

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING** - *Professional learning is the means by which teachers, administrators and other school and system employees acquire, enhance and refine the knowledge, skills, and commitment necessary to create and support high levels of learning for all students.*

**Professional Learning Standard 1: The context of professional learning--the who, when, why and where—contributes to the development and quality of learning communities, ensuring that they are functioning, leadership is skillful and focused on continuous improvement, and resources have been allocated to support adult learning and collaboration.**

**PL 1.1 Learning Teams**

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	✓ <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Teachers do not participate in learning teams or meet regularly to plan for instruction.	Some teachers in some grade levels or subject areas meet to plan for instruction, but meetings do not occur regularly and the work is not aligned with school improvement goals.	Most teachers meet regularly in learning teams to plan for instruction (e.g., develop lesson plans, examine student work, monitor student progress). This collaborative work would be enhanced by clear alignment of group expectations with the school improvement goals.	All teachers participate in learning teams throughout the year and meet regularly to plan for instruction (e.g., develop lesson plans, examine student work, monitor student progress). The collaborative work is aligned with the school improvement goals.

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Teachers participate in weekly collaborative planning meetings throughout the school year to discuss instruction. This is evident and can clearly be seen in the [minutes](#) from a weekly first grade collaborative planning meeting. These meetings are designed to inform teachers of upcoming changes, develop and share lesson plans, and examine [student work](#). Buford Elementary provides a generous amount of collaborative planning time for the various teacher teams within the building.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

One recommendation would be to infuse the weekly collaborative planning meetings throughout the year with embedded brief technology professional learning. The weekly meetings would provide a great forum for teachers to share their successes regarding technology. Teachers could participate in a brief show and share regarding their successes with the interactive whiteboards or iOS devices within their classrooms. This could take the form of a brief tip shared by teachers during their weekly collaborative planning meetings.

## PL 1.2 Learning Community

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
<p>There is little or no evidence that the principal, administrative team or related human resources (e.g., leadership team, coaches, central office) supports or reinforces the creation and maintenance of a learning community.</p>	<p>There is some evidence that the principal, administrative team, or related human resources (e.g., leadership team, coaches, central office) support or reinforce the creation and maintenance of a learning community, but additional support in this area is needed. Although administrators have created structures for meetings to occur, they have failed to provide teachers with professional development related to the collaboration process.</p>	<p>The principal, administrative team, and other human resources periodically support the creation and maintenance of an effective learning community to support teacher and student learning. In key aspects of the school, these individuals work collaboratively to reinforce collaborative forms of professional development and learning for staff members. Although this process is operational, it would improve if greater emphasis were given to monitoring its impact on school improvement goals and student achievement.</p>	<p>The principal, administrative team and other human resources consistently support the creation and maintenance of an effective learning community to support teacher and student learning. These individuals work collaboratively to reinforce teachers' skillful collaboration (e.g., facilitation skills, conflict resolution, and group decision-making). They also help to create structures to support collegial learning and implement incentive systems to ensure collaborative work. They monitor the impact of these collaborative processes on school improvement goals and on student learning, and participate with other individuals and groups in the operations of the learning community.</p>

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

The administration consistently supports learning communities within the school with [weekly collaborative planning meetings](#), vertical team meetings, [peer observations](#), walk-throughs, quarterly data discussions and curriculum planning days. This is evident and is noted in the Buford Elementary [Quarterly Action Plan](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS: incentive systems to ensure collaborative work

While administration consistently supports effective learning communities within the school, more could be done to implement incentives to encourage collaborative work among teachers. Primary motivators and incentives are directly tied to end of the year evaluations. To receive a fully operational ranking on PL 1.2, more attention needs to be devoted this area.

## PL 1.3 Instructional Leadership Development and Service

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
There are few if any opportunities for teachers to participate in instructional leadership development experiences, serve in instructional leadership roles, or participate in supporting school-based professional learning.	There are opportunities for teachers to participate in preparing for and serving in instructional leadership roles and contributing to the school-based professional learning plans. However, the opportunities are limited to a small number of teachers.	There are many opportunities for teachers to serve in instructional leadership roles and develop as instructional leaders. They are highly engaged in planning, supporting, and communicating professional learning in the school. This would be enhanced if there were more opportunities for instructional leadership roles among various personnel.	A variety of teachers take advantage of opportunities to participate in instructional leadership development experiences and serve in instructional leadership roles (e.g., instructional coach, mentor, facilitator). They plan, advocate for support of, and articulate the benefits and intended results of professional learning.

