Professional Learning 2018–2019 Evaluation Report

Department of
Research and Evaluation
AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Executive Summary

This report describes findings from the Austin Independent School District's (AISD) Professional Learning (PL) Department 2018–2019 evaluation. The purpose of the PL evaluation was to (a) understand and conceptualize the various services offer by the PL Department, (b) define measurable indicators of implementation, outputs, and outcomes; and (c) conduct a needs assessment and analysis to identify gaps that may exist between current and desired levels of processes, outputs, and outcomes.

Theory of changes (ToC) graphics were created to conceptualize the work, goals, and outcomes of the department and various services offered by the department, and a logic model was created to operationalize the work, goals, and outcomes of the department and various services offered by the department. The ToC statement central to the work of the PL Department states:

> If we empower employees and build their capacity to design, facilitate, and support highly engaged adult and student learning, then we will improve employee effectiveness, staff retention, and student outcomes. To do this, the AISD Professional Learning Department will build relationships and provide continuous and innovative professional learning aligned with district curriculum, instructional programs, and initiatives.

Overall, the PL Department staff focuses on coordinating PL opportunities, ensuring the quality of PL opportunities, and providing ongoing sustained support for all AISD staff. The staff in the PL Department serve as district experts for designing and facilitating highly engaged PL opportunities. Along with consultation services for district staff to provide assistance in designing and/or facilitating PL activities upon request, the work of the PL Department was conceptually organized into eight primary areas of support. The goal of the PL Department was to empower employees and build their capacity to design, facilitate, and support highly engaged adult and student learning. The services offered by the PL Department were further distinguished as supporting either adult learning (e.g., teaching program managers to design highly engaged PL activities, trainer of trainers) or student learning (e.g., PL activities for staff that will have a direct impact on teachers' instruction). To assess attainment of the goal, it was conceptualized that the PL activities/services offered should be aligned, be accessible, and build teacher and/or facilitator capacity. Finally, the primary outcome of the PL Department was to increase employee effectiveness, which was expected to increase staff retention and student outcomes.

A needs assessment and analysis was conducted for the PL Department and each of the primary services offered. Upon reviewing the needs assessment results, PL Department staff indicated greatest interest in evaluative work related to TIP, the NBC Program, and the Student Teacher Program for the upcoming academic year.

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Introduction

Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of the 2018–2019 Professional Learning (PL) evaluation was to (a) understand and conceptualize the various services offered by the PL Department, (b) define measurable indicators of implementation, outputs, and outcomes; and (c) conduct a needs assessment and analysis to identify gaps that may exist between current and desired levels of processes, outputs, and outcomes.

Department Description

The PL Department provides "continuous and innovative professional learning aligned to the district's mission and strategic plan which fosters a growth mindset, an urgency for change, and results in meaningful change in practice, ensuring that students become college, career, and life ready" (Austin Independent School District, n.d.) To that end, the department offers a variety of opportunities for PL aligned with district curriculum, programs, and initiatives and services that ensure staff are effective in their roles.

Department Background

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) PL Department has been in operation for more than 15 years. For several years, the department operated under the Curriculum Office, where staff managed the Professional Development Center, providing PL opportunities that were not related to curriculum; this included PL opportunities such as the new teacher academy, national board certification (NBC), teacher leadership, and professional development and appraisal system (PDAS) training. Since 2010, the department has operated under the Educator Quality Office. There, the work shifted to program management and support for the Curriculum Office. The PL Department is currently a part of the Office of Talent Acquisition and Development, where the work focuses on coordinating PL opportunities, ensuring the quality of PL opportunities, and providing ongoing sustained support for all AISD staff.

Description of Evaluation Work In 2018–2019

Overview

The high-level goal of the AISD PL evaluation was to understand if the department was performing as intended. The 2018–2019 academic year was the first year of AISD PL Department evaluation by the Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE). Therefore, the 2018–2019 evaluation focused on conceptualizing and operationalizing the AISD PL Department's implementation work, goals, and outcomes.

Evaluation Questions and Methods

Three major evaluation activities were conducted in 2018–2019, and various evaluation questions guided the work.

First, DRE staff collaborated with PL staff to develop a theory of change (ToC). The following questions guided this work:

- What is the ToC underlying the AISD PL Department?

- What are the implementation work, goals, and outcomes of the AISD PL Department and areas of support offered?

Second, DRE staff developed a logic model for AISD PL Department programs and projects to describe the work and expected outcomes. The following questions guided this work:

- What was the detailed work of the AISD PL Department?
- What measures of process and performance output were defined for the implementation work of the AISD PL Department?
- What specific concepts comprised the AISD PL Department's goals and outcomes?
- What empirical indicators were available to describe the AISD PL Department's outcomes?

Third, DRE conducted a needs assessment to inform programmatic decision making. The following questions guided the needs assessment:

- What gaps were identified between current and desired processes, outputs, and outcomes?
- What additional data could augment measurement of PL services, the output of PL services, and programmatic outcomes?

The evaluation of the AISD PL Department followed a process of work analysis, logic modeling, and needs assessment and analysis. To understand, conceptualize, and operationalize the various services offered by the PL Department, DRE staff engaged in an iterative, systematic questioning process with PL Department staff. Conversations with the entire department focused on understanding and conceptually organizing the major groups of PL work. After the major groups of work were identified, DRE staff engaged in follow-up conversations with the staff from each individual group. The series of follow-up conversations helped further detail the specific supports provided by each major PL group.

