***Salem Middle School***

*Collective Commitments*

The highest functioning professional learning communities agree to a core set of behaviors and beliefs that govern their work and guide their decisions. These core behaviors – which we have chosen to call collective commitments – can serve as reference points for everyone within the organization. Our collective commitments – which were developed in the spring of 2012 – are informed by the key learning community behaviors outlined in *Learning by Doing (2010)*.

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| ***Salem Middle School Collective Commitments*** | |
| **(A). Developing a Collaborative Culture.** | | We will join collaborative teams that work interdependently to achieve common goals that directly impact student achievement. Our team will be clear about the critical questions that should drive our collaborative efforts (*LBD, p. 21*). |
| We will identify and honor the commitments we have made to the members of our collaborative teams in order to enhance our effectiveness. These articulated norms will clarify expectations of how our team will operate, and we will use them to address problems that may occur on the team. *(LBD, p. 132)* |
| We will recognize that conflict is an essential and inevitable by-product of a successful substantive change effort. We will thoughtfully and purposefully create processes to help use conflict as a tool for learning together and improving the school. *(LBD, p. 230)* |
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| **(B). Developing a Culture Committed to Responding to Student Needs.** | | We will regard ongoing analysis of evidence of student learning as a critical element in the teaching and learning process. We will be provided with and/or collect frequent and timely information regarding the achievement of our students. We will use that information to:   1. Respond to students who are experiencing difficulty 2. Enrich and extend the learning of students who are proficient 3. Inform and improve the individual and collective practice of our members 4. Identify team professional development needs   *(LBD, pp. 191-192)* |
| We will work with colleagues on our team to clarify the criteria by which we will judge the quality of student work, and we will practice applying those criteria until we can do so consistently. *(LBD, pp. 200-201)* |
| We will provide a system of research-based interventions that guarantees each student will receive additional time and support for learning if he or she experiences initial difficulty. Students on our team who are proficient will have access to enriched and extended learning opportunities. *(LBD, p. 96)* |
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| **(C). Developing a Culture Committed to Curricular Clarity** | | We will work with colleagues to build shared knowledge of the common core curriculum; our state essential standards; district curriculum guides, initiatives and expectations; trends in student achievement; and expectations for the next course or grade level.  This collective inquiry will enable each member of our team to clarify what all students must know and be able to do as a result of every unit of instruction.  *(LBD, pp. 63-64)* | |

***Salem Middle School***

*Action Steps*

If we are to be successful at becoming the kind of professional learning community defined by our collective commitments, we must systematically begin working on a set of predetermined action steps. Those action steps are defined below. They should serve as a checklist for learning teams, outlining the specific tasks that they should be ***working on over the course of the next 3-5 years***.

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| ***Salem Middle School Action Steps*** | | |
| ***LBD Pages***  *(where available)* | ***Action Step*** | |
| p. 132 | (1). Every team will have a clearly defined set of norms that set expectations for peer participation; that establish roles and responsibilities for sharing workload; and that include a clear process for ensuring that all voices are heard. |
| p. 37 | (2). Every team will find reasons for celebrating the work of their peers – successful instructional strategies, use of technology, positive experiences with students, neat student products – regularly. |
| p. 205 | (3). Every team will have a clearly defined process for resolving conflict. |
| pp. 260-261 | (4). Every team will facilitate one school-wide conversation – faculty presentation, online conversation, staff development session – around PLC principles outlined in *Learning by Doing.* |
|  | (5). Every team will develop a system for communicating – and addressing weaknesses in – academic achievement and work behaviors separately. |
|  | (6). Every team will develop a set of samples for subjective tasks that demonstrate low, average and high performance that students can use for self assessment. Every team will also find a way to share those samples online with parents, students, and other school faculty members. |
| p. 75 | (7). Every team will develop a set of common pre-assessments and post-assessments for the content that they teach. Every team will also design 3-5 remediation lessons to support struggling students and monitor the performance of their students on each of these remediation lessons. |
| pp. 69-70 | (8). Every team will develop a set of 3-5 reading strategies that they will implement consistently in their classrooms. Every team will also track the performance of their students on each of these strategies and finish with a ranked list of strategies from most to least effective. |
| pp. 200-201 | (9). Every team will develop a set of 3 performance tasks that they can implement during the course of a school year. Every team will also track performance of their students on these performance tasks and make comparisons to the performance of students on more traditional assessments. |
|  | (10). Every team will develop at least 3 differentiated activities that provide students with opportunities to make choices about the way that they demonstrate mastery. |
| pp. 125-126 | (11). Every team will develop a formal process for observing their peers delivering lessons that incorporate a reading skill – either in person or in videotaped lessons – at least once per school year with the intention of seeing what shared practices look like in action in other classrooms. |
| pp. 63, 70 | (12). Every team will develop unit overview sheets that (a). list essential outcomes and content in student friendly language, (b). include important vocabulary to be mastered and (c). suggest ways that students and parents can evaluate current levels of mastery. *(Learning by Doing, p. 53)* |
| p. 37 | (13). Every team will develop a plan for awarding PBIS tickets in the regular course of their instruction. Every team will also develop a system for collecting information from students on the impact that their PBIS plan is having on their behavior and academic performance. |
| pp. 63, 70 | (14). Every team will work to incorporate reading (print and/or non-print) and writing opportunities into their instruction. |
| p. 123 | (15). Every team will collaborate with a member of our PE and/or Elective staff to develop at least 3 activities that integrate elective content and/or skills into traditional core classroom lessons. |