

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Angela Kelly

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

Hello empowered principals. Welcome to episode 322.

Welcome to *The Empowered Principal® Podcast*, a not so typical educational resource that will teach you how to gain control of your career and get emotionally fit to lead your school and your life with joy by refining your most powerful tool, your mind. Here's your host certified life coach Angela Kelly Robeck.

Well, hello my empowered leaders. Happy Tuesday. I cannot believe it's the end of February already. My goodness. It's been an amazing month because it's the week and the month of my birthday. Actually, my birthday is on February 22. So you're probably listening to this just after my birthday, but I have been celebrating for the month and for the week. It's glorious.

So I want to talk to you today about choosing effective professional development or in-service sessions for your staff. So I know many of you are tasked with having to decide topics or speakers or presenters or themes for in-service days or professional development days.

The reason this came to mind happened for me because I saw a post in a principal Facebook group recently that was asking for recommendations for a motivational speaker or a professional development presenter. Dozens of people started responding with links to their offers. I do this. I do that. Here's my book. This guy's great. People were either like self-promoting, or there were tons of people who were recommending people that they had hired for their school, and they loved them.

I saw this post, and I thought to myself, that's an interesting question. To pose out to random people that you don't know or know their schools and ask them to help you decide who you should hire for your professional development day.

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

So I, being the coach, I couldn't help myself. I responded to the author of this post by posing some questions for them to consider. These were the questions that I posed. What is your top desired outcome for this in-service? How do you want your staff to experience the day? How would you love for them to think, feel, and act as a result of the in-service? What are the short and the long term impacts you would like to create? Where are you as a staff right now? Where do you want to go?

Finally, do the promised outcomes of the presenters you are considering, do they align with your goals and vision? Because the truth is that if you're going to take a precious professional development day, an entire in-service day, you want to create an in-service with incredible intention. It matters how you spend that day. Minutes are like dollars. You want to be intentional and plan on the outcomes that you want.

You don't go to the grocery store and just throw a bunch of money up in the air. It feels like you do. But what you're really doing is you're intentionally choosing vegetables, fruits, salads. You're getting some meats and potatoes, some milk, some eggs, some bread. You're getting lunch for the kid's lunches or yourself. You're being intentional. You're going through the store and making decisions dollar by dollar what you want to buy and what you don't want to buy.

The same is true with your minutes. When you have professional development minutes, they're very precious, and you want to be intentional about how you're choosing to spend them. How you spend your professional development minutes with your staff is different than how somebody else needs to spend those dollars. Right?

There are some people who are allergic to flour or gluten, something. There's people with allergies, and they go to the store, and they can't buy any of that. That's not even on the menu. They don't spend their dollars on food they can't have or food that's not going to serve them. They spend

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

dollars on food that they can have and that will serve them and fuel them and give them the energy they need to live life.

Other people live on pastas and sandwiches, and they love that, and that's what feels good to their body. So they might not spend as much money on gluten free crackers. They might go and get some high quality bread, some high quality deli meats, perhaps they love to make homemade pastas. They're going to purchase different foods that fuel their body. There is no right answer or one answer. It's whatever is best for you.

So for this person, I said you've got to look inward here and ask yourself what are your goals? What do you want? What are the outcomes? How do you want people to feel? What do you want to change as a result? This has to come from you. Basically, when you put it out into the world, everybody's going to solicit you like pick me, pick me, pick me, which is self-serving, and it's just going to be more confusing for you.

So I posted this, and I just posted it for her benefit or his. I don't know who it was. It was anonymous maybe. But the author of this post responded back to me with the following statement.

“I appreciate your questions. This is my second year as the PD coordinator, and your questions have given me a perspective shift. Not from I need to fill up this time to a what are the goals mindset. So I sent out a Google Form requesting feedback. Based on the 25 responses, discipline and technology are two of the focal points. For me, I'm interpreting this as a need to address the well-being and mental health of both educators and students to foster a positive and supportive school culture.”