After collecting information on the work of the PL Department, DRE staff analyzed the PL work around three conceptually distinct ideas: categories of PL, direct outputs and goals of the PL work, and broad outcomes the PL Department is trying to impact in the district. After each of the ideas was articulated, it was further framed into a programmatic ToC statement. The ToC statement took the form of *If-Then-Therefore* (e.g., If we achieve the goal of the Professional Learning department, then we will enable positive outcomes. Therefore, we should engage in the implementation work of the Professional Learning department). The ToC statement was conceptually translated into work, goal, and outcome constructs and organized into a ToC graphic representation. Finally, the overall ToC document was operationalized into sets of measures specific to the implementation, the goal, and the outcomes.

In addition to an overall department ToC, a logic model for each program/area of support offered by the PL Department was created. Although a specific ToC statement was not developed for each of the major service groups of PL work, each area of support

Logic Models and Theory of Changes

"The purpose of a logic model is to provide stakeholders with a road map describing the sequence of related events connecting the need for the planned program with the program's desired results" (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). By mapping out the detailed work of a program, logic models are an effective tool for program design and planning, implementation, and evaluation (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). A detailed logic model was created for this evaluation, defining measurable indicators for the activities, goals, and outcomes of the Professional Learning Department.

A theory of change offers a graphical representation of the change process of a program, illustrating the relationship between the outcomes and the activities implemented to achieve that outcome (Anderson, 2004). A theory of change statement and theory of change graphics were created for this evaluation that displays the work, goal, and outcomes of the Professional Learning Department.

was conceptually organized into its own graphic representation of work, goals, and outcomes. After all the ToCs and logic models were developed, a needs assessment and analysis was conducted to identify and understand potential gaps between current and desired program/area of support implementation and resulting performance.

Results

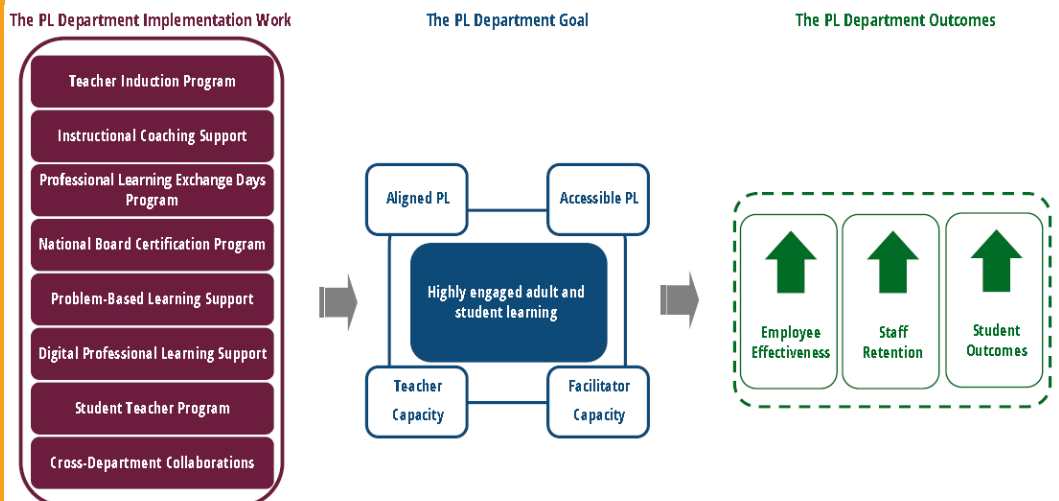### Professional Learning Department

Description

The AISD PL Department is led by the department director, with support from staff employed as PL design specialists and an administrative supervisor. The work of the PL Department is conceptually organized into eight primary areas of support: the Teacher Induction Program (TIP), instructional coaching support, professional learning exchange days, the National Board Certification (NBC) Program, problem-based learning (PBL), digital professional learning, the Student Teacher Program, and cross-department collaborations (e.g., African American Achievement Plan, Professional Pathways for Teachers' Leadership Pathways, curriculum and instruction) (Figure 1).

Each PL design specialist is assigned to various area(s) of support offered by the PL Department; all staff members are engaged in the TIP implementation work. The staff in the PL Department also serve as district experts for designing and facilitating highly engaged PL activities. Consulting is frequently requested from other departments/programs to provide assistance in designing PL activities and is assigned based on staff subject matter expertise and/or background knowledge.

The ToC statement central to the implementation work of the PL Department states:

> If we empower employees and build their capacity to design, facilitate, and support highly engaged adult and student learning, then we will improve employee effectiveness, staff retention, and student outcomes. To do this, the AISD Professional Learning Department will build relationships and provide continuous and innovative professional learning aligned with district curriculum, instructional programs, and initiatives.

Figure 1.
The AISD Professional Learning Department Theory of Change

Source. AISD Professional Learning Department theory of change, revised July 7, 2019
Note. The corresponding logic model is available upon request.

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The overall goal of the PL Department is to empower employees and build their capacity to design, facilitate, and support highly engaged adult and student learning. Conversation with PL Department staff highlighted the need to differentiate between PL activities related to building capacity to design, facilitate, and support highly engaged adult learning (e.g., teaching program managers to create PL activities) versus student learning (e.g., teaching teachers to design classroom instruction).

