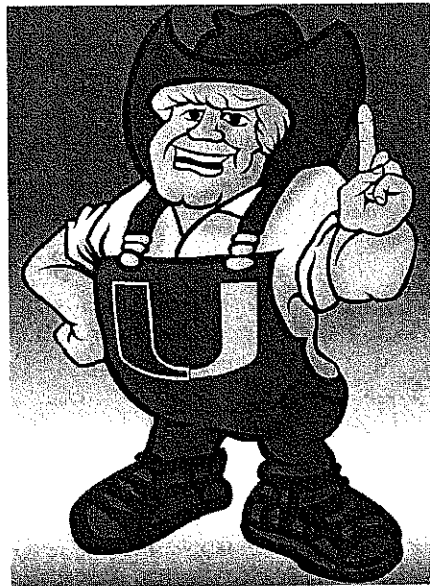# Township of Union Public Schools

Union, NJ 07083

District Professional Development Plan 2014-2015

Township of Union Schools
Central Office Administrators

Dr. Patrick Martin – Superintendent
Dr. Noreen Lishak – Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Gregory Tatum – Assistant Superintendent

Township of Union
Board of Education Members

Francis "Ray" Perkins – President
Richard Galante – Vice President
David Arminio
Susana Cooley
Thomas Layden
Vito Nufrio
Guy Francis
Lois Jackson
Angel Salcedo

District Professional Development Committee Profile and Sign–Off Sheet

Please write all of your responses for the district professional development plan on the template. You will want to refer to the guidance document for an explanation of each of the sections in the plan and for a list of helpful tools and resources in the Collaborative Professional Learning in School and Beyond tool kit.

SECTION 1 DISTRICT PROFILE

Name of District: __Township of Union__
District Code: ___5290___   County Code: ___39___
District Address: ___2369 Morris Avenue___   County: Union___
District Factor Group: __DE__
Chief School Administrator: __Dr. Patrick Martin__   Date submitted: April 28, 2014
Type of District (check one):
__ K-5 __ K-6 __ K-12 __ 7-12 X 9-12 __ Other (specify) _____

Please provide the following information:
List the names of the school buildings, grades, current student enrollment and number of professional staff members (who hold instructional or educational services licenses):

NAME OF BUILDING	SCHOOL CODE	GRADES	STUDENT ENROLLMENT	STAFF MEMBERS
Battle Hill ES	080	PK-4	426	54
Burnet MS	060	6-8	1051	106
Connecticut Farms ES	090	PK-4	438	47
Franklin ES	100	PK-4	449	42
Hannah Caldwell ES	083	PK-4	610	54
Jefferson School	085	5	536	53
Kawameeh MS	070	6-8	648	69
Livingston ES	130	PK-4	420	36
Union High School	050	9-12	2372	220
Washington ES	140	PK-4	594	56

Please provide the following information for the District Professional Development Committee:
Chair:

Noreen Lishak _[signature]_   _Position_ Term Expires Email
Chair Name (please print) Signature   Position Term Expires Email

Gina Calderone _[signature]_   _V.P.H.S._
Name (please print) Signature   Position Term Expires Email

Caitlin Brady _[signature]_   _Teacher_
Name (please print) Signature   Position Term Expires Email

Name (please print) Signature   Position Term Expires Email

Name (please print) Signature   Position Term Expires Email

Name (please print) Signature   Position Term Expires Email

DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2014-2015

Please write all of your responses for the school professional development plan on the template. You will want to refer to the guidance document for an explanation of each of the sections in the plan and for a list of helpful tools and resources in the Collaborative Professional Learning in School and Beyond tool kit.

To begin typing in each section, place the cursor at the end of the last question in the section and hit enter/rerturn key.

SECTION ② BUILDING A DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

A. Reflection

Provide a narrative that reflects the committee's thinking on the following questions:

1. What were the positive aspects of previous professional development opportunities in your district that you want to retain and replicate? What challenges emerged that require attention?
2. Through previous evaluations of your professional development program have you been able to document how professional development is improving teacher practices and student learning? If yes, describe how you have accomplished this task.
3. How have you ensured that professional learning is addressing student learning needs and is aligned to the district and school priorities and key initiatives and programs?