I'm assuming she's talking about the discipline part. I don't know the details of her responses. But the way she interpreted, there must have been a lot around the discipline. She interpreted like, “Whoa, we need to address the well-being and mental health of educators and students and foster a

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

positive and supportive school culture. Thank you so much for this feedback.”

This exchange with this person out there got me thinking about how site and district leaders select professional development for their schools. It also gave me some insight as to how leaders are thinking about how to make decisions for professional development. I get it. Here's what comes up. I did this too. We all do it because we're so busy.

Here are the thoughts driving our urge to just get a decision, get somebody hired, and check it off the list, right? It's one more thing to plan and prepare. I've got to get it done in time. There's a deadline. I just want to secure somebody before everybody's booked up. I need to fill up this time.

Because we want to rush through the process of planning and securing and preparing for this in-service day in a way that aligns to our goals and our outcomes, we fail to leverage the opportunity to move people along in this journey towards our goals. This is an opportunity. Every in-service you have, half day, full day, multiple days. They are precious, and they are opportunities to leverage everybody moving forward.

But because we feel so busy or because we're afraid or because we have deadlines, and we think the fastest way to get it done is to go out and ask other people. What do you do? I'll just choose what that is. Then I don't have to think. I don't have to look at my goals, I don't have to plan backwards. I don't have to think about what the outcomes are what we would need or where we're at or where we're going.

All of that requires brain power. Your brain's like oh, I don't want to put out that much effort. I don't have the time for that. So I'm just going to ask somebody else, I'm going to pick it and stick it. Sounds good, boom. But the problem would pick it and stick it in this scenario is that you're not picking and sticking with intention. It's whack a mole. You're just random.

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

This is why teachers get so frustrated with professional development. This is why they hate it and why they make fun of it on Bored Teachers or whatever, Teachers Pay Teachers, I don't know. Like whatever the platforms are, they're out there making fun of professional development in-service days because they don't feel aligned. They're not consistent. They're not congruent. They either are so boring they are random, or they're very inspirational but they don't really produce an outcome.

I want you to think about this. I always laugh when I see people posting this question online. Like hey, what did you do for professional development? Or who did you have to come speak at your school? Or I need some motivation at my school? Who did you hire? These people are amazing. I have friends who are motivational speakers, and they're amazing. They can produce high yield results.

But you just want to vet out for yourself what are the results I want to create? Which of these individuals has a program that will promise or guarantee or give me some kind of insurance that I'm going to get closer to my results? How does this inspirational speaker move my school forward closer to our goals?

So you just want to make sure that if you're going to go out and ask thousands of people for their input and you get hundreds of responses back now you have more than you can handle, right? You have more information than you can possibly ever sort through. So sometimes when we ask somebody thinking it's going to just be easier to choose whatever else somebody else has done because they love it. Then I don't have to think it through.

The problem is you get hundreds of responses. Now you're like oh, shoot, now I feel less assured of what I need to do and who I should pick. They all sound really good. There's so many of them, I have no idea. Now we're back in what I talked about last week about being in indecision. You have

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

to, as a leader, value your opinion of your decision. You have to trust your decisions. You have to value them. When you do so, the reason you feel this way is because you're making decisions with intention.

I've watched people what should I do, they ask, and they get tons of feedback. Now what they say is now I really don't know who I should hire. I don't even know what I'm looking for. I don't even know why I asked this question. Now I'm more confused. I'm more overwhelmed because you're thinking somebody else out there knows, or it's faster to ask somebody else. What's going to work for them will surely work for us.

But let's break down those thoughts. Is it true that you don't know who to hire, and you don't know what you're looking for? Think about how that feels versus I'm going to research because I'm not yet clear on what we need next. I'm going to review our goals and outcomes that I want for this day, and then I can research somebody who's in alignment to our goals and our values and the outcomes that we want.

Because I care more about creating a result than just checking the box of having the in-service planned. I want you to think about that. Think about caring more about just checking the box and getting it done because you're super busy. You're in a hurry. You don't want to plan and think about it because there's a million other things to get done, which is no guilt here. We've all done that.