To assess attainment of the goal, it was conceptualized that PL activities offered by the department should be aligned, be accessible, and build teacher or facilitator capacity. Aligned PL activities are related to ensuring they are relevant to district curriculum, instructional programs, and initiatives and connect to classroom instruction, student learning, and/or the staff member's role. The department also ensured that services offered are accessible to staff (e.g., access to PL activities during duty and non-duty hours, individualize PL activities upon request). Finally, other factors to consider when measuring goal attainment include whether provided PL activities were successful in building teacher capacity (e.g., self-efficacy, leadership, designing highly engaged classroom instruction) or facilitator capacity (e.g., teaching staff to design and facilitate high engaged PL activities). These constructs (e.g., aligned PL activities, accessible PL activities) underlying the goal can be measured by analyzing various Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) survey items, district records related to PL (e.g., number of PL activities offered by PL Department staff, number of ad hoc PL activities conducted, number of substitute request approved for staff who were interested in attending PL activity), and various annual staff appraisal items. Measurable indicators for the PL Department goal and implementation work goals are shown in Appendix A.

The overall outcomes of the PL Department include improving employee effectiveness, staff retention, and student outcomes. The outcomes can be measured by analyzing district records related to staff appraisal, staff, and student data. Measurable indicators for the PL Department outcomes and implementation work outcomes are shown in Appendix B.
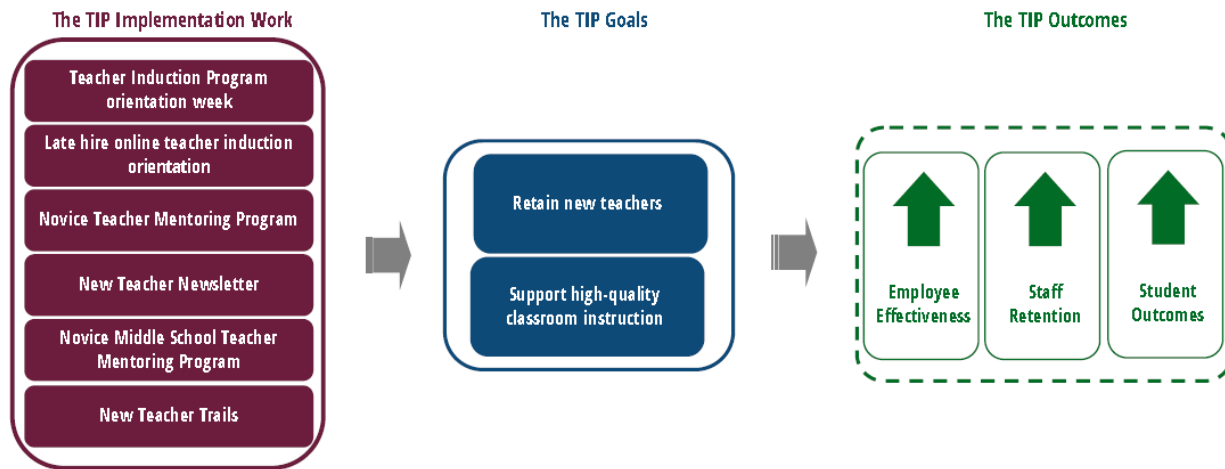
Needs Assessment Results

This year, the department goal (i.e., empower employees and build their capacity to design, facilitate, and support highly engaged adult and student learning) and the constructs underlying the goal (i.e., PL activities are aligned, are accessible, and build teacher and facilitator capacity) were conceptualized and operationalized. These constructs provide a way to measure if the department is performing as intended. The recommendations for the PL Department include goal monitoring in the upcoming year to determine if the department goal is achieved and if the department is operating as designed.

Teacher Induction Program (TIP)

Description

TIP was designed to onboard teachers new to the district by expanding teachers' knowledge, acquainting teachers with specific curricula and district practices, exposing them to new ideas and strategies, and providing a context for further learning over a course of 2 academic years. A number of PL opportunities were provided that focused on challenges frequently experienced by novice teachers. The TIP ToC is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2.
The Teacher Induction Program Theory of Change

Source. AISD Professional Learning Department theory of change, revised July 7, 2019
Note. The corresponding logic model is available upon request.

Needs Assessment Results

Results from the needs assessment indicated staff were interested in improving the TIP orientation week process. Although results from the current TIP orientation week survey were typically positive, PL Department staff strive to continuously innovate so new teachers are prepared when entering classrooms. Follow-up in the upcoming year with respondents who responded less positively to the survey is recommended. DRE will continue to provide TIP support and modify the survey so a limited number of respondents are identified to be contacted with follow-up questions to understand what may improve the TIP orientation week PL activities from a novice teacher's perspective.

PL Department staff also indicated interest in evaluating the Novice Teacher Mentoring Program's implementation process. Currently, mentors are assigned annually by campus principals, while PL Department staff provide PL for mentors as well as topics for each mentoring session. Recommendations include reviewing and refining the survey given to novice teachers and examining characteristics of the selected mentors. DRE staff will work with PL staff to update the current survey used to monitor process and performance outputs. DRE staff will also examine how mentor characteristics (e.g., years of experience on campus, PPfT appraisal) were distributed and their relation with performance outputs.

Instructional Coaching Support

Description

The instructional coaching support, primarily provided through the Coaching Connections PL series, was created to strengthen support for instructional coaches. Coaching Connections were PL sessions facilitated by the members of the PL team that allowed AISD staff to learn and practice skills relevant to their role, ensuring teachers had opportunities to consult with high-quality coaches. Representatives from Academics as well as experienced instructional coaches provided sessions as part of Coaching Connections. These PL activities were available to instructional coaches, specialists, campus administrators, and others who support teachers in a coaching fashion. The instructional coaching support ToC is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3.
The Instructional Coaching Support Theory of Change

Source. AISD Professional Learning Department theory of change, revised July 7, 2019
Note. The corresponding logic model is available upon request.

