

Characteristics of the “Right” Network Participants

Commits to the Work -

- volunteers – someone who finds this work engaging and exciting
- completes tasks, readings or homework assignments in order to engage fully in network
- focuses on the goals -- learning, implementing, reflecting and guiding others

Displays Leadership Skills -

- has the ability and the opportunity to lead a professional learning team
- is viewed as a leader in the school/department/district
- influences and inspires others
- knows how to do the “right thing,” not just how to do the thing right
- knows how to facilitate learning

Exhibits effective interpersonal skills -

- is trustworthy and dependable
- listens for understanding
- values the contributions and thinking of others
- is pleasant and comfortable interacting with others
- is not afraid of conflict and works toward resolution
- loves to read and learn
- adapts to situations -- even those that are challenging
- takes initiative to accomplish what must be done

Exemplifies Productive Team Membership -

- develops authentic relationships in order to facilitate real change
- works effectively with others and uses those strengths to accomplish group goals
- communicates with others without being intimidating or condescending
- shows professional respect for those with whom they work
- plans and organizes strategically based on group needs

Seeks to Enhance Pedagogical Skills -

- has a strong background in content knowledge and knowledge of the standards
- desires to improve their own practices
- has instructional competence (recognizes/implements highly effective teaching & learning)
- accesses current research in pedagogical content knowledge
- has been a special education collaborator/co-teacher

Advances Innovation and Creativity -

- is willing to try new approaches in the classroom
- has a vision for what education *can* be
- spends time thinking deeply about how to accomplish the vision
- is willing to take risks and to move forward beyond what is comfortable

- thinks critically and is able to solve problems
- is creative and thinks out of the box, refusing to be confined by tradition

So, who is **NOT** a good candidate?

- a person already overloaded with extra –curricular duties and responsibilities
- a person who is assigned to attend the meetings without consideration of the above characteristics
- a teacher *lacking an understanding of content knowledge or teaching to standards*
- a central office employee who is not involved in the routine of daily instruction and practice
- a person who typically resists change
- a teacher selected primarily because they happen to teach in an “assessment grade/course”
- ***be cautious of designating those specifically involved with the PGES Pilot work as doing that and the networks may be overwhelming.*

What must a network participant commit to do?

Each network participant (including teacher, school, and district reps) will be expected to attend all scheduled meetings (eight days per year — six during the academic year; two during the summer). Participants will be given readings and other ‘assignments’ (e.g., trying a new strategy, bringing examples of student/teacher work, collecting student data) that will need to be completed between face-to-face meetings. To support this work, network members will also be linked in electronic communities of practice. Finally, network members will be expected to participate on a **district leadership team*** that will figure out how to ‘scale up’ the practices that they are learning and honing and then actually bring them to scale in the district. Because it is systemic and intensive work, participants should be willing to commit to this process for at least three years.

It is important to keep in mind that each network is a community, but the power comes from the members also facilitating and participating in learning communities at the local level. As members learn in an authentic, social, action-oriented, ongoing team with their fellow network members, they will help other colleagues in their own schools and districts learn using those same strategies.

**The DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM should be comprised of all teacher, school and district leader members—and it is recommended that the Mathematics and ELA Teacher Leaders who have worked in the previous 3 years CONTINUE to be included and involved as Science and Social Studies standards are implemented. After all, both Science and Social Studies are explicitly mentioned in the ELA Literacy standards, and ELA and Mathematics are explicitly linked in the new Science and Social Studies standards documents. Additionally, it is important to remember that the TEACHER LEADERS are only as effective as the SCHOOL and DISTRICT leaders that are supporting them. They need to be given prioritized and regular time to work with other teachers in their buildings and districts if capacity is to be built.*