

## **2009-2010 Planned Delayed Opening Days Portsmouth School Department**

### ***Why do we need additional professional development time?***

Our work as a school system, like many others, has shifted from teachers teaching in isolation to a more collaborative approach known as a “professional learning community” or PLC. In isolation, teachers may be individually very effective, but as a system, we are much more effective when we coordinate efforts and collaborate meaningfully. In a PLC, teachers spend time agreeing on essential student learning, crafting common assessments to monitor that learning and sharing successful instructional strategies.

It is also significant that in 2009-2010 the district will be faced with far less money for professional development system wide. The use of these days will help effectively engage teachers in professional development without the need for additional funding.

### ***What happens during this time?***

During the release days this past year teachers engaged mostly in team level work creating assessments and looking at student data. These conversations have been directly related to student learning and how to best meet the needs of all students. The work of the administrative team has been focused recently on how to structure the time to better meet the needs of all roles, including paraprofessionals and other non-classroom teacher roles.

### ***How will this time be structured differently for 2009-2010?***

The schedule for the late starts would include the third Wednesday of each month (September-May). Late starts would occur on the following days:

September 16, 2009  
October 21, 2009  
November 18, 2009  
December 16, 2009

January 20, 2010  
February 17, 2010  
March 17, 2010  
April 21, 2010  
May 19, 2010

### ***What about the loss of instructional time?***

The reality is the use of these days can greatly improve the value of instructional time. There is abundant research to support the increased effectiveness of teachers working in a professional learning community and the associated increases in student achievement. A relatively small investment in collaborative teacher time, used well, can significantly increase learning as teachers “bring to scale” the most successful instructional strategies.

### ***What about parents who would struggle with childcare?***

Understanding that any change in the school schedule presents a challenge for parents, the plan for delayed openings is sensitive to parents with a hardship around childcare. The consistent schedule of the same day every month is meant to provide for easier planning on the part of parents. In addition to that, each school will provide an opportunity for parents to drop off their children at the regular time on planned delayed opening days with supervision provided by the school.