Needs Assessment Results

The instructional coaching support was created to fill a gap identified in the available support for staff who provide coaching to teachers. Conversations with the PL staff indicated the support was well received by attendees, and attendees would like more time to strengthen their coaching skills. The PL team also planned to market PL opportunities during the TIP orientation week in the upcoming year to target new coaches in the district. As instructional coaching support was a relatively new support, recommendations include monitoring the implementation process (e.g., number of sessions offered, number of staff attended, reception of the PL sessions, and progress toward the goal) for programmatic decision making in the future (e.g., increasing number of PL activities offered, when to offer PL activities).
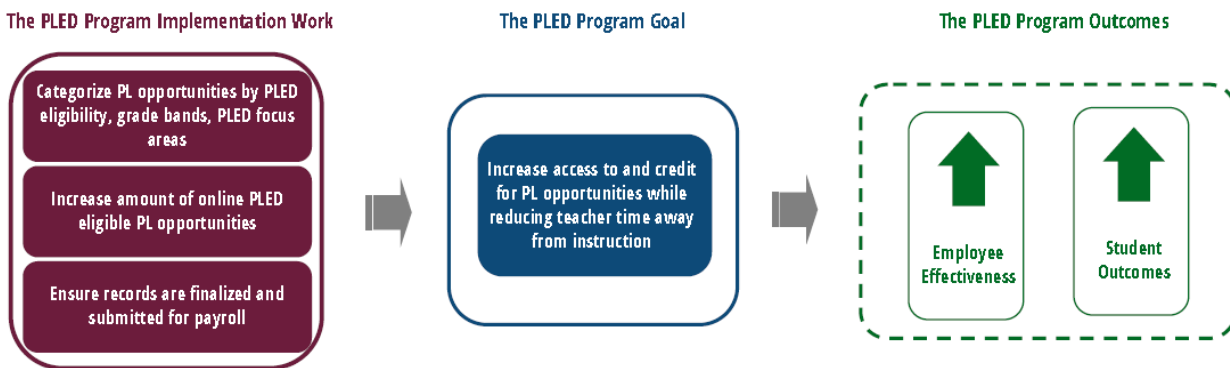
Professional Learning Exchange Days (PLED) Program

Description

The PLED Program provided exempt, campus-based professional staff members with the opportunity to exchange 2 regular duty days for 2 non-duty days of PL activities. PLED allowed eligible staff to be honored for time (up to 12 continuing professional education [CPE], 2 duty days) spent on PL activities outside duty hours. The PLED Program was designed to (a) offer individual and campus empowerment and flexibility around PL activities, (b) sharpen the focus of PL activities around district initiatives and priorities, (c) encourage a variety of forms and structures for PL activities, and (d) increase access

to PL activities while reducing teacher time away from instruction and substitute costs. The PLED Program ToC is shown in Figure 4.

The Professional Learning Exchange Days Program Theory of Change

Source. AISD Professional Learning Department theory of change, revised July 7, 2019
Note. The corresponding logic model is available upon request.

Needs Assessment Results

The 2018–2019 academic year was the first year of the PLED Program. Because it was a new program, PL staff proactively addressed or developed a plan to address issues identified in 2018–2019. Overall, PL staff expressed interest in improving the PL documentation system and gathering feedback on stakeholders' experience with the PLED process. Addressing these concerns might ensure the PLED process is not overly cumbersome for stakeholders to complete, the program is operating as designed, and the program is attaining its goal for all eligible staff. Recommendations for future PLED Program evaluation include collecting feedback (e.g., challenges in getting PL activities approved, documenting PL activities, why staff did not use PL hours, approval of the program), aligned with stakeholder interest that can be used to inform changes in the PLED implementation process.

National Board Certification (NBC) Program

Description

NBC is offered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) organization. The certification process is a rigorous professional development activity available to teachers, counselors, and librarians that involves intensive self-reflection of their teaching practices against national established standards. AISD funds a new cohort of 30 candidates into the NBC Program annually.

AISD and the members of the PL team supported current candidates by continuously refining the curriculum used to guide monthly meetings intended to build capacity of five criteria scored by the NBPTS, providing funds for the majority of the certification fee, and providing a network of NBC mentors for candidates over the course of 2 academic years. Support also was provided to assist with recertification for AISD staff. National Board (NB) certified staff receive an annual stipend for the duration of their certification. The NBC Program ToC is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5.
The National Board Certification Program Theory of Change
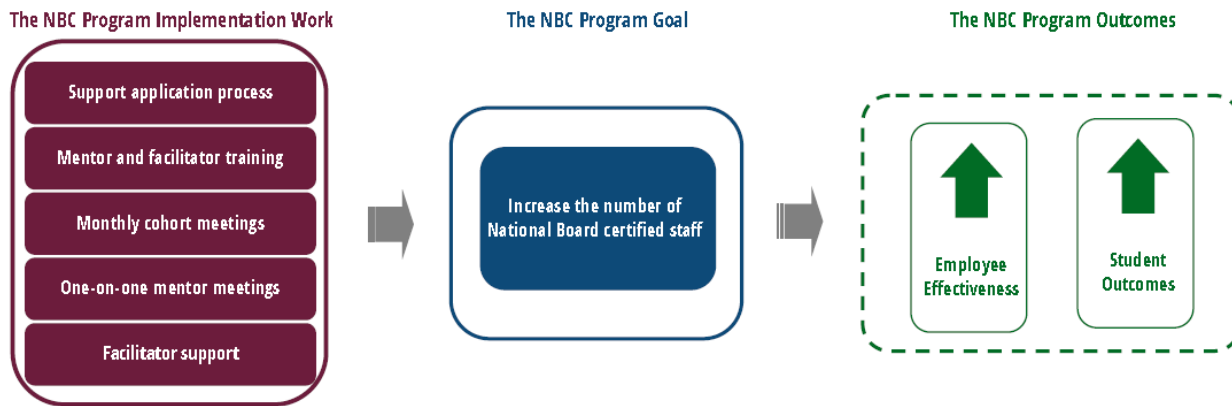
Source. AISD Professional Learning Department theory of change, revised July 7, 2019
Note. The corresponding logic model is available upon request.