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

It is consistently evident that a variety of teachers take full advantage of opportunities to serve in instructional coaching roles. One example of this can be seen in the continuous professional learning of the ELL teachers at Buford Elementary. Multiple times throughout the year, ELL teachers redeliver pertinent information regarding best practices with ELL learners. This is noted in a recent [Professional Learning Day Agenda](#) and the opportunities provided to faculty to coach their colleagues on best practices can clearly be seen. In addition, “Teachers will be provided opportunities to participate in instructional leadership development experiences (such as Teachers as Leaders) and serve in instructional leadership roles, such as mentoring, grade chairs, etc” ([BES SIP, 2014 p.17](#)).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Administration should continue to fund rich professional learning opportunities for educators. The continued practice of educators attending local conferences and subsequently redelivering their newly acquired knowledge to faculty will continually sustain a rich and fully operational professional development program. It is evident that Instructional Leadership is a focus of administration and is a shared responsibility among educators within Buford Elementary.

## PL 1.4 School Culture for Team Learning and Continuous Improvement

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
There is little or no evidence of the principal and other leaders establishing ongoing team learning with clearly articulated expectations for professional learning.	There is some evidence the principal and other leaders support a culture involving ongoing team learning and continuous improvement. However, there is not a clearly articulated plan for professional learning for teachers and administrators.	There is general evidence the principal and other leaders support a culture involving ongoing learning and continuous improvement through a plan for professional learning for teachers and administrators. The professional learning would be enhanced by including a variety of designs (e.g., lesson study, peer observations, modeling, instructional coaching, collaborative teacher meetings, etc.) constituting high-quality professional learning experiences.	The principal and other leaders support a school culture that reflects ongoing team learning and continuous improvement. The principal and other leaders plan for high-quality professional learning, articulate intended results of school-based professional learning, and participate in professional learning to become more effective instructional leaders.

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

In accordance with the Georgia Department of Education, Buford City Schools system delivers the [Georgia School Personnel Survey](#), the results of which inform the School Climate Star Rating which directly correlate to a healthy College and Career Ready Performance Index, or (CCRPI) rating. As noted in the [Buford Elementary School 2014-2015 School Profile](#), “Buford Elementary scored a 95 on the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) in May, 2014” ([BES School Profile, 2014 p.5](#)). The (CCRPI) rating is direct evidence that the principals and other leaders are successful in supporting a healthy school culture and climate that reflects ongoing team learning and continuous improvement. It is also evident that administration continuously plans for high-quality professional development and can be seen directly in the [Teaching and Assessing for Learning Professional Learning Plan](#) as well as the [Buford City Schools Focus For Professional Learning](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In accordance with the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning, administration needs to continue to advocate for rich professional development opportunities and continuous learning and improvement. Buford Elementary has a wonderful professional climate and school culture. Continued focus on those factors by administration, should ensure healthy and positive outcomes for the following school years.

## PL 1.5 Job-Embedded Learning and Collaboration

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Teachers spend little or no time during the work-week learning and collaborating with colleagues to improve their use of curriculum, assessment, instruction, and technology.	Some teachers spend a small amount of time during the work-week collaborating with colleagues. However, this time is often focused on non-curricular topics and typically occurs after school.	Most teachers spend time during a workday each week collaborating with colleagues about curriculum, assessment, instruction and technology use in the classroom. This professional learning would be enhanced by allocating more time each week for job-embedded learning (e.g., lesson study, peer-observations, modeling, instructional coaching, teacher meetings).	Teachers spend a significant part of their work-week in job-embedded learning and collaboration with colleagues addressing curriculum, assessment, instruction, and technology. They receive sufficient support resources (e.g., materials, time, training) and assist with securing additional resources necessary (e.g., funding, time, technology) to sustain their learning. (NSDC Standards recommend that formal and informal job-embedded learning take place during at least 25% of educators' professional time. Such time can be devoted to lesson study, peer observations and coaching, modeling, conferencing, teacher meetings, mentoring.)

**EVIDENCE:** In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

As outlined in the [Teaching and Assessing for Learning Professional Learning Plan](#), Professional Learning Meetings will be held weekly and as needed. Professional Learning Meetings are needs based and informed by recurring Needs Assessment surveys and results. Teachers receive significant opportunities for job-embedded learning and collaboration in the form of book studies, peer observations, teacher meetings, and many other professional learning opportunities throughout any given school year.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Continued use of peer observations, vertical team meetings, frequent professional learning, curriculum planning days, and weekly teacher support meetings will ensure the ongoing success of job-embedded learning and collaboration.



