Ongoing Learning

Supporting Professional Development at LIFE

Since we believe in learning for all at LIFE, and the notion that one’s ability to navigate his or her own learning path is what is necessary to succeed; we foster varied opportunities for LIFE teachers to continue their learning. Even with varied opportunities, we do believe that the ongoing development of teachers is best supported through “concrete classroom applications of general ideas” (Elmore, 1997). Therefore the opportunities we offer involve teachers taking new content into classrooms in order to observe, critique, and reflect upon their practices (Elmore, 1997). We allow teachers to base their content and pedagogical needs on their ongoing LIFEplans. Therefore, the decisions that each teacher makes around his or her own learning, will be influenced by the learning team that provides feedback to that particular teacher according to his or her LIFEplan. Similar to the learning paths that students take, there will be some required PD courses that all teachers will be exposed to in order to maintain consistency. Each teacher will then select the particular methods or content in which they want to grow, in order to take on opportunities for ongoing practice, and in depth reflection. Flex time is provided to teachers in order to maintain the time and space for this ongoing development. While the school will work to build capacity within, through the development of teacher leaders, we will also bring in outside experts to meet the particular needs of the staff. Since our curriculum offers a wide range of content, the teachers will have a wide range of specific needs, and therefore might request particular individuals or organizations that might best support their teaching. In addition to outside resources, each teacher also has two collaborative blocks build into each instructional week to allow for ongoing conversations with colleagues around the particular content, pedagogical methods, and student data that each teacher must work with. This space is intended to further develop the teachers in ways that relate directly to their current classroom practices through reflective and responsive practices.