Needs Assessment Results

The PL staff indicated challenges in recruiting NBC staff to be facilitators and mentors for the new cohort of NBC candidates and gaining district-wide campus administrator support for the program. This may have an impact on efficient execution of the implementation work. Additionally, although AISD has offered funding and PL activities for NBC for many years, program outcomes have not been examined. The recommendation for NBC Program evaluation includes a study to determine the impact of the NBC Program on staff effectiveness and student outcomes. Determining positive impact may alleviate challenges indicated by PL staff and demonstrate the value of certification. One caveat is the NBPTS recently revised the standards for certification, which may make it challenging to measure the longitudinal impact of the newly revised program. However, as a national certification, it may be assumed that staff are equally qualified when certified under revised guidelines.
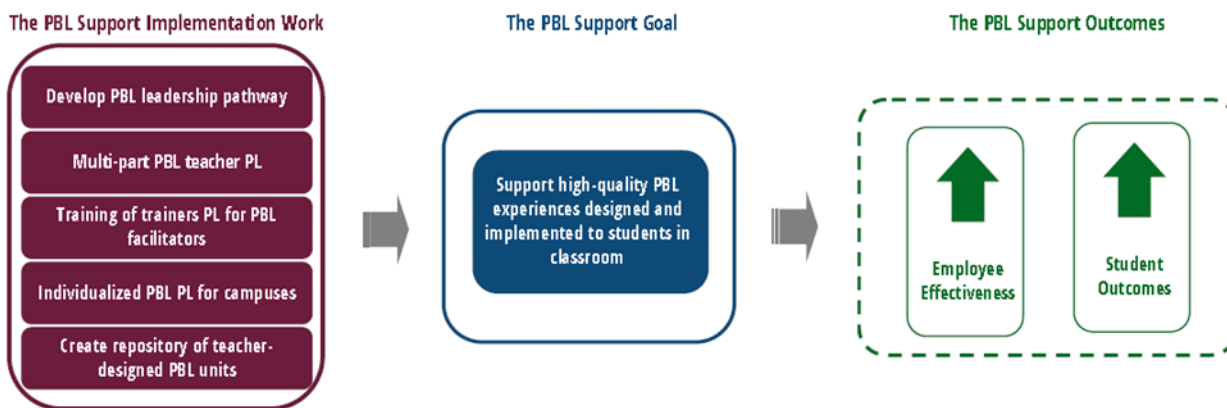
Additionally, the PL staff indicated challenges in recruiting candidates at high-needs campuses and ensuring NB certified staff are employed at high-need campuses. The PL Department aims for representation of NBC across the district and attempts to ensure a NB certified staff member is employed at each AISD campus. However, recruitment at high-need campuses is difficult due to the stressful and demanding environment of high-need campuses. The PL staff suggested NBC staff transfers from high-need campuses may also be common. It is recommended that future program evaluation examine campus transfers and resignation rates of current NBC staff, with a focus on NBC staff at high-need campuses.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Support

Description

Designated PL team members developed and offered a number of PBL PL opportunities to ensure teachers were able to provide high-quality PBL experiences for students. The PL opportunities focused on developing capacity in multiple areas related to providing PBL activities. Additionally, the PL team is co-leading a 2-year leadership pathway opportunity offered through PPfT. The PPfT PBL leadership pathway develops teachers' expertise in PBL that allows them to be recognized as subject leaders on their campus and throughout the district. The PBL PL ToC is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6.
The Problem-Based Learning Support Theory of Change

The PBL Support Implementation Work
- Develop PBL leadership pathway
- Multi-part PBL teacher PL
- Training of trainers PL for PBL facilitators
- Individualized PBL PL for campuses
- Create repository of teacher-designed PBL units

The PBL Support Goal
- Support high-quality PBL experiences designed and implemented to students in classroom

The PBL Support Outcomes
- Employee Effectiveness
- Student Outcomes

Source. AISD Professional Learning Department theory of change, revised July 7, 2019
Note. The corresponding logic model is available upon request.

Needs Assessment Results

The development of the logic model for PBL support showed the majority of the work was already being assessed. The PL team had a system to monitor implementation (e.g., number of PL activities facilitated, number of staff trained) and a PL feedback survey. Additionally, the PL staff provided a rubric to trained staff for assessing whether PBL experiences that were implemented were high quality.

However, the needs assessment for the PBL support revealed a need for focusing on monitoring the PBL leadership pathway, as this is a new PL opportunity. It is recommended that monitoring include tracking facilitation challenges, refining content based on attendee reception of the material, and gathering perceptions of the PL opportunities at various points across the 2-year commitment.

Digital Professional Learning Support

Description

The PL team provided resources, structures, and support related to the development and delivery of digital learning to strengthen the capacity of AISD staff to develop high-quality digital learning opportunities. In addition, the PL team designed and delivered digital learning opportunities. These PL opportunities varied greatly to ensure AISD staff have access to PL activities in a convenient format, particularly in an online or

blended environment. The digital professional learning support ToC is shown in Figure 7.

