



edWeb PD Guide

New Models for Personalized Professional Learning



Anytime, Anywhere Peer-to-Peer Learning



Personalized, Professional Learning — Anytime, Anywhere

edWeb.net is an award-winning professional learning network that helps engaged and innovative educators share their best ideas and practices — anytime, anywhere — with educators around the country and the world.

In April 2021, edWeb.net released its 2021 Professional Learning Survey at a time when supporting educators with current and effective professional learning has never been more important with the COVID-19 pandemic. Educators had to pivot instantly to remote learning and make unprecedented changes in the delivery of instruction and support for students and families.

edWeb has provided preK-12 educators with free online professional learning communities, edWebinars, and CE certificates for over 10 years and was on hand when schools switched to remote learning in the spring of 2020. Professional learning programs were adapted immediately for the change in circumstances. edWeb experienced a 45% increase in community membership and a 66% increase webinar viewership as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

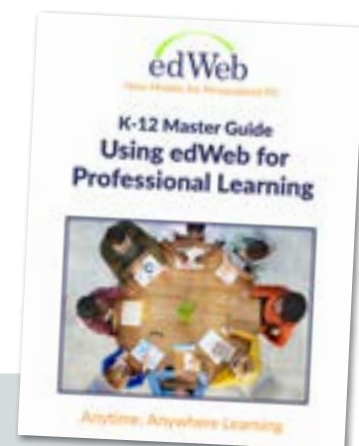
edWeb is a community of over 1 million educators from preK through higher education who are committed to lifelong learning for themselves and to help their students learn more, achieve more, be more creative, and be better prepared for life. We are able to provide these professional learning programs for free thanks to our sponsors and partners.

Our research and models for professional learning can provide inspiration and ideas for personalized professional learning that gives educators more choice over their learning and the opportunity to share ideas and get support from their peers.

Lisa



Lisa Schmucki
Founder & CEO
lisa@edweb.net



Find more edWeb guides for personalized PD at home.edweb.net/pd-plans



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edWeb is a free social learning community where you can create and join communities, attend edWebinars, earn CE certificates, and share ideas with fellow educators.

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Join the edWeb community – 1 million strong!



“My heading is exploding (in a good way) with all the new advice, resources and ideas shared to help my colleagues and me for the upcoming school year.”



edWeb.net is a free professional learning community of over 1 million educators.

Explore the edWeb world of personalized, peer-to-peer professional learning.

- View our edWebinars live or on-demand and earn CE certificates for your PD hours.
- Create communities for your school or district, or any group of professionals in education.



edWeb gives teachers, librarians, and administrators from preK-12 the widest choice of professional learning topics – so there is something for every educator. Here are some of the ways you can explore edWeb individually or as a group and expand your professional learning horizons with engaging edWebinars and a supportive professional community.

- edWeb hosts 400 live edWebinars a year on the widest range of topics. Educators can live chat with educators all around the world for a real-time, collaborative learning experience.
- edWebinars are recorded, and there are over 2,000 available on-demand for viewing anytime, anywhere.
- Educators earn CE certificates for free when they attend live edWebinars or view our on-demand recordings. CE certificates are widely accepted by schools, districts and states for teacher PD hours.

Learn if edWeb CE certificates are accepted in your state:

<https://tinyurl.com/StateCEmap>





- edWeb professional learning communities provide online networking with peers on topics of particular interest on a wide range of subjects. edWeb professional learning communities include archived edWebinars, resources, and discussion forums.
- Create your own private community on edWeb as a professional learning hub for your school, district, or state. Your teachers can access all of edWeb's professional learning programs for free, and you can add your own.



edWeb fulfills the need for a professional social and learning network that is focused on the needs of educators. We've received many awards and widespread recognition for our work. We value the comments we receive from edWebbers the most!



Please explore all edWeb has to offer!

