

ISSUE AND HISTORY:

Our Quaker philosophy and mission are introduced to new faculty during a three hour introduction the first week of school. In addition, the Quaker Principles Committee provides optional meetings on various aspects of Quakerism during PLUSS Days (two hour professional development time allotted for faculty and administration the first Wednesday of every month from October to May.) Another faculty member also offers an optional "[Faith and Play](#)" training (teaching Quaker history and testimonies through story telling.) Although this professional development is worthwhile and well received by all who participate, they are both still optional. We need to incorporate a *mandatory* professional development plan for new faculty throughout their first year at Friends School of Baltimore that focuses on incorporating Quaker teaching practices into the classroom.

The economic crash of 2008 affected most if not all independent schools in our country and Friends School of Baltimore is not an exception. However, I believe this time of incredible change is an opportunity to teach and learn what makes a Quaker education "Quaker." Bringing our Quaker identity to the forefront--who we are and who we have been for 325 years in this country, will not only help us move forward as a group, but it will also help us withstand the stress of this incredible change. Our Quaker values are timeless, radical and current for the 21st century and our new faculty needs help in carrying these values forward.

In July 2014, Friends School created a Director of Marketing position so that we could create a brand for our school and help market who we are and what we do. July 10th, 2015, our Director of Marketing reported that this has been a difficult job because our community has a hard time articulating our Quaker values. Our school motto is, "*The world needs what our children can do*," however, she asked, "What does that really mean and how does Quakerism fit into this motto?" Although our community may not be able to easily articulate this, I do not believe this means, we, as a school, are going through an identity crisis. I believe it is evidence of a lack of understanding and a lack of being able to communicate our Quaker teaching practices to new faculty and our community at large.

The following data addresses the question, "To what degree does the school's professional development help new faculty integrate authentic Quaker practices into their classroom teaching?"

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND CONCLUSIONS:

100% of faculty and administration (84 participants) that participated in surveys believe that Quakerism is important and that it impacts the teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms. 96.1% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that learning about Quakerism as it relates to teaching and learning in the classroom is vital to the mission of our school. 42.3% of respondents believe that new teachers do not receive adequate professional development regarding Quakerism, 42.3% of respondents believe they do and 15.4% of respondents did not

know if new teachers receive enough professional development. 65.4% of respondents do not think new teachers experience enough PD regarding integrating Quakerism into teaching and learning in their own classrooms.

Only 15.4% of faculty thought that the 3 hour initial training new teachers receive at the beginning of their first year was adequate. The rest of the respondents appeared all over the map about when and how much training should occur, but it was clear from the data that faculty and administrators agreed it should be more than it occurs now. 80.7% agreed it should be at least once per month.

The concepts of Quakerism are hard to define and even more difficult when it comes to teaching someone how to integrate these concepts into the teaching and learning that occurs in their own classroom. In addition, Quakers believe each person has their own unique journey into finding their own way and truth. However, these Quaker beliefs, principles and practices are at the core of who we are as an institution which has been supported by the data.

The textual data revealed commonalities throughout all of the responses. I additionally analyzed the textual responses by inserting all of the textual data into a Word Cloud program to see words and ideas that appeared prevalent among the data. I used the program Tagxedo which allowed me to omit the word Quaker when analyzing each response. Tagxedo also allows for words to be counted to see what words and ideas come up the most. The data revealed that our faculty and administrators believe that the Quaker tenets, or SPICES (i.e. *Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, and Stewardship*), Meeting for Worship, using silence for reflection, coming to a *sense of the meeting*, honoring that of God in each individual and learning about Quaker history, the Quaker process and how it relates to our school are all important aspects of Quaker education that new teachers should learn about. In addition, these are the same answers that faculty and administrators gave as to what makes a Quaker education Quaker. Respondents also stated the importance of creating an environment where there is time and space for *all* voices to be heard and valued.

Many respondents stated that they would like to learn more about Quakerism through the Quaker Principles Committee, experienced teachers and possibly Meeting members. In addition, faculty and administration would like small, experiential group learning where teachers can observe each other, have group readings and discussions and possibly observe one another as well. In conclusion, teachers and administrators across our community see the value and need for new teachers to have a deeper professional development experience regarding Quakerism and how it relates to the teaching and learning in their own classroom. In addition, it appears that even more experienced faculty would appreciate and grow from learning more about Quakerism.

This leads me to consider the impact direct professional development experiences regarding integration of Quaker teaching practices would have on our community. In addition, the creation of small professional learning community groups would provide mentorship for new and more experienced faculty. The following three year plan includes the creation of organizational structures that design, evaluate and monitor Quaker professional development for new and more experienced faculty that is sustainable. Furthermore, this plan will strengthen our identity as a Quaker school, help community members better articulate our “*Quakerness*,” and in doing so, create a more positive school climate.

