

A school of yellowtail snappers swimming in clear blue water over a coral reef. The fish are silver with yellow tails and are swimming in a coordinated pattern. The background is a deep blue gradient.

Professional Learning Communities at Work Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement

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Presenters

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Dr. Rick DuFour was a public school educator for thirty-four years, serving as a teacher, principal, and superintendent. He served as the principal of Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois from 1983 to 1991 and as superintendent of the district from 1991 to 2002. During his tenure, Stevenson became what the United States Department of Education has described as “the most recognized and celebrated school in America.” It is one of three schools in the nation to win the USDE Blue Ribbon Award on four occasions and one of the first comprehensive schools designated a New America High School by USDE as a model of successful school reform. Stevenson has been repeatedly cited in the popular press as one of America’s best schools and referenced in professional literature as an exemplar of best practices in education.

Dr. DuFour is the author of ten books and almost eighty professional articles, and wrote a quarterly column for the *Journal of Staff Development* for almost a decade. He was the lead consultant and author for ASCD’s seven-part video series on the principalship and the author of two other videos – “How to Build a Professional Learning Community” and “Through New Eyes: Examining the Culture of Your School.” He was the first principal in Illinois to receive the state’s Distinguished Educator Award, received his states highest award as both a principal and superintendent, was named as one of the Top 100 school administrators in North America by *Executive Educator* magazine, was presented the distinguished scholar practitioner award from the University of Illinois, and was the 2004 recipient of the National Staff Development Council’s Distinguished Service Award. He has consulted with school districts, state departments, and professional organizations throughout North America on strategies for improving schools.



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Becky DuFour has served as a teacher, school administrator and central office coordinator. As a former elementary principal, Becky helped her school earn state and national recognition as a model Professional Learning Community. She is one of the featured principals in the *Video Journal of Education*'s program on "Leadership in an Age of Standards and High Stakes" (2001). She is also the lead consultant and featured principal for the *Video Journal* program, "Elementary Principals as Leaders of Learning" (2003).

Becky is co-author of:

Getting Started: Reculturing Schools to Become Professional Learning Communities (Solution Tree, 2002),

Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn (Solution Tree, 2004),

Learning By Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work (Solution Tree, 2006),

Professional Learning Communities at Work Plan Book (Solution Tree, 2006) and
Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work (Solution Tree, 2008).

She is also co-editor of *On Common Ground: The Power of Professional Learning Communities* (Solution-tree, 2005), a collection of essays from the leading educational authors and consultants.

Becky has written for numerous professional journals, served as a book reviewer for the *Journal of Staff Development* and wrote a quarterly column for the National Association of Elementary School Principals' publication, *Leadership Compass*. Becky has consulted with and worked for professional organizations, school districts, universities, and state departments of education throughout North America.

Professional Learning Communities at Work: Bringing the Big Ideas to Life

by
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Assumption: Teachers Matter

- Regardless of the research basis, it is clear that effective teachers have a profound impact on student achievement and ineffective teachers do not. In fact, ineffective teachers might actually impede the learning of their students.

– Marzano (2003), p. 75

Assumption: Schools Matter

An analysis of research conducted over a thirty-five year period demonstrates that **schools that are highly effective produce results that almost entirely overcome the effects of student backgrounds.**

—Robert Marzano (2003)

Assumption: Effective Schools Require More than Competent Individual Teachers

Student achievement gains and other benefits are influenced by organizational characteristics beyond the skills of individual staff. We saw schools with competent teachers that lacked the organizational capacity to be effective with many students. **The task for schools is to organize human resources into an effective *collective* effort.**

—Newmann & Wehlage (1995), p. 29-30

Assumption

- **We now know how to create schools that help more kids learn at higher levels. In fact, there has never been greater consensus regarding the schools it will take to raise student achievement.**

The Power of Professional Learning Communities

The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community. **The path to change in the classroom lies within and through professional learning communities.**

—Milbrey McLaughlin (1995)

Organizations That Endorse Professional Learning Community Concepts

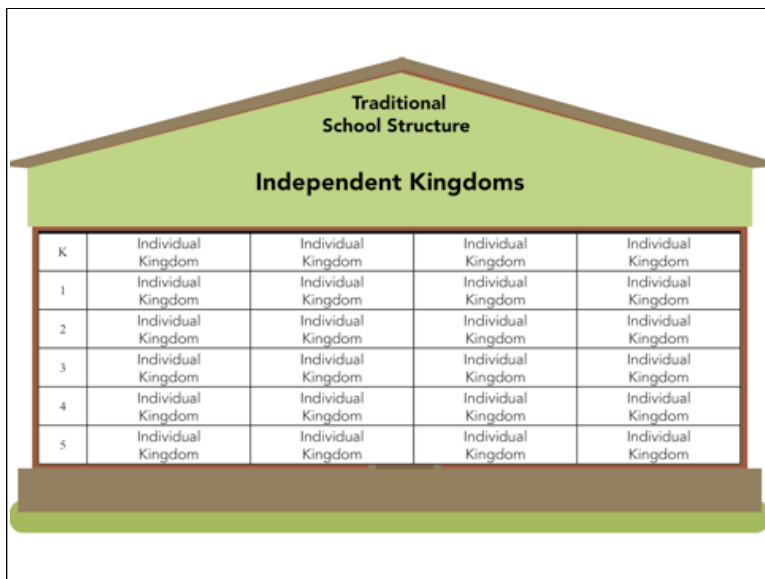
American Federation of Teachers
Annenberg Institute for School Reform
California Teachers Association
Center for Performance-Based Assessment
Center for Teaching Quality
Council of Chief State School Officials
ETS Assessment Training Institute
Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium
Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Board of Professional Teaching Standards
National Commission on Teaching and America's Future
National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education
National Council of Teachers of English
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Education Association
National Middle School Association
National Science Education Leadership Association
National Science Teachers Association
National Staff Development Council
North Central Association, Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
Research for Better Teaching, Inc.
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

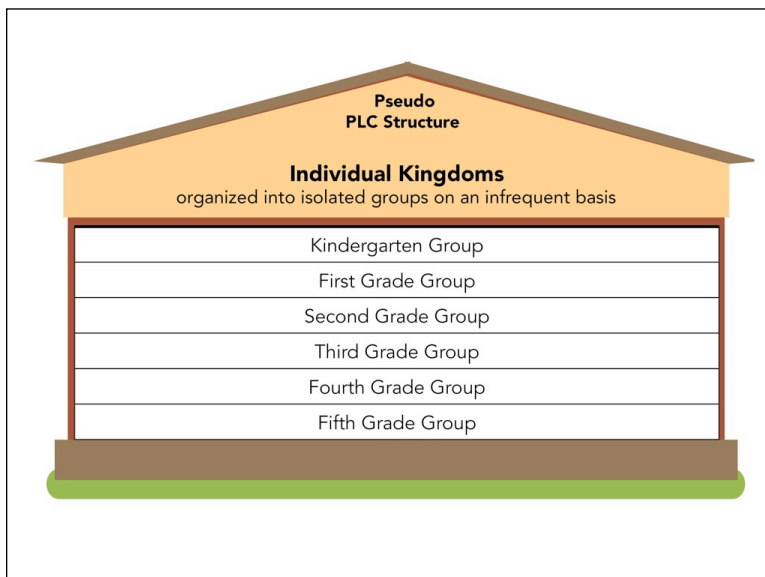
**For more information,
please visit
www.allthingsplc.info
"Articles & Research."**

Educational Researchers Who Endorse PLC Concepts

Roland Barth	Judith Warren Little	Thomas Sergiovanni
Anthony Byrk	Robert Marzano	Dennis Sparks
Linda Darling-Hammond	Milbrey McLaughlin	Richard Stiggins
Richard Elmore	Fred Newmann	Joan Talbert
Michael Fullan	Douglas Reeves	Gary Wehlage
Carl Glickman	Jonathan Saphier	Dylan Wiliam
Andy Hargreaves	Phil Schlechy	Art Wise
Shirley Hord	Mike Schmoker	
Sharon Kruse	Karen Seashore Louis	

What is a PLC?



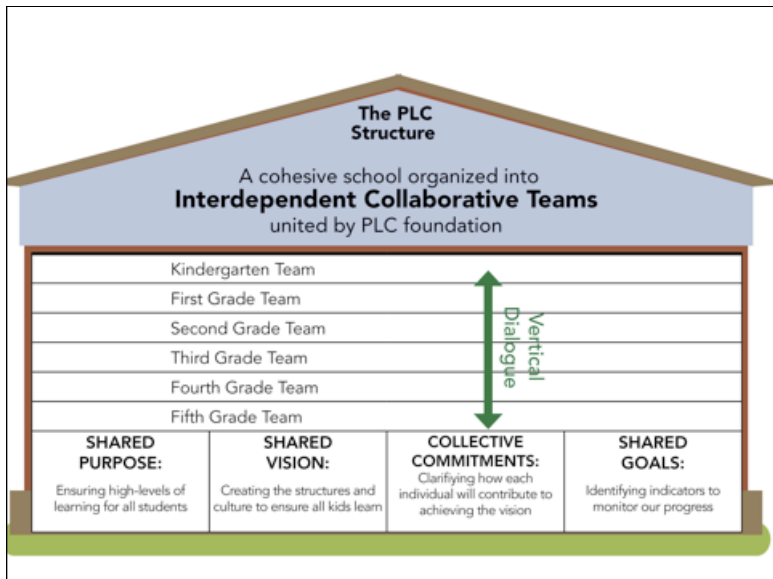


Professional Learning Community (PLC) Defined

Educators are committed to working **collaboratively** in **ongoing processes** of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better **results** for the students they serve.

PLCs operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.

—DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many (2006)



The Pervasive Impact of the PLC Process

A Professional Learning Community is an ethos that infuses every single aspect of a school's operation. When a school becomes a professional learning community, everything in the school looks different than it did before.

—Andy Hargreaves (2004)

Is the Professional Learning Community Concept Based on...

- ...adherence to core practices or individual teacher autonomy?
- ...strong administrative leadership or teacher empowerment?
- ...recognition and celebration of current efforts and achievements or discontent with the status quo?
- ...approaching school improvement with a sense of urgency or demonstrating the patience to sustain an improvement initiative over the long haul?