Join edWeb for free at www.edweb.net/join

Helpful Links

edWeb Calendar: home.edweb.net/webinars

edWebinar Recordings: home.edweb.net/browsewebinars

Professional Learning Communities:
home.edweb.net/professional-learning-communities-with-free-webinars

Ideas for Personalized PD: home.edweb.net/tag/pd-stories

CE Certificates and State Map: <https://home.edweb.net/ce-certificate>



"We are not isolated in our common concerns regarding student learning in light of the COVID pandemic, and it has been a great resource to find solutions to common problems shared by fellow educators."

edWeb 2021 Professional Learning Survey

edWeb.net has just released its 2021 Professional Learning Survey at a time when supporting educators with current and effective professional learning has never been more important with the COVID-19 pandemic. Educators had to pivot instantly to remote learning and make unprecedented changes in the delivery of instruction and support for students and families.

edWeb has been benchmarking members' attitudes about professional learning for four years. This year, questions were added to the annual survey to get feedback on how professional learning has helped with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was sent via email the week of April 12th to 125,000 edWeb members and received 1,295 replies, a 1% response rate, with no incentive. Key takeaways from the survey include the following:

edWeb members continue to rate webinars as the type of professional learning that helps the most.

The most important features of professional learning are that the content is current and relevant, and that they can participate on their own time.

The top reasons edWeb members participate in professional learning are to:

- improve learning for their students
- learn new ideas and practices
- improve teaching.

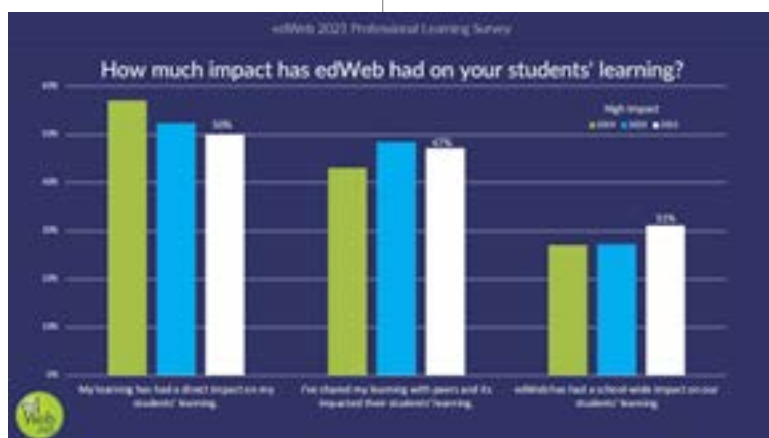
edWeb members continue to report that edWeb has an impact on their own students' learning, and that the knowledge is shared and frequently has a school-wide impact on student learning.

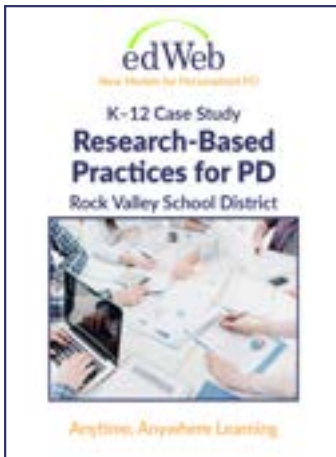
62% of respondents said that edWeb was better than other professional learning programs for getting support during the pandemic.

edWeb members report that in three areas of importance during the pandemic, edWeb has been very helpful: social-emotional issues (66%), remote learning (63%), and equity (60%).

Educators provided over 1,100 comments as part of the survey that provide a deeper understanding of educators' needs. Overall, the comments reflect the importance of providing professional learning that helps educators connect and collaborate with their peers, "We are not isolated in our common concerns regarding student learning in light of the COVID pandemic, and it has been a great resource to find solutions to common problems shared by fellow educators."

Download the complete 2021 Teacher Professional Learning Survey
home.edweb.net/2021survey





edWeb.net has made it possible for Rock Valley Community School District to put a professional development program into place that embodies many of the features most important for improving instruction.

