

EMPOWERING EDUCATORS:
WHAT'S DIFFERENT FOR TEACHERS IN THE CLASS PROJECT?

EXPANDED
CAREER PATHS

EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

NEW COMPENSATION
MODELS

Before CLASS	CLASS School District
Teachers have limited formal leadership roles and responsibilities aside from becoming administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers are recognized for their leadership with new roles and responsibilities without leaving the classroom School culture is more directly focused on high quality teaching and learning for teachers as well as students Talented teachers share their skills and stay in the teaching profession
"Inspection" model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous improvement process focused on enhancing teacher effectiveness and raising student achievement
Performance goals focused on "inputs" not "outcomes"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers and administrators collaborate to develop performance goals that are data-driven
Performance goals isolated from school improvement goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching practices improved by more peer involvement in goal-setting, planning, analysis of student work, formative assessment, and classroom observations Collaboration results in higher expectations for teacher performance, higher comfort level with specific and accurate feedback from principal and colleagues
Very few strategies to assist the struggling teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous improvement model provides strategies for assisting all teachers
Very few student achievement goals set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic & Timely) goals, which become one part of an effective performance evaluation
Teacher coursework not necessarily aligned with district and school goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development is aligned with school improvement goals Teachers are more accountable for student academic growth Causes of low student achievement become easier to identify (e.g., curriculum, assessment method, poor instruction, pattern of instruction)
Scant resources and lack of time during the school day prevent collaboration or regular opportunities for ongoing professional inquiry or improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaborative learning teams teachers receive job-embedded professional development Increased time for professional development
No other opportunities to accelerate on pay scale or earn bonus pay without becoming an administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers eligible for expanded compensation when they assume leadership positions (e.g., mentor, instructional coach) Educators who lead the way to higher student achievement are recognized and rewarded Increased retention and recruitment of effective teachers New compensation models can be substantial and motivating

CLASSTM PROJECT

EMPOWERING EDUCATORS, RAISING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Research shows that an effective teacher is the most important factor in raising student achievement. That's why Oregon school districts must rise to the challenge of recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers in every classroom. The CLASS (Creative Leadership Achieves Student Success) Project launched in 2007 to achieve just that.

In the 2008-2009 school year, three school districts implemented CLASS designs in their schools. Each district had it's own unique challenges. Each saw culture shifts and initial signs of success. Inside are encouraging highlights from this first year.

SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS: SHERWOOD + FOREST GROVE + TILLAMOOK SCHOOL DISTRICTS

HOW CLASS WORKS:

CLASS raises student achievement and strengthens teacher leadership through four components of effective teaching: **expanded career paths, effective performance evaluations, relevant professional development and new compensation models.**



Districts expand their own thinking about teaching and learning through a local process that brings together teachers, administrators, union leaders, classified staff, and school board members. During a year-long design process districts bridge best practices and local needs to empower educators and raise student achievement. CLASS districts design plans around the four components to best serve their teachers, staffs, and communities and prepare all of their students for college, career, and life.

SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS:

SHERWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT

FAST FACTS		
Enrollment		4,761
Certified Staff		262
Classified Staff		210
Administrative Staff		16.5
Students on Free or Reduced Lunch		14%

THE CHALLENGE: As the fastest growing district in Oregon, Sherwood also had a growing percentage of inexperienced teachers joining their workforce. In designing the components of the CLASS Project, Sherwood tried to imagine a district that was able to empower their young, energetic workforce to do their best work by providing them with the support and training necessary to grow as professionals.

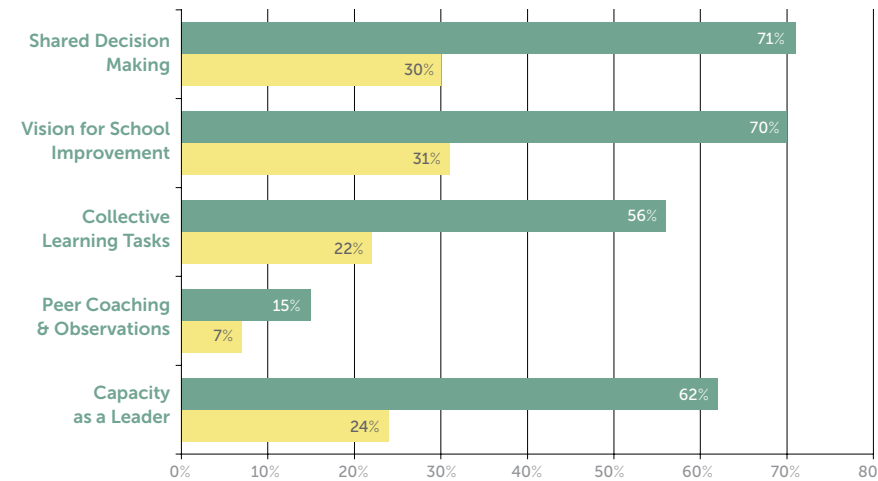
THE APPROACH: In their approach to the CLASS Project, Sherwood focused on projects that would develop the skills of their less experienced teaching staff. One of their first steps was to create a new system of comprehensive performance evaluations that included student achievement goals and could serve as a tool for continuous improvement. The district also implemented strategies for recognizing and rewarding effective teaching through new leadership roles and expanded compensation models. Relevant professional development was prioritized through Collaborative Learning Teams and early release to provide more time for teachers to engage in learning opportunities.

