



Mission

All students draw upon their passion, motivation and life experience to become independent, adaptive problem solvers, powerful thinkers, effective communicators and meaningful contributors to the larger community. Our school community is committed to leveraging every resource to ensure all students are prepared for college and career success.

Overview

Mariana Bracetti Academy recognizes that effective professional learning is “intensive and sustained, directly relevant to the needs of teachers and students, and provides opportunities for application, practice, reflection, and reinforcement.”¹ To support teachers in continuously increasing their effectiveness, administrators conduct observations and engage teachers in structured conversations multiple times throughout the year, which encourage teachers to reflect on student achievement gaps and professional progress. Administrators provide vital coaching assistance to each teacher multiple times throughout the year. While the teacher leads these conversations and highlights areas of strength and growth opportunities as they seek to reach high levels of performance, administrators also provide honest feedback in an effort to accelerate the learning process.

Curriculum Teams

To facilitate peer collaboration, each teacher is a member of a curriculum team and grade-level village. Curriculum teams meet once per week for forty-five minutes and utilize this time to tune unit plans, evaluate and refine the quality of assessments and rubrics, examine student work, analyze data to improve student learning, discuss professional readings, and participate in professional development.

Grade-Level Villages

Villages meet once per week for forty-five minutes and utilize this time to support teachers’ development in mobilizing parents/guardians, designing classroom procedures, communicating high expectations for behavior, and identifying achievement gaps. Agendas focus on the review of student data (achievement, attendance, and behavioral) and parent/guardian contacts.

Additional Learning Experiences

To increase teachers’ access to learning experiences, further their ability to persist through challenges, and promote a culture of inquiry and improvement, the Mariana Bracetti Academy academic calendar is structured to provide early dismissal and flexible professional development days for continued learning.

Early Dismissal Days

Every other Wednesday, students are dismissed at 1:00 pm and teachers have 1.5 hours of professional and collaboration time. The goals of this professional and collaboration time are as follows:

- Improve curriculum quality and alignment.
- Analyze results and student work.
- Enhance instructional and assessment practices.
- Increase professional conversations and the level of inquiry amongst faculty members.
- Better implement school improvement initiatives through collaboration.

¹ Reeves, D.B. (2010). Transforming professional developing into student results. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. p.23.

Flexible Professional Development Days

To provide teachers with access to learning experiences that are intensive, sustained, and directly relevant to their individual needs, the Mariana Bracetti Academy professional development model includes flex days. Teachers self-select and participate in at least one professional learning community, one professional development workshop, and staff book presentations throughout the year. Professional learning communities are blended learning experiences with six hours of web-based collaboration and six hours of face-to-face learning. Professional development workshops are designed in one-part (3-hour) or two-part (1.5-hour) modules. Teachers who complete *at least eight hours* of professional development *before winter break* have earned the first scheduled flex day and need not report on Friday, January 2, 2015. Teachers who complete *at least eighteen hours* of professional development *before spring break* have earned the second scheduled flex day and need not report on Monday, April 6, 2015. Teachers who have not completed the required professional development hours by these dates are required to report to school and participate in the one-day professional learning community offered that day.

Professional Learning Communities

Teachers and administrators co-identify the professional learning community that best aligns to the teacher's professional growth areas. Professional learning communities are facilitated by administrators and external consultants and focus on the following topics:

- Classroom Management (12 hours)
- Digging Deeper into Pennsylvania Core Standards to Redesign Classroom Assessments (12 hours)
- Effective Feedback Based on Established Criteria (12 hours)
- Four Mindsets to Motivate Learners (12 hours)
- Winter One-Day PLC (9 hours)
- Spring One-Day PLC (9 hours)

Each professional learning community is aligned to one or more of our school learning principles and selected teacher development targets. The learning principle(s), teacher development targets, format, schedule, session topics, and resources for each professional learning community are outlined in a separate document. Teachers are encouraged to review this information thoroughly before selecting a professional learning community given that attendance at *all* sessions is required.

Professional Development Workshops

A variety of one-part and two-part professional development workshops are offered throughout the year to provide a differentiated menu of learning experiences. Teachers self-select at one professional development workshop (three hours each) that are best aligned to their individual growth plan goals. Topics for professional development workshops include:

- Goal-Setting and Student Investment
- Unit and Lesson Planning
- Classroom Management
- Differentiation
- Reflective Practice

Workshops are facilitated by administrators, teachers, and external consultants as appropriate. Each professional development workshop is aligned to one or more teacher development targets. The teacher development target(s), format, schedule, and resources for each professional development workshop are outlined in a separate document. Teachers are encouraged to review this information thoroughly before selecting their workshops. If a workshop is offered in a two-part module (i.e., two 1.5-hour sessions), teachers are required to attend both parts for credit.

Note for Workshop Presenters

We may request that a curriculum coordinator or village lead plan and facilitate a professional development workshop. In these cases, facilitators will receive professional development credit for both preparation and presentation time (i.e., 3 hours each or 6 hours total) as long as the workshop has not been presented previously.

Modeling Professional Learning

As a learning organization, it is the expectation of Mariana Bracetti Academy that school leaders model constant learning for students and staff members. Therefore, in addition to the 18 hours of professional development required of teachers and their Act 45 Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PILs) requirements, achievement team members participate in state/district required and recommended professional development opportunities throughout the year.

Application, Practice, Reflection, and Reinforcement

To increase effectiveness, all professional learning communities and professional development workshops include components to support application, practice, reflection, and reinforcement. These components may include required readings and video screenings with notes, action plans, and post-session reflections. To receive session credit, teachers must complete all required components as outlined in the professional learning community and professional development workshop documents.

Act 48 Continuing Professional Education Credits

All professional learning communities and professional development workshops have been designed in such a way for teachers to earn Act 48 professional education credits in addition to flex day hours. Teachers who complete the required session components will automatically receive appropriate Act 48 credits. Should teachers or leaders exceed their required 18 hours, Act 48 credits will still be awarded.