GOALS:

As a school that is shrinking in numbers like many other independent schools, it is important we create a professional development plan that strengthens our focus and ability to articulate who we are as a Quaker school, as we are the only Quaker school in the Baltimore metro area. Within 3 years, Friends School of Baltimore should accomplish the following:

Formation of a Quaker Professional Development Committee

Professional development scope and sequence for teachers new to Quakerism

Monthly faculty meeting devoted to teaching and learning Quaker practices

Formation of professional learning community groups to support mentorship of new faculty

PLAN OF ACTION:

Transparency, communication and collaboration are three essential elements in developing a professional development plan to help new faculty integrate authentic Quaker practices into their classroom teaching. In order to make this a sustainable reality, it will be necessary to include as many members of our community as possible.

Formation of a Quaker Professional Development Committee

A committee will be created for new teachers to learn various methods and pedagogy in order to incorporate Quaker practices in their classroom. The committee will be comprised of Quaker Principle Committee members, Stony Run Meeting members, administration, Teaching and Learning Committee members, and any other faculty members who would like to join in this work. This committee will also help design and facilitate professional development experiences that occur at monthly faculty meetings and monthly “New to Quaker Teaching” meetings.

Professional Development scope and sequence for teachers new to Quaker teaching

The work of the above committee will be to create a scope and sequence of Quaker teaching practices for new faculty. The committee will identify three key areas for new faculty to concentrate on during their first year of teaching, adding to this list each consecutive year. Faculty will learn about these practices through monthly faculty meetings, “New to Quaker Teaching” meetings and in their professional learning community groups. Furthermore, the committee will create a list of resources such as readings, websites, and professional development opportunities that support Quaker teaching practices. The committee will create surveys in order for faculty and administration to provide feedback twice per year. They will then use the data to adjust the professional development accordingly.

Monthly divisional faculty meetings devoted to teaching and learning Quaker teaching practices

Every month, each division will devote one faculty meeting so that faculty can reflect on Quaker teaching experiences and practices happening in classrooms. The specifics of this professional development will be guided by the Quaker Professional Development Committee. Administrators and faculty will be given the opportunity to provide feedback to this committee in December and May of each year.

Monthly “New to Quaker Teaching” Meetings devoted to teaching and learning Quaker teaching practices

Every month, new faculty will participate in a “New to Quaker Teaching” meeting led by a member of: the Stony Run Meeting House, the Quaker Principles Committee, the Quaker Professional Development Committee, or guest speaker who is experienced in Quaker teaching practices. This monthly meeting will occur for one hour after school from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm in addition to regular faculty meetings and will be mandatory for two years.

Formation of Professional Learning Community Groups to support mentorship of new faculty

Each faculty member will participate in a professional learning community group comprised of three or four faculty members from their division. Each professional learning community should include one new faculty member. A new faculty member will be defined as having two or less years experience teaching at Friends School of Baltimore. The professional learning community will serve to provide mentorship for new faculty members, as well as support all faculty in improving their practice through a shared experience. Each group will participate in group observations where each member is observed three times per year. The group will also be provided with protocols to utilize before, during and after observations to best support their professional growth. Faculty members will continue to be provided with substitutes to cover their classes as they are now. Observations schedules will be created during the first week of opening meetings and turned in at the end of that week.

TIMELINE

Year 1: 2015-2016

Formation of a Quaker Professional Development Committee

- June 2015:
Share research findings, analysis and conclusions with Quaker Principles Committee and the Teaching and Learning Committee regarding faculty perceptions regarding Quaker professional development for new faculty. Share plan for the creation of a Quaker Professional Development Committee and invite members to join. Ask that Stony Run Meeting members who are on the Quaker Principles Committee to share and invite Meeting Members to the new Committee.
- August 2015:
During opening meetings, share research findings, analysis and conclusions with whole faculty regarding faculty perceptions regarding Quaker professional development for new

faculty. Share plan for the creation of a Quaker Professional Development Committee and invite any interested faculty members and administration to join.

- September 2015:
Create Quaker Professional Development Committee comprised of *volunteers* from Stony Run Meeting House (elders), Quaker Principles Committee members, Teaching and Learning Committee members and any other faculty members and administrators who care to join. The committee will be co-clerked by a Stony Run Meeting member and me, as I serve on both the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Quaker Principles Committee.
- October 2015:
Send an official email out to the new members of the Quaker Professional Development Committee for the first meeting. Meet with new committee members to help everyone understand the charge of the committee, create group norms, and finally, get a *sense of the meeting* in order to forward the work of the group.

Professional Development scope and sequence for teachers new to Quakerism

- November 2015 – March 2016:
Meet monthly to create a scope and sequence of professional development for new faculty on what makes Quaker education “Quaker.”
- April 2016:
Finish scope and sequence of PD for Quaker teaching practices, a plan for who will administer the professional development, and a plan of what will occur in the allotted time of monthly “New to Quaker Teaching” meetings, monthly faculty meetings, as well as suggestions for professional learning community groups to focus on during the year.
- May 2016:
Plan, including the suggested focus for professional learning community groups, will be presented to Administrative Council and adjusted accordingly. The Division Heads will present the professional learning community plan to faculty during opening meetings in September 2016.
- June 2016:
Plan will be presented to whole faculty at end of year meetings for feedback and adjusted accordingly.
- August 2016:
New professional development program for new faculty will be implemented.