The 2013-2014 professional development programs were scheduled three times during the school year, each day for five hours. The professional development programs supported professional staff as they refined their teaching skills and learned about new developments in the education field.

The individual school improvement panels (ScIP) meet during the school year to articulate and maintain the professional development plans of the schools. Input and guidance were provided by principals, vice principals, supervisors, and faculty.

The desire of the ScIPs for 2013-2014 was to retain and expand the positive professional development opportunities that stimulated the thinking of professional staff and thus, ensure student learning and achievement.

The ScIPs recognized the need to continually strive to provide the best quality of instruction for every student in the Township of Union School District. In an effort to meet and deliver effective instruction to every student, the ScIPs worked diligently to support topics that were relevant to student learning and achievement.

Topics for the workshops were in response to the district and building as identified in the building needs assessments. Topics included Danielson's domains (1-4), non-linguistic representations in the classroom, Common Core math and Language Arts strategies, connecting reading, writing, and test prep instruction, Go Math instruction, SGO review, professional learning communities, sharing of sites for lessons on the SmartBoard, data analysis, PBSIS, PARCC training, the Treasures Reading Program, modern trends in physical fitness, building optimism and resilience in the classroom, Core Content Standard review, Compass Learning, and suicide awareness training. The information was examined and discussed by the panels. The ScIPs also used all available information to plan future professional development activities.

The ScIPs, in an effort to bring about improvement in student performance, increased teacher knowledge and competence through the professional development courses. The programs provided opportunities for professional staff to develop desirable changes in the delivery of instruction and implement practices for the 21st century learner.

SECTION ② BUILDING A DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:
B. Needs Assessment

Provide the definition for question (1) and then provide responses to the remaing questions::

1. Each district has developed an initial definition of student achievement. What commonalities do you notice in the definitions? What student learning priorities are highlighted in the definitions? How will the LPDC support these definitions as they develop the local plan?
2. How did the district committee communicate student learning priorities to the schools for school planning? How has the district committee sought input for district priorities for professional development? Summarize the formal or informal needs assessments that were conducted to identify adult learning priorities focused on student learning gaps?
3. Identify key data for the district plan that were used to provide evidence of adult learning needs based on student needs.
4. What did the final analysis of the needs assessments show to be district priorities?

The commonalities of student achievement/learning priorities as defined by the ten schools in the Township of Union include:

- Students will perform at or above grade level on standardized tests, as well as academic proficiency tests, and will demonstrate mastery of the state curriculum standards for student success.
- Students are required to read six (6) chapter books at each grade level. Additionally, students will practice writing through a common template known as the "Monster Outline."
  This is being done to increase test scores in Language Arts.
- Students will take double periods of math and English to aid in improving test scores.
- Students will be able to learn how to inquire, think critically and gain knowledge, as well as draw conclusions, make informed decisions, and apply knowledge to new situations, thereby creating new knowledge to assist them in becoming lifelong learners. Using this newly-acquired knowledge, students will then be able to assume personal responsibility to participate ethically and productively in our society, while pursuing personal and aesthetic growth.
- The intended goals for the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are to create and implement a process for responding when students experience difficulty in learning.

The School Improvement Panels, along with the support of the administration and the Board of Education, are committed to encourage building-based, job-embedded collaborative workshops and offer more afterschool opportunities based on the needs of the school based professional development committees. The staff development coordinator assists with any individual building concerns and issues on an as-needed basis. Where learning priorities are similar, ScIPs encourage collaboration amongst schools.

The panels sought input from the directors of elementary and secondary curricula to understand the district priorities for professional development. For example, using data to direct instruction was a district focus. In preparation for such, workshops were offered on such topics as "Data Analysis of Proficiencies, "Understanding your SGOs," "Catapult," "Bullying Conflict," "PLC Curriculum Development," "Smartboard," "Changing Student Behavior," "NJCCS" and "Methods for Motivating Students."