Simultaneous Loose AND Tight School Cultures

Simultaneous loose *and* tight cultures establish clear parameters and priorities that enable individuals to work within established boundaries in a creative and autonomous way. They are characterized by “*directed empowerment*” or what Marzano and Waters refer to as “*defined autonomy*” - *freedom to act and to lead within clearly articulated boundaries.*

The BIG IDEAS of a PLC

- We accept learning as the fundamental purpose of our school and therefore are willing to examine all practices in light of their impact on learning.
- We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose. We cultivate a collaborative culture through development of high-performing teams.
- We assess our effectiveness on the basis of results rather than intentions. Individuals, teams, and schools seek relevant data and information and use that information to promote continuous improvement.

If the purpose of school is truly to ensure high levels of learning for all students, schools will:

- Clarify what each student is expected to learn

Team Learning Process

- Clarify 8-10 Essential Common Outcomes (skills, knowledge, dispositions) per semester by Course/Content Area

The 1st Step in Decision Making in a PLC: Building Shared Knowledge

Professional Learning Communities *always* attempt to answer critical questions by BUILDING SHARED KNOWLEDGE - engaging in collective inquiry - LEARNING TOGETHER.

If people make decisions based upon the collective study of the same pool of information, they increase the likelihood that they will arrive at the same conclusion.

Resources To Help Teams Build Shared Knowledge & Clarify “Learn What”

- State/Provincial/National Standards (e.g.NCTE/ NCTM)
- **Vertical articulation**
- District or department curriculum guides
- Assessment Frameworks (how will they be assessed)
- Data on past student performance (local/state/ national)
- Examples of student work and the criteria by which the quality of student work will be judged
- Textbook Presentation of Curriculum
- Curriculum Framework of High Performing Schools

Criteria for Identifying Essential Common Outcomes

To separate the essential from the peripheral, apply these 3 criteria to each standard:

1. **Endurance** - are students expected to retain the skills/knowledge long after the test is completed
2. **Leverage** - is this skill/knowledge applicable to many academic disciplines
3. **Readiness for the Next Level of Learning** - is this skill/knowledge preparing the student for success in the next grade/course

- Doug Reeves

Advantages of Team Discussion of Essential Learning

- Greater clarity regarding interpretation of standards
- Greater consistency regarding importance of different standards
- Greater consistency in amount of time devoted to different standards (common pacing)
- Common outcomes and common pacing are essential prerequisites for a team to create common assessments and team interventions
- Greater ownership of and commitment to standards

Levels of Curricula at Work in Your school

1. Intended - What we want them to learn
2. Implemented - What actually gets taught
3. Attained -What they actually learn

*To impact the *attained* curriculum in the most powerful way, make certain the *implemented* curriculum is *guaranteed and viable*.

- Robert Marzano

To Improve Student Achievement

- ..create a *guaranteed and viable* curriculum (Marzano)
- ..establish a limited number of *power standards* (Reeves)
- ..pursue clear and focused *essential academic goals* (Lezotte)
- ..identify *learning intentions and success criteria* (Hattie)
- ..develop a compact list of *learning expectations and tangible exemplars of student proficiency* (Saphier)

If we want all students to learn at high levels, those who teach them must be able to answer the questions, “learn what” with a consistent voice.

If the purpose of school is truly to ensure high levels of learning for all students, schools will:

- Clarify what each student is expected to learn
- **Monitor each student’s learning on a timely basis**

The Case for a Guaranteed Curriculum

One of the most significant factors that impacts student achievement is that teachers commit to implementing a *guaranteed and viable curriculum* to ensure no matter who teaches a given class, the curriculum will address certain essential content. For learning to be effective, clear targets in terms of information and skills must be established (Marzano, 2003).

To improve student achievement, educators must determine the *power standards* – learning standards that are most essential because they possess the qualities of endurance, leverage, and readiness for success at the next level. The first and most important practical implication of power standards is that leaders must make time for teachers to collaborate within and among grade levels to identify the power standards (Reeves, 2002).

One of the keys to improving schools is to ensure teachers know the *learning intentions* and success criteria of their lessons, know how well they are attaining these criteria for all their students, and know where to go next in light of the gap between students' current knowledge and the success criteria. This can be maximized in a safe and collaborative environment where teachers talk to each other about teaching (Hattie, 2009)

“The staff in the effective school accepts responsibility for the students' learning of the *essential curricular goals*” (our emphasis, Lezotte, 2001, p.4).

Professional learning communities are characterized by an academic focus that begins with a set of practices that bring clarity, coherence, and precision to every teacher's classroom work. Teachers work collaboratively to provide a *rigorous curriculum that is crystal clear and includes a compact list of learning expectations* for each grade or course and tangible exemplars of student proficiency for each learning expectation (Saphier, 2005).

Effective teachers *clarify goals and assessment criteria* in ways that will help students understand what they need to learn and the strategies likely to be most useful in enabling them to learn (Brophy, 2004).

Implementing a strategy of *common, rigorous standards* with differentiated resources and instruction can create excellence and equity for all students (Childress, Doyle, & Thomas, 2009)

Team Learning Process

- Clarify 8-10 Essential Common Outcomes (skills, concepts, and dispositions) per semester by Course/Content Area
- **Develop multiple Common Formative Assessments for each Course/Content Area**

What are Common Formative Assessments?

We will make the case that common formative assessments are the lynchpin of the collaborative team process in a PLC.

- Define “common” assessment.**

- Define “formative” assessment.**

Keys to Formative Assessments

To determine if an assessment is formative, ask:

1. Is it used to identify students who are experiencing difficulty in their learning?
2. Are students who are having difficulty provided with additional time and support for learning?
3. Are students given an additional opportunity to demonstrate their learning?

Resources to Help Teams Build Valid Common Assessments

- List of Essential Outcomes/Pacing Guides for Each Course/Subject
- Recommendations from Stiggins, Reeves, Ainsworth, William...
- Released items from district, state, provincial, and national assessments (ACT, SAT, ITBS, NAEP, etc.)
- **Websites such as:**
 - www.nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/
- Data from past indicators of achievement
- Methods of alternative assessments
- Examples of rubrics
- Assessments from other high-performing teams

Two Essentials of Performance Based Assessment

- Can we agree on the criteria by which we will judge the quality of student work?
- Can we apply those criteria consistently (inter-rater reliability)?

Team Learning Process

- Clarify 8-10 Essential Common Outcomes (skills, concepts, and dispositions) per semester by Course/Content Area
- Develop multiple Common Formative Assessments for each Course/Content Area
- **Establish Specific Target/Benchmark so rigorous it will lead to success on high stakes assessments**
- **Analyze Results**
- **Identify & Implement Improvement Strategies**

THIRD GRADE READING SKILLS: COMMON ASSESSMENT RESULTS (***TARGET SCORE 80/100)															
STUDENT	MAKES PREDICTIONS				COMPARES/CONTRASTS STORIES				MAIN IDEA/SUPPORTING DETAILS				CAUSE/EFFECT		
	CLASS #	%	CLASS #	%	CLASS #	%	CLASS #	%	CLASS #	%	CLASS #	%	CLASS #	%	TOTALS
1	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	86	50	90	100	70	89	100	100
2	100	100	80	100	86	100	86	100	60	90	100	70	100	78	100
3	80	60	80	100	86	100	89	100	70	90	80	80	78	89	89
4	100	100	100	80	100	100	86	86	92	90	100	80	100	100	100
5	100	100	80	100	100	86	100	67	90	90	100	100	89	100	89
6	80	100	100	60	100	100	100	71	100	100	92	40	100	89	100
7	100	100	80	80	100	100	100	100	90	100	80	70	89	100	100
8	40	80	80	100	100	100	86	100	90	83	83	50	67	89	100
9	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	83	100	100	80	100	100	89
10	60	100	100	100	71	100	100	86	60	92	90	70	78	100	89
11	100	100	80	60	86	100	100	71	92	100	90	50	100	89	100
12	100	80	100	80	100	86	100	100	83	100	100	50	78	78	100
13	100	100	80	60	86	100	86	86	92	100	80	100	100	100	100
14	80	100	100	100	100	86	100	86	90	90	80	100	89	100	100
15	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	89	100	100	90	100	89	100	89
16	100	100	100	100	86	100	86		80	100	80		100	100	89
17	100	100	100		100	89			90	92			89	89	
18	100				100				100				100		
Average Score	91%	95%	91%	88%	92%	95%	97%	89%	84%	95%	90%	74%	86%	91%	93%

Standard Group Comparison

2001

Group	Designation	Forced Choice Mastery	Performance Mastery	Total Mastery
10-1: INFERENTIAL RDG				
ENG110FR ENGLISH - - FOLEY , T(00-01) - % Mean 0.72	MASTERY	- (89%) 63 of 71 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
	NON-MASTERY	63 89% (15 of 25)	0 0% (0 of 0)	63 89%
		8 11%	0 0%	8 11%
ENG110FR ENGLISH - (00 - 01) - %Mean 0.73	MASTERY	- (89%) 562 of 630 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
	NON-MASTERY	562 89% (15 of 25)	0 0% (0 of 0)	562 89%
		68 11%	0 0%	68 11%
10-2: VOCAB STRATEGIES				
ENG110FR ENGLISH - - FOLEY , T(00-01) - % Mean 0.72	MASTERY	- (61%) 43 of 71 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
	NON-MASTERY	43 61% (4 of 6)	0 0% (0 of 0)	43 61%
		28 39%	0 0%	28 39%
ENG110FR ENGLISH - (00 - 01) - %Mean 0.73	MASTERY	- (73%) 458 of 630 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected
	NON-MASTERY	458 73% (4 of 6)	0 0% (0 of 0)	458 73%
		172 27%	0 0%	172 27%
10-3: TERMS & STRUCT LIT				
ENG110FR ENGLISH - - FOLEY , T(00-01) - % Mean 0.72	MASTERY	- (87%) 62 of 71 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
	NON-MASTERY	62 87% (3 of 5)	0 0% (0 of 0)	62 87%
		9 13%	0 0% (0 of 0)	9 13%
ENG110FR ENGLISH - (00 - 01) - %Mean 0.73	MASTERY	- (90%) 564 of 630 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
	NON-MASTERY	564 90% (3 of 5)	0 0% (0 of 0)	564 90%
		66 10%	0 0%	66 10%
10-4: AIMS/MODES OF WRITING				
ENG110FR ENGLISH - - FOLEY , T(00-01) - % Mean 0.72	MASTERY	- (80%) 57 of 71 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
	NON-MASTERY	57 80% (5 of 9)	0 0% (0 of 0)	57 80%
		14 20%	0 0%	14 20%
ENG110FR ENGLISH - (00 - 01) - %Mean 0.73	MASTERY	- (78%) 491 of 630 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
	NON-MASTERY	491 78% (5 of 9)	0 0% (0 of 0)	491 78%
		139 22%	0 0%	139 22%
10-5: CORRECTNESS OF EXPR				
ENG110FR ENGLISH - - FOLEY , T(00-01) - % Mean 0.72	MASTERY	- (79%) 56 of 71 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
	NON-MASTERY	56 79% (6 of 10)	0 0% (0 of 0)	56 79%
		15 21%	0 0%	15 21%
ENG110FR ENGLISH - (00 - 01) - %Mean 0.73	MASTERY	- (73%) 458 of 630 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
	NON-MASTERY	458 73% (6 of 10)	0 0% (0 of 0)	458 73%
		172 27%	0 0%	172 27%

