

Keeping Faculty at the Leading Edge

# Designing Professional Development to Foster Growth

## Research-Based Characteristics of Professional Development Key to Success

Well-designed professional development is critical to a coherent talent management system that supports teacher growth. However, many independent schools offer unstructured, one-off professional development opportunities that do not lead to changes in practice. To help schools develop more structured, effective programming, we reviewed and synthesized the academic literature on professional development and identified a set of characteristics necessary for high impact professional development.

### Four Characteristics of Effective Professional Development



### Case Study: Georgetown Day School's "GDSU"

At GDS, teachers participate in "GDSU," a series of in-house professional development courses offered each semester. The courses are led by master teachers and are tied to the school's mission and priorities. In GDSU, teachers collaborate in a workshop-style course, learn and implement new strategies, and receive ongoing feedback and support. The initiative embodies all four characteristics of effective professional development:



Uses active learning instructional strategies, with minimal lecturing



Master teachers provide feedback during, outside of GDSU classes to teachers



Peer teachers, master teacher collaborate to identify, discuss best practices



Classes meet five times per semester, during repurposed faculty meetings

You can learn more about GDSU by listening to the following webconference: [Creating Active, Collaborative Professional Development Opportunities](#)