

Bend-La Pine Schools' Leadership Team Critical Friends Protocol for Design Plan Drafts Review

Purpose

The critical friends protocol is a process that allows teams to reflect deeply about important issues. Inherent in this process is a genuine inquiry stance on the part of all participants. The conversation is intended to ensure clarity of purpose, to question your own assumptions, and to provide insight into next steps for addressing issues raised in the process.

Preparation

Each group will need a timekeeper who is not the presenter. Timekeepers should give a silent one-minute warning when needed.

Process

Step 1: Overview of design plan's two strategic goals (10 minutes)

First, it's important for the presenting principal to provide background. Talk about the student- and teacher-level data that have shaped the school's priorities for adult learning. Also, discuss the process used to involve staff in the design plan. Finally, talk about how their own equity stance informed the plan.

Then, the presenting principal will distribute the one-page action plans for each of the school's strategic goals. They should allow participants time to review these, and then discuss why the school leaders believe these action plans will be the best ways to move the school forward toward its goals. In addition, they should talk about the implementation and/or outcome data they will be monitoring over the course of the year.

Step 2: Clarifying questions (5 minutes)

During this time, participants who are not from the presenting school should ask questions to make sure they understand the plan, the rationale, the monitoring data, etc.

Step 3: Listeners' responses (5 minutes)

During this time, the presenting school principal and their team should not speak. Their role is to take notes.

The other participants should begin with quick affirmations. These should include specific feedback about what has been done well. Again, these might relate to the process, the rationale for the selected goals and actions, the actions themselves, etc.

After affirmations, participants should dig into their wonderings, concerns, next steps, etc. Some guiding thoughts:

- Which groups of students are clearly the focus of the key actions of the plan? Which are not? Why?
- Does the action plan require significant adult learning across the school? If not, where might the school dig in more?

- What monitoring data of adult actions and student outcomes is missing that might help the school measure their progress?
- Are you aware of resources that could help the school in its work?

Step 4: Final thoughts from design plan presenter (5 minutes)

The only speakers during this portion of the activity should be the presenting principal and members of their team. They should begin by thanking the other participants. Then, the next step is to summarize some key ideas, questions, etc. that they heard. Finally, they close by reflecting on their next steps as the instructional leader of the school. What do they need to learn? How can other school and district leaders support them?