

WESTSYDE SECONDARY

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SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN



STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE, COMMITTED TO WESTSYDE

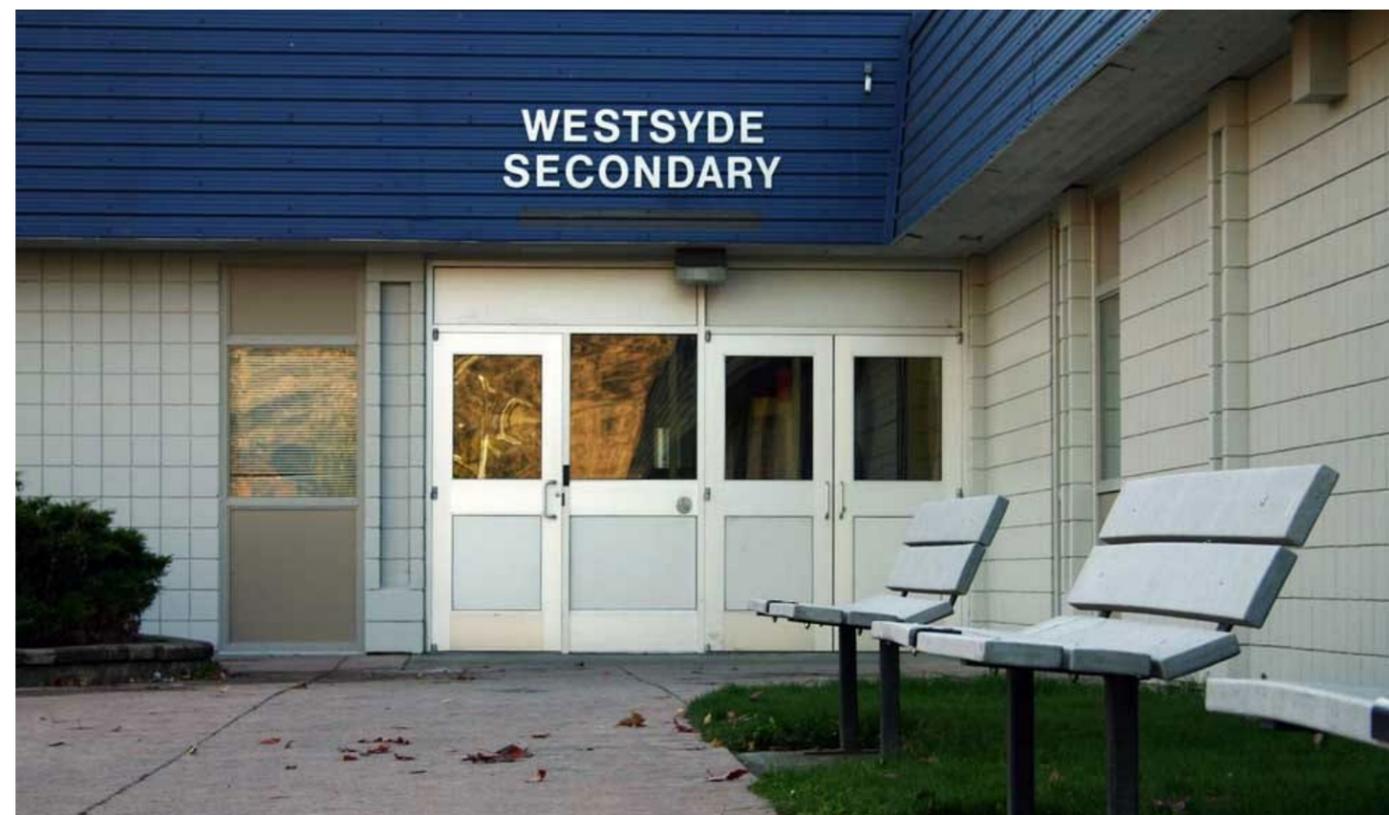


OUR CONTEXT

WESTSYDE Secondary School is the smallest of the in-town high schools in the Kamloops-Thompson School District. We have approximately 670 students, 90 of whom identify as having an Aboriginal heritage. There are 37 teaching staff, 9 CEAs, 6 custodians, three clerical, two counsellors and two administrators. For several years we have been working in a few areas which include our relationship with our elementary feeder schools in order to develop a stronger K-12 philosophy of education, as well as developing our collective understanding of how technology can transform teaching and learning. We have invested in our collaborative learning environments and our collegial relationships through constant and focused collaborative work time in our Wednesday connections blocks.