K-12 Case Study: Research-Based Practices for PD

Prepared by Cambridge Learning Group

Rock Valley Community School District in Iowa relies on edWeb.net to support its professional development program for teachers. Their program embodies four of the key features identified by educational researchers as characterizing both high-quality professional learning experiences, the effective design of online communities for teachers, and best practices for integrating informal online professional learning with formal district professional development. In each case, edWeb.net provides critical support that empowers Rock Valley leaders to implement research-based practices:

- Content-based professional development through edWeb.net resources applied to instruction
- Active learning through structured online activities and classroom application
- Collaboration that builds knowledge and makes collective decisions

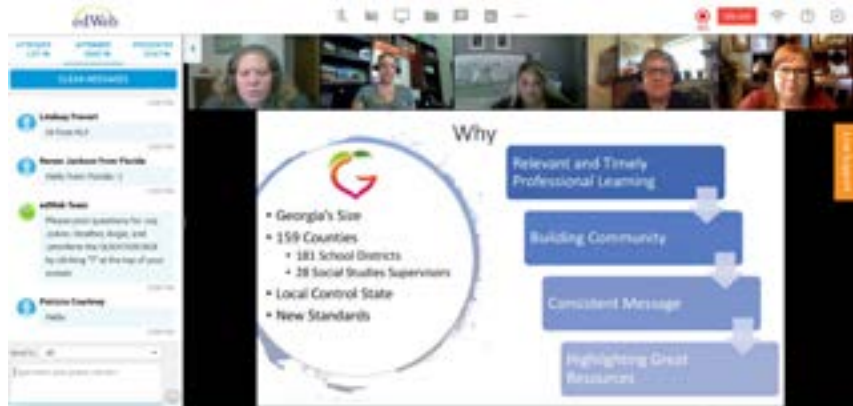
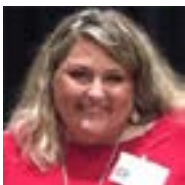
This case study explains each of these key practices and shows how they align with the research base. Information about the Rock Valley professional development program comes from review of Rock Valley's edWeb.net community content and interviews with the district leader responsible for it and with two elementary school teachers who have participated in it, one in her second year in the classroom and a second with more than two decades of experience. The characteristics of effective professional development described are from a recent synthesis of research to date performed by the Learning Policy Institute (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner, 2017). The characteristics of effective online communities and effective integration of informal and formal professional learning draw on research conducted and synthesized by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology (Cambridge, 2014; Cambridge & Nussbaum-Beach, 2014).

Sustained development through personal learning plans linked to activities in edWeb.net has made it possible for Rock Valley Community School District to put a professional development program into place that embodies many of the features most important for improving instruction. Rachel Langenhorst, a district leader responsible for developing the professional development programs the district uses, acknowledges that some of the activities could have been supported using general-purpose tools, such as Google Docs, and some do incorporate such tools. However, she says that she uses edWeb.net because it provides a central hub through which to link together a "hot mess" of free tools. It offers an intuitive interface, keeps everything in one place, and offers extensive community administration options.

Download the case study to read the full report and the alignment to best practice and relevant research.

home.edweb.net/edwebs-research-based-practices-personalized-professional-learning

The Georgia DOE Social Studies Department and three of their virtual specialists presented an edWebinar on their three-year journey growing virtual learning communities.



New Models for Professional Learning Practice

The following professional learning case studies and practices provide inspiration and models for how innovative educators use edWeb.

A State-Wide Model for Online Professional Learning

Faced with implementing new standards and inquiry-based instruction for over 180 school districts and over 30,000 social studies teachers with a department of two people, the social studies team at the Georgia Department of Education turned to virtual learning communities on edWeb.net to reach Georgia teachers and leaders.

The GaDOE Social Studies Department and three of their virtual specialists presented an edWebinar on their three-year journey in creating and maintaining virtual learning communities for social studies for every grade level and course from K through 12. In their presentation, they shared:

- Why they set up virtual communities the way they did
- Who is involved in their success
- How they did it
- The results
- The impact on student learning
- What they've learned over the past two years as they start year three

The presentation featured:

- Joy Hatcher, Social Studies Program Manager, Georgia Department of Education
- JoAnn Wood, Social Studies Program Specialist, Georgia Department of Education

Who were joined by three virtual specialists:

- Heather MacKenzie, Instructional Coordinator for Social Studies, Henry County Schools, GA

“Our goal was to find a way to provide professional learning for content and instructional support throughout the state of Georgia. I’ve always been a proponent of building community. We’re better together; we’re stronger together.”