Versus when it's time to decide and plan out in-services, you believe they're one of the most valuable uses of time, and that you care more about the outcome than the time that it takes to plan this in-service out with intention. Think about this. Other people's input will make this decision easier, better. They know what's best for my school.

Versus more opinions actually need more opinions to sort out. It makes my decision harder. Other people can't possibly know what's best for your

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

school. They don't even work there. They don't know your people. They don't know your goals. They don't know where you're at. They don't know where you're headed. They don't know your vision. That's your job. It's your job to know what your staff needs to move them forward.

Instead of wanting to just make the decision quickly to hurry up and get out of that decision. It says though, when we are in that zone, when we're like I just want to make this and get out, it's almost the opposite of what I talked about last week.

Last week, I talked about making clear, intentional decisions. This week I'm talking about trying to rush through a decision without intention just to be done. Like the top priority is to have the decision made. I just want this decision made. I just want it over with. I don't want to think about it anymore. I just want to check the box, put it away, and be done with it.

Instead of wanting that to be the priority, what if you tried shifting to wanting to make the decision based on the outcome that you're going to create from the in-service? Because you can decide to be done, just check the box and get it done. Or you can decide based on your desired outcome in mind.

I know that it doesn't feel good to have to spend more time planning, but I want you to consider the benefit of that. There is a cost. It's called you have to invest some time, but the benefit of that, the outcome, the return on investment that you receive is that your professional development actually creates a result and moves the needle forward.

Because what is the goal of professional development? Professional development means developing people professionally. What does that look like? How do we know that somebody has developed professionally? The way that I think about professional development is the same way I think about personal development, which is the beauty of EPC by the way.

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

The Empowered Principal® Collaborative is about professional and personal development because you cannot develop professionally if you're not developing personally. It's all one package. So when you think about professional development, what that means is that people have developed the criteria in which that we determined that they have evolved or transformed, have developed, into a more advanced version of themselves as a teacher is that they create different desired outcomes for themselves.

So when somebody is developed, the results and the outcomes that they produce as a teacher or as a principal in their lives, it changes. The outcomes change. They create different outcomes for themselves. They create more desired outcomes for themselves.

Why do they do that? Because they have evolved and transformed how they behave. Their actions are different, their decision making is different. Their behavior is different. How they approach teaching and learning and how they approach their colleagues and how they approach their own professional concept, like their self-identity. It's changed.

Why does behavior change? Because they feel differently when you go to a professional development, and the concepts are offered, and it shifts an emotional energy in them. That happens because they're thinking differently, right? So people develop professionally when thoughts shift, when feelings shift, emotions, right? Emotional energy. Their energy shifts. When their energy shifts, their actions and decisions shift. When the actions and decisions shift, then the outcomes and results shift. That's how you know somebody's developed.

People develop based on what they perceive or believe to be true or possible. What you want in a professional development training or in-service is for people to walk away with new ideas, new thoughts that they had never thought before that inspire an energy in them that is new, that

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

feels different, that invites them to think differently, that plants seeds of thought.

Oh, I didn't know that was possible for me. Now, I think it might be. That's interesting. Or oh, I used to think that was true. But after this training, I now think this is true. That's new for me. When they feel something new and they think something new and there's a seed planted in their brain, that seed turns into emotional energy. That energy turns into momentum. That momentum fuels action. Those actions create new behaviors, new results.

So when their perspective shifts and when their belief changes or shifts, the motions shift. The energy shifts. Have you ever been in a really good professional development day where you're like oh my gosh. This is exactly what I needed to hear. I didn't realize this was possible. Somebody showing you how it is.

Like the first time you ever learned how to do maybe like differentiated instruction or small group instruction, and you had been doing whole group. Then somebody comes in and says here's how you set up centers. Here's how you teach the kids how to function in the centers independently so that you can pull a small group.

I remember the first time somebody showed me that. I was an awe because I was teaching whole group my first like two years as a teacher. I was taught it in theory, but I didn't know how to implement it in all the classroom techniques, like the management techniques. I wasn't sure how to do that on my own as a brand new teacher. That was way before we had teacher coaches, instructional coaches.