“The CLASS Project has launched a culture of shared leadership in our schools. All Sherwood professionals are empowered to dream big and transform the art of teaching and learning to benefit all students. We are fundamentally a more powerful, effective professional family due to our shared efforts in the CLASS Project.” - Dan Jamison, Sherwood Superintendent

EARLY SUCCESSES: Sherwood saw a dramatic shift in teacher support and empowerment as a result of new programs to encourage collaboration and support teacher leadership.

TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS: School Professional Staff as Learning Communities Questionnaire*

* Shirley M. Hord - Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)



In February 2008 and May 2009, Sherwood School District certified and classified staff completed a questionnaire concerning the school staff as a learning organization, rating each topic on a scale of 1 to 5, with a “5” indicating a high degree of development in the school. The graph below outlines the average percentage of each category receiving a score of “4” or “5” in the 2008 and 2009 surveys for all Sherwood schools.

Number of participants:
2008 = 232 2009 = 236

2008 2009

With job-embedded professional development, time for collaboration, recognition of leadership and goal setting, Sherwood was supporting teacher effectiveness and began to see results in student achievement. In collaborative learning teams, teachers were able to work together to address the needs of their students. Sherwood’s middle and high school teachers focused in on early warning signs to keep all of the students on track to succeed and graduate on time.

As a result, Sherwood experienced a continued decrease in the percentage of high school freshman failing one or more classes (From 14% in 2006/07 to 7% in 2008/09).

By empowering teachers, Sherwood truly created a culture of teaching and learning that had a beneficial impact on student outcomes.

“In my 30 years of teaching, I have never been a part of a more innovative project that is as good for teachers and students as the CLASS Project.”

- Terrel Smith, President, Sherwood Education Association



“Innovation in education takes time, commitment, and leadership. We have been inspired by the way these three districts have been pioneers in this most important work. We are optimistic that the CLASS Project can strengthen teacher leadership and raise student achievement across Oregon.”

Sue Hildick, President, Chalkboard Project

SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS:

FOREST GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

FAST FACTS		
	Enrollment	6,175
	Certified Staff	360
	Administrative Staff	23
	Students on Free or Reduced Lunch	55%
	Students Speaking English as a Second Language	23%

THE CHALLENGE: The Forest Grove School District was already known for their tremendous work with a diverse student population when they began the CLASS Project. But the district, like many others, struggled with how to recognize and reward teachers for taking on new roles and responsibilities, how to provide job-embedded professional development, and how to continue to raise student achievement.

THE APPROACH: Forest Grove made professional development one of the biggest priorities in their design of the CLASS Project. In order to better serve their diverse student population, the district wanted to provide more relevant professional development that was useful to staff and noticeable in its affect on learning in the classroom.

Instead of looking outside the district for strategies and tools that could be tailored to Forest Grove, Forest Grove educators who knew the needs of the staff and students helped meet those needs. The district invested in relevant professional development by turning its own staff into trainers. The approach was a collaborative one in which all teachers could play a role.

Yvonne Curtis, Forest Grove Superintendent, came into the district after the first year of CLASS Project implementation and noticed a unique culture in the district.

“Coming into the district during a difficult budgeting year, I expected some tough negotiations. I found instead, that negotiations required to balance the budget were reached in a collaborative and efficient manner. Clearly, the relationship building developed through the CLASS project design work resulted in fruitful outcomes for both staff and students.”

- Yvonne Curtis, Forest Grove Superintendent

EARLY SUCCESSES: In tough economic times, the district was able to increase the number of professional development days for teachers. The district increased the number of professional development days from 2.6 days in 2007/08 to 3.1 in 2008/09. The .5 day may not seem like a lot, but the increase demonstrated the district’s commitment to providing their educators with the support and tools they needed to do their best work.

The willingness of teachers and administrators to work together for the benefit of all Forest Grove students led to a commitment to a continuous improvement model and a culture that embraces innovation.

