar amount of \$2000.

The members of the PLC will be given discretion over how these dollars are spent. Possible expenditures could include workshop or conference fees for some members of the group, books for members of the group, instructional materials for members of the group, etc. Guidelines would be established and shared that include the requirement that any expenses directly support the goals of the group and that anyone benefiting (i.e. attending a conference) from an expenditure provide a report, presentation, etc. to the whole group. Final approval for any expenditures would be the responsibility of the administrative team.

### **Staff Development Consultant**

Paula Hundley's services during the 2010-11 school year have been invaluable to the teaching teams at both Ormondale and Corte Madera. She will provide support to the PLCs and assist with advancing the district initiatives related to technology.

### **Math Consultant**

As the district prepares to respond to changes in the math standards as outlined in the new Common Core Standards, identifying a consultant to work with teachers and district staff will be a priority for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years. The consultant will help identify areas for change and support the teachers in re-engineering their programs accordingly.

### **Peer Observations**

The feedback received from the peer observations that have occurred this year has been consistently positive. Providing teachers with an opportunity to observe a peer at work and then debrief with that peer will continue during the 2011-12 school year.

### **Expected Results**

Offering our teachers a comprehensive professional development program will have a direct, positive impact on student learning through greater level of engagement from students, a higher quality of instruction, and improved systems for assessment as a result of this work. A more seamless integration of technology into the instructional program is also envisioned.

### **Budget**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Unit Cost</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
PLC workshop fees and/or materials	10	PLC	\$2,000	\$20,000
Math Curriculum Consultant	100	Hours	\$100	\$10,000
Peer Observations	60	Days	\$157	\$9,420
Staff Development Consultant	275	Hours	\$75	\$20,625
<b>Total:</b>				<b>\$60,045</b>

## Agreement

I (we) understand that a Portola Valley Schools Foundation Endowment Award obligates the awardees to:

1. Submit a final report to the Endowment Board and to the District on the results of the grant.
2. To begin using the funds within 6 months of receiving the award.
3. To return the portion of the funds not yet used, if an award recipient terminates his or her employment with the Portola Valley School District during the grant period.

Applicant(s) Signature: Tim Hanretty                      Date: May 17, 2011  
Tim Hanretty, Superintendent

Applicant(s) Signature: Carol Piraino                      Date: May 17, 2011  
Carol Piraino, Asst. Superintendent