— Joy Hatcher
Social Studies Program
Manager, GaDOE

- Angie Battle, Fourth Grade Teacher, Warner Robins, GA
- Jennifer Zoumberis, First Grade Teacher, Perry, GA

When Georgia implemented new standards, Joy and JoAnn, in charge of the social studies program for the GaDOE, had to find a way to make professional development timely and relevant across a large state. It was a challenge for a department of two people to do this for 159 counties with 181 school districts and only 29 social studies supervisors in the state. They built an online professional learning program that uses the edWeb.net platform in combination with webinars and 14 virtual specialists in social studies at all grade levels. This model provides a blueprint and guidance that can be adapted for any state-wide content area.

Joy talked about their goals for the program.

“Our goal was to find a way to provide professional learning for content and instructional support throughout the state of Georgia. I’ve always been a proponent of building community. We’re better together; we’re stronger together. I thought if there was some way we could connect teachers in districts that have only one school with other teachers in the state, we could expand our reach and be much more productive together. It’s important to provide a consistent message and highlight good resources. We needed an outlet for educators to come together and talk about those things.

We decided to go with edWeb to host virtual learning communities, and we decided to create one virtual learning community for each grade from K-12, plus a virtual learning community for leadership across the state for anyone who was tasked with supporting social studies at the school or district level.

We were able to call on a cadre of talented teachers to help us with moderating and facilitating the communities. The virtual specialist team is amazing and continues to serve as teachers or directors while also serving as virtual specialists for their thriving communities.”

In talking about the importance the virtual specialists, Joy said, “The who is the heart of what we do.”

In the next part of the presentation, Joy led the discussion about how they set the program up.

“We created a framework for professional learning for every grade level for inquiry in the social studies classroom. We use edWeb as a platform for every grade level. The virtual specialist is in charge of facilitating discussion in the discussion forums, emailing members when there’s a new resource they’re posting or if there is a particular opportunity that’s coming up.

Once a month, the virtual specialists are trained via a webinar by Joy and JoAnn on a topic from the framework document, and they record the webinar, put it on YouTube and host the link in the edWeb community, so it’s accessible to teachers at any time. New teachers are joining all the time. All of the information and resources





are archived in the edWeb communities so teachers can go back and choose things that are relevant for them. Social studies departments use this as a resource as well, and play webinars at department meetings, talk about the particular focus, and how they can use the information in their classrooms."

The edWeb professional learning communities (PLCs) and the webinars work together. They've presented 23 webinars so far in just over two years. The webinars provide an op-

portunity to see inside the classrooms and how the resources work.

To reach teachers across the state to get participation in the program and to encourage engagement, they use every communication channel they can think of:

- Word of mouth
- Announcements in the GaDOE newsletter
- Emails to teachers in the state
- Emails to department chairs to ask their teachers to sign up
- Social media messages daily
- Attending as many Georgia state conferences as possible

To boost participation and engagement, they make PLCs on edWeb and webinars as condensed, informative, and relevant as possible. They always try to make the program easy and accessible.

- Teachers are busy, so the webinar recordings make it convenient. It provides pajama PD. Teachers can watch webinars on the weekend while they have their coffee. The viewership of the recordings after the fact is enormous.
- In the edWeb communities, they are constantly adding resources, asking questions, and starting conversations. A virtual specialist can start a community discussion, but members can, too. The community is a great forum for teachers to ask questions and get answers.
- The leadership community has been invaluable. Heather, who leads that community said, "I'm not an expert so it's been so helpful to reach other experts. A lot of the administrators in the state may not have a social studies background, so I can provide support for them."

The virtual specialists receive a little bit of compensation, but it was clear from the presentation and the joy they all had in talking about the success of the program that it's a true labor of love. As one virtual specialist said, "We love our jobs and the chance to connect with teachers." Joy and JoAnn are always looking for special opportunities for their virtual specialists, like presenting at conferences.

The virtual specialists provided their reflections on lessons learned and the benefits from their online professional learning program, now in its third year.

"The feedback comes in and they say 'I love how you're doing this' and they're taking the information back to their classrooms and you realize you really are making a difference."

— Jennifer Zoumberis
Virtual Learning Specialist,
GaDOE

“The reason I chose edWeb is not just because we can create communities, but also manage who joins the community...When we get our teachers on edWeb, edWeb gives them access to hundreds of other communities about things they’re interested in...It puts them into our communities for Georgia, but it also offers them communities for professional development on their own, which is particularly valuable for smaller districts that don’t have access to this kind of PD.”
— Joy Hatcher

Heather: The lesson I’ve learned about being a virtual specialist is to be meaningfully informed and connected.