Standard Group Comparison

2001

Group	Designation	Forced Choice Mastery	Performance Mastery	Total Mastery
10-6: IDENT. PHRASES/CLAUSES				
ENG110FR ENGLISH - - FOLEY , T(00-01) - % Mean 0.72		- (77%) 55 of 71 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
MASTERY		55 77% (3 of 5)	0 0% (0 of 0)	55 77%
NON-MASTERY		16 23%	0 0%	16 23%
ENG110FR ENGLISH - (00 - 01) - % Mean 0.73		- (83%) 520 of 630 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
MASTERY		520 83% (3 of 5)	0 0% (0 of 0)	520 83%
NON-MASTERY		110 17%	0 0%	110 17%
10-7: IDENTIF SENT/RUN-ON/FRAGS				
ENG110FR ENGLISH - - FOLEY , T(00-01) - % Mean 0.72		- (86%) 61 of 71 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
MASTERY		61 86% (3 of 5)	0 0% (0 of 0)	61 86%
NON-MASTERY		10 14%	0 0%	110 17%
ENG110FR ENGLISH - (00 - 01) - % Mean 0.73		- (86%) 543 of 630 Students have Mastered this Local Standard.		80% Selected.
MASTERY		543 86% (3 of 5)	0 0% (0 of 0)	543 86%
NON-MASTERY		87 14%	0 0%	87 14%

Item Analysis for 630 Students
02/14/2001 2000-2001 School Year

ENG110 FR COLLEGE PREF

Item	A	B	C	D	E	Space	Diff
# 1 -	1 (0%)	17 (3%)	6 (1%)	606 (96%)*	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.962
# 2 -	10 (2%)	10 (5%)	564 (90%)*	27 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.895
# 3 -	29 (5%)	3 (0%)	586 (93%)*	13 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.930
# 4 -	553 (88%)*	37 (6%)	4 (1%)	36 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.878
# 5 -	37 (6%)	19 (3%)	52 (8%)	524 (83%)*	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.832
# 6 -	106 (17%)	458 (73%)*	58 (9%)	10 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.727
# 7 -	11 (2%)	22 (3%)	570 (90%)*	28 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.905
# 8 -	10 (2%)	16 (3%)	38 (6%)	569 (90%)*	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.903
# 9 -	46 (7%)	40 (6%)	13 (2%)	529 (84%)*	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.840
# 10 -	12 (2%)	590 (94%)*	15 (2%)	12 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.937
# 11 -	460 (73%)*	104 (17%)	63 (10%)	4 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.730
# 12 -	432 (69%)*	129 (20%)	55 (9%)	14 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.686
# 13 -	3 (0%)	528 (84%)*	34 (5%)	65 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.838
# 14 -	8 (1%)	598 (95%)*	7 (1%)	17 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.949
# 15 -	56 (9%)	461 (73%)*	19 (3%)	94 (15%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.732
# 16 -	78 (12%)	14 (2%)	79 (13%)	460 (73%)*	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.730
# 17 -	112 (18%)	139 (22%)	6 (1%)	376 (60%)*	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.597
# 18 -	21 (3%)	47 (7%)	561 (89%)*	2 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.890
# 19 -	4 (1%)	407 (65%)*	3 (0%)	219 (35%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.646
# 20 -	548 (87%)*	30 (5%)	5 (1%)	50 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.870
# 21 -	14 (2%)	4 (1%)	21 (3%)	592 (94%)*	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.940
# 22 -	438 (70%)*	64 (10%)	98 (16%)	31 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.695
# 23 -	69 (11%)	457 (73%)*	61 (10%)	44 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.725
# 24 -	56 (9%)	28 (4%)	472 (75%)*	76 (12%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.749
# 25 -	10 (2%)	50 (8%)	556 (88%)*	16 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.883
# 26 -	112 (18%)	120 (19%)	10 (2%)	389 (62%)*	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.617
# 27 -	125 (20%)	269 (43%)	237 (38%)*	2 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.376
# 28 -	568 (90%)*	37 (6%)	11 (2%)	14 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.902
# 29 -	506 (80%)*	28 (4%)	65 (10%)	34 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.803
# 30 -	64 (10%)	48 (8%)	30 (5%)	488 (77%)*	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.775
# 31 -	11 (2%)	559 (89%)*	16 (3%)	44 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.887
# 32 -	88 (14%)	63 (10%)	422 (67%)*	58 (9%)	0 (0%)	2 (0%)	0.670
# 33 -	107 (17%)	377 (60%)	16 (3%)	131 (21%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.598
# 34 -	427 (68%)*	49 (8%)	81 (13%)	75 (12%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.678
# 35 -	73 (12%)	413 (66%)*	38 (6%)	107 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.656
# 36 -	34 (5%)	398 (63%)*	45 (7%)	154 (24%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.632
# 37 -	78 (12%)	253 (40%)	11 (2%)	289 (46%)*	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.459
# 38 -	97 (15%)	397 (63%)*	62 (10%)	73 (12%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.630
# 39 -	222 (15%)	167 (27%)	170 (27%)*	72 (11%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.270
# 40 -	99 (16%)	44 (7%)	88 (14%)	400 (63%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.635
# 41 -	542 (86%)*	25 (4%)	5 (1%)	60 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.860
# 42 -	36 (6%)	82 (13%)	135 (21%)	378 (60%)*	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.600
# 43 -	12 (2%)	291 (46%)	11 (2%)	318 (50%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.505
# 44 -	486 (77%)*	48 (8%)	91 (14%)	5 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.771
# 45 -	8 (1%)	93 (15%)	518 (82%)*	13 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.822
# 46 -	57 (9%)	421 (67%)*	123 (20%)	33 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.668
# 47 -	54 (9%)	360 (57%)*	41 (7%)	178 (28%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.571
# 48 -	19 (3%)	165 (26%)*	51 (8%)	396 (63%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.262
# 49 -	42 (7%)	574 (91%)*	5 (1%)	9 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)	0.911
# 50 -	153 (24%)	72 (11%)	9 (1%)	398 (63%)*	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.632
# 51 -	542 (86%)*	50 (8%)	41 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (0%)	0.860
# 52 -	17 (3%)	307 (49%)	311 (49%)*	1 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0.490

Assessing Your Current Reality

Consider the descriptions of 5 stages of PLC progress regarding:

1. *Clarity on What Students Must Know and Be Able to Do*
2. *Assessing Student Learning on the Essential Curriculum*

Individually, silently, and honestly assess the current status of your school for each indicator on the Professional Learning Community Continuum

Progress and Problems

Share your assessment with your colleagues:

- Where are areas of agreement?
- Where are the areas of disagreement?
- Where can you celebrate the greatest progress?
- What areas are you finding problematic?

Closing the Knowing-Doing Gap

- What steps could you take to make progress in these indicators?
- Complete the “Where Do We Go From Here” worksheets to begin your plan for becoming a school committed to a focus on learning.

The Professional Learning Community at Work™ Continuum Learning as Our Fundamental Purpose in a PLC at Work (Part I)

DIRECTIONS: Individually, silently and *honestly* assess the current reality of your school’s implementation of each indicator listed in the left hand column. To assess district implementation, substitute the word “district” for “school.”

Learning as our Fundamental Purpose (Part I)					
We acknowledge that the fundamental purpose of our school is to help all students achieve high levels of learning, and therefore we work collaboratively to clarify what students must learn and how we will monitor each student’s learning.					
Indicator	Pre-Initiating	Initiating	Implementing	Developing	Sustaining
<p>We work with colleagues on our team to build shared knowledge regarding state, provincial, and/or national standards; district curriculum guides; trends in student achievement, and expectations for the next course or grade level. This collective inquiry has enabled each member of our team to clarify what all students must know and be able to do as a result of every unit of instruction.</p>	<p>Teachers have been provided with a copy of state, provincial or national standards and a district curriculum guide. There is no process for them to discuss curriculum with colleagues and no expectation they will do so.</p>	<p>Teacher representatives have helped to create a district curriculum guide. Those involved in the development feel it is a useful resource for teachers. Those not involved in the development may or may not use the guide.</p>	<p>Teachers are working in collaborative teams to clarify the essential learning for each unit and to establish a common pacing guide. Some staff members question the benefit of the work. They argue that developing curriculum is the responsibility of the central office or textbook publishers rather than teachers. Some are reluctant to give up favorite units that seem to have no bearing on essential standards.</p>	<p>Teachers have clarified the essential learning for each unit by building shared knowledge regarding state, provincial, and/or national standards; by studying high stakes assessments, and by seeking input regarding the prerequisites for success as students enter the next grade level. They are beginning to adjust curriculum, pacing, and instruction based on evidence of student learning.</p>	<p>Teachers on every collaborative team are confident they have established a guaranteed and viable curriculum for their students. Their clarity regarding the knowledge and skills students must acquire as a result of each unit of instruction, and their commitment to providing students with the instruction and support to achieve the intended outcomes gives every student access to essential learning.</p>
<p>We work with colleagues on our team to clarify the criteria by which we will judge the quality of student work, and we practice applying those criteria until we can do so consistently</p>	<p>Each teacher establishes his or her own criteria for assessing the quality of student work.</p>	<p>Teachers have been provided with sample rubrics for assessing the quality of student work.</p>	<p>Teachers working in collaborative teams are attempting to assess student work according to common criteria. They are practicing apply the criteria to examples of student work, but they are not yet consistent. The discrepancy is causing some tension on the team.</p>	<p>Teachers working in collaborative teams are clear on the criteria they will use in assessing the quality of student work and can apply the criteria consistently.</p>	<p>Collaborative teams of teachers frequently use performance-based assessments to gather evidence of student learning. Members have established strong inter-rater reliability and use the results from these assessments to inform and improve their individual and collective practice. The team’s clarity also helps members teach the criteria to students who can then assess the quality of their own work and become more actively engaged in their learning.</p>