## PL 1.6 Resources Support Job-Embedded Professional Learning

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Resources are not allocated for job-embedded professional learning that is aligned with high-priority school improvement goals. Little if any professional development is devoted to helping teachers use technology to enhance student learning.	Some resources are allocated for professional learning. However, much of the professional learning is conducted primarily after school and is not aligned with the high-priority school improvement goals. There is limited professional development devoted to helping teachers use technology to enhance student learning.	Most resources for professional learning are allocated for the identified high-priority school improvement goals. However, providing more job-embedded learning opportunities and professional development would enhance teachers' use of technology to support student learning. In other cases, these forms of professional development need to be more ongoing and sustained to ensure actual classroom implementation of training strategies and processes.	Resources are allocated to support job-embedded professional learning that is aligned with high-priority school improvement goals and technology supporting student learning. There is sustained commitment to ensuring that these professional development activities result in successful classroom implementation. There is also a process in place to determine the value-added of key strategies and processes, i.e., how they impact student achievement and related organizational short- and long-range goals.

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

“In addition to receiving funds from our Central Office, BES’ Title 1 status allows for the receipt of additional funds that can be used toward professional development. Additional planning and professional development is utilized to target and plan specific lessons to low performing students” (M. Reed, personal communication, September 2014). The estimated funding for 2014-2015 professional learning at BES is approximately \$16,000 ([BES SIP, 2014 p.18](#)). Resources are continuously used to support job-embedded professional learning and this information is noted in the [BES SIP](#). “Funds are allocated for all teachers to be trained in Best Practices, some of which include higher order thinking skills. Funds are also allocated for any additional necessary training, including training regular education, EIP teachers, and special education teachers & homeroom teachers in co-teaching strategies” ([BES SIP, 2014 p.17](#)).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PTO fundraising proceeds are continuously used to further advance Buford City Schools System towards the 1:1 initiative. Allocating a portion of fundraising proceeds to continually bring in outside specialists to deliver professional development would be a great way to further sustain rich professional development opportunities and activities for the faculty of Buford Elementary.

**Professional Learning Standard 2: The process—the how—of professional learning is aligned with articulated goals and purposes, data-driven, research-based, evaluated to determine its impact, aligned with adult learning theory, and collaborative in design and implementation.**

**PL 2.1 Collaborative Analysis of Data**

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	✓ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
<p>Teachers and/or administrators use personal experiences or opinions to determine student and adult learning needs and goals. Data is not collected and analyzed in monitoring school and classroom improvement strategies,</p>	<p>Teachers and/or administrators work in isolation or with limited representation to review student summative data and determine student and adult learning needs and goals. Student and teacher data is collected and analyzed at the end of the year to monitor the accomplishment of classroom and school goals.</p>	<p>Teachers and administrators collaboratively analyze disaggregated student learning, demographic, perception, and process data to identify student and adult learning needs and goals. They collect and analyze relevant student and teacher data at the beginning and end of the year to monitor and revise school and classroom improvement strategies. Accomplishments are celebrated and results are regularly reported to family and community.</p>	<p>Teachers and administrators collaboratively analyze disaggregated student learning, demographic, perception, and process data to identify student and adult learning needs and goals. They continuously (minimum of 4 times a year) collect and analyze relevant student and teacher data (e.g. action research, analyzing student work, classroom observations, Awareness Walks, and surveys) to monitor and revise school and classroom improvement strategies. Accomplishments are celebrated and results are regularly reported to family and community.</p>

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

On a quarterly basis teachers and administrators collectively analyze student achievement data in a faculty benchmark data discussion. Evidence of this can be seen in a recent [Professional Learning Day Agenda](#) and also the accompanying [quarterly benchmark data handout](#) from the meeting. In addition to quarterly benchmark data discussions, teachers and administrators meet to analyze data pertaining to RTI and other at risk students in a session called, “Kid Talks”. This is evident in can be seen in a recent [RTI and Kid Talks meeting schedule](#).

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

A continued focus on finding the best instructional software with embedded assessment tools and data reporting capabilities will ensure the continued success of fully utilizing student data to bolster student achievement.