Each of the individual schools created and conducted their own building needs assessments.   Priorities were based not only on the answers received but on the feedback given via the online portal evaluation for each staff development session, as well as feedback from professional learning community meetings. The ScIps also created their adult learning priorities based on the student data received from local and state test results.

The data that was used to assess adult learning based on student needs were those derived from the evaluation portion of Teachscape. The identified needs included strategies for improving students' reading and writing skills, behavior management strategies, accommodating special needs children in the regular education classroom, creating learning centers, using 21st century skills, such as technology and using data analysis to improve instruction. Teachers in some buildings were given common preparation time to evaluate student performance and progress and to develop strategies that are successful in getting students to learn.

Other staff development needs were based on feedback from formal and informal staff needs assessments, professional development surveys, grade level meeting documentation, articulation meetings, staff meetings, Professional Learning Committee meetings, department meetings

documentation, and site-based meetings. Scores on standardized tests, quarterly assessments developed by teachers, proficiency exams, report cards, progress reports, formal and informal observations, tests, quizzes, discussions and data supplied by licensed computer programs purchased by the district were also used to develop the following:

- Need for more training to use learning activities linked to technology.
- Need for more technology equipment in the school and individual classrooms.
- Behavior modification strategies for classrooms.
- Strategies to effectively implement collaborative teaching.
- Strategies for accommodating the inclusion of special needs children in the regular education classroom.
- More strategies for assisting students to improve their reading and writing skills.
- Allow all staff to participate in vertical articulation meetings.
- Strategies for developing learning centers.
- More strategies on using data analysis to improve student learning.
- Improving school climate

The district goals identified by the needs assessment include:
- An increase in language arts literacy and math concepts.
- Utilizing technology to its capacity within the curriculum.
- Use data to create individual learning plans for struggling students or decrease the number of students referred for special education services.
- Continue using professional learning communities to design lessons to increase student engagement and student achievement.
- Training on writing grants for opportunities in the classroom.

How the school committee is using school based performance and other data to drive professional development in the school:

- Through the use of licensed computer programs, the staffs at the all schools have been trained in how to analyze student

data in order to identify student strengths and weaknesses, as well as best practices for program implementation.

- Individual buildings have scheduled workshops that are relevant to meeting the needs of their students.
- Job embedded collaborative workshops on various differentiated strategies will be offered throughout the 2014-2015 school years.
- Professional Learning Committees submit "Team meeting feedback sheets" twice a month. Information is used to determine PD activities.
- Schools will request that the Sclps offer after school courses based on their needs (example Teachscape training).

SECTION ② BUILDING A DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:
C. Professional Development Goals for the District

Provide your responses to the following questions:

1. List the district's established student learning goals and other learning needs. These should: be based on an overview of the schools' goals; an analysis of the needs assessment data; be directly tied to enhanced student learning; and be measurable and attainable.
2. List the professional development goals for the district. These could be SMART goals.
   a. Specific: Be specific about what is to be accomplished
   b. Measurable: Identify how the goal will be measured
   c. Attainable: Ensure the capacity exists to accomplish the goal
   d. Results Based: Identify the benchmarks and outcomes for the goal
   e. Time-bound: Set a specific timeframe for completing the goal
3. Provide an explanation of how the district professional development goals align with the district priorities goals and the systemic goals of the district.

The identified student learning goals of the Township of Union School district for the 2014-2015 school years include:

- Improved skills in the areas of reading, language arts, writing and mathematics.
- Increasing state standardized test scores.
- Motivating reluctant learners.
- Addressing the needs of a diverse student population with various multicultural issues.
- Supporting inclusion and mainstreaming of special needs students by improving pedagogy in the co-teaching classroom.
- Addressing the various learning styles and strategies through differentiated instruction.
- Addressing bullying, harassment and intimidated through conflict resolution and character education programs.
- Utilizing technology, whenever possible, in the classroom.
- Increase technological literacy for students and teachers alike.