<p>We monitor the learning of each student's attainment of all essential outcomes on a timely basis through a series of frequent, team-developed common formative assessments that are aligned with high-stakes assessments students will be required to take.</p>	<p>Each teacher creates his or her own assessments to monitor student learning. Assessments are typically summative rather than formative. A teacher can teach an entire career and not know if he or she teaches a particular skill or concept better or worse than the colleague in the next room teaching the same skill or concept.</p>	<p>The district has established benchmark assessments that are administered several times throughout the year. Teachers pay little attention to the results and would have a difficult time attempting to explain the purpose of the benchmark assessments.</p>	<p>Teachers working in collaborative teams have begun to create common assessments. Some attempt to circumvent the collaborative process by proposing the team merely use the quizzes and tests that are available in the textbook as their common assessments. Some administrators question the ability of teachers to create good assessments and argue that the district should purchase commercially developed tests.</p>	<p>Teachers working in collaborative teams have created a series of common assessments and agreed on the specific standard students must achieve to be deemed proficient. The user-friendly results of common assessments are providing each member of the team with timely evidence of student learning. Members are using that evidence to improve their assessments and to develop more effective instructional strategies.</p>	<p>Collaborative teams of teachers gather evidence of student learning on a regular basis through frequent common formative assessments. The team analysis of results drives the continuous improvement process of the school. Members determine the effectiveness of instructional strategies based on evidence of student learning rather than teacher preference or precedent. Members who struggle to teach a skill are learning from those who are getting the best results. The frequent common formative assessments provide the vital information that fuels the school's system of intervention and enrichment. The assessments are formative because 1) they are used to identify students who need additional time and support for learning, 2) the students receive the additional time and support for learning, and 3) students are given another opportunity to demonstrate that they have learned.</p>
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Where Do We Go From Here? Worksheet Clearly Defined Outcomes

<p>Describe one or more aspects of a professional learning community that you would like to see in place in your school.</p>	<p>What steps or activities must be initiated to create this condition in your school?</p>	<p>Who will be responsible for initiating or sustaining these steps or activities?</p>	<p>What is a realistic timeline for each step or phase of the activity?</p>	<p>What will you use to assess the effectiveness of your initiative?</p>
<p>Teachers in the school have worked together to clarify and focus on the essential outcomes for each course, each grade level, and each unit of instruction.</p> <p>These common essential outcomes reflect the teachers' efforts to build shared knowledge regarding best practice.</p>				



Where Do We Go From Here? Worksheet Monitoring Each Student's Learning

<p>Describe one or more aspects of a professional learning community that you would like to see in place in your school.</p>	<p>What steps or activities must be initiated to create this condition in your school?</p>	<p>Who will be responsible for initiating or sustaining these steps or activities?</p>	<p>What is a realistic timeline for each step or phase of the activity?</p>	<p>What will you use to assess the effectiveness of your initiative?</p>
<p>Teachers in the school have worked together to clarify the criteria they use in judging the quality of student work and they apply the criteria consistently.</p> <p>Teachers in the school have worked together to monitor student learning through frequent, team-developed common formative assessments that are aligned to state and local standards.</p>				



The BIG IDEAS of a PLC

- We accept **learning** as the fundamental purpose of our school and therefore are willing to examine **all** practices in light of their impact on learning.
- **We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose. We cultivate a collaborative culture through development of high-performing teams.**

Barriers to a Learning Community

- A professional norm of teacher isolation.

Why Should We Collaborate?

- Gains in student achievement
- Higher quality solutions to problems
- Increased confidence among all staff
- Teachers able to support one another's strengths and accommodate weaknesses
- Ability to test new ideas
- More support for new teachers
- Expanded pool of ideas, materials, and methods
—Judith Warren Little (1990)

The Case for Teams

Empowered teams are such a powerful force of integration and productivity that they form the basic building block of any intelligent organization. Given the right context, teams generate passion and engagement. In addition, a team is something to belong to, a support group and political unit with more clout than the individuals in it.

Pinchot & Pinchot, *The End of Bureaucracy and the Rise of the Intelligent Organization*

We are at a point in time where teams are recognized as a critical component of every enterprise—the predominant unit for decision making and getting things done. . . .

Working in teams is the norm in a learning organization.

Senge, et al., *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*

The leader of the future will master the art of forming teams. Future leaders will master teamwork, working with and through others because no one person can master all the sources of information to make good decisions.

Ulrich, “Credibility and Capability” in *The Leader of the Future*

Teams bring together complementary skills and experience that exceed those of any individual on the team. Teams are more effective in problem solving. Teams provide a social dimension that enhances work. Teams motivate and foster peer pressure and internal accountability. Teams have more fun.

Katzenbach and Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams*

The best way to achieve challenging goals is through teamwork. Where single individuals may despair of accomplishing a monumental task, teams nurture, support, and inspire each other.

Noel Tichy, *The Leadership Engine*

People who collaborate learn from each other and create synergy. That is why learning organizations are made up of teams that share a common purpose. Organizations need togetherness to get things done and to encourage the exploration essential to improvement.

Charles Handy, “Managing the Dream” in *Learning Organizations*

Learning organizations are fast, focused, flexible, friendly and fun. To promote these characteristics they are far more likely to be organized into teams than in old-fashioned hierarchies.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, “Mastering Change” in *Learning Organizations*

We have known for nearly a quarter of a century that self-managed teams are far more productive than any other form of organizing. There is a clear correlation between participation and productivity.

Margaret Wheatley, “Goodbye, Command and Control” in *Leader to Leader*

The Case for Collaboration

The single most important factor for successful school restructuring and the first order of business for those interested in increasing the capacity of their schools is building a collaborative internal environment (Eastwood & Seashore Louis, 1992).

When groups, rather than individuals are seen as the main units for implementing curriculum, instruction, and assessment, they facilitate development of shared purpose for student learning and collective responsibility to achieve it (Newmann and Wehlage, 1995).

“The key to ensuring that every child has a quality teacher is finding a way for school systems to organize the work of qualified teachers so they can collaborate with their colleagues in developing strong learning communities that will sustain them as they become more accomplished teachers” (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2003, p. 7.)

Teacher collaboration in strong professional learning communities improves the quality and equity of student learning, promotes discussions that are grounded in evidence and analysis rather than opinion, and fosters collective responsibility for student success (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006).

“High performing schools tend to promote collaborative cultures [and] support professional communities and exchanges among all staff... Teachers and staff communicate to remove barriers to student learning” (National Education Association, 2006).

When teachers work in collaborative teams schools are more likely to see gains in student achievement, find higher quality solutions to problems, promote increased confidence among staff, create an environment in which teachers support one another’s strengths and accommodate weaknesses, provide support for new teachers, and provide all staff with access to an expanded pool of ideas, materials, and methods (Judith Warren Little, 1990).

[High-achieving schools] “build a highly collaborative school environment in where working together to solve problems and to learn from each other become cultural norms” (West Ed, 2000, p.12).

Improving schools require a collaborative culture. Without collaborative skills and relationships it not possible to continue to learn (Michael Fullan, 1993).

Collaboration and the ability to engage in collaborative action are becoming increasingly important to the survival of the public schools. Indeed, without the ability to collaborate with others the prospect of truly improving schools is not likely (Schlechty, 2005, p. 22).

“It is imperative that professional learning be directed at improving the quality of collaborative work” (National Staff Development Council, 2001).

It is time to end the practice of solo teaching in isolated classrooms. Today’s teachers must transform their personal knowledge into a collectively built, widely shared and cohesive professional knowledge base (Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005).

Group IQ

There is such a thing as group IQ. While a group can be no smarter than the sum total of the knowledge and skills of its members, it can be much “dumber” if its internal workings don’t allow people to share their talents.

—Robert Sternberg (1988)

Team Defined

What Is Collaboration?

A **systematic** process in which we work together, **interdependently**, to analyze and **impact** professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results

—DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker (2002)

The Focus of Collaboration

Collaborative cultures, which by definition have close relationships, are indeed powerful, but unless they are focusing on the right things they may end up being powerfully wrong.

- Michael Fullan

A Key Question in PLCs

The critical question in a PLC is not, “do we collaborate,” but rather,

“what do we collaborate about.”

You must not settle for
“Collaboration Lite.”

Critical Corollary Questions: If We Believe All Kids Can Learn:

- What is it we expect them to learn?
- How will we know when they have learned it?
- How will we respond when they don't learn?
- How will we respond when they already know it?

Seven Keys to Effective Teams

1. Embed collaboration in routine practices of the school with FOCUS ON LEARNING.

The Criterion for Creating Teams

The fundamental question in organizing teams is:

“Do the people on this team have a shared responsibility for responding to the critical questions in ways that enhance the learning of their students.”

Possible Team Structures: Provided Focus Is on LEARNING

- All teachers teaching the same grade level
- All teachers teaching the same course
- Vertical teams (K-2/3-5 or French I-IV)
- Electronic teams
 - www.isightEd.com
 - www.firstclass.com
 - professional organizations
- Interdisciplinary teams
- District or regional teams
- Similar Responsibility Teams

Seven Keys to Effective Teams

1. Embed collaboration in routine practices of the school with FOCUS ON LEARNING.
2. **Schedule time for collaboration into the school day and school calendar.**

Parameters for Collaborative Time

- Can not keep the kids at home
- Can not increase costs
- Can not significantly impact instructional time

For more ideas on

Team Structure

Making Time for Collaboration

Go to:

www.allthingsplc.info

“Evidence of Effectiveness” Schools

Making Time for Collaboration

It is imperative that teachers be provided with time to meet during their contractual day. We believe it is insincere and disingenuous for any school district or any school principal to stress the importance of collaboration, and then fail to provide time for collaboration. One of the ways in which organizations demonstrate their priorities is allocation of resources, and in schools, one of the most precious resources is time. The following list is not meant to be comprehensive but is merely intended to illustrate some of the steps schools and districts have taken to create the prerequisite time for collaboration.

Common Preparation: Build the master schedule to provide daily common preparation periods for teachers of the same course, or department. Each team should then designate one day each week to engage in collaborative, rather than individual planning.

Parallel Scheduling: Schedule common preparation time by assigning the specialists—physical education teachers, librarians, music teachers, art teachers, instructional technologists, guidance counselors, foreign language teachers, etc.—to provide lessons to students across an entire grade level at the same time each day. The team should designate one day each week for collaborative planning. Some schools build back-to-back specials classes into the master schedule on each team's designated collaborative day, thus creating an extended block of time for the team to meet.