Our school is a true community school. We are unique in the fact that we are an urban high school but with distinct geographical isolation which leads to a strong sense of community. Most of our staff either live in Westsyde or graduated from here. We have a strong and thriving sports focus. Our football, basketball, and rugby teams are high performing. Our sport based electives are very popular and well attended.

Creating choice with small cohort sizes has meant that greater flexibility and creativity in course offerings is required. Increased multi-graded elective offerings as well as increasing access to senior academic offerings has been a priority. Increasing the number of students choosing more academically challenging paths to graduation has also become a focus. Staff have embraced the new curricular opportunities available through the redesigned curriculum thereby creating more choice for students where limited choice existed previously.



SCHOOL GOALS

GOAL ONE



To increase student commitment and connection to their learning through student voice and choice.

GOAL TWO

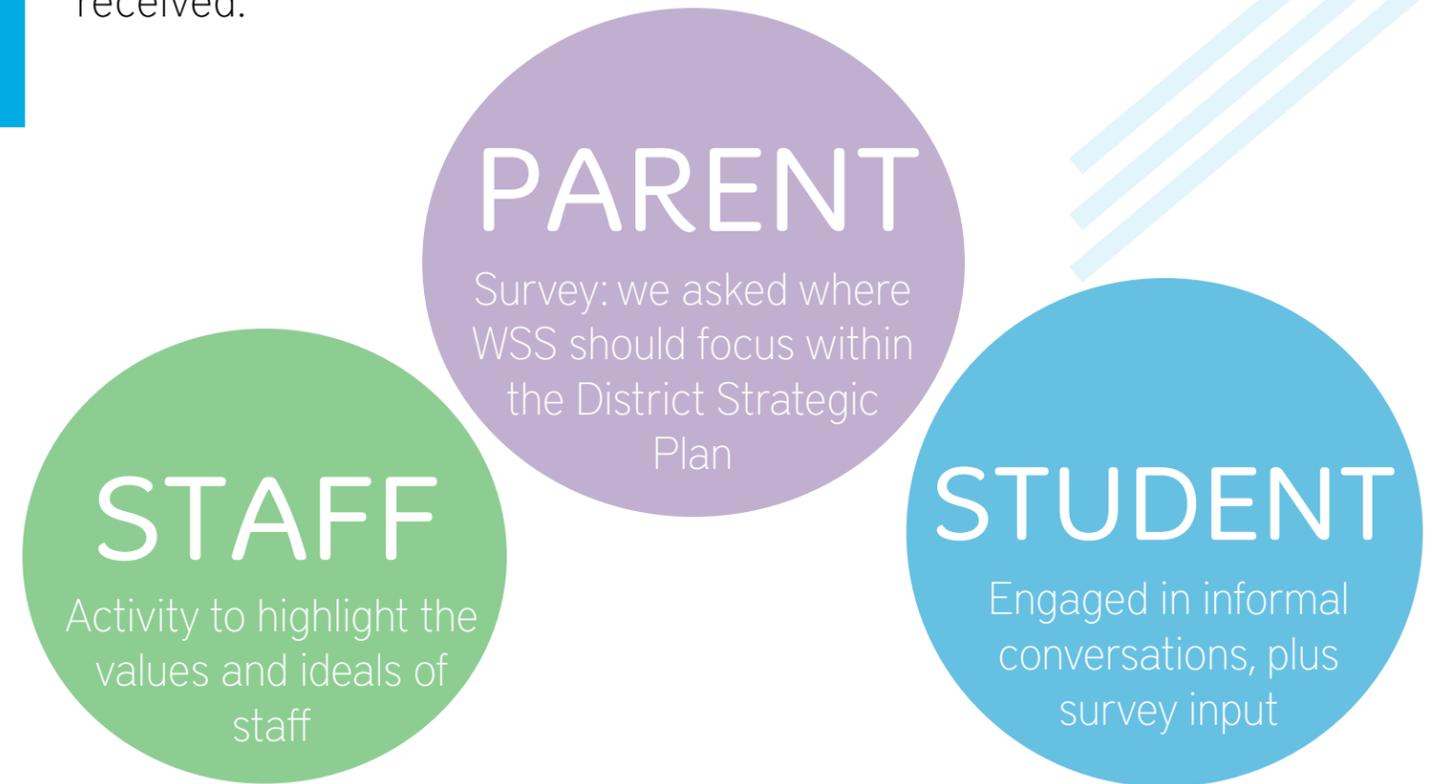


To improve critical and creative thinking skills in students through personal goal setting and meaningful and ongoing self-evaluation.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

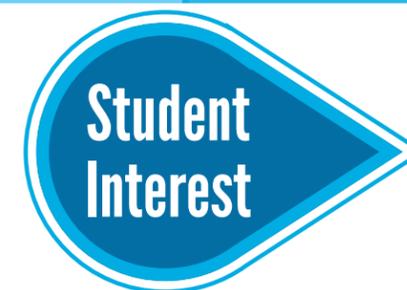
In the 2016-17 school year, we began to engage with our community over the direction we should be taking. Here are a few of the processes we followed, along with the results of the input we received.



The Result:



Staff indicated that we had a problem with some student behaviours which stem from a need for a culture of respect. These include: attendance, due dates, lack of motivation, etc.



All stakeholders placed a high degree of value on having students become able to develop their own interests and follow their own passions.



Parents chose clearly to have their children's education focus on skills needed for success in life such as financial literacy and career planning.

GOAL ONE: STUDENT COMMITMENT

To increase student commitment and connection to learning through student voice and choice.

District Strategic Plan Alignment

Our school goals align to the District Strategic Plan's priorities as follows:

priority 2:

This goal is based from a combination of staff's desire to want to foster a culture of respect and all stakeholders' desire to pursue student interests and passions (which is priority two of the district strategic plan).

priority 4:

This goal also speaks to developing a school culture of collaboration, inclusiveness and accountability. We hope that students who are made to feel safe and who are given a choice will work toward social responsibility initiatives.

