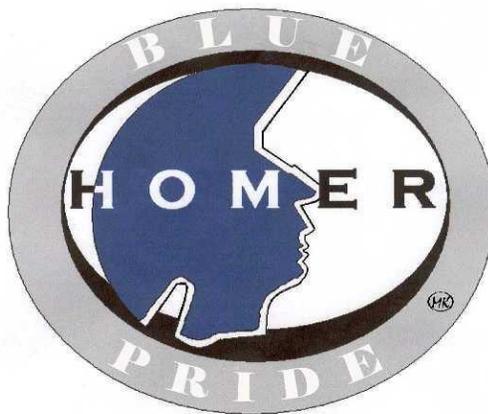


Professional Learning Plan 2021-2024



Homer Central School District

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Homer Central School District Professional Learning Plan 2021-2024

Homer Central School District Mission

The Homer Central School District is committed to excellence for all students. Our mission is to graduate responsible and productive citizens who embrace life-long learning. We work together as a team of dedicated, effective, and well-supported professionals to provide a safe and nurturing learning environment.

Vision

PRIDE--Partnerships, Respect, Integrity, Diversity and Excellence--is the foundation for the Homer Central School district.

Partnerships promote collaboration among students, staff, families and the community to support student learning.

Respect grows through mutual kindness, compassion for others, and the development of strong moral character in a student-centered environment.

Integrity guides our actions so that they are honest and open and fair.

Diversity enriches our opportunities to create multiple pathways for learning and to foster independent intellectual growth.

Excellence, through rigorous learning experiences, empowers students to become critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, and responsible citizens.

Beliefs

Staff and community members will work together to foster the needs and strengths of all students.

- It is important to streamline priorities and initiatives to best meet our goals.
- We believe that developing a positive relationship between home, school, and community is critical to students' success.
- All students are unique and capable of meeting high expectations, which

- enables high achievement.
- Providing support for the social and emotional health of staff and students is critical for a successful learning environment.
 - We believe it is the collective responsibility of all staff members to meet the needs of all students.
 - We value feedback from parents, staff and students to enhance an open mutual communication.
 - We embrace communication and collaborative decision making to foster a stronger school community.

Needs Analysis

The District uses a variety of data sources to make its decisions about professional learning. These include: benchmark and common formative assessment data and state assessment data, staff surveys, New York State Learning Standards, and the NYS accountability under ESSA. We are a target District and conduct a needs assessment in our schools through the school improvement process of NYSED.

The long-term professional learning objectives for the District are based on the three focus areas of the Homer Central School District Strategic Plan 2019-2024:

- Student Engagement
- Social Emotional Learning
- Community Engagement

The District Strategic Plan has outlined measurable 5-year goals in each of the areas identified above.

Short-term decisions about professional learning needs are collected from the District staff through surveys conducted during each staff development day. After each staff development day the Professional Staff Development Committee (PSDC) reviews the feedback and subsequently plans short-term professional learning opportunities for the staff.

Professional Learning and the Homer Community

The Homer Central School District is located in Cortland County and covers 162 square miles primarily serving the townships of Cortlandville, Cuyler, Groton, Homer, Preble, Scott, Sempronius, Solon, Spafford, Summerhill, Truxton, and Tully. The district's facilities include four schools:

- Homer Elementary
- Homer Intermediate
- Homer Junior High
- Homer High School

In 2020-2021, the total enrollment for the district was 1,830. Like other Upstate New York school districts, enrollment has been decreasing and is expected to continue to decrease.

Student Body Demographics (based on 2018-2019 school year):

- 1% Black or African American
- 2% Hispanic or Latino
- 1% Asian/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 3% Multiracial
- 94% White
- 1% English Language Learners
- 11% Students with a Disability
- 44% Economically Disadvantaged

While the majority of our students are white and speak English as their heritage language, there is a great deal of economic diversity within the community. Mental Health issues are a major struggle for some students and their families. In addition, the District has seen an increase in English Language Learners. Most recently the Homer Intermediate School was identified as a Targeted Support and Intervention (TSI) School by New York State by not meeting accountability benchmarks for the Hispanic subgroup. Under previous accountability measures there was not a Hispanic subgroup in Homer. Overall we continue to not be satisfied with our NY State test results for all students. As a result, it is very important for us to develop and deliver a guaranteed and viable curriculum and it is important that our programs and instruction be highly engaging.

In order to dramatically increase the achievement of all students, teachers must be engaged in collaborative practice and job-embedded learning. The term *Professional Learning Community* describes the culture and systematic approach to teaching and learning to which the District commits.

