## 1.8 LEARNING COMMUNITIES

### STEP 1 >> READ THE PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>INITIATING</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
</tr>
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**Teaching practice is largely individualistic and uninformed by current research, collegial feedback, formative assessments, or student data. Classroom doors are generally closed and faculty members rarely observe one another teaching or have focused discussions about specific instructional strategies or student needs. The administrative team is largely focused on managerial responsibilities, and only a limited amount of time is devoted to investigating proven best practices, analyzing student-performance trends, and participating in professional learning. School policies do not explicitly support ongoing professional learning, and teacher schedules and workloads do not provide time for collaborative work and study. Some tensions among the faculty may go unresolved for long periods of time.**

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<th>3</th>
<th>DEVELOPING</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>PERFORMING</th>
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**Teacher interactions indicate that there is a growing sense of trust, appreciation, and mutual respect for one another’s contributions to the school community. Several teachers have been trained to facilitate professional sharing among teachers, and a significant percentage of the teaching faculty meets every month to discuss student work and instructional strategies. The administrative team has taken steps to stay informed about current research, analyze student data, distribute best-practice literature to the faculty, and support the ongoing professional learning of every teacher. Time for collaborative preparation and planning is provided to teachers during the school day, but this time is often unstructured, loosely facilitated, or unproductive in terms of improving classroom instruction across the school.**

**Faculty interactions are characterized by the kind of collegiality, trust, and respect that result from strong personal relationships, professionalism, and mutual appreciation. Teachers regularly observe one another’s practice and provide constructive feedback that is based on a shared understanding of effective teaching, learning goals, and student needs. The faculty has developed a “shared language” for discussing instruction, assessment, and other critical elements of teaching and learning. All teachers are involved in consistent, group-based professional conversations that are well established, organized, skillfully facilitated, and goal-driven. Group agendas and conversations focus on addressing the specific tasks and strategies of student-centered, inquiry-based teaching and assessment. Faculty meetings are characterized by enthusiasm, intellectual curiosity, and a sense of collective responsibility for improving student learning and outcomes, particularly among traditionally underperforming student subgroups.**

### STEP 4 >> SCORE YOUR SCHOOL

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school’s performance in this dimension.

- [ ] NOT ADDRESSED
- [ ] INITIATING
- [ ] DEVELOPING
- [ ] PERFORMING
- [ ] PERFORMING
## STEP 2 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE STRATEGIES

### SAMPLE STRATEGIES

- Create a professional development program that balances graduate courses, external workshops, conferences, and school visits with job-embedded professional learning, including mentoring, instructional coaching, classroom observation, data analysis, and professional learning groups.
- Create a centralized online repository of research, best-practice literature, rubrics, scoring guides, curriculum maps, and effective lesson plans that can facilitate sharing and ongoing professional learning.
- Develop a ‘shared language’ among the faculty for discussing instruction, assessment, and other essential elements of teaching and learning.
- Require all teachers to participate in a structured professional learning group that meets at least once a month for two hours or longer. Ensure that these sessions are well facilitated and follow a purposeful agenda focused on instructional improvement and student performance.
- Create time in the schedule for professional learning groups to meet regularly during the school day.

### OUR STRATEGIES IN THIS DIMENSION

## STEP 3 >> RECORD PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE

### SAMPLE EVIDENCE

- Interdisciplinary collaboration and team teaching are common, and teachers are knowledgeable about the learning expectations of their colleagues’ content areas and the instructional practices they use.
- The school has lower dropout rates, reduced absenteeism, and fewer behavioral issues.
- Teachers report a more positive view of their students’ abilities, more enthusiasm for teaching, more rewarding interactions with colleagues, and a stronger desire to continue learning and developing their own skills.
- Teachers are not only attending more conferences and other local or national learning opportunities, but they are also submitting proposals to lead presentations or facilitate workshops.

### OUR EVIDENCE IN THIS DIMENSION