



Culture Building & Teacher Choice is Needed Along with Professional Development

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This summer, I had the opportunity to attend the Learning Sciences Institute (LSI) Conference in Orlando, Florida. I believe many aspects of the conference could and should be incorporated into the school setting. Teachers shouldn't have to travel states away to be treated like professionals in other fields.

Additionally, some schools recognize the need to adapt how we support and develop staff as well as create a positive working environment. Below, I will share some adjustments that should be made.

Add at least one day to work in classrooms

Teachers need time to prepare their rooms for students. They should not have to come to school over the summer or on weekends. They also need time to make adjustments based on new policies or initiatives. Teachers should not be told to have certain items on their walls with no time to put the items on the wall. When teachers learn new strategies, they should be adjusting their lesson plans. This is also work teachers can complete in their classrooms. If school leaders can squeeze in more than one day, they should.

Provide time for fun

For colleagues to be able to work well together, they need time to get to know each other. I am not for forced fun, so there should be options. Food should be included. If a person does not want to participate in a game or activity, they could chill with colleagues and chat over

food. Saint Monica School had a day during the before school PD week where the staff went to play mini golf. Some people didn't play and instead just relaxed and talked.

Give teachers options

When I worked in Wayne Township, Election Day was used as a full day professional development day. Teachers chose the sessions they completed. Also, some of the presenters were district teachers. Just like students like choice, so do teachers.

Connect with parents and community members to provide services for teachers

I worked at a school where a parent was a professional chef. We had a nice catered lunch, which was much better than the typical Panera Bread lunches. Also, we all got one free massage when I was at LSI. Some people would love to show teachers appreciation way before teachers appreciation week.

Limit the number of new initiatives

People forget there are more words after the phrase "Jack of all trades." The full saying is, "Jack of all trades and master of none." When teachers have too many areas to focus on, it is hard to do them all well. Moreover, new initiatives are not needed every year. Sometimes, we should continue to perfect what has been previously implemented.

These changes are easy, so school leaders should not have any issue implementing them.