Staff learning and development is the ongoing process that orients, trains and develops employees’ skills and knowledge in order to achieve the organization’s mission and goals. It encompasses a broad range of activities in order to identify and address the needs of individuals for performance improvement as well as for personal growth. For the Pierce County Library System, staff learning and development is critical for the library to evolve and become what our communities want and need us to be.

As such, all learning and development must begin at the local level ~ in each building and department, where employee need is thoughtfully matched with an appropriate learning activity in order to acquire specific skills and/or knowledge. Since learning will be applied at the local level, it makes it crucial that the assessment of what the employee needs should happen at that level as well.

In order for this to happen successfully, everyone plays an important role:

**Individual’s Role**

For learning and development to be successful, the process must begin with each employee. As the first point in the Foundations of the Learning Organization states, “The burden of learning is on the individual.” In order for an employee in the work world today to remain relevant to her employer, she must continue to hone and acquire appropriate skills and knowledge. No one knows better what they need to do their jobs successfully than the front-line employees doing the day-to-day work. However, the employee also needs to be conversant in PCLS core documents\* in order to make self-assessments and suggestions about what new skill or knowledge is necessary.

**Manager’s Role**

Acting as guide and coach on each employee’s learning journey, the manager actively engages the employee in order to help her determine what skills and knowledge she needs to be acquire in order for the employee, work team, department and organization to evolve and grow. In order to successfully coach employees on learning, managers must:

* Be well-versed in the PCLS core documents\* and be able to meaningfully translate those documents into learning actions for individuals
* Make appropriate connections between employee needs with learning opportunities
* Be able to balance day-to-day work activities with learning activities by finding time, space and funding to support learning
* Act as a liaison between individuals and their work teams and the Learning Team and Leadership Team
* Aid in creating system-wide learning initiatives that have an impact on the organization, and therefore, on our customers and communities

**Learning Team**

Charged with the responsibility of overseeing staff learning and development, the Learning Team’s two main areas of concern are:

* Learning that has a major and systemic impact. This means that traditional training (live and face-to-face) is now focusing on the skills and knowledge that everyone needs and that impacts the organization on every level.
* Facilitating and consulting on learning that happens outside the system-wide learning at the local and individual levels. This means that the Learning Team is available to answer questions, help assess and evaluate learning opportunities as well as how to make sure that learning is being applied.

**\*PCLS core documents:** Mission/Vision/Values, Balanced Scorecard, Leadership Descriptors, Core Skills and Qualities, Foundations of a Learning Organization