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## PL 2.2 Evaluating Impact of Professional Learning

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
<p>The principal and other leaders develop and implement a plan for evaluating teachers' reactions to professional development events. Teachers' contributions to the evaluation are limited to providing satisfaction ratings. The evaluation identifies changes in teacher knowledge and skills as a result of participation, but it does not evaluate changes in practice or impact on student learning.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders develop and implement a plan for evaluating professional development events. Teachers contribute to the evaluation by collecting and analyzing summative student learning data. The evaluation identifies changes in teacher knowledge and skills as a result of participation and year-end student performance, but it does not evaluate change in teacher practice.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders develop and implement a comprehensive plan for conducting ongoing (formative and summative for a one- to two-year period) evaluation of the impact of professional development on teacher practices and student learning. The evaluation also emphasizes changes in school culture, organizational structures, policies, and processes. Teachers contribute to the evaluation by collecting and analyzing relevant student learning and process data.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders develop and implement a comprehensive plan for conducting ongoing (both formative and summative over a three- to five-year period) evaluation of the impact of professional development on teacher practices and student learning. Evaluation also emphasizes changes in school culture, organizational structures, policies, and processes. Teachers contribute to the evaluation by collecting and analyzing a variety (student learning, demographic, perception, and process) of relevant data. The plan specifies the evaluation question(s), data sources, data collection methodology, and data analysis processes.</p>

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Principal Melanie Reed indicates that data generated from the Buford City School System Teacher Needs Assessment Survey is used to inform professional development needs and evaluate professional learning outcomes (M. Reed, personal communication, September 2014). Buford City Schools' administration convene annually for a leadership retreat at which the direction and focus of professional development is determined for the upcoming school year. Evidence of the professional learning focus can be seen in the [Buford City Schools Focus for Professional Learning](#).

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Buford City School System would benefit greatly from having Instructional Technology Coaches on site at each school to support personnel. Immediate evidence of a three- to five-year plan to assess professional development impact is hard to identify. The system has a pending 1:1 initiative in place for January 2015. Little is evident of how the administration plans to assess the effectiveness of both implementation and professional development necessary to successfully launch the 1:1 initiative. A greater focus on professional development pertaining to mobile device classroom management and also Web 2.0 instructional content creation would greatly benefit Buford City Schools.

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## PL 2.3 Interpreting and Using Research Results

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Not Addressed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Emergent</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Operational</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Fully Operational</b>
<p>The principal and other leaders review professional journals that summarize research instead of actual research or they do not recognize a need for reading and interpreting research when making instructional decisions regarding professional development and school improvement approaches.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders review educational research. They create opportunities for a few, select teachers to study educational research. They work with them to conduct reviews of research when making instructional decisions regarding the adoption of professional development and school improvement approaches.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders demonstrate modest skills in interpreting educational research (validity and reliability, matching populations, and interpreting effect-size measures). They create opportunities for teachers to learn to use educational research. They work with them to conduct extensive reviews of research to make informed instructional decisions regarding the adoption of professional development and school improvement approaches.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders demonstrate advanced skills in determining appropriate research design, interpreting research results, and determining whether results can be generalized. They ensure that teachers and community members learn to use educational research. They work with them to conduct extensive reviews of research to make informed instructional decisions regarding the adoption of professional development and school improvement approaches.</p>

**EVIDENCE:** In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Evidence of principals, leaders, and educators at Buford Elementary demonstrating advanced research skills is indicated by the high percentages of personnel with T5 and T6 certifications as indicated on the [PSC Report regarding BES faculty](#). Buford Elementary has a highly qualified staff and personnel are regularly provided the opportunity to further their education through both cohorts and endorsements. Regular opportunities are available to all educators to further enhance best practices in regards to educational research.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Continued use of book studies would be a good strategy to continually review research pertinent to successful instructional decisions and professional development. Fund allocation for both time and a targeted book would be something that could be explored perhaps by the PTO considering recent funds for continued book studies have been depleted or no longer supported under Title 1 expenses.

## PL 2. 4 Long-Term, In-Depth Professional Learning

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Not Addressed</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Emergent</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Operational</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Fully Operational</b>
<p>Teachers experience single, stand-alone professional development events that are typically large group, workshop designs. There is little if any evidence of implementation or change in practice in classrooms. No emphasis is given to enhancing teachers' content knowledge or understanding.</p>	<p>Teachers attend multiple workshops on the same topic throughout the year to gain information about new programs or practices. They experiment with the new practices alone and infrequently with limited school-based support for implementation. No emphasis is given to enhancing teachers' content knowledge or understanding.</p>	<p>Teachers participate in long-term (two- to three-year period), in-depth professional learning that includes a variety of appropriate professional development designs including the use of technology. The various designs are aligned with the intended improvement outcomes. They include but are not limited to follow-up support for implementing new classroom practices (e.g., collaborative lesson design, professional networks, analyzing student work, problem solving sessions, curriculum development, coursework, action research, and classroom observations). Some evidence is present of attention to enhancing teachers' content knowledge.</p>	<p>Teachers participate in long-term (two- to three-year period), in-depth professional learning that engages learning teams in a variety of appropriate professional development designs including the use of technology. The various designs are aligned with the intended improvement outcomes. They include but are not limited to extensive, follow-up support for implementing new classroom practices (e.g., collaborative lesson design, professional networks, analyzing student work, problem solving sessions, curriculum development, coursework, action research, and coaching with feedback). A major focus of ongoing professional development is a commitment to maintaining and updating all teachers' knowledge and understanding of the content they are teaching and changes occurring in their field(s).</p>