No voice

No self-
efficacy

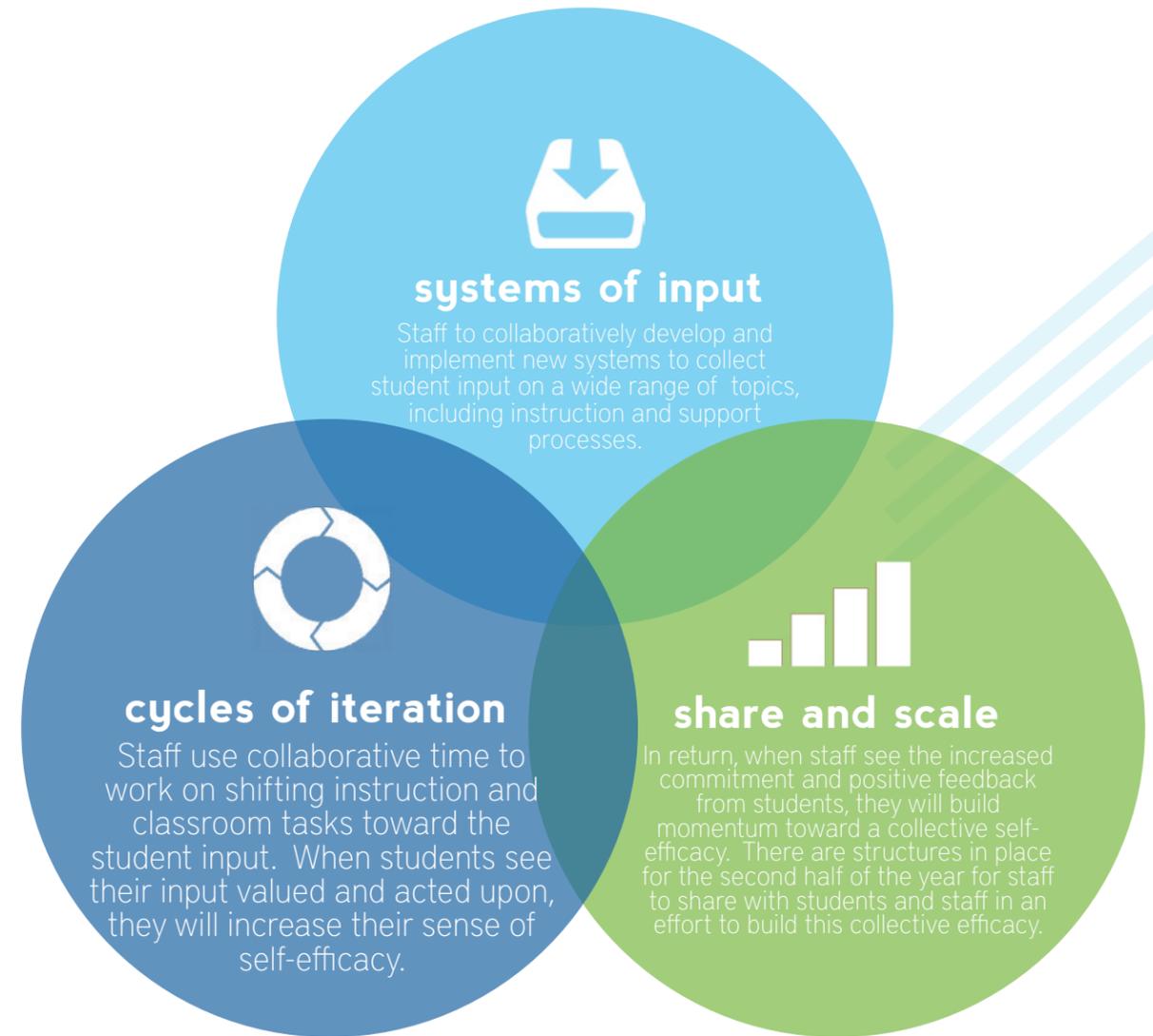
Check out

THE RATIONALE for this goal was sought through a process of root cause analysis. We tried to find an approach which was inside our control that could make a difference in how our students approached the school and their education. The theory is that if students are given more of a voice and choice in their learning, and staff work to foster trust in their working relationships (building student self-efficacy) and they will take on more ownership for their school and learning.

SPECIFIC SUPPORT FRAMEWORKS:

We will need to pay special attention here to the school's student populations who typically have less of a voice. These groups include students with special needs, ministry designations, behaviour problems, and cultural minorities. We will need to create structures that allow the voice of all students to be heard in a safe and equitable manner.

Strategies & Initiatives



DATA & PROGRESS

AMONG the data collected: a discipline referral count, the number of late assignments, the failure rates, and how many projects and assemblies are student led. As this goal is new to us, we will collect data after the end of the 2016-17 school year in order to establish a baseline.

Data Collected	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Office conduct reports	162	167	-
Lates (%)	2.36%	2.44%	-
Failure rate (%)	2.8%	-	-
Attendance rate (%)	90.7%	89.6%	-
Number of clubs	2	1	-
Student led initiatives	2	1	-
Student Learning Survey	see appendix		
Informal student surveys	n/a	n/a	-
AI referrals	289	158	-

GOAL TWO: THINKING COMPETENCY

To improve critical and creative thinking skills in students through personal goal setting and meaningful and ongoing self-evaluation.

District Strategic Plan Alignment

Our school goals align to the District Strategic Plan's priorities as follows:

priority 1:

This goal was inspired by the feedback from the parents who wanted us to focus deeply on the fundamentals skills to succeed. The goal focuses on the thinking competency of the new curriculum.

priority 2:

This goal also speaks to student interests and passions. The specific goals set are determined by students, for students, and allows for a high degree of differentiation.