Jennifer: It was new and you’re nervous so it’s challenging, but then the feedback comes in and they say “I love how you’re doing this” and they’re taking the information back to their classrooms and you realize you really are making a difference. Their feedback helps tweak the webinars to provide what teachers want and need.

Angie: It is a true professional learning community. It’s not just us picking out of the air what we’re going to talk about or being told what to present. We’re having conversations with teachers and administrators in the field. It’s a common ground and very beneficial. I can get teachers answers to questions they have about the standards, and I’m learning and sharpening my knowledge, and that benefits my students in my classroom, so that’s a win-win.

Heather: It’s been a great leveler, and I love the equity of support it provides.

Joy: There’s a connection. Before we had these professional learning communities, if a teacher had a question and is in a district without a social studies administrator, who would they go to for clarification? Most teachers don’t know how to contact the Georgia DOE or are hesitant to ask their questions. It’s created this community of support in Georgia where it’s not top-down, it’s all of us together, all in the same direction, and a consistent message which is important. Like Heather said, it’s an equalizer. We’re connecting teachers with vast content knowledge with teachers who are tech-savvy. How do we know that people are paying attention? How do we know it’s making a difference? Many are lurkers but we get feedback, we see the webinar clicks, they come up to us at conferences.

JoAnn: We’re very much a community, a family.

Joy: For webinars, there can be obstacles with connectivity, or you’re on a webinar at school and they are making an announcement, or you have to go home because there’s no quiet place at school, and then there are dogs barking.

Heather: It’s important to have a moderator. Bandwidth can be tricky. So a moderator is crucial to help with tech issues.

Do they recommend edWeb as a platform for this kind of program?

Joy responded, “Yes! The reason I chose edWeb is not just because we can create communities, but also manage who joins the community. We can’t pay a virtual specialist to manage a community with hundreds of thousands of people all around the world. With edWeb, we can control who joins. When we get our teachers on edWeb, edWeb gives them access to hundreds of other communities

about things they’re interested in like gamification, 21st-century learning, differentiation, and much more. It puts them into our communities for Georgia, but it also offers them communities for professional development on their own, which is particularly



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*"Engagement equals
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— Angie Battle
Virtual Learning Specialist,
GaDOE

valuable for smaller districts that don't have access to this kind of PD."

The presentation concluded with a summary of the results. The program started in 2016 and grew to over 4,800 members in the first year. The leadership community grew to 700 in the first year and, considering there are only 28 designated social studies administrators in the state, that is outstanding. In year two, the program grew to over 8,000 members.

How do you know it's impacting student learning?

Joy: The amount of leadership we're seeing from social studies teachers, the level of the questions that teachers have for us, shows us how they're changing their daily lessons and giving over control of their classrooms to students with the inquiry model. We're seeing a much larger percentage of teachers do that.

Heather: Joy and JoAnn have re-ignited and re-energized the teachers, and enthusiasm is contagious. Teachers are growing in their confidence, in their content knowledge, their pedagogy, and in their excitement. They feel they are not alone, and they have a place to go for resources. They get excited and there's no doubt that's translated into measurable achievement in the classroom.

Angie: Engagement equals achievement. I heard one of my reluctant learners say the other day, "I just love social studies," and my heart went boom!

Jennifer: The love for social studies! The biggest reward I see is that my kids are loving social studies and giving each other fist bumps.

Watch the edWebinar at home.edweb.net/webinar/edweb4pd20181001

New Models for Professional Learning is a free professional learning community on edWeb.net that provides online coaching and ideas on how to use edWeb as a free platform and resource for personalized PD.

Join the community at edweb.net/models4pd.

District Model for Online Professional Learning: Spencerport School District

The Spencerport School District (NY) was looking for a professional learning solution for some of their teachers who can't stay after hours for face-to-face PD because of family responsibilities. New York State requires that teachers earn 100 hours of professional learning in five years for their license renewal, and teachers were struggling to earn those hours. Spencerport wanted to find a solution that could help with the issue of equal access to high-quality professional learning to meet the needs of all of their teachers. Those PD needs coincided with the impact of COVID-19 pushing all learning to remote instruction in March 2020. Spencerport then needed a remote professional learning solution for all teachers for the remainder of the school year.