Adjusted Start and End Time of Contractual Day: Members of a team, department, or an entire faculty agree to start their workday early or extend their workday one day each week to gain collaborative team time. In exchange for adding time to one end of the workday, the teachers are compensated by getting the time back on the other end of that day.

For example, on the first day of each school-week the entire staff of Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois, begins its workday at 7:30 a.m., rather than the normal 7:45 start-time. From 7:30 to 8:30, the entire faculty engages in collaborative team meetings. Student arrival begins at 7:40, as usual, but the start of class is delayed from the normal 8:05 until 8:30. Students are supervised by administration and non-instructional staff in a variety of optional activities such as breakfast, library and computer research, open gym, study halls, and tutorials. To accommodate for the 25 minutes of lost instructional time, five minutes is trimmed from five of the eight 50-minute class periods. The school day ends at the usual 3:25 p.m., buses run their regular routes, and Stevenson teachers are free to leave at 3:30 rather than the 3:45

time stipulated in their contract. By making these minor adjustments to the schedule on the first day of each week, the entire faculty is guaranteed an hour of collaborative planning to start each week, but their work day or work week has not been extended by a single minute.

Shared Classes: Teachers across two different grade levels or courses combine their students into one class for instruction. While one teacher/team instructs the students during that period, the other team engages in collaborative work. The teams alternate instructing and collaborating to provide equity in learning time for students and teams. Some schools coordinate shared classes to ensure that older students adopt younger students and serve as literacy buddies, tutors and mentors.

Group Activities, Events, or Testing: Teams of teachers coordinate activities that require supervision of students rather than instructional expertise (i.e., videos, resource lessons, read-alouds, assemblies, testing). Non-teaching staff supervise students while the teachers engage in team collaboration.

Banking Time: Over a designated period of days, instructional minutes are extended beyond the required school day. After banking the desired number of minutes on designated days, the instructional day ends early to allow for faculty collaboration and student enrichment. In a middle school, for example, the traditional instructional day ended at 3:00 p.m.; students boarded buses at 3:20 and the teacher contractual day ended at 3:30. The faculty decided to extend the instructional day until 3:10 rather than 3:00. By teaching an extra 10 minutes nine days in a row, they bank 90 minutes. On the tenth day, instruction stops at 1:30 and the entire faculty has collaborative team time for two hours. The students remain on campus and are engaged in clubs, enrichment activities, and assemblies sponsored by a variety of parent/community partners and co-supervised by the school's non-teaching staff.

In-Service/Faculty Meeting Time: Schedule extended time for teams to work together on staff development days and during faculty meeting time. Rather than requiring staff to attend a traditional whole staff in-service session or sit in a faculty meeting while directives and calendar items are read to highly educated professionals, shift the focus and use of these days or meetings so members of teams have extended time to learn with and from each other.

Materials derived from: DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many. (2006). *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

Seven Keys to Effective Teams

1. Embed collaboration in routine practices of the school with FOCUS ON LEARNING.
2. Schedule time for collaboration into the school day and school calendar.
3. **Focus teams on critical questions.**
4. **Make products of collaboration explicit.**

Example of a Timeline for Team Products

By the end of the:

- 2nd Week - Team Norms
- 4th Week - Team SMART Goal
- 6th Week - Common Essential Outcomes
- 8th Week - First Common Assessment
- 10th Week - Analysis of Student Performance on First Common Formative Assessment

Reciprocal Accountability

Accountability must be a reciprocal process. For every expectation I have of you to perform, I have an equal responsibility to provide you with the capacity to meet that expectation.

- Richard Elmore, 2006

Critical Issues for Team Consideration

Team Name: _____

Team Members: _____

Use the scale below to indicate the extent to which each of the following statements is true of your team.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not True of Our Team			Our Team Is Addressing				True of Our Team		

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. ___ We have identified team norms and protocols to guide us in working together.</p> <p>2. ___ We have analyzed student achievement data and have established SMART goals that we are working interdependently to achieve.</p> <p>3. ___ Each member of our team is clear on the essential learnings of our course in general as well as the essential learnings of each unit.</p> <p>4. ___ We have aligned the essential learnings with state and district standards and the high-stakes exams required of our students.</p> <p>5. ___ We have identified course content and/or topics that can be eliminated so we can devote more time to essential curriculum.</p> <p>6. ___ We have agreed on how to best sequence the content of the course and have established pacing guides to help students achieve the intended essential learnings.</p> <p>7. ___ We have identified the prerequisite knowledge and skills students need in order to master the essential learnings of our course and each unit of this course.</p> <p>8. ___ We have identified strategies and created instruments to assess whether students have the prerequisite knowledge and skills.</p> <p>9. ___ We have developed strategies and systems to assist students in acquiring prerequisite knowledge and skills when they are lacking in those areas.</p> <p>10. ___ We have developed frequent common formative assessments that help us to determine each student's mastery of essential learnings.</p> | <p>11. ___ We have established the proficiency standard we want each student to achieve on each skill and concept examined with our common assessments.</p> <p>12. ___ We have developed common summative assessments that help us assess the strengths and weaknesses of our program.</p> <p>13. ___ We have established the proficiency standard we want each student to achieve on each skill and concept examined with our summative assessments.</p> <p>14. ___ We have agreed on the criteria we will use in judging the quality of student work related to the essential learnings of our course, and we practice applying those criteria to ensure consistency.</p> <p>15. ___ We have taught students the criteria we will use in judging the quality of their work and have provided them with examples.</p> <p>16. ___ We evaluate our adherence to and the effectiveness of our team norms at least twice each year.</p> <p>17. ___ We use the results of our common assessments to assist each other in building on strengths and addressing weaknesses as part of a process of continuous improvement designed to help students achieve at higher levels.</p> <p>18. ___ We use the results of our common assessments to identify students who need additional time and support to master essential learnings, and we work within the systems and processes of the school to ensure they receive that support.</p> |
|--|--|

To Help Build the Capacity of Teams, Address...

- Why - (Rationale)
- How - (Process)
- What - (Common Language, Tools, Templates, Materials, Resources, Examples)
- When - (Timeline)
- Guiding Questions
- Criteria for Clarifying Quality of Each Product
- Tips and Suggestions

Seven Keys to Effective Teams

1. Embed collaboration in routine practices of the school with FOCUS ON LEARNING.
2. Schedule time for collaboration into the school day and school calendar.
3. Focus teams on critical questions.
4. Make products of collaboration explicit.
5. **Establish team norms to guide collaboration.**

The Significance of Team Norms

- When all is said and done, the norms of a group help determine whether it functions as a high-performing team or becomes simply a loose collection of people working together.
- Positive norms will stick only if the group puts them into practice over and over again. Being explicit about norms raises the level of effectiveness, maximizes emotional intelligence, produces a positive experience for group members, and helps to socialize newcomers into the group quickly.

- Daniel Goleman

Importance of Team Norms

- Social psychologists learned long ago that if you make a commitment and then share it with others, you are far more likely to follow through than if you simply make the commitment to yourself.

□ Kerry Patterson et. al. *Influencers*, p. 152

The Importance of Norms

- One thing is clear: having clear norms gives teams a huge advantage. A key to effective teams is involving all members in establishing norms, and then holding everyone accountable to what they have agreed upon.

□ Patrick Lencioni, *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*

The Importance of Team Norms

- At the heart of team interaction lies a commitment-building process. The team establishes a social contract among its members that relates to their purpose, and guides and obligates how they must work together. At its core, team accountability is about the promises we make to ourselves and others, promises that underpin two critical aspects of teams: commitment and trust.

□ Katzenbach and Smith, *The Wisdom of Teams*

Norms of High Performing Teams

- Willingness to consider matters from another's perspective
 - Accurate understanding of spoken and unspoken feelings and concerns of team members
 - Willingness to confront a team member who violates norms
 - Communicating positive regard, caring, and respect
 - Willingness and ability to evaluate the team's own effectiveness
 - Seeking feedback about and evidence of team effectiveness from internal and external sources
 - Maintaining a positive outlook and attitude
 - Proactive problem-solving
 - Awareness of how the group contributes to the purpose and goals of the larger organization
- Daniel Goleman

Criteria For Team Norms

- The norms have clarified our expectations of one another.
- All members of the team participated in creating the norms. All voices were heard.
- The norms are stated as commitments to act in certain ways.
- All members have committed to honoring the norms.

Tips For Team Norms

- Each team establishes its own norms.
- Norms are stated as commitments to act or behave in certain ways.
- Norms are reviewed at the beginning and end of each meeting until internalized.
- One norm requires team to assess its effectiveness every six months. This assessment should include review of adherence to norms and the need to identify new norms.
- Less is more. A few key norms are better than a laundry list.
- Violations of norms must be addressed.

Developing Norms

Comments to the Facilitator: This activity will enable a group to develop a set of operating norms or ground rules. In existing groups, anonymity will help ensure that everyone is able to express their ideas freely. For this reason, it is essential to provide pens or pencils or to ask that everyone use the same type of writing implement.

Supplies: Index cards, pens or pencils, poster paper, display board, tape, tacks

Time: Two hours

Directions

1. Explain to the group that effective groups generally have a set of norms that govern individual behavior, facilitate the work of the group, and enable the group to accomplish its task.
2. Provide examples of norms by posting the list of norms that appears on page 212.
3. Recommend to the group that it establish a set of norms:
 - To ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to contribute in the meeting;
 - To increase productivity and effectiveness; and
 - To facilitate the achievement of its goals.
4. Give five index cards and the same kind of writing tool to each person in the group.
5. Ask each person to reflect on and record behaviors they consider ideal behaviors for a group. Ask them to write one idea on each of their cards. Time: 10 minutes.
6. Shuffle all the cards together. Every effort should be made to provide anonymity for individuals, especially if the group has worked together before.
7. Turn cards face up and read each card aloud. Allow time for the group members to discuss each idea. Tape or tack each card to a display board so that all group members can see it. As each card is read aloud, ask the group to determine if it is similar to another idea that already has been expressed. Cards with similar ideas should be grouped together.
8. When all of the cards have been sorted, ask the group to write the norm suggested by each group of cards. Have one group member record these new norms on a large sheet of paper.
9. Review the proposed norms with the group. Determine whether the group can support the norms before the group adopts them.