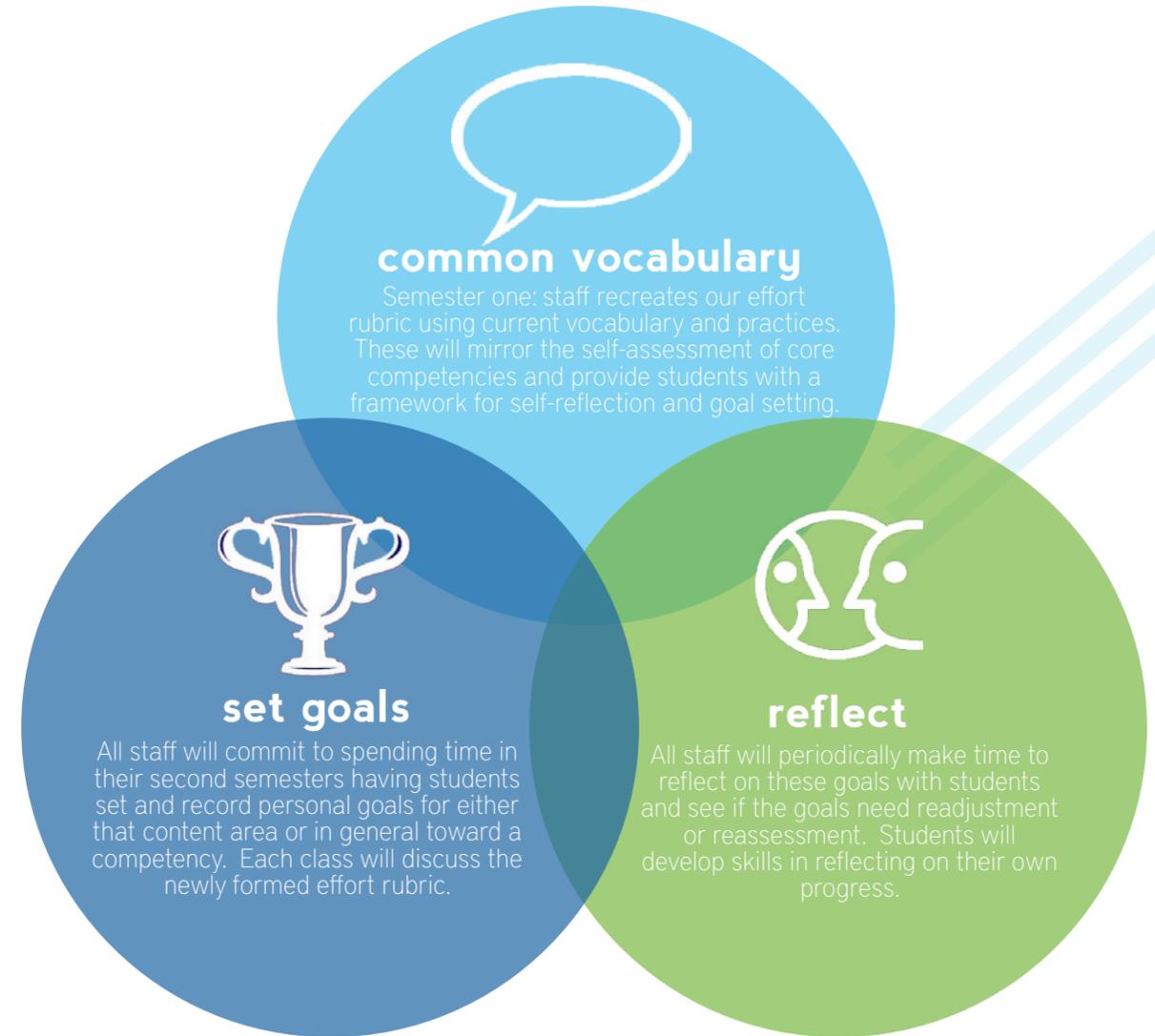


THE RATIONALE for this goal is that meta-cognition and reflective learning practices help to develop maturity, resilience and competency in thinking. After analysing our parent feedback we noted a theme that emerged: parents want their students to grow into successful adults by having their education equip them with the skills to do so. Apart from the content-rich classes we already teach, staff felt that the tool best used to grow students in workforce readiness was to focus in on some of the core competencies outlined by the BC Ministry of Education. By encouraging students to develop a practice of goal setting and self-evaluation, we would give them a tool that works across curriculum to develop these skills in students. We predict that having students frequently self-evaluate in a meaningful way will allow them to become more effective thinkers and more involved in setting their own path.

SPECIFIC SUPPORT FRAMEWORKS:

Students of lower cognitive ability, or students who are disengaged, will need extra support in the development and statement of their goals. These students will be supported in their goal setting and self-evaluation by the school wide supports that already exist and work effectively.