Spencerport created a private community on edWeb for all of their teachers so they could track their participation in the program. Teachers joined the free community and were then able to search the webinar recordings on a wide range of topics that aligned with district priorities.

The edWeb team worked with Lisa McCarthy and her team to create a program for the spring that would meet their goals and also provide more choice for teachers in selecting what programs they viewed. Teachers were required to view one or two webinars per week based on their role within the district.

When the coronavirus arrived, edWeb had programs immediately on COVID-19 and switching to remote learning, and there was an added benefit for teachers' assistants and nurses to watch programs, too.

Lisa McCarthy commented, "As we developed the program, we learned about the importance of teacher choice and ownership in their own professional learning. Within the district priorities, there were so many programs to choose from, and teachers continued viewing more programs, even when it wasn't required. edWeb provided a very positive experience for teachers. Teachers commented on how much they learned, and how they couldn't wait to share what they learned with their students and colleagues."

Read more at home.edweb.net/spencerport



“When you have administrators, teachers, and people in my position who are planning PD do so in a way that is meaningful to each and every teacher, in any content area – it’s really exciting. edWeb has been instrumental in helping us achieve this, because it’s easy to get to, easy to maneuver, and there’s something for everyone. To me, those are absolutely immeasurable qualities.”

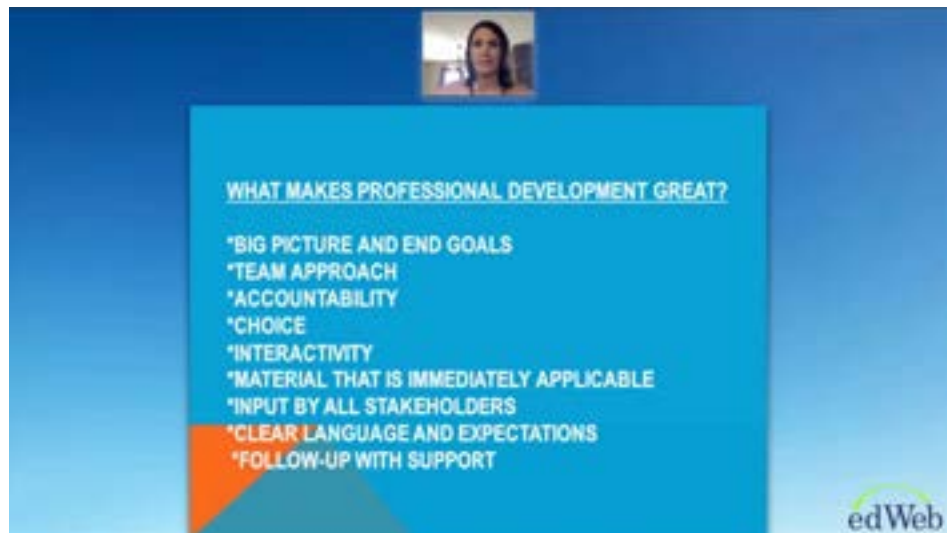
— Rachel Langenhorst,
Instructional Coach and
Tech Integrationist,
Rock Valley School District (IA)

Implementing a Personalized PD Program in Your District

Rachel Langenhorst, K-12 Technology Integrationist and Instructional Coach in Rock Valley, Iowa, presented an edWeb.net webinar on “Implementing a Personalized PD Program in Your District”, where she provided a guide for how educators can use edWeb in school districts as a tool to implement relevant and collaborative PD.

In a system where people learn in a variety of ways, one size does not fit all for PD programs. Districts must provide choice, allowing teachers to select what they want to learn while keeping district goals in mind. For teacher-selected PD, teachers should be provided with a plan for the time of day to work on PD, expectations for their learning, and a venue for sharing their learning. Rachel explained that Rock Valley uses their edWeb community page to have teachers post their learning reflections and feedback to others. Schools and districts can create their own community page on edWeb.net and use the community to easily connect with others, facilitate discussions in the discussion forum or blog, post resources to share, and more.