The identified professional development goals for the Township of Union school district for the 2014-2015 school years include:

- Increasing educators' competency in using technology in their daily lessons.
- Using behavior modification programs to improve classroom management.
- Use of differentiated lessons and learning plans.
- Enabling educators to select, construct, and implement formative and summative assessment strategies for monitoring student learning.

- Influencing classroom practice through use of professional learning communities.

These goals will be measured in a variety of ways including but not limited to:
- Teacher plan book documentation
- Teacher formal and informal observations via Teachscape methods.
- Measuring student discipline referrals, detentions, absences, and suspensions.
- Use of standardized test scores, academic proficiency exams, teacher-made formative and summative assessments, and pre and post assessments.
- Teacher reflection through student performance analyses
- Responses to online Teachscape survey questions.
- Evidence via artifacts.

The district has identified academic growth, particularly an improvement on standardized testing and a closing of the achievement gap in all areas, as its goal. The professional development goals are aligned to coordinate with this effort. Student outcomes are improved when all members of the learning community are provided with staff development that is relevant and collaborative.

SECTION ❷   BUILDING A DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:
D. District Professional Development Opportunities

Provide your responses to the following questions:

1. Describe the professional development structures and processes that will be used in the district. For instance, will professional development opportunities be offered for team based learning, online learning, workshops or other venues? Will partnerships be developed with universities, county colleges, and other educational organizations to support adult learning in the schools? Will district offerings provide sustained support for implementation of new skills? How will consultants, institutes, and conferences support district professional development goals? In this section describe the varieties of contexts in which professional development will be offered rather than a listing of trainings or a catalog of events.
2. What are some of the key core curriculum content standard areas on which your district will focus the professional development? What other district initiatives will be targeted for intensive learning?
3. How will the district support groups of schools whose professional development goals are closely aligned? How will the district support the diversity of school professional development goals?
4. How will the district address professional learning gaps not addressed in schools?
5. How are teachers and administrators being supported in developing productive team structures and protocols that focus on results for students?
6. How will the district plan be communicated to all stakeholders?
7. Summarize the connection between student learning goals and the professional development opportunities.

Professional development in the Township of Union School district is offered in a variety of differentiated formats to suit our own professionals' learning needs, styles, and profiles as well as to exemplify best practices in teaching both students and adults. We currently offer afterschool workshops on many subjects, ranging from technology to research-based strategies. Due to the concern of Danielson's domains and impending SGOs, we have offered numerous opportunities to hone and develop these skills for teachers in the district. At the elementary schools, there are professional learning community meetings based on the needs assessments of the district. The district has also contracted with outside consultants and experts to assist in the common core and PARCC trainings.

The core curriculum content standards and the academic proficiencies which the district will be focusing on deal with improving literacy skills across the curriculum. The CCCS require teachers to pair different subject areas in their teaching approach. The students must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. This literacy encompasses visual literacy, media literacy, textual literacy, numerical literacy, technology literacy, and network literacy. This is an important issue in our professional development quest, as we must help our district educators reexamine their own assignments and traditional teaching strategies. Because our world is changing so rapidly, no traditional curriculum and methodology can

sufficiently supply students with fact-based learning needed for the challenges they will face. Through carefully designed staff development, we can enable educators to gain concrete examples of how literacy can be integrated into core subjects, while making the teaching and learning of core subjects more relevant to the demands of the 21st century. By utilizing more team based learning, we are hoping to help our schools and teachers reflect and evaluate where they are on the road to being a 21st century learning environment.

Future district initiatives targeted for intensive learning will be identified through needs assessments, test scores and state mandates.

The School Improvement Panels reviewed each school's previous professional development plan to find out individual needs and discuss commonalities that various schools can achieve together. There is also a hope to create a professional development community with which we can discuss things with the chairs of each building committee, and amongst teachers in each individual school building.

The district is highly cognizant of the differing demographics of the district and supports the individualized goals of each of its schools. The diversity of these programs is coordinated with the individual building needs.