The Digital Professional Learning Support Theory of Change
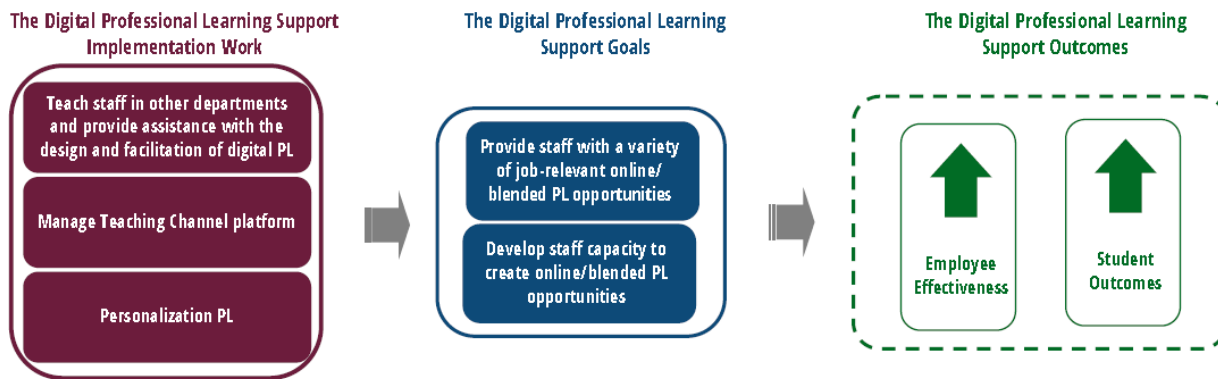
The Digital Professional Learning Support Implementation Work

- Teach staff in other departments and provide assistance with the design and facilitation of digital PL
- Manage Teaching Channel platform
- Personalization PL

The Digital Professional Learning Support Goals

- Provide staff with a variety of job-relevant online/blended PL opportunities
- Develop staff capacity to create online/blended PL opportunities

The Digital Professional Learning Support Outcomes

- Employee Effectiveness
- Student Outcomes

Source. AISD Professional Learning Department theory of change, revised July 7, 2019
Note. The corresponding logic model is available upon request.
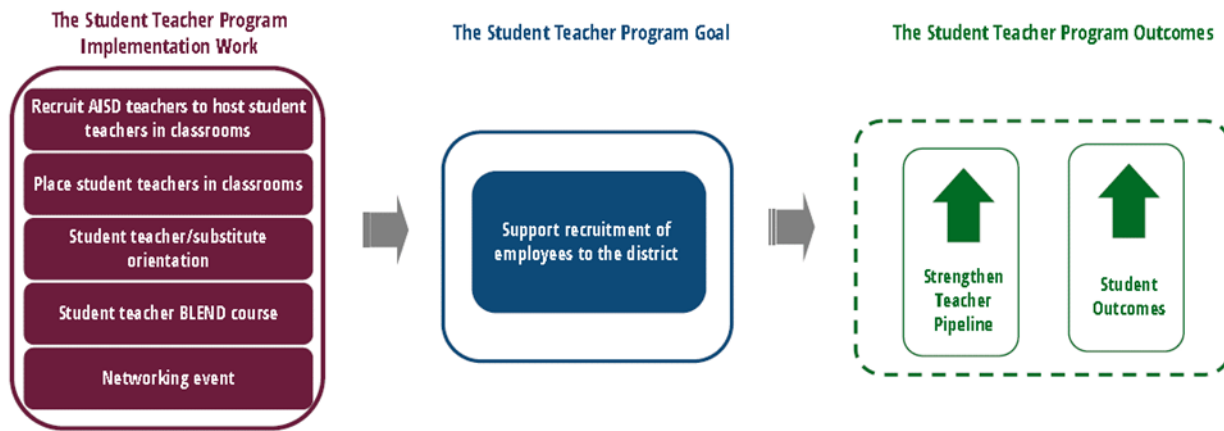
Needs Assessment Results

The PL Department indicated building relationships is an important aspect of their role. Building relationships and working closely with other departments in the district ensures PL activities are designed according to best practices for adult learning. The results of the needs assessment indicate a need to focus on monitoring the digital professional learning implementation work related to teaching staff in other departments and providing assistance with the design and facilitation of digital PL activities. Monitoring this will identify how well the PL Department is connecting with other departments to ensure high-quality online PL activities are designed, as well as with which departments PL staff should attempt to build relationships.

Student Teacher Program
Description

In partnership with universities, colleges, alternative certification programs, and other teacher preparation programs, the Student Teacher Program offered placement for student teachers in classrooms across the district. For cooperating teachers, it provided an opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise in the area of teaching and instruction, while developing their mentoring capacity. Student teachers had an opportunity to gain valuable experience working in an urban school district and were encouraged to make connections with AISD personnel to increase chances of employment in the district upon completing their program. The Student Teacher Program is considered a pipeline for recruiting effective employees into the district, as former AISD student teachers have previous knowledge of and experience working with AISD and our systems. The Student Teacher Program ToC is shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8.
The Student Teacher Program Theory of Change

Needs Assessment Results

The PL staff indicated interest in gathering more information about student teachers and cooperating teachers and improving the student teacher recruitment pipeline. The PL staff would like to gather feedback from cooperating teachers and student teachers regarding their experience when hosting or being hosted in a classroom. Additionally, PL staff indicated a low recruitment rate of former student teachers immediately after being hosted in a classroom; PL staff suggested campus administrators' tendency to hire teachers later than did a neighboring district may be a potential reason for the low recruitment rate. However, PL staff also indicated AISD lacked a process to recruit the former student teachers into the district. It is recommended that PL staff work with Talent Acquisition to begin to develop a process to recruit student teachers into the district (e.g., outreach to former AISD student teachers, indications an applicant participated in the AISD Student Teacher Program, hiring fairs for student teachers).