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Developing Norms

WHEN ESTABLISHING NORMS, CONSIDER:	PROPOSED NORM
<p>Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ When do we meet? ■ Will we set a beginning and ending time? ■ Will we start and end on time? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How will we encourage listening? ■ How will we discourage interrupting? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Confidentiality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Will the meetings be open? ■ Will what we say in the meeting be held in confidence? ■ What can be said after the meeting? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Decision Making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How will we make decisions? ■ Are we an advisory or a decision-making body? ■ Will we reach decisions by consensus? ■ How will we deal with conflicts? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How will we encourage everyone's participation? ■ Will we have an attendance policy? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What do we expect from members? ■ Are there requirements for participation? 	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

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Survey on Team Norms

Team: _____ Date: _____

Use the following ratings to honestly reflect on your experiences as a member of a collaborative team:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4

1. ___ I know the norms and protocols established by my team.

Comments: _____

2. ___ Members of my team are living up to the established norms and protocols.

Comments: _____

3. ___ Our team maintains focus on the established team goal(s).

Comments: _____

4. ___ Our team is making progress toward the achievement of our goal(s).

Comments: _____

5. ___ The team is having a positive impact on my classroom practice.

Comments: _____

Team Feedback Sheet

Team Name: _____

Meeting Date: _____

Team Goal(s): _____

Team Members Present:

Team Members Absent (List Reason):

Topics/Meeting Outcomes:

Questions/Concerns:

Administrator: _____

Date: _____

Keys to Responding to a Resister

- Assume good intentions
- Seek to understand
- Use strategies of persuasion

Seven Ways to Change Someone's Mind

- 1) Reason. Appealing to rational thinking and decision making.
- 2) Research. Building shared knowledge of the research base supporting a position.
- 3) Resonance. Connecting to the person's intuition so that the proposal **feels right**.
- 4) Representational Re-descriptions. Changing the way the information is presented (for example, using stories or analogies instead of data).
- 5) Resources and Reward. Providing people with incentives to embrace an idea.
- 6) Real-World Events. Presenting real-world examples where the idea has been applied successfully.

Howard Gardner, 2004

The Sequence of Changing Attitudes (Including Your Own)

- **Attitude**
 - is shaped by
 - **Experience**
 - is a result of
 - **Behavior**
-
- To change attitudes, focus on behavior.

Keys to Responding to a Resister

- Assume good intentions
- Seek to understand
- Use strategies of persuasion
- **Identify specific behaviors essential to the success of the initiative**
- **Focus on behavior not attitude. Monitor behavior.**

We Can Behave our Way to New Attitudes

- There is a large literature demonstrating that attitudes follow behavior. People accept new beliefs as a result of changing their behavior.
 - Pfeffer and Sutton

Assessing Your Current Reality

Consider the descriptions of 5 stages of PLC progress regarding:

Collaborative Teams that focus on Issues that directly impact student learning

Individually, silently, and honestly assess the current status of your school for each indicator on the Professional Learning Community Continuum

The Professional Learning Community at Work™ Continuum Building a Collaborative Culture Through High-Performing Teams in a PLC at Work

DIRECTIONS: Individually, silently and *honestly* assess the current reality of your school’s implementation of each indicator listed in the left hand column. To assess district implementation, substitute the word “district” for “school.”

Indicator	Pre-Initiating	Initiating	Implementing	Developing	Sustaining
We are organized into collaborative teams in which members work interdependently to achieve common goals that directly impact student achievement.	Teachers work in isolation with little awareness of the strategies, methods, or materials used by colleagues teaching the same course or grade level. There is no plan in place to assign staff members into teams or to provide them with time to collaborate.	Teachers are encouraged but not required to work together collaboratively. Some staff may elect to work with colleagues on topics of mutual interest. Staff members are congenial but are not co-laboring in an effort to improve student achievement.	Teachers have been assigned into collaborative teams and have been provided time for collaboration during the regular contractual day. Teams may be unclear regarding how they should use the collaborative times. Topics often focus on matters unrelated to teaching and learning. Some teachers believe the team meeting is not a productive use of their time.	Teachers have been assigned into collaborative teams and have been provided time for collaboration on a weekly basis during the regular contractual day. Guidelines, protocols, and processes have been established in an effort to help teams use collaborative time to focus on topics that will have a positive impact on student achievement. Teams leaders are helping lead the collaborative process and the work of teams is monitored closely so assistance can be provided when a team struggles. Teams are working interdependently to achieve goals specifically related to higher levels of student achievement and are focusing their efforts on discovering better ways to achieve those goals.	The collaborative team process is deeply engrained in the school culture. Staff members view it as the engine that drives school improvement in their schools. Teams are self-directed and very skillful in advocacy and inquiry. They consistently focus on issues that are most significant in improving student achievement, and set specific measurable goals to monitor improvement. The collaborative team process serves as a powerful form of job-embedded professional development because members are willing and eager to learn from one another, to identify common problems, engage in action research, make evidence of student learning transparent among members of the team, and make judgments about the effectiveness of different practices on the basis of that evidence. The team process directly impacts teacher practice in the classroom, helping each teacher clarify what to teach, how to assess, and how to improve instruction.
Building a Collaborative Culture Through High Performing Teams in a PLC at Work We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose of learning for all students. We cultivate a collaborative culture through the development of high-performing teams.					

<p>We have identified and honor the commitments we have made to the members of our collaborative teams in order to enhance the effectiveness of our team. These articulated collective commitments or norms have clarified expectations of how our team will operate and are used to address problems that may occur on the team.</p>	<p>No attention has been paid to establishing clearly articulated commitments that clarify the expectations of how the team will function and how each member will contribute to its success. Norms do emerge from each group based on the habits that come to characterize the group, but they are not explicit nor are they the result of a thoughtful process. Several of the norms have an adverse effect on the effectiveness of the team.</p>	<p>Teams have been encouraged by school or district leadership to create norms that clarify expectations and commitments. Recommended norms for teams may have been created and distributed. Norms are often stated as beliefs rather than commitments to act in certain ways.</p>	<p>Each team has been required to develop written norms that clarify expectations and commitments. Many teams have viewed this as a task to be accomplished. They have written the norms and submitted them, but do not use them as part of the collaborative team process.</p>	<p>Teams have established the collective commitments that will guide their work and members have agreed to honor the commitments. The commitments are stated in terms of specific behaviors members will demonstrate. The team begins and ends each meeting with a review of the commitments to remind each other of the agreements they have made about how they will work together. They assess the effectiveness of the commitments periodically and make revisions when they feel it will help the team become more effective.</p>	<p>Team members honor the collective commitments they have made to one another regarding how the team will operate and the responsibility of each member to the team. The commitments have been instrumental in creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect among members. They have helped members work interdependently to achieve common goals because members believe they can rely upon one another. The commitments facilitate the team's collective inquiry and help people explore their assumptions and practices. Members recognize that their collective commitments have not only helped the team become more effective, but have also made the collaborative experience more personally rewarding. Violations of the commitments are addressed. Members use them as the basis for in crucial conversations and honest dialogue when there is concern that commitments are not being observed by one or more members.</p>
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Where Do We Go From Here? Worksheet A Commitment to a Collaborative Culture

<p>Describe one or more aspects of a professional learning community that you would like to see in place in your school.</p>	<p>What steps or activities must be initiated to create this condition in your school?</p>	<p>Who will be responsible for initiating or sustaining these steps or activities?</p>	<p>What is a realistic timeline for each step or phase of the activity?</p>	<p>What will you use to assess the effectiveness of your initiative?</p>
<p>Teachers work together as members of collaborative teams. The members of each team work interdependently to achieve common goals.</p> <p>Each team is provided with time to meet and uses that time to engage in collective inquiry on questions specifically linked to gains in student achievement.</p> <p>Each team adopts and observes protocols that clarify how members will fulfill their responsibilities to the team.</p> <p>Each team is asked to generate and submit products, which result from their discussion of critical questions.</p>				

Progress and Problems

Share your assessment with your colleagues:

- Where are areas of agreement?
- Where are the areas of disagreement?
- Where can you celebrate the greatest progress?
- What areas are you finding problematic?

Closing the Knowing-Doing Gap

- What steps could you take to make progress in these indicators?
- Complete the “Where Do We Go From Here” worksheets to begin your plan for becoming a school committed to a focus on learning.

The BIG IDEAS of a PLC

- We accept **learning** as the fundamental purpose of our school and therefore are willing to examine **all** practices in light of their impact on learning.
- We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose. We cultivate a **collaborative culture** through development of high performing teams.
- **We assess our effectiveness on the basis of results rather than intentions. Individuals, teams, and schools seek relevant data and information and use that information to promote continuous improvement.**

Professional Learning Communities Focus on Results in Two Ways

1. To identify students who need more time and support for learning
2. To identify strategies to improve upon both our individual and collective ability to teach each essential skill and concept

Seven Keys to Effective Teams

1. Embed collaboration in routine practices of the school with FOCUS ON LEARNING.
2. Schedule time for collaboration into the school day and school calendar.
3. Focus teams on critical questions.
4. Make products of collaboration explicit.
5. Establish team norms to guide collaboration.
6. **Pursue specific and measurable team performance goals.**

Results-Oriented Goals: Keys to Effective Teams

Leaders foster effective teams when they help teams establish specific, measurable, results-oriented, performance goals. Promoting teams for the sake of teams or focusing on team-building exercises does little to improve the effectiveness of the organization. There is nothing more important than each member's commitment to common purpose and a related performance goal to which the group holds itself jointly accountable.

—Katzenbach & Smith (1993)

Evidenced-Based Decisions as Key to a Results Orientation in Education

An astonishing number of educational leaders make critical decisions about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and placement on the basis of information that is inadequate, misunderstood, misrepresented, or simply absent. Even when information is abundant and clear, I have witnessed leaders who are sincere and decent people stare directly at the information available to them, and then blithely ignore it.....Strategic leaders are worthy of the name because of their consistent linking of evidence to decision making. They respond to challenges not by scoring rhetorical points but by consistently elevating evidence over assertion.

Doug Reeves, *The Leader's Guide to Standards*

School systems must create a culture that places value on managing by results, rather than on managing by programs. It is essential that leaders work to establish a culture where results are carefully assessed and actions are taken based on these assessments.

Phil Schlechty *Creating the Capacity to Support Innovations*

Concentrating on results does not negate the importance of process. On the contrary, the two are interdependent: Results tell us which processes are most effective and to what extent and whether processes need reexamining and adjusting. Processes exist for results and results should inform processes.”