A significant challenge that we are currently facing in our district is selecting the staff development approach that aligns most clearly with the assumptions and beliefs of our staff members, and produces the results desired for students. When everyone is on board, a change in behavior accelerates; however, when these beliefs aligned with a staff development program contradict the long-held beliefs of our participants, this change is difficult. According to research, no single ingredient has greater impact on student achievement than the quality of the teacher in the classroom (Haycock, 1998). We use Haycock's view of effective professional development where teachers are engaged in discussions about what they are teaching, how they are teaching, and about the results they are getting with students and how to improve them. We are also striving for these conversations to be able to occur during the school day for teachers to meet and examine student work, evaluate it against standards, and determine strategies for getting better results.

It is crucial for educators to proactively communicate with each other to achieve better results in their individual classrooms. The district provides afterschool workshops to help our educators communicate better with each

other, share information and create classroom environments that are more conducive to learning.

The district plan will be distributed to all the stakeholders in the district at the beginning of the school year. It will be discussed at PLC and faculty meetings. It will also be posted on the district website.

The ScIPs realize that with the increasing expectations for students, manifested through our own state standardized tests, academic proficiencies and 21st Century Learning Initiatives, it shows the importance of the effect that adult learning has on our students' eventual learning. There is an explicit correlation between teacher learning and student achievement results. Current research has also redefined our own notion of professional development, as we have moved toward building- based professional development. We know that professional development is not just about what the teachers want to know. While the district gives us 15 hours of professional development yearly, this may be insufficient because research has shown that professional development needs to be job-embedded throughout a teacher's work day in order to improve student learning, and we are currently working on existing measures to be able to incorporate this more effectively i.e. assigning Teachscape videos and colleague observation in the classroom.

SECTION ② BUILDING A SCHOOL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

E. Professional Development Resources

1. Include a description of time allocation and supporting resources needed to meet the professional development goals. Collaborative school teams can indicate how time for professional learning is created. For instance, is time provided for professional learning in interdisciplinary, grade level, or content area collaborative teams and staff meetings? Do teachers use planning time for collaborative professional learning? What resource materials and consultant expertise are provided for professional learning?
2. Identify the resources and structures in place in the school that demonstrate that the school community values and nurtures quality professional development for adult learners. These might include dedicated professional learning days or summer or after school opportunities.

District-dedicated professional development is scheduled to be offered three times during the year as full-day collaborative Professional Development workshops, running from 8 am until 1 pm, as well as a variety of after school programs. During faculty and department meetings, various PD programs are offered as well. Course offerings at various local universities, colleges and educational organizations are routinely offered, and staff members are encouraged to participate in order to support their adult learning. Mentoring is also offered, which allows the collaboration of veteran teachers and new teachers. The observation of teaching practices of other faculty members is also encouraged.

Some staff members will collaborate during common prep periods (grade level meetings) to discuss relevant issues pertaining to the grade level. Monthly PLC meetings will be held to support each other in improving areas of student weakness, as well as to share strategies and ideas that have led to student improvement. Co-teaching support model lessons are used during the school day to demonstrate a variety of instructional strategies. Resource teachers work with general education teachers to provide instruction that is differentiated and meets the needs of all learners.

The ScIPs, in conjunction with administration, plan, implement and monitor staff development in the district and provide invaluable support for teachers in their pursuit of professional learning goals.

The district leadership encourages collaborative professional development to occur as job embedded discussions as much as possible considering the obstacles the district faces in terms of budgeting, scheduling and staffing.

SECTION 2 **BUILDING A DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:**

F. Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation of the School Professional Development Plan

Provide your responses to the following questions:

1. What knowledge, skills or behaviors will educators learn as a result of the District Professional Development Plan and what evidence will you have to indicate staff has learned new skills?
2. What student data will be used to determine how these knowledge, skills or behaviors impact student learning?
3. What additional data is needed to support the program evaluation process?
4. How will the District Professional Development Plan encourage job-embedded collaboration and what is the evidence to support this?
5. What data are needed to answer the evaluation questions? For instance, the Local Professional Development Committee might consider the following questions:
   - How might you consider holding district-wide focus groups or conduct surveys to get feedback on district professional development offerings?
   - How might you use school level program evaluation data to provide more input on the district professional development plan?
   - How might you examine and tabulate individual evaluation forms from specific events or team meetings to determine usefulness of professional learning offered in the past that you might repeat for other staff?