It is recommended that additional program evaluation be conducted on the Student Teacher Program. A survey should be conducted to gather feedback on cooperating teachers and student teachers, as well as gathering contact information from student teachers for targeted recruitment opportunities. A study is recommended to examine which partnering organizations that provided candidates for the Student Teacher Program benefited AISD the most to improve the student teacher recruitment pipeline (e.g., cooperating teachers recommended student teachers be hired by the district, candidates were interested in working with the district, student teachers applied and were hired).

Cross-Department Collaboration

Description

The PL Department collaborated with numerous departments, in various scope, to provide expertise for designing, facilitating, and/or supporting highly-engaged adult and student learning. For example, some projects the staff provided support for include African American Achievement Plan (AAAP), Professional Pathways for Teachers' (PPfT) Leadership Pathways, curriculum and instruction, and special

education. Only the support for the cross-department collaboration for the AAAP was examined in greater detail in the evaluation.
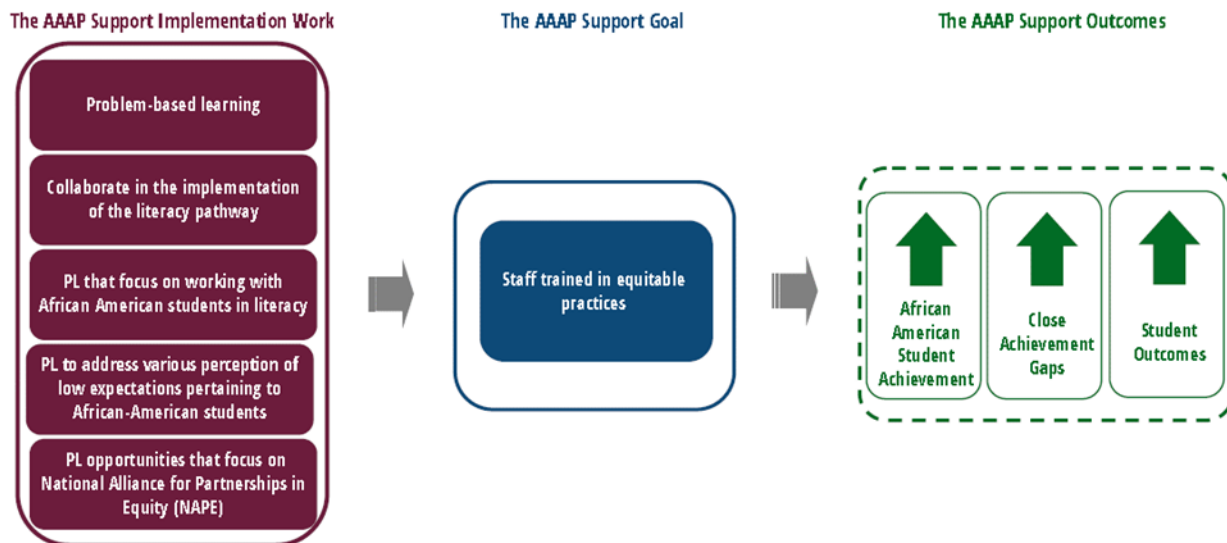
Needs Assessment Results

Similar to the recommendation for the digital professional learning support, it is suggested the PL Department focus on monitoring which departments they have collaborated with. Monitoring this will identify how well the PL Department is connecting with other departments to ensure high-quality PL activities are designed, as well as with which departments PL staff should attempt to build relationships.

Description: AAAP Support

In 2018–2019, the PL Department supported the AAAP by designing and facilitating various PL opportunities targeted on increasing African American students' achievement. The work included providing PL opportunities focused on strategies to improve the academic achievement of African American students, as well as addressing low teacher expectations of African American students. Much of the work related to the AAAP was incorporated into other areas of support provided by the PL Department. The cross-department support for the AAAP ToC is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9.
Support for the African American Achievement Plan Theory of Change

Source. AISD Professional Learning Department theory of change, revised July 7, 2019
Note. The corresponding logic model is available upon request.

Needs Assessment Results: AAAP Support

The majority of work relevant to support of the AAAP provided by the PL Department is embedded into other work of the department or other departments in the district. For example, the PL Department provided opportunities that focused on National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) by providing an online course in BLEND that included components related to NAPE topics (e.g., equity, micromessages) in the Teacher Induction Program Novice Teacher Mentoring Program. Since much of the work was being monitored by other departments or other support offered by the PL Department, DRE staff does not currently have recommendations for the support of the AAAP.

Summary and Recommendations

Summary of Evaluation Findings

Because 2018–2019 was the first year of PL Department evaluation, the program evaluation work was focused on studying the work of the PL Department. Specifically, the evaluation focused on understanding the various services offered by the PL Department. The development of ToCs and logic model described measurable indicators of implementation, outputs, and outcomes. The needs assessment identified gaps in current and desired levels of implementation, outputs, and outcomes.

Along with consultation services for district staff to provide assistance in designing and/or facilitating PL activities upon request, the work of the PL Department was conceptually organized into eight primary areas of support. The goal of the PL Department was to empower employees and build their capacity to design, facilitate, and support highly engaged adult and student learning. The services offered by the PL Department were further distinguished as supporting either adult learning (e.g., teaching program managers to design highly engaged PL activities, trainer of trainers PL activities) or student learning (e.g., PL activities for staff that will have a direct impact on teachers' instruction). To assess attainment of the goal, it was conceptualized that the PL activities offered should be aligned, be accessible, and build teacher and/or facilitator capacity. Finally, the outcome of the PL Department was to increase employee effectiveness, which was expected to increase staff retention and student outcomes.