Mike Schmoker, *Results*

As schools initiate reform, they can't back off the collection of data because they will need information more than ever. They must have a process that gathers information that is recognized as authentic and relevant. The information should provide constant evaluation that shows schools where they are getting close and where they are falling short in a way that pushes people toward continual improvement.

Patrick Dolan, *Restructuring Our Schools*

What does it take to close the achievement gaps? Our findings suggest that it comes down to how schools use data. Teachers in gap-closing schools more frequently use data to understand the skill gaps of low-achieving students.... When data points to a weakness in students' academic skills, gap-closing schools are more likely to focus in on that area, making tough choices to ensure that students are immersed in what they most need.

Kiley Walsh Symonds, *Perspectives on the Gap: Fostering the Success of Minority and Low Income Students*

Evidenced-Based Decisions as Key to a Results Orientation in Any Organization

The ultimate measure of a great team is results. Effective teams avoid ambiguity and interpretation when it comes to results. They decide what they want to achieve, then they clarify how they will measure their progress. They select one or two indicators they can collectively focus upon and around which they can rally. They create a scoreboard that helps keep them focused on results. These teams use the scoreboard to monitor their progress against the expected achievement.

Patrick Lencioni, *Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team*

Companies operate under the false assumption that if they carry out enough of the “right” improvement activities, actual performance improvements will inevitably materialize. At the heart of this assumption, which we call “activity centered,” is a fundamentally flawed logic that confuses ends with means, processes with outcomes. Payoffs from the infusion of activities will be meager at best. And there is in fact an alternative: results’ driven improvement processes that focus on achieving specific, measurable operational improvements within a few months.

Robert Schaffer and Harvey Thomson, *Successful Change Programs Begin with Results*

We found there was something distinctive about the decision making process of the great companies we studied. First, they embraced the current reality, no matter how bad the message. Second, they developed a simple yet deeply insightful frame of reference for all decisions.You absolutely cannot make a series of good decisions without first confronting the brutal facts.

Jim Collins, *Good to Great*

Unless you can subject your decision-making to a ruthless and continuous *JUDGEMENT BY RESULTS*, all your zigs and zags will only be random lunges in the dark, sooner or later bound to land you on the rocks.

James Champy, *Reengineering Management*

Ducking the facts about performance for fear of being judged, criticized, humiliated, and punished characterizes losing streaks, not winning streaks. In a losing streak, facts are used for blame, not improvement; they are turned into weapons to persecute, not tools to find solutions.....In winning streaks, players get and use abundant feedback about their performance. Leaders can...ensure that measurements ultimately empower rather than punish people.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Confidence*

SMART Goals

Established a team SMART goal:

- Strategic and specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Results-oriented
- Time-bound

—Conzemius & O'Neill (2000)

Are These SMART Goals?

Strategically aligned with the school-wide goal of improving student performance in language arts, by the end of the 2009–2010 school year we will:

- **Develop and implement four (4) common assessments in the area of writing.**
- **Increase the use of cooperative learning activities in our English classrooms by 25%.**
- **Increase the number of students achieving the target score (80% or higher) on the district reading assessment from 81% to 90%.**

The Importance of Short-Term SMART Goals

People can become so caught up in big dreams that they don't manage the current reality. **Short-term gains are needed to establish credibility for a change initiative over the long haul.**

Major change takes times. **Most of us want to see some convincing evidence that all the effort is paying off. We want clear data indicating changes are working.**

—John P. Kotter, (1996), pp. 118–119

SMART Goal Worksheet

School: _____ Team Name: _____ Team Leader: _____

Team Members: _____

District Goal(s): _____

School Goal(s): _____

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness

SMART Goal Worksheet: Third-Grade Team

School: George Washington Elementary **Team Name:** Third-Grade Team **Team Leader:** Theresa Smith

Team Members: Ken Thomas, Joe Ramirez, Cathy Armstrong, Amy Wu

District Goal(s): We will increase student achievement and close the achievement gap in all areas of our middle and secondary schools, using a variety of local, state, and national indicators to document improved learning on the part of our students.

School Goal(s): We will:

1. Increase the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency on both a national reading proficiency assessment and on the state test.
2. Eliminate the achievement gap for minority students.

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
<p>Our Reality: Last year, 18% of our third graders were unable to meet grade-level proficiency standards in reading fluency and comprehension as measured by a standardized, individualized assessment program for early literacy development. Six percent of Caucasian and 33% of minority students were unable to demonstrate proficiency.</p>	<p>We will create a common team schedule that reserves 8:30 to 10:30 for language arts each day. We will designate 45 minutes (9:45 to 10:30) each day for regrouping students into three groups (intensive support, strategic support, and achieving benchmark) based on demonstration of reading fluency and comprehension.</p>	<p>Third-grade team will adhere to the agreed-upon schedule and identify the appropriate reading group for each student by the end of September.</p>	<p>End of September</p>	<p>Students will be assigned to one of three groups on the basis of individual reading assessment results.</p>



SMART Goal Worksheet: Third-Grade Team (continued)

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
<p>Our Goal: This year, 100% of third graders will demonstrate proficiency in reading fluency and comprehension as measured by the standardized, individualized program for early literacy.</p>	<p>The team will expand to include the special education teacher, Title I teacher, speech therapist, and literacy coach during the designated 45 minutes each day. Students in need of intensive support will be assigned to a member of the team in groups of no more than four students. Students in need of more strategic support will be assigned to groups of no more than eight students. Students at benchmark proficiency will be assigned to the remaining team members for reading enrichment and extension activities created by the team. Student proficiency will be monitored on an ongoing basis and membership in the groups will be fluid.</p>	<p>The team will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with the principal and staff members listed above to create the schedule that allows for this intervention. 2. Create a series of ongoing assessments of reading fluency and comprehension and analyze the results. 3. Align assessments with the content and format of the state test for language arts. 4. Identify specific and precise instructional strategies to address the needs of students assigned to each group. 5. Create a variety of enrichment activities for proficient readers, including Junior Great Books reading circles, independent and group research projects, computer-based explorations, silent sustained reading, and teacher read-alouds. 	<p>The team will administer the standardized assessment three times this year: in mid-September, January, and late April.</p> <p>The team will develop and administer its own assessments every 6 weeks.</p>	<p>Evidence will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student movement to higher groups 2. All students demonstrating fluency and comprehension on the standardized assessment 3. All students meeting the proficiency standard on the state test in language arts



SMART Goal Worksheet: Eighth-Grade Math

School: Thomas Jefferson Middle School **Team Name:** Eighth-Grade Math **Team Leader:** Chris Rauch

Team Members: Chris Carter, Dolores Layco, Mary Fischer

District Goal(s): We will increase student achievement and close the achievement gap in all areas of our middle and secondary schools, using a variety of local, state, and national indicators to document improved learning on the part of our students.

School Goal(s): We will:

1. Reduce the failure rate in our school.
2. Increase the percentage of students scoring at or above the established proficiency standard on the state assessment in all areas.

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
<p>Our Reality: Last year, 24% of our students failed one or more semesters of math. And 31% percent of our students were unable to meet the state proficiency standard in math.</p>	<p>We will align each unit of our math program with state standards, study the results of the last state assessment, identify problem areas, and develop specific strategies to address those areas in our course.</p>	<p>Entire team</p>	<p>We will complete the analysis on the teacher workday prior to the start of the year. We will review our findings prior to the start of each new unit.</p>	<p>Written analysis of state assessment and strategies to address weaknesses</p>
<p>Our Goal: This year, we will reduce the percentage of failing grades to 10% or less and the percentage of students unable to meet state standards to no more than 15%.</p>	<p>Develop common formative assessments and administer them every 3 weeks. These assessments will provide repeated opportunities for students to become familiar with the format used on the state assessment.</p>	<p>Entire team</p>	<p>Formative assessments will be created prior to the start of each unit of instruction throughout the year. They will be administered on a day designated by the team.</p>	<p>Student performance on team-endorsed common assessments</p>



SMART Goal Worksheet Eighth-Grade Math (continued)

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
	<p>After each common assessment, we will identify any student who does not meet the established proficiency standard and will work with the counselor to have those students re-assigned from study hall to the math tutoring center.</p>	<p>Members of entire team will request tutoring as their supervisory responsibility; team leader will work with the counselor after each assessment.</p>	<p>Assessments administered every 3 weeks. Students will be assigned to the tutoring center within 1 week of assessment.</p>	<p>Daily list of students receiving tutoring in math</p>
	<p>Replace failing grades from our common assessments with the higher grade earned by students who are able to demonstrate proficiency in key skills on subsequent forms of the assessment after completing tutoring.</p>	<p>Entire team will create multiple forms of each assessment. Tutors will administer the assessment after a student has completed the required tutoring.</p>	<p>Multiple forms of an assessment will be created prior to the start of each unit of instruction. Tutors will administer the second assessment within 2 weeks of a student's assignment to the tutoring center.</p>	<p>Compilation of results from subsequent assessments</p>
	<p>Examine the results of each common assessment in an effort to determine which member of the team is getting the best results on each skill, and then share ideas, methods, and materials for teaching those skills more effectively.</p>	<p>Each member of the team</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout the year each time a common assessment is administered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Analysis of findings after each common assessment is administered ■ Decrease in the failure rate ■ Increase in percentage of students proficient on state assessment

SMART Goal Worksheet: American Government

School: John Adams High School **Team Name:** American Government Team **Team Leader:** Tom Botimer

Team Members: Dan Hahn, Andy Bradford, Nick Larsen, Helen Harvey

District Goal(s): We will provide more students with access to our most rigorous curriculum in each subject area and grade level.