Year 2: 2016-2017

Monthly Divisional Faculty Meetings devoted to teaching and learning Quaker teaching practices.

Monthly New to Quaker Teaching Meetings devoted to teaching and learning Quaker teaching practices

Formation of Professional Learning Community Groups to support mentorship of new faculty

- August 2016:

Quaker Professional Development Committee will present the scope and sequence and professional development plan for teachers new to Quakerism during opening meetings. Division Heads will present the plan for professional learning community groups at divisional faculty meetings.

- September 2016 - November 2016:
Each division will devote one faculty meeting to professional development regarding Quaker teaching practices.
Each new faculty member will participate in a monthly “New to Quaker Teaching” meeting after school from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm.
Professional learning community groups will utilize protocols to observe each other and provide feedback.
- December 2016:
The faculty meeting devoted to professional development on Quaker teaching practices will instead be used to fill out a survey regarding this PD so far. This data will be collected and analyzed by members of the Quaker Professional Development Committee to make necessary changes regarding professional development and decisions regarding the professional development in the future.
- January 2017 - April 2017:
Each division will continue to devote one faculty meeting to professional development regarding Quaker teaching practices.
Each new faculty member will participate in a monthly “New to Quaker Teaching” meeting after school from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm.
Professional learning groups will utilize protocols to observe each other and provide feedback.
- May 2017:
The faculty meeting devoted to professional development on Quaker teaching practices will instead be used to fill out a survey regarding this PD so far. This data will be compared to the data collected in December. It will be analyzed by members of the Quaker Professional Development Committee to make necessary changes regarding professional development and decisions regarding the professional development in the future.
Faculty will also fill out a separate anonymous survey to provide feedback on their professional learning community group experience. This data will be analyzed and shared by Division Heads.
- June 2017:
At the end of the year meetings, the Quaker Professional Development Committee will share analysis and conclusions of data collected throughout the year to faculty.
All faculty, administrators and Stony Run Meeting members will celebrate with a final Meeting for Worship and an end of year barbeque.

Quaker Professional Development Committee

- September 2016 – 2017:
This committee will continue to meet once per month to plan, evaluate and reflect on Quaker professional development experiences. The committee will also create surveys to evaluate the PD experience. The Division Heads will create their own surveys to evaluate the professional learning community group experience and share the results with faculty in their own divisions as well as the Administrative Council Team.

Year 3: 2017-2018

Monthly Divisional Faculty Meetings devoted to teaching and learning Quaker teaching practices.

Monthly New to Quaker Teaching Meetings devoted to teaching and learning Quaker teaching practices

Formation of Professional Learning Communities to support mentorship of new faculty

- August 2017:
During the opening year meeting with faculty from all three divisions, we will share in a whole school discussion using [Padlet](#), an online brainstorming tool, to reflect our thoughts on how our new Quaker PD has impacted our teaching and learning. The Quaker Professional Development Committee will provide any changes made as a result of last year's data collected.
- September 2017 – June 2018:
The previous year's plan will stay in place.

Quaker Professional Development Committee

- September 2017 – 2018:
This committee will continue to meet once per month to plan, evaluate and reflect on Quaker professional development experiences. The committee will also create surveys to evaluate the PD experience. The Division Heads will continue create their own surveys to evaluate the professional learning community group experience and share the results with faculty in their own divisions as well as the Administrative Council Team.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE PLAN:

As Co-clerk of the committee, I will be able to re-assess the short and long term goals. An important Quaker practice is the ability to gain a *sense* of the meeting in order to include all members' voices. This will afford me the opportunity to make appropriate and necessary changes to the plan. In addition, I will share all changes with the committee which will be minuted and shared with the entire school community.

Evaluating our plan will occur through the regular communication that takes place between committee members, faculty, and administration, but most importantly through the data collected twice a year. All surveys will be anonymous. We will first know we have been successful when our scope and sequence of professional development has been finished and a plan is in place to deliver it. Again, success will also be measured through the collection, analysis, and comparison of previous data collected.

REFLECTION AND CELEBRATION:

As is customary with all we do in our Quaker school community, regular reflection time will be provided during faculty meetings which are specifically devoted to Quaker professional development, monthly "New to Quaker teaching" meetings, and during professional learning community group feedback meetings.

We will celebrate by recognizing and sharing accomplishments in several ways. We can recognize our accomplishments by sharing it with our Marketing Director and adding it as a story to our Alumni Magazine. Additionally, I will share reflections in my blog, Tweet, send video message shout-outs to our community, and invite Meeting House Members to an end of year Meeting for Worship and celebration barbeque with all faculty members.