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**EVIDENCE:** In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Long term and in-depth professional learning is evident and can be seen in the recurring sessions pertaining to Autism Spectrum Disorder. Administration has planned long-term professional development and this evidence can be seen in this [artifact](#). In regards to long term professional designs including the use of technology, many artifacts are available to document this. The first artifact is a [Post Planning agenda](#) indicating the implementation of TKES. The second artifact is a recent [Early Release Agenda](#) that indicates a Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Portal overview in the computer lab setting. Administration is implementing the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System this school year and has continuing plans to educate faculty through professional development of the many tools within the TLE Portal to enhance instruction and maintain accountability. In addition, administration continually provides long-term support and professional development for both newly acquired instructional software and reinforcing best practices with already implemented software pieces. Administration's dedication to continued professional development on instructional software can be seen in this [artifact](#) citing multiple delivery sessions pertaining to the newly implemented RAZkids software.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:** A long-term and in depth professional learning strategy focusing on the successful implementation of the coming 1:1 initiative would greatly benefit Buford City School System. A long-term and comprehensive plan focusing on mobile device management and best practices would be a great vehicle to attain a fully operation rating on PL 2.4.

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## PL 2.5 Alignment of Professional Learning with Expected Outcomes

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
<p>The principal and other leaders provide single, stand-alone professional development events that are typically large group, workshops with no expectations for implementation of new classroom practices. Generally, activities are not aligned with the school improvement plan or related priorities.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders provide multiple workshops on the same topic throughout the year. They articulate the learning goal, but do not discuss expectations for implementation. Teachers receive limited school-based support for implementing the new classroom practices. Activities are only generally aligned with the school improvement plan or related priorities.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders align a variety of professional development designs with expected adult learning outcomes (e.g., collaborative lesson design, professional networks, analyzing student work, problem solving sessions, curriculum development, coursework, action research, and coaching with feedback). The professional learning is long-term (two-to-three year period) and in-depth with extensive school-based support for the implementation of new practices. They clearly communicate the expectations for implementation by providing rubrics that describe the desired classroom practices and communicate how those practices connect to the school improvement goals. Generally, activities are aligned with major priorities within the school improvement plan.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders align a variety of professional development designs with expected adult learning outcomes (e.g., collaborative lesson design, professional networks, analyzing student work, problem solving sessions, curriculum development, coursework, action research, and coaching with feedback). They ensure that teams of teachers are engaged in long-term (two-to-three year period), in-depth professional learning with extensive school-based support for the implementation of new practices. They clearly communicate the expectations for implementation with collaboratively developed rubrics describing desired classroom practices and communicate how those practices connect to the school improvement goals.</p>

**EVIDENCE:** In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Administration provides multiple workshops on the same topic throughout the year. This is evident and can be seen in this [artifact](#) documenting a recent series of Autism Spectrum Disorder trainings. The learning goals and expectations are clearly articulated and are closely aligned with school improvement goals.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

While expectations for learning goals are clearly articulated, Administration does not provide rubrics outlining expected classroom practices and outcomes. Providing detailed rubrics would qualify Buford Elementary with an operational rating on PL 2.5.