Strategies & Initiatives



DATA AND PROGRESS

THE data collected will include achievement data from the literacy and numeracy exams, in-class achievement data, data collected from the quality of student goals, core competency self-assessments, and collected assessments using the new effort rubric. As this goal is new to us, we will collect data after the end of the 2016-17 school year in order to establish a baseline.

Data Collected	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Literacy Exam	n/a	n/a	-
Numeracy Exam	n/a	n/a	-
Percent A, B, C+	70.5%	78.8%	-
Quality of student goals	rubric to be constructed		
Core Competency S/As	on file	-	-
Effort Rubric baselines			
G	65.2%	64.2%	-
S	24.8%	25.1%	-
N	9.9%	10.8%	-

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PLAN

a practical roadmap

WESTSYDE'S DESIRE is for focused and sustained professional development. Throughout this goal setting process, we as a staff set our targets on achievable, time-driven, high-leverage tasks that had multiple entry points and layers of effect. We stayed focused on this motto: stick with something and see it through. What you see presented here is a timeline that integrates both goal one and two, as well as a development system to incorporate instructional rounds as a data collection tool and a source for advice to drive us forward.



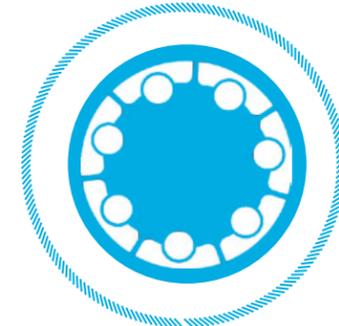
INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS

Over the course of the school year we will provide professional learning opportunities that guide staff toward understanding what instructional rounds are and how they can be used to drive our practice. In this process, a group of educators from a variety of backgrounds and locations come to the school to observe classrooms in non-judgemental ways to help provide specific feedback to help the school with a targeted "problem of practice." Our plan is to gather this input in April after much of our work is in place.



SYSTEMS OF INPUT

Creating a new culture sometimes starts with a development of new structures and systems. When early adopters start innovating ways we can collect and respond to student voice and feedback, the groundwork will be laid for those more skeptical educators. Lots of iteration and innovation must be present here, and we will be adopting an innovative model based on Simon Breakspear's "design sprints" along the way.



CONNECTIONS

This time will be invaluable to our goals and their progress. This time will be used to both develop tools and monitor their use, as well as track data and share successes and failures. Staff are starting to report excitement in the fact that these goals will re-invigorate our work in our collaborative groups and provide a new sense of purpose as we develop collective efficacy.



SUSTAINABLE CULTURE

Communication, collaboration, and co-creation are central to our plan. We want every step of the process to be something that engages staff in the work because they believe that it can and will make a difference. When we start to see the results of the changes, we hope that the momentum becomes self-sustaining. This will only be possible through careful iteration and a large amount of persistence.

EFFORT RUBRIC

We start our journey by developing common language and vocabulary about effort and competency. This work is foundational to having students write effective goals later on.

SYSTEMS OF INPUT

Using our common collaborative time, departments start having conversations about how to collect student input and make use of it to guide our instructional practices.

DEFINE PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

Work begins on preparing our school for instructional rounds to collect data on our goals. Using the defined vocabulary from our work thus far, we start framing a "problem of practice" in regards to the difficulties we have experienced in our work to this date. The preparation of this is ongoing after this time.

GOAL SETTING

At the start of semester two, staff will be ready to launch our school-wide goal setting structure. Each student frames a goal for each class, and these are reflected upon periodically.

SHARE FEEDBACK

Throughout the year, connections time will give opportunities for departments and other teacher clusters to present their progress to the whole group. Successes and frustrations around changes to student input will be shared in an effort to grow the culture.

INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS

The preparations will be complete for outside experts to give us advice and data to drive us forward. Our POP will have been collaboratively developed over the school year and the information collected from these rounds will let us know if we are on the right track. The suggestions from the rounds will also guide the next yearly cycle of our learning plan.

REFLECT AND DEBRIEF

We refocus, reflect, and post-mortem our year's progress. We share in successes, and make changes to our focus as needed, perhaps implementing more tools or pulling back on others.

September

November

January

February

April

June