Homer as a Professional Learning Community

In a Professional Learning Community, teams of teachers work interdependently to ensure high levels of learning for all learners. Often referred to as a PLC, a Professional

Learning Community is not a program, a fad, or a meeting. A school or district is a Professional Learning Community. It describes a culture of a relentless focus on learning -- the learning of students and the learning of the adults. As defined by DuFour et al. (2010, p.4), a Professional Learning Community is “an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve.” A Professional Learning Community, they continue, “operate[s] under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job embedded learning for educators.” Our District and our schools are becoming Professional Learning Communities.

The research and literature has identified certain practices that have the greatest impact on learning. Through his meta analysis, Hattie (2008) identified the actions that have the greatest effect size:

- Collective teacher efficacy (1.57 effect size)
- Student monitoring of learning (1.33 effect size)
- Response to intervention (1.29 effect size)
- Feedback (1.13 effect size)
- Formative assessment (0.9 effect size)

There are certain ways that teachers work together in a Professional Learning Community. These five fundamental actions characterize the work of teacher teams in the District:

1. Educators work in Collaborative Teams and take collective responsibility for student learning rather than working in isolation.
2. Collaborative Teams implement a guaranteed and viable curriculum, unit by unit.
3. Collaborative Teams monitor student learning through an ongoing assessment process that includes frequent, team developed common formative assessments.
4. Educators use the results of common assessments to improve individual practice, build the team’s capacity to achieve its goals, and intervene and enrich on behalf of the students.
5. The school provides a systematic process for intervention and enrichment.

This work is ongoing and is becoming the culture of the District and its schools. Ongoing training and support for teachers and this work will continue to be the major focus of our professional learning. Not only do we learn how to operate this way by a combination of professional learning and coaching, but our professional practice will forever improve when we are constantly and collaboratively analyzing the effectiveness of our instructional strategies. This work occurs on Superintendent’s Conference Days, over the summer, and at monthly and weekly meetings that are embedded in the schedule.

New Staff Mentoring

Teachers and administrators of Homer Central School District provide direct support to new staff through the new teacher mentoring program. The program is designed to bring new staff to high levels of competency more quickly. It formalizes a procedure for introducing staff to the culture, expectations, curriculum, assessments, and visions of the district. These benefits lead to enhanced student performance, while recognizing the expertise of experienced teachers. The District's two-year mentoring program is fully articulated in the Homer Central School District Mentoring Plan.

Responsibilities of the Homer Central School District

To support an atmosphere for optimal educational practices where professional values are revered, and personal commitments and beliefs that all students can learn are supported, the Homer Central School District will:

- Develop a culture where sharing and modeling of excellence in teaching and learning is embraced
- Provide the time for regular meetings of the mentor and new staff member
- Encourage team teaching activities by providing resources for sharing best practices
- Provide guidance in developing annual goals for mentors and new teachers
- Provide curriculum guidelines for new staff.

New York State Professional Development Standards

The State Professional Development standards focus on ten areas and include a set of quality indicators for each standard. These indicators are critical attributes that guide the preceding plan and its primary goals.

- Designing Professional Development
- Content Knowledge and Quality Teaching
- Researched-based Professional Learning
- Collaboration
- Diverse Learning
- Student Learning Environments
- Parent, Family, and Community Engagement
- Data-driven Professional Practice
- Technology
- Evaluation

Professional Learning and NYS Certification Requirements

This chart summarizes some of the annual professional learning time expectations for faculty and staff:

Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Conference Days - 24 hours● Monthly grade-level meetings - 10 hours● Monthly faculty meetings - 10 hours● Collaborative team meetings - 50 hours● Required Online Trainings - 2.5 hours
New Faculty (in addition to expectations for teachers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● New Staff Orientation - 6 Hours● District Induction & Mentoring process - 15 hours
Teaching Assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Monthly faculty meetings - 10 hours● Required Online Trainings - 2.5 hours● Conference Days - 24 hours
Teacher Aides	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Required Online Trainings - 2.5 hours● Conference Days - 24 hours
Bus Drivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Required Online Trainings - 2.5 hours● Annual training - 25 hours
Maintenance & Custodians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Required Online Trainings - 2.5 hours● Safety training - 25 hours
Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Conference Days - 24 hours● Administrative Team Meetings - 30 hours● Summer retreat - 12 hours

The New York Education Department requires holders of professionally certified teachers and level III teaching assistants to document hours of professional development, with the objective of completing a minimum of 100 approved hours in a five-year period. In order to assist individuals and the district to verify compliance with this requirement, the district uses Frontline Professional Growth as a tool to streamline the approval and registration process for conferences, in-district trainings, and higher education coursework. Each of the district's staff development days is generally 6.5 hours. In addition to this, teachers and teaching assistants have many additional professional learning opportunities that are available to them via approved CTLES

providers such as BOCES, professional conference, the Teacher Center, and online platforms.