## PL 2.6 Building Capacity to Use Research Results

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
<p>Professional development is planned with no regard for research about adult learning needs and individual and organizational change processes. The sessions provided include strategies that do not mirror the instructional strategies teachers are expected to use with students (e.g., lecturing on inquiry method, covering material instead of helping participants to use and internalize it), and sessions are the same for all teachers regardless of their career stage.</p>	<p>Professional development is planned using research about adult learning needs and how individuals experience the change process. The professional development sessions demonstrate classroom practices through videotapes and simulations. The experiences focus on procedural learning - "how to do it" - rather than on developing deep understanding of concepts and problem solving strategies. Some professional development is specialized for new and mentor teachers.</p>	<p>Professional development is planned using research about adult learning needs and individual and organizational change processes. The professional development sessions include modeling and demonstrations of expected classroom practices. The experiences impact teachers' depth of understanding enabling them to use the new strategies routinely. Some professional development is specialized to reflect career stages of new teachers, mentor teachers, and teacher leaders.</p>	<p>Professional development builds the capacity of the staff to use research about adult learning needs and individual and organizational change processes as they implement new strategies. Professional development sessions consistently employ the same instructional strategies that are expected to be used in their classrooms. The experiences impact teachers' depth of understanding enabling them to solve problems and adapt new strategies to classroom circumstances. Professional development is differentiated to reflect career stage needs and interests (e.g., mentoring, leading learning teams, coaching, utilizing technology, and curriculum development).</p>

**EVIDENCE:** In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

As outlined in the BES SIP, "Teachers will be provided opportunities to participate in instructional leadership development experiences (such as Teachers as Leaders) and serve in instruction leadership roles, such as mentoring, grade chairs, etc" ([BES SIP, 2014 p.17](#)). This indicates that professional development is specialized to reflect different career stages. Mentor teachers are provided annually to new teachers and provide continuous support throughout the school year. Additionally, "Ongoing differentiated professional learning opportunities will be provided to all teachers and paraprofessionals, including teachers attending courses on scheduled professional learning days" ([BES QAP, 2014, p.3](#)).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Continued focus on adult learning needs and differentiated professional development is recommended to further sustain rich professional development opportunities for the faculty of Buford Elementary.

## PL 2.7 Knowledge about Effective Group Processes

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Teachers and administrators lack knowledge about effective group processes and/or work alone, disregarding collective responsibility for student learning.	Teachers and administrators have knowledge of stages of group development and effective interaction skills, but lack skill in group process strategies needed for productive collaborative work. As a result, colleagues work in temporary groups often encountering unresolved conflict or frustration. Technology (e.g., email, chat rooms, and websites) is used to support collegial interactions.	Teachers and administrators have knowledge and skills regarding group processes (e.g., group decision making strategies, stages of group development, effective interaction skills, and conflict resolution) that are necessary to accomplish tasks and satisfy the interpersonal expectations of the participants. As a result, the school culture is characterized by trust, collegiality, and collective responsibility for student learning where colleagues work collaboratively. Technology (e.g., subject area networks, lesson sharing, seminars) is used to support collegial interactions.	Teachers and administrators have knowledge and skills to monitor and improve group processes (e.g., group decision-making strategies, stages of group development, effective interaction skills, and conflict resolution) that are necessary to accomplish tasks and satisfy the interpersonal expectations of the participants. As a result, the school culture is characterized by trust, collegiality, and collective responsibility for student learning where colleagues work collaboratively in established, ongoing learning teams. Technology (e.g., online discussions, web casts, and seminars, educational blogs, listservs, downloadable resources) is used to support collegial interactions and to ensure effective and sustained implementation.

**EVIDENCE:** In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Knowledge about effective group processes is fully operational at Buford Elementary. Administrators and teachers regularly engage in professional development group activities that support group decision-making strategies and interpersonal skills. This is evident and can be seen first hand in a recent [artifact](#) from a TKES professional development session. Participants had to divide into groups and synthesize the various standards of TKES. Further evidence of effective group processes can be seen in the collaborative professional development [book study blog comments](#) from a recent book study.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Buford Elementary has enjoyed great success from past book studies. Sadly funding for the book studies is no longer supported by Title 1 funds, thus making it more difficult to continually implement future book studies. I would like to see administration focus on finding funds or grants to implement future book studies.

**Professional Learning Standard 3:** The content—the what—of professional learning reinforces educators’ understanding and use of strategies for promoting equity and high expectations for all students, application of research-based teaching strategies and assessment processes, and involvement of families and other stakeholders in promoting student learning.

