

The Type of PD Teachers Enjoy

Give teachers more ownership over their learning, say principals.

There's no other way to say this: many teachers dislike the professional development offered to them. Traditional "sit-and-get" PD is often described by teachers as unhelpful, poorly timed, or disconnected from the real challenges teachers face in their classrooms.

As instructional leaders, principals must ensure teachers learn new curriculum, instructional strategies, or emerging approaches—such as the "science of learning"—while also making PD meaningful enough that teachers actually engage with it.

Some principals, though, are rethinking PD altogether. They are building systems that give teachers greater choice over what they learn, how they learn it, and whom they learn from.

Here are three models principals say are working.

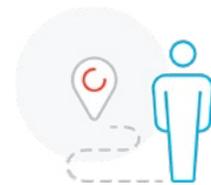
Research Project

- Teachers identify a "problem of practice" in their classroom.
- They learn basic research methods and develop a guiding question or thesis.
- Teachers collect, and after reviewing results, they repeat the experiment with a different group of students.



Choose Your Own Adventure

- Veteran teachers may lead workshops on classroom management.
- Newer teachers may share expertise in emerging tools, such as AI or other classroom technology.
- Learning frequently happens through peer observations and feedback cycles.



Career Pathways

- Administrators create learning pathways aligned with teacher evaluation standards and school priorities.
- Teachers complete a needs-based assessment to identify areas for growth.
- Staff join small peer cohorts focused on a shared skill or instructional goal.
- Administrators observe classrooms and provide feedback as teachers implement new strategies.