Recommendations

The high-level goal of the AISD PL evaluation was to understand if the department was performing as intended. However, this broad question should be collectively addressed over time by focusing on more specific questions tied to the AISD PL Department's implementation work, work outputs, and overall impact; that is:

- Is AISD's PL Department operating as designed or intended?
- Is AISD's PL Department producing what was intended?
- Is AISD's PL Department achieving the desired long-term change or impact?

Each of these three questions will examine a different type of evidence, and each will take priority in our support work at different points over time.

Development of a long-term evaluation design was not part of the 2018–2019 evaluation plan. However, a few logistical features should be taken into consideration for evaluation design in the future. The PL Department offers numerous services, and those services differ greatly in when it was first implemented, whether services are to support adult or student learning, and scale. For example, mentoring under TIP is a district-wide program offered for many years and required for all novice teachers employed by the district. The PLED Program was a relatively new, so its evaluation could focus on understanding implementation challenges, whereas the NBC Program has been operating for many years, so evaluation of program outcomes would be appropriate. Future work will consider these factors when developing long-term evaluation designs and how it reflects the department's interests.

A needs assessment and analysis was conducted for each work flow of the PL Department. Interviews with the PL Department staff revealed great interest in

evaluative work related to TIP, the NBC Program, and the Student Teacher Program for the upcoming academic year. Future evaluative work will tentatively include:

- Continuing to provide TIP orientation week survey support. Substantial changes were made to the orientation week PL activities for the 2019–2020 academic year. Some topics of interest include examining whether the changes to TIP orientation week help differentiate the PL activities for teachers of various experience levels and provide voice and choice for teachers to control their learning. DRE will work with PL staff to update surveys to ensure data are collected that reflect these topics.
- Providing evaluation support for the Novice Teacher Mentoring program implementation. DRE will work with PL staff to refine the Novice Teacher Mentoring Survey. DRE will also analyze mentor characteristics and survey results.
- Examining the impact of NBC on outcomes (i.e., employee effectiveness and student outcomes). The study will analyze outcomes such as staff's appraisal data, level of self-efficacy, and student State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) achievement. Additionally, the study will examine outcomes by factors such as certification content area, campus level, and campus status (e.g., Title I status).
- Examining campus transfer rates and attrition rates of NBC staff overall and at high-need schools.
- Providing evaluation support for the Student Teacher Program implementation. DRE will work with PL staff to design surveys for student teachers and cooperating teachers that gather feedback regarding the student-teaching experience and gauge future plans to formally work with the district.
- Examining the recruitment rates of former student teachers from partnering organizations (e.g., percentage of student teachers applied or hired from each partnering organization).

Appendix A

Implementation work	Goal	Instruments/sources	Measure(s) of goal
Professional Learning Department	Empower employees and build their capacity to design, facilitate, and support highly engaged adult and student learning (aligned PL opportunities, accessible PL opportunities, teacher capacity, facilitator capacity)	- TELL Survey - Customer Service Survey - PPfT appraisal - Non-teaching professional (NTP) appraisal - District records	- Average TELL Survey subset rating - Average Customer Service Survey subset rating - Average PPfT appraisal subset rating - Average NTP appraisal subset rating - # of PL opportunities offered, during duty and non-duty hours - # of ad hoc PL opportunities implemented - # of PL sub requests approved
Teacher Induction Program	Retain new teachers Support high-quality classroom instruction	- Staff records - TELL Survey	- New teacher retention rate - Average TELL Survey subset rating
Instructional Coaching Support	Support high-quality coaching	- TELL Survey	- Average TELL Survey subset rating
Professional Learning Exchange Days Program	Increase access to and credit for PL opportunities while reducing teacher time away from instruction	- District records - TELL Survey	- # of PL sub requests - Average TELL Survey subset rating
National Board Certification Program	Increase the number of National Board certified staff	- Staff records	- # of teachers certified/recertified
Problem-Based Learning Support	Support high-quality PBL experiences designed and implemented to students in classroom	- Student records	- Student PBL scores
Digital Professional Learning Support	Provide staff with a variety of job-relevant online/blended PL opportunities Develop staff capacity to create online/blended PL opportunities	- TELL Survey	- Average TELL Survey subset rating
Student Teacher Program	Support recruitment of employees to the district	- District records	- # and % of student teachers who apply and are hired

Appendix B

Outcomes	Instruments/sources	Measures
Employee effectiveness	- PPfT appraisal - Librarian appraisal - Counselor appraisal - Non-teaching professional appraisal - Classified staff appraisal	- Average staff appraisal rating - % new teacher with PPfT rating of 3 or higher - Average appraisal subset ratings of coaches that attended instructional coaching support Coaching Connection versus those who did not attend PL activities - Average appraisal rating of National Board certified staff versus similar non-National Board certified staff - % former student teacher hired with PPfT rating of 3 or higher - Former student teacher hired PPfT appraisal rating versus similar teacher appraisal rating
Staff retention	- Staff records	- Staff retention rate - Retention rate of new teachers
	- TELL Survey	- Which best describes your immediate professional plans? - continue teaching at my current school
Student outcomes	- State and district assessment - Student records	- Average STAAR achievement scores - Average STAAR scores of students enrolled in course instructed by National Board certified teacher versus similar students enrolled in course instructed by teacher who is not certified - Average PBL score

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