School Goal(s): We will increase by at least 10% the number of students enrolling in:

1. Advanced placement courses
2. Capstone courses in a departmental sequence

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
<p>Our Reality: All students must complete a semester of American Government as a graduation requirement. Last year only 10% of the graduating class fulfilled that requirement by enrolling in advanced placement (AP) American Government.</p> <p>Our Goal: At least 20% of the current junior class will enroll in and complete the advanced placement American Government class next year.</p>	<p>We will make a presentation in each section of United States History, encouraging students to enroll in AP American Government and listing the advantages for doing so.</p> <p>We will coordinate with the guidance department to ensure that when counselors register students for classes, they encourage any student who receives an A at the end of the first semester of United States History to enroll in AP American Government.</p>	<p>Team leader will coordinate the schedule for these presentations with the team leader for United States History. Each member of the team will assist in making these presentations and will distribute a written list of advantages created by the team.</p> <p>Team leader will attend the counselors' team meeting to enlist their support, explain advantages of the AP program, and share the team's strategies for supporting students in AP Government.</p>	<p>Complete presentations by the end of January prior to students registering for their courses for next year.</p> <p>End of first semester</p>	<p>The presentation has been made in every United States History class</p> <p>Minutes of meeting</p>



SMART Goal Worksheet: American Government (continued)

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
	<p>We will advise parents of the benefits of AP American Government.</p>	<p>The team will draft a letter to parents of students who earn an A in United States History at the end of the semester. The letter will list the advantages of completing this course while in high school for any student planning on attending college. It will also include the team's strategy to provide students with additional support. The team will also create a flyer on the benefits of the AP program to be distributed during parent open house.</p>	<p>The flyer will be created for distribution at the open house in early October. The letter will be sent at the end of the first semester.</p>	<p>Completed documents</p>
	<p>We will create study groups to review material prior to the comprehensive assessments we administer every 6 weeks.</p>	<p>The team will create the common comprehensive assessments. Each member will be responsible for conducting one study group to help students review for these tests. Study groups will be held on three evenings in the week prior to the test.</p>	<p>Ongoing throughout the semester</p>	<p>Completion of common assessments and student performance on common assessments. The number of students earning honor grades on the AP exam in American Government will double over last year's total.</p>



SAMPLE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Any Town Elementary School Year: _____

District Goal 1: We will increase student achievement and close the achievement gap in all areas using a variety of indicators to document improved learning on the part of our students.

School Goal 1: We will improve student performance in language arts as measured by local, district, state/provincial, and National indicators.

TEAM SMART GOALS	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES/ACTION STEPS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATES	BUDGET	EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS
<p>Grade K: Current Reality: Last year, 81% of kindergarten students scored a 2 on the District Reading Rubric in May. SMART Goal: This year, at least 87% of kindergarten students will score a 2 or higher on the District Reading Rubric in May.</p> <p>Grade 1: Current Reality: Last year, 65% of first grade students scored a 3 or higher on the District Reading Rubric in May. SMART Goal: This year, at least 70% of first grade students will score a 3 or higher on the District Reading Rubric in May.</p> <p>Grade 2: Current Reality: Last year, 91% of second grade students passed the District Second Grade Reading Test when first administered in May. SMART Goal: This year, at least 93% of second grade students will pass the District Second Grade Reading Test when first administered in May.</p>	<p>Curriculum: 1. Clarify & pace Essential Learnings (skills, concepts & dispositions) in each area of Language Arts utilizing Standards Documents, Curriculum Guides, assessment blueprints, and textbooks.</p> <p>Assessments: 2. Develop and implement local, common, formative grade level assessments to: 1) frequently monitor each student's learning of essential outcomes 2.) provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate progress in meeting and exceeding learning targets.</p> <p>Instruction: 3. Create/implement a master instructional schedule at each grade level to provide protected blocks of instructional time for all areas of the content. 4. Initiate individual and small group programs to provide additional intervention and enrichment learning time for students.</p>	<p>All Instructional Staff</p> <p>Grade-Level Teams, Principal</p> <p>Principal, Instructional Teams</p> <p>Principal, Instructional Teams, Volunteers</p>	<p>Reading: Oct. 15 Writing: Nov. 15 Listening & Speaking: Dec. 15</p> <p>September-May checkpoints at mid-point of each nine-weeks; (district benchmark assessments at end of each nine-weeks)</p> <p>August 20th</p> <p>Daily: September - May</p>		<p>Lists of Each Team's Essential Learnings & Pacing Guides</p> <p>Increased results for all students on local, district, state/provincial, and national indicators</p> <p>Common Grade Level Schedules; Faculty Survey—January & June</p> <p>Intervention/Enrichment Schedule; Student Records; Volunteer Log</p>

TEAM SMART GOALS (cont.)	SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES/ACTION STEPS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATES	BUDGET	EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS
<p>Grade 3: Current Reality: Last year, 85% of third graders met or exceeded standard on the state's Writing Subtest in May. SMART Goal: This year, at least 90% of third graders will meet or exceed standard on the state's Writing Subtest in May.</p> <p>Grade 4: Current Reality: Last year, the national percentile for our fourth graders in vocabulary on the Stanford 9 was 62%. SMART Goal: This year, the national percentile for our fourth graders in vocabulary will be at least 66%.</p> <p>Grade 5: Current Reality: Last year, 78% of fifth graders scored at or above proficiency on the state's Reading/Literature and Research English Subtest in May. SMART Goal: This year, at least 85% of fifth graders will score at or above proficiency on the state's Reading/Literature and Research English Subtest in May.</p>	<p>5. Provide parents with resources and strategies to help their children succeed academically. Information will be provided through grade-level workshops, weekly folders/parent logs; newsletters, and parent/teacher conferences.</p> <p>6. Utilize a variety of instructional strategies to help students learn all Essential Skills at or above grade level proficiency targets.</p> <p>Staff Development:</p> <p>7. Collaboratively study standards & curriculum guides to generate grade level lists of essential skills.</p> <p>8. Create a variety of common, formative assessment instruments designed to monitor student learning of essential skills in reading and writing.</p> <p>9. Develop, implement, and evaluate Team Action Research Projects to improve teaching & learning. Use information from common assessments to identify staff development needs. Provide ongoing, job-embedded staff development.</p>	<p>All Instructional Staff, Principal</p> <p>All Instructional Staff, Principal</p> <p>All Instructional Staff, Principal</p> <p>All Teams, Principal</p> <p>All Instructional Teams, Principal</p>	<p>September-May</p> <p>Sept. – Dec. Faculty Meetings, Staff Dev. Days, & Team meetings</p> <p>Sept. - May Faculty Meetings, Staff Dev. Days, & Team meetings</p> <p>September–May Faculty Meetings; Staff Dev. Days; Team meetings; Additional Time by team request</p>	<p>\$3,500.00 Staff Dev. Funds</p>	<p>Number of Parents in Attendance, Study Guides & Newsletters</p> <p>Results on all indicators; Lesson Plans</p> <p>Grade Level Lists of Essential Skills</p> <p>Grade Level Common Assessments</p> <p>Quarterly Reviews; Mid Year Progress Reports; End-of-Year Team Evaluations; Assessment Results</p>

Seven Keys to Effective Teams

1. Embed collaboration in routine practices of the school with FOCUS ON LEARNING.
2. Schedule time for collaboration into the school day and school calendar.
3. Focus teams on critical questions.
4. Make products of collaboration explicit.
5. Establish team norms to guide collaboration.
6. Pursue specific and measurable team performance goals.
7. **Provide teams with frequent access to relevant information.**

Interpreting Data

Student Performance on the High-Stakes State Math Test:

Mean	178
Median	177
Mode	180

Use the data presented above to answer the following question: To what extent is this school helping all students achieve at high levels in math?

Schools Suffer from the DRIP Syndrome

Schools are often

Data

Rich, but

Information

Poor.

Data are not information; translating fact to understanding means relating data to something you know and can visualize. This typically requires comparison.

- Robert Waterman

Student #	Homeroom Class # 4
1	70
2	70
3	80
4	80
5	100
6	40
7	70
8	50
9	80
10	70
11	50
12	50
13	100
14	100
15	100
Average Score	74%
Number Proficient	7
Percent Proficient	47%

STUDENT	Class #1	Class #2	Class #3	Class #4	Total
1	50	90	100	70	
2	60	90	100	70	
3	70	90	80	80	
4	92	90	100	80	
5	90	90	100	100	
6	100	100	92	40	
7	90	100	80	70	
8	90	83	83	50	
9	83	100	100	80	
10	60	92	90	70	
11	92	100	90	50	
12	83	100	100	50	
13	92	100	80	100	
14	90	90	80	100	
15	100	100	90	100	
16	80	100	80		
17	90	92			
18	100				
# Proficient	14	17	16	7	54/66
% Proficient	78%	100%	100%	47%	81%

**To inform and impact
professional practice, ensure
all teachers receive:**

- Timely and frequent information on the achievement of their students,
- In meeting an agreed-upon standard,
- On a valid assessment,
- In comparison to others.

Sharing Data: Beginning of Community

Collecting data is only the first step toward wisdom, but sharing data is the first step toward community.

- Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

The Case for Formative Assessments

- *...developed through teacher learning communities promises the largest potential gains in student achievement*
- *Few initiatives in education have had such a strong body of evidence to support a claim to raise standards*
- *...one of the most powerful, high-leverage strategies for improving student learning that we know of*
- *...one of the most powerful weapons in a teacher's arsenal*

The Case for Common Assessments

- *...consistently used by schools with the greatest achievement*
- *...represent a powerful, proven structure for improved results*
- *...enable educators to diagnose student learning needs in time to make instructional modifications*
- *...form the basis of professional dialogue in schools that double student achievement*

The Case for Formative Assessment to Improve Student Learning

Effective use of formative assessment, developed through teacher learning communities, promises not only the largest potential gains in student achievement but also a process for affordable teacher professional development (Wiliam and Thompson, 2006).

“There is strong and rigorous evidence that improving formative assessment can raise standards of pupils' performance. There have been few initiatives in education with such a strong body of evidence to support a claim to raise standards” (Black and Wiliam (1998, p.20).

“Assessment for learning... when done well, this is one of the most powerful, high-leverage strategies for improving student learning that we know of. Educators *collectively* at the district and school levels become more skilled and focused at assessing, disaggregating, and using student achievement as a tool for ongoing improvement” (Fullan, 2005, p.71).

“Studies have demonstrated assessment *for* learning rivals one-on-one tutoring in its effectiveness and that the use of assessment particularly benefits low-achieving students” (Stiggins 2004, p.27).

“Formative assessments are one of the most powerful weapons in a teacher's arsenal. An effective standards-based, formative assessment program can help to dramatically enhance student achievement throughout the K-12 system” (Marzano 2006, back cover).

“Formative assessment is a potentially transformative instructional tool that, if clearly understood and adroitly employed, can benefit both educators and their students (p.3) ...formative assessment constitutes the key cornerstone of clearheaded instructional thinking. Formative assessment represents *evidence-based* instructional decision-making. If you want to become more instructionally effective, and if you want your students to achieve more, then formative assessments should be for you” (Popham, 2008, p.15).

The Case For Common Assessments

In my reviews of accountability data from hundreds of schools, the schools with the greatest gains in achievement consistently happen to use common assessments and collaborative scoring by faculty (Doug Reeves, 2007).

“Powerful, proven structures for improved results are at hand. