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## COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

*What is it?*

A Community of Practice is a group of self-selected and self-directed group of educators who share a common concern, interest, or passion. They collaborate regularly with a focus on improving and sharing one's teaching and learning practices and experiences with the goal to improve student achievement.




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## VALUE OF A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

- Educates**
  - connect with diverse perspectives and to become resource and role
  - connect people who might be otherwise only paths, or with
  - provide a common culture and language
- Cultivates**
  - build with mutual success with professional development that
  - achieved by mutual of members
  - explore, challenge and challenge a community
  - professional growth, ideas and work
- Empowers**
  - provides the skills or resources through discussion and sharing
  - creates learning by work, self-paced for the road
  - can be used to improve the work

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## STARTING A COMMUNITY

- Invite**
  - identify a facilitator and co-facilitator if needed
  - create roles, time commitment, and accountability
- Share Vision**
  - seek a brief overview of the CoP benefits, provide a brief of
  - objectives, will work, or long term goals
  - determine an initial meeting place or platform
- Recruit Members**
  - define a typical session
  - promote opportunities for participating, identify strengths and
  - weaknesses, address all of stakeholders' needs

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## BUILDING A COMMUNITY

- Identify and Introduce
  - not invite everyone you consider to be members of the beginning, but start with those closest to you
  - consider each member, their willingness to attend, and commitment to
- Be Intentional
  - include all participants in tasks and decisions, identify and utilize strengths, acknowledge resources, encourage involvement
  - set the standards and then expect to be held accountable each time
  - describe a vision of success for the group
- Engage
  - consider what each will bring to the community to contribute, long or short-term, and how you can best support
  - great leaders themselves attend to their own
  - use time to build trust, generosity, and a shared, consistent vision and shared goals and objectives

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**THE WILLINGNESS TO SHOW UP CHANGES US. IT MAKES US A LITTLE braver each time.**  
- Brené Brown

*"Sit with the winners the conversation is different"*  
- Dr. Jody Carrington

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## FACILITATING A COMMUNITY

- Invite and Welcome
  - identify membership, general membership
  - plan first meeting, prepare to host
  - address any existing issues
- Collaborate and Plan
  - take time to review each other's own surrounding info, set goals of organization to complete
  - identify key topics for agenda, meeting, future agenda, invite members
  - identify what you can bring from group and what the meeting needs throughout the year
- Prepare and Equip Others
  - recruit others and lead them thru
  - address any other resources, need, information or workshopping
  - work addressing build systems or working

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### SPACES IN YOUR AREA

GAIN INSIGHT BY EXPLORING PLACES YOUR STUDENTS MAY BE WHEN THEY ARE NOT WITH YOU



*You do not need to travel far to have an adventure.*

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## STARTING A COMMUNITY

*Hospital Schools Community of Practice*

Question 1: Can you do a Community of Practice if your school division/district does not currently list it as a priority?

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Question 2: How many members are recommended? What are the advantages of a smaller group?

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Question 3: Do we have to meet in person?

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# THE REAL QUESTIONS



Time  
Be intentional, set aside 2-4 times/school year, making at least every other meeting mandatory. Half-days work well to make meeting time valuable and productive.

Money  
Use spaces that you have access to and use them in creative ways to avoid renting spaces or parking fees. Meet virtually to include those who may not have means to travel each time. Set aside a small budget to purchase professional resources as needed. Engage your community by seeking donations to use for door prizes or incentives for members or guest presenters.

Tasks  
Prepare and distribute an agenda, use a sign in sheet, schedule presenters, and schedule wellness breaks. Plan a field trip experience and use alternative public or private spaces to gather. Follow-up, keep the momentum going during longer breaks, consider posting highlights in a collaborative space.

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# RESOURCES



People  
Invite people you work with, people you want to work with, or people who do interesting work to speak, share, or join your community.

Variety  
Use a variety of resources...people, professionals, print, local, published, draft, documentaries, programs, services...those that are important to you and the work you do!

Organizations  
Reach out to organizations you work with, want to work with, or do work you are interested in.

Topics  
Pick topics that the group is interested in. Topics can remain the same all year, or change session to session.

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# JUST-IN-TIME PD

“...one of the top benefits of a community of practice is access to new information, often recommended by other participants. Identifying, reviewing and sharing resources is a key component of building collective knowledge and sharing with others.”  
-ERLC




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