But when I met my mentor teacher, Susan, who's one of my best friends in the world. She taught me how to set up a kindergarten classroom with eight centers going at once. It was phenomenal. Actually, we had 12. My apologies because they rotated. They went to three stations a day, four

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

days out of the week. So we had 12 stations going for the week. They would rotate. It was insane. It was so, so good.

She taught me how to teach the kids to be independent at each of the centers. Then to be able to pull kids and do guided reading, small group instruction reading. It was incredible. I learned so much from her, but I would have never known that was possible for me to achieve and to be able to do on my own if I hadn't been professionally developed.

So as you're considering professional development for the end of the year and into next year, I want you to consider people who have the gift of planting seeds into teacher's brains that will help inspire them to think new thoughts, believe in themselves, believe in what's possible, to expand themselves professionally. Right?

That's what I do for schools. That's what I do for school leaders. That's what I do for all of you. Every week on this podcast, I plant a seed. Did you know this is possible for you? You can be more intentional with your time. You can be more intentional with your decisions. Did you know that you could have balance? Did you know you can be successful and not overwork.

I plant seeds in your brain every single week to allow you to let that thought develop and grow and sprout and emerge into a new version of you. That's what EPC does. That's what I go out, and I also do offer professional development for schools. I've done that before. I can do it for your school, but it only works if it aligns with the intentions and the goals that you have.

So I want you to consider as you're thinking about professional development for your staff or for your like teaching staff, for your support staff, for your district staff. If you're a district leader, and you're thinking about principal professional development, I definitely do that. That's my wheelhouse, my jam.

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

But if you're a principal who wants these kinds of ideas implanted into your staff, of course, I can help you with that. But what I want to offer you as you need to make the decision on what professional development program is right for you, for your staff, for your school. Do not ask 25,000 people on the internet what they think you should do.

If you do, you're going to get some amazing insights. You can do that to like just for fun to connect and to get ideas. But from there, take those ideas and then you do the work to answer the questions that I mentioned above. You can look at the show notes. Answer those questions to make your decisions about where you want to take your school. Where are they at? Where do you want them to go? What do you believe we'll get them there?

Do the one next professional development that will move them in the direction on this journey of professional development. That's the goal of development. It's continual evolution of what we believe about ourselves, about our teachers, about our students, about what's possible in education. We throw out old paradigms that are no longer working for us. We bring in new ones. We stop confining ourselves to what used to be possible in the past. We dream up the portal of possibility of the future.

School does not have to look the same as it always has. It's my goal to not have it look the same. Why? It's not working for most kids. It's not working for most teachers. It's not working for most of you. We need to develop the way we think, the way we lead, the way we teach, the way we nurture our children emotionally and mentally.

We need to think about how we nurture the adults on campus emotionally and mentally. We need to develop our minds, develop ideas. That's what professional developing is. Consider that as you go forth in planning out your professional development for the end of the year and into next year.

Ep #322: Planning Professional Development

If you do want me to be considered as a source for your professional development needs, I'm happy to speak with you. Reach out to me. We can schedule a time to talk on the phone. I will take you through the process of getting very clear about what it is you want, why you want it, and what you think will be the next best fit for your school. All right, you guys have an amazing week. Take care. Talk to you next week. Bye.

Hey empowered principal. If you enjoyed the content in this podcast, I invite you to join the Empowered Principal® Collaborative. It's my latest offer for aspiring and current school leaders who want to experience exceptional impact and enjoy the school leadership experience.

Look, you don't have to overwork and overexert to be a successful school leader. You'll be mentored weekly and surrounded by supportive likeminded colleagues who truly understand what it means to be a school leader. So join us today and become a member of the only certified life and leadership coaching program for school leaders in the country. Just head on over to angelakellycoaching.com/work-with-me to learn more and join. I'll see you inside of the Empowered Principal® Collaborative.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *The Empowered Principal® Podcast*. If you enjoyed this episode and want to learn more, please visit angelakellycoaching.com where you can sign up for weekly updates and learn more about the tools that will help you become an emotionally fit school leader.