The educators in the Township of Union will develop a repertoire of effective and research-based teaching strategies created through collaborative efforts. These will include 21st century skills dealing with technology and those other skills identified by each individual building ScIP. This is an on-going process taking place district wide. The district will be able to measure the results of these initiatives through standardized testing results, surveys, academic proficiencies, formative and summative assessments, and periodic feedback garnered on Teachscape.

Evidence of the aforementioned include teacher lesson plans and formal and informal observations. Teachers are using more formative data analysis to drive instructional practices. Academic proficiency exams at all schools are being used to analyze student learning. Subsequent professional development will continue to be offered as support.

All of the ScIP plans offer opportunities for job-embedded collaborative professional development. Every building plan has its own building-level goals and objectives. Also all schools meet in professional learning community meetings. The documentation is available through the building administrator and includes agenda items and attendance.

The evaluation data is gathered on Teachscape. Each ScIP panel has the ability to create their own evaluation survey specific to their professional development and/or building needs. A variety of additional assessment tools are available on Teachscape.

SECTION ③ PLAN SUMMARY FOR DISTRICT PLAN

Each school is asked to complete a one page summary of key elements of their plan for inclusion in the district plan. Please provide a short narrative description for each of the sections of the plan:

1. Reflection: Identify key elements of previous professional development you will leverage in the new plan..
2. Needs Assessment: Submit the school definition of student achievement. Identify key findings from needs assessments.
3. Professional Development Goals: Identify the professional development goals connected to the student learning goals for the school/district.
4. Professional Development Opportunities: Identify the processes and structures the school will use to provide professional learning opportunities.
5. Professional Development Resources: Identify the resources that will ensure professional learning is ongoing.
6. Evaluation: Identify your goals for evaluation of your professional development in the first year.

Our district remains committed to building-based, job-embedded professional development throughout the school year to meet the identified needs of our students and staff. Training will be designed to be in-depth and with follow up, to provide teachers with tools to utilize in their classrooms which will enhance student learning.

In order for students to achieve, they need to learn how to inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge, as well as draw conclusions, make informed decisions, and apply knowledge to new situations, thereby creating new knowledge to assist them in becoming lifelong learners. Using this newly acquired knowledge, students will then be able to assume personal responsibility to participate ethically and productively in our society, while pursuing personal and aesthetic growth. Needs assessments have identified several areas to be addressed through professional development. These areas include providing more time for teachers to evaluate student progress, workshops on how to modify curriculum to meet the needs of students, differentiated instruction, alternative assessments, use of technology in the instructional and evaluative process, behavior management techniques, development of reading, writing and math skills, cooperative learning, and character education.

Our professional development goals are based on the identified needs of the students in each building. It is expected that these needs will evolve as we conduct on-going formative and summative assessments. Currently identified goals include showing an increase in mathematics and language arts literacy competencies, narrowing the achievement gap, creating behavior plans, and implementing a variety of evidence-based instructional strategies in the classroom.

The district will continue to provide three in-service days for all staff. Additional courses are offered on a variety of topics through the learning portal. Staff is encouraged to make use of professional days as well when approved by the Board of Education. Teachers may also continue their education through colleges, universities, and online programs. In addition, opportunities for professional development are offered at faculty and department meetings.

The ScIPs plan, implement, and monitor professional development in the district and provide support for teachers as they pursue their professional learning goals. They also meet to discuss school and district goals.

Evaluations will be conducted to determine whether short and long term goals have been met. The ScIPs will use surveys, staff feedback, discussion groups and data analysis to determine the effectiveness of the professional development plan. The recommendations will be used to develop goals and objectives for future professional development plans.