**PL 3.1 Classroom Practices Reflect an Emotionally and Physically Safe Learning Environment**

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	✓ <input type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
Classroom practices reflect little or no evidence of teachers’ training in understanding the impact that attitudes regarding race, disabilities, background, culture, high expectations, and social class of both students and teachers have on the teaching and learning process.	Classroom practices of some teachers reflect evidence of teachers’ training in understanding the impact that attitudes regarding race, disabilities, background, culture, high expectations, and social class of both students and teachers have on the teaching and learning process.	Classroom practices of most teachers reflect skill in communicating high expectations for each student and adjusting classroom activities to meet student needs. Respect for students’ cultures and life experiences is evident through the emotionally and physically safe learning environment where students of diverse backgrounds and experiences are taught the school code of conduct (customs) to help them be successful in the school context.	Classroom practices (e.g., considering interests, backgrounds, strengths, and preferences to provide meaningful, relevant lessons and assess student progress, differentiating instruction, and nurturing student capacity for self-management) of all teachers reflect an emotionally and physically safe environment where respect and appreciation for a diverse population is evident. There are high achievement expectations for all students and teachers. The principal and other leaders provide professional learning for teachers lacking understanding of the impact that attitudes regarding race, disabilities, background, culture, high expectations, and social class of both students and teachers have on the teaching and learning process.

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

The [Buford Elementary School 2014-2015 School Profile](#) indicates that, “With individualized attention and tender loving care, the faculty and staff of Buford Elementary takes the youngest students and lays a safe, secure, and trusting groundwork for all students to become critical thinkers, responsible and productive citizens, and life-long learners” ([BES School Profile, 2014 p.1](#)). In addition, administration takes great care in targeting all student demographics within the school. Evidence of this commitment can be seen in the [blog comments](#) of the *From Rage to Hope: Strategies for Reclaiming Black & Hispanic Students* book study.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recently administration has focused on targeted professional development focusing on Autism Spectrum Disorder. One recommendation would be to refocus future professional development to target our Hispanic and Black populations, as this is a critical area in constant need of attention. Continued professional development that is culturally responsive will continually sustain emotionally and physically safe learning environments for students from all cultures.

## PL 3.2 Deep Understanding of Subject Matter and Instructional Strategies

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
<p>Teachers demonstrate superficial knowledge of subject matter and mostly rely on textbooks. They primarily use lecture, seatwork, and discussion as instructional strategies and paper-and-pencil tests for assessment.</p>	<p>Teachers demonstrate breadth of subject matter, but the content they teach is often not aligned with required learning goals (e.g., GPS, district standards). They may use some engaging instructional strategies and a variety of assessment strategies in some contexts; however, most of their instruction is presented in traditional whole-group, teacher-centered fashion.</p>	<p>Teachers exhibit a deep understanding of subject matter, use a variety of appropriate instructional strategies, and use various assessment strategies to monitor student progress toward meeting rigorous and required standards. They plan interdisciplinary units with colleagues and can articulate a rationale for why specific instructional strategies and assessments are appropriate to specific content or objectives.</p>	<p>Teachers exhibit a deep understanding of subject matter; differentiate instruction based on needs, interests, and backgrounds; use a variety of appropriate instructional strategies; and use various assessment strategies (e.g., constructed-response test items, reflective assessments, academic prompts, culminating performance tasks and projects, interviews, rubrics, peer response groups) to monitor student progress toward meeting rigorous standards. They plan interdisciplinary units with colleagues and can articulate a rationale for why specific instructional strategies and assessments are appropriate to specific content or objectives.</p>



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EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

The [Buford Elementary School 2014-2015 School Profile](#) indicates that, “A variety of formative and summative assessments, tasks, and tools to monitor student progress will be given throughout the year” ([BES School Profile, 2014 p.21](#)). This is clear evidence that various and appropriate assessment strategies are consistently used to monitor student progress. Further, the [BES QAP](#) indicates that, “A variety of formative & summative assessments, such as STAR Reading, STAR Math & ELT benchmark testing will be given regularly to determine student weaknesses, monitor progress and establish RTI groups. Data will be shared with parents. Further, teachers will follow the RTI Pyramid of Interventions once students are placed in RTI” ([BES QAP, 2014, p.3](#)). Both artifacts suggest that administration and teachers have a continued focus on deeply understanding subject matter, differentiating instruction, and continually using instructional strategies.

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RECOMMENDATIONS: Buford Elementary provides educators with quarterly opportunities to develop unit lesson plans, curriculum and content maps. This practice of providing grade level teams with planning days to unit plan and develop curriculum maps is critical. To ensure sustained successful outcomes, administration should keep this practice in place, as it is critical that educators have ample collaborative planning time.