Working with Students For Whom English is a New Language

The District's ENL teachers work closely with the [Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network](#) (Midstate RBERN) for their professional learning. We have seen a significant increase in our ELL population even though it is still less than 1% of the student population. The District has hired additional TESOL certified staff and worked with the RBERN to design better scheduling practices that allow us to meet the state requirements for ENL instruction. In addition, the District has created an ENL Program Advisory Committee consisting of administrators and ENL teachers and partners from the RBERN. This council is continuing our efforts to engage with families in their home language and help all staff with instructional strategies that benefit English Language Learners.

Instructional Coaching

The District has invested significantly in an instructional coaching model. As of the 2019-2020 school year the District has:

- Elementary School Instructional Coach
- Intermediate School Instructional Coach
- Instructional Coach for Technology

Coaches set yearly goals and have participated in training in effective coaching. They meet with all teachers each year, with a goal for supporting and developing teams in their work toward a Guaranteed Viable Curriculum. Coaches model, support, and provide feedback to staff. Part of the efficacy of the instructional coaching model relies on that they are colleagues; not evaluators.

A common understanding of our work is crucial if we want to change our culture and demonstrably impact student learning.

- We will continuously teach and remind ourselves of our collective responsibilities in our Professional Learning Community.
- We will ensure that we have a common understanding of research and proven practice.
- We will collectively identify our most effective strategies and build our professional capacity, with a focus on learning rather than teaching.

Feedback is how we all learn and improve. It is neither positive nor negative. It is a mirror that reflects back practice.

- Teams and individuals need feedback.
- Feedback should be grounded on data gathered from agreed-upon standards of practice.
- Student learning data are feedback for students, teacher teams, and schools.

Structures help teams keep on track and provide horizontal and vertical alignment and consistency.

- Coaches help teachers see the bigger picture as well as how the pathways connect.
- Coaches help increase the efficiency and effectiveness of common planning time.
- Coaches challenge and support team members to think more deeply to improve student learning.

District Resources

The following are examples of resources available to Homer Central School District.

Fiscal resources:

- BOCES COSERS including Technology, School Improvement, and Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- Title I and II Funds
- HCSD budgeted funds
- Competitive grants

Staff resources:

- Instructional Coaches
- Curriculum consultants
- Content specialists from within or from outside of the district
- Director of Instruction, Principals, Director of Special Education
- Technology Coordinator
- Professional Colleagues
- Curriculum Area Lead Teachers, Grade Level Chairs and Directors

Providers:

- Institutions of Higher Education: Syracuse University, SUNY Cortland, TC3,
- LeMoyne College, SUNY ESF, Cornell University, Ithaca College, RIT
- Teacher Resource Centers: Cortland County Teacher Center, Syracuse Teacher Center, Dryden Teacher Center, BOCES (OCM and TST, Instructional Support

Services, RSE-TASC, Regional Information Center, RBERN, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment)

Community:

- Homer Education Foundation
- Phillips Free Library
- Historical Society
- Lime Hollow Center for Environment and Culture
- Business Partners

Participation in Regional Professional Development

The District belongs to the [Cortland County Teacher Center](#) (the Director is also a member of the District's PD Committee). The bulk of the work of the Teacher Center is focused on student engagement, mental health, trauma-informed pedagogies, and literacy. Many district teachers participate in Teacher Center learning opportunities and our staff have facilitated training for the Teacher Center.

This [catalog](#) shows teachers what offerings are available through our regional training center, OCM BOCES. Professional staff also participates in learning opportunities in neighboring BOCES and professional organizations and associations. With administrative approval, teachers are allowed to sign up for offerings. MyLearningPlan.com is used for registration and record keeping regarding all professional training.

The OCM BOCES also facilitates a number of leadership networks. Both administrators and teachers from Homer participate in the networks, including:

- Arts Regional Leadership Network
- ELA Regional Leadership Network
- Mathematics Regional Leadership Network
- World Languages Regional Leadership Network
- Science Regional Leadership Network
- Social Emotional Learning Regional Leadership Network

Required Annual Training

The District requires employees to participate in several online training sessions, as required by law and regulation. The District subscribes to an online platform to administer and track these training requirements. Successful completion of the required

training is monitored until all have completed the required training(s). Topics include:

- School violence prevention and intervention
- Sexual Harassment
- Right to Know
- Mental Health Training
- Emergency Response
- Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)
- Information Privacy

Plan Evaluation

The 2021-2024 plan reflects a multi-year approach focused on improving teacher effectiveness and performance of all students district-wide.

The Instructional Leadership Council/PSDC will survey and assess progress on all goals and objectives specified in this plan annually. Based on these assessments and surveys, and the New York State Student Learning Standards, New York State Professional Development Standards, Homer Central School District Goals and student performance data, adjustments will be made to improve the effectiveness of our staff development as well as modification in future Professional Development Plans.