This commitment was seen in the formation of teacher data teams throughout the district. Data teams met regularly in grade level or content area teams to review student results and discuss strategies for improvement. Data teams helped Forest Grove continue positive growth trends in the district, including:

- Neil Armstrong Middle School meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the first time
- Continuing to be one of the only school districts in Oregon to show an increase in the number of students meeting benchmark in mathematics between 8th and 10th grade (In 2008/09, 61% of 8th graders and 82% of 10th graders met benchmark on OAKS math assessments)
- Showing a significant number of students demonstrating growth on reading assessments as seen in the chart below

STUDENT READING GROWTH ON THE DEVELOPMENT READING ASSESSMENT (DRA)

Spring 2008 to Spring 2009

	STUDENTS DEMONSTRATING GROWTH	STUDENTS DEMONSTRATING ONE YEAR OR MORE OF GROWTH
4th to 5th	96%	80%
5th to 6th	99%	75%
6th to 7th	88%	85%
7th to 8th	100%	73%

This chart outlines student achievement data on the Development Reading Assessment (DRA) a measure used to chart student progress in reading K-8. The CLASS Project propelled Forest Grove forward in the data team process, creating the conditions for teachers to meet in grade level or content area teams to review student results and student work.

The benefits of teachers collaborating and sharing instructional practices contributed to the continued success of Forest Grove School District.



FUNDING CLASS

The CLASS Project is an initiative of the Chalkboard Project, a non-profit, non-partisan organization working to unite Oregonians to make our K-12 public schools among the nation's best. CLASS is supported by a growing list of funders:

- Meyer Memorial Trust
- James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation
- Ford Family Foundation
- Oregon Community Foundation
- The Collins Foundation
- John Gray Charitable Fund
- ADEC (Joan and Ken Austin)
- PGE Foundation
- Paul and Sally McCracken Fund
- Bank of America
- State Farm
- Edmund Hayes Jr.
- Qwest Foundation
- Ann and Bill Swindells Charitable Trust

SNAPSHOT OF SUCCESS:

TILLAMOOK SCHOOL DISTRICT

FAST FACTS		
	Enrollment	2,023
	Certified Staff	143
	Administrative Staff	12
	Students on Free or Reduced Lunch	55%
	Students Speaking English as a Second Language	12%

THE CHALLENGE: Keeping effective teachers has always been an issue for the small coastal community. On average, Tillamook was losing about 50% of its new teachers every year. One of their primary goals with CLASS was to create a system that supported new teachers and kept them in the district.

THE APPROACH: As a declining enrollment district with a majority of students receiving free or reduced price lunch, Tillamook began the CLASS design process with a focus on sustainability. If they were going to commit district resources to CLASS, they needed a plan that would work for their community and would be a wise investment for years to come.

For Tillamook, the development of a New Teacher Retention Program was such an investment. The New Teacher Retention Program in Tillamook includes relevant professional development for new teachers, opportunities for community leadership, and incentives for staying in the district longer than four years.

"In Tillamook, it is impossible to distinguish between the philosophies of CLASS and the district because they have become one in the same. We are better at educating our students and supporting our teachers today than we have ever been. When the CLASS grant ends, the culture we have developed will continue on into the future." - Randy Schild, Tillamook Superintendent

EARLY SUCCESSES: With their New Teacher Retention Program underway, Tillamook retained 86% of their effective teachers in 2008/09 as compared to 75% in 2007/08.

One could argue that the economy had a great deal to do with increases in retention, but the Tillamook staff would add that relevant professional development, more frequent formal and informal evaluations, greater collaboration between teachers, and a focused vision for their district will keep effective teachers in the district even after the economy recovers.

By retaining their effective teachers Tillamook was able to focus on raising student achievement. Tillamook's 10th grade reading scores on the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) provide testament to their investment in educators.

STUDENT READING SCORE IMPROVEMENT

Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) Test

* Averages are based on 2006/07 benchmark

	GRADE 10
2005/08 State Average*	67%
2005/08 Tillamook Average*	50%
2008/09 Tillamook	64%

10th grade reading scores rose 14% in 2008/09 compared to the average from 2005 through 2008.

The increase in reading scores was not the heroic effort of one teacher or group of teachers; Tillamook developed a whole school approach to address the issue.

- Mentor teachers helped their peers tailor their lessons and provided a sounding board for new practices.
- Administrators spent more time in the classrooms to see what was working, what wasn't, and where further professional development could be helpful.
- Teachers and administrators engaged in conversations about instructional practices and the implementation of new skills.

Together, Tillamook staff was able to make a noticeable impact on their students' learning.