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### PL 3.3 Sustained Development of Deep Understanding of Content and Strategies

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
<p>The principal and other leaders encourage but do not require teachers to participate in district-based professional development opportunities to increase knowledge of content, research-based instructional strategies, and assessments. There is minimal if any evidence of school-based professional development to promote student achievement. They create work schedules that result in teacher isolation and individual practice.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders emphasize the importance of teachers' deep understanding of content knowledge, research-based instructional strategies, and assessment strategies. They create work schedules to support collegial interaction and sharing and encourage teachers to participate in district-based professional development focused on content, pedagogy, and assessment.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders promote teachers' deep understanding of content knowledge, research-based instructional strategies, and assessment strategies as a high priority. They avoid large-scale trainings that may not address the needs of all participants. They create work schedules to support collegial learning and differentiated professional development focused on content, pedagogy, and assessment. Teacher learning time and application of strategies and assessments is closely monitored.</p>	<p>The principal and other leaders promote the sustained development of teachers' deep understanding of content knowledge, research-based instructional strategies, and assessment strategies. All professional development activities are purposeful and aligned with specific individual and group needs. They create work schedules to support <i>ongoing</i>, collegial learning and differentiated professional development focused on content, pedagogy, and assessment. Teacher learning time and application of strategies and assessments is closely monitored.</p>

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Administration ensures that all professional development activities are purposeful and aligned with specific individual and group needs. Evidence of this can be seen in the continuous professional development opportunities that are even extended to our paraprofessionals. Recently a MOOC was introduced to the paraprofessionals to accommodate their busy schedules while providing differentiated and collegial learning opportunities. The artifact is [email correspondence](#) between administration, the curriculum director, and myself outlining the MOOC guidelines concerning paraprofessionals at Buford Elementary. This is clear evidence that all professional development activities are purposeful and aligned with specific and individual group needs.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

One recommendation would be to extend the MOOC opportunities to the teachers. The paraprofessionals have enjoyed the convenience of learning on their own time. This same learning on your own time professional development strategy would benefit teachers at Buford Elementary as well. Administration has a continued commitment to fostering all employees' professional growth and continued focus on this will ensure successful outcomes in the future.

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### PL 3.4 Partnerships to Support Student Learning

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Addressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergent	<input type="checkbox"/> Operational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Operational
<p>There is no collaboration with parents or the community in developing activities to support learning. Communication through only written correspondence is limited to encouraging parents to attend school functions, yearly conferences, and performances.</p>	<p>There is a school committee to focus on developing community partnerships to support student learning. Communication through written correspondence or phone is about school programs, student progress, and encouraging attendance at school functions, yearly conferences, and performances.</p>	<p>There is a committee that works with families and the community through partnerships that develop programs to support student learning. Strategies are implemented to increase family involvement such as offering suggestions about ways parents can support student learning at home and communicating with families about school programs and student progress (e.g., information about report cards, grading practices, student work, homework, and school events) through a website, phone, email, voice mail, and written correspondence.</p>	<p>Partnerships among teachers, families, and the community are maintained to develop programs that support learning and enhance student skills and talents. Strategies are implemented to increase family involvement such as providing parent education workshops with information on child development and supporting student learning at home and communicating with families about school programs and student progress (e.g., information about report cards, grading practices, (student work, homework, and school events) through an interactive website, phone, email, voice mail and written correspondence.</p>

EVIDENCE: In the space below, provide detail evidence supporting your rating above –

Parent Involvement and parent education workshops are a huge priority for Buford Elementary. As outlined in the [Buford Elementary School 2014-2015 School Profile](#), “All parents and stakeholders are welcomed into the school. Events during the school year, such as Dad’s Day, Mom’s Tea, PTO family events & programs, etc. help parents feel a part of the school environment. Parents will be provided parenting and parent involvement tips during these events to help students academically” ([BES School Profile, 2014 p.25](#)). Buford Elementary continually provides parent educational workshops during community events throughout the year. Family involvement is a major focus of administration and teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Buford Elementary has made great efforts to attain the [Georgia Family – Friendly Partnership School Award](#). Administration has continually monitored and implemented changes based on the GA DOE’s suggestions concerning a family – friendly school. One recommendation would be to continue to strive to achieve this distinguished award. Modifications to the Parent Resource Center have been made and various other strategies have been implemented to better meet these goals. My recommendation would be to continue in the quest to achieve this distinguished honor. Buford Elementary is on the cusp of receiving this award and continued focus on parent and family involvement will ensure successful outcomes.

**All GAPSS B Evidence and Artifacts can be found here:**

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dzgv3pyn66acg5g/AAB2PuQpwLzCbfzm1ofdR2\\_3a?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dzgv3pyn66acg5g/AAB2PuQpwLzCbfzm1ofdR2_3a?dl=0)

\*This is a shared Dropbox folder allowing for easy access to all evidence and artifacts.

**References**

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