If teachers need any direction, Rachel provides help through the blog on Rock Valley’s community page. Her favorite feature of the blog is being able to easily spot any new posts, which will automatically appear on the community page. This feature works with discussion posts too. Along with joining a community for your school’s network, she recommended using edWeb to connect with others to build your own personal professional learning network.



View an edWebinar demonstrating how Rachel Langenhorst uses edWeb.net to implement a personalized professional learning program in her district

What Makes PD Great? Schools and districts can also use edWeb as an online meeting place. When introducing new topics or making announcements to groups of people, it can be difficult to gather everyone in person, especially in larger districts. An online venue proves valuable in these situations. edWeb community pages can be



“[edWeb] has really been much more of a great home for all of the different things we want to do...edWeb really allowed us to personalize [our PD platform]”

used to make announcements, post updates, and gather input.

When making any PD changes, schools should collaborate with district leaders and teachers, and get the input of all stakeholders, including parents. Schools should also have a plan worked out so that everyone is on this same page - what are you going to accomplish this year and when? People will want to participate if they know the school has put thought into developing a great PD program.

Rachel first came across edWeb as part of her graduate program and found that it has helped her with her own personal learning and has allowed her to guide the educators in her district through their own professional

development. She now uses edWeb in the graduate-level courses she teaches at Northwestern College, too.

“When you have administrators, teachers, and people in my position who are planning PD do so in a way that is meaningful to each and every teacher, in any content area – it’s really exciting. edWeb has been instrumental in helping us achieve this, because it’s easy to get to, easy to maneuver, and there’s something for everyone. To me, those are absolutely immeasurable qualities,” Rachel said.

For more tips on implementing a personalized PD program in your district, watch Rachel Langenhorst’s edWebinar at

home.edweb.net/webinar/implementing-personalized-pd-program



“We did a half day PD session with edWeb and it was amazing. My teachers said they got more out of that half-day than they had in the past 5 – 6 years of PD.”

— Dr. Robert Furman
Principal, South Park
Elementary School, PA

How a Principal Uses edWeb for Personalized PD

Dr. Robert Furman, elementary principal at Southpark Elementary School in PA, is a best-selling author and national keynote speaker. He talked with Lisa Schmucki, founder and CEO of edWeb.net, about how he uses edWeb.net to provide personalized PD that gets his teachers really motivated and excited about their professional learning.

Rob describes how successful it was the first time he asked his teachers to try using edWeb for PD. “We did a half-day PD session with edWeb and it was amazing. My teachers said they got more out of that half-day than they had in the past 5 – 6 years of PD. I made friends because they loved this PD so much. If they’re not interested they’re not going to put their heart and soul into it. But if you ask them to pick something that interests them, all of a sudden it’s meaningful, they WANT to do it.

Rob has continued to use edWeb to provide personalized PD, and his teachers absolutely love it. “It’s personalized professional development. Just like we should be personalizing instruction for our kids, administrators should be personalizing instruction for their teachers.”

Rob explained how their PD program works. At the beginning of the year, the teachers pick a topic they each want to work on individually, and they find 8 – 10 resources on the topic on edWeb – and there are so many topics. The teachers love it because edWeb is a one-stop-shop for great resources on all kinds of specific topics. It’s created a personalized PD system for the school and has made a huge impact on the teachers. So many times teachers ask “Is this professional development going to relate to me? Am I going to have to sit here for 4 hours and listen to garbage?” Well, that’s all gone by the wayside because now they do what they’re interested in, and they look forward to it.

When you look at student learning, we no longer have one class of 30 students. We should have 30 classes of 1 student because it all should be personalized. The same applies to professional development. Principals and administrators should be doing the exact same best practices for their teachers because they are in effect their students. “edWeb gives you a tool to make a very easy jump into personalized professional development.”

Listen to Dr. Furman’s interview on Education Talk Radio

Take the Risk, Take the Extra Step: Advice for School Leaders

Dr. Robert Furman, Principal of South Park Elementary, was interviewed by edWeb to gain an administrator’s perspective on providing quality professional development for teachers and the social aspect of learning. While Robert first discovered edWeb as a webinar presenter, he quickly realized the site’s potential as a best-practices research platform, an affordable source of teacher PD, and an opportunity for growth-focused evaluation.

Read more and listen to the interview at
home.edweb.net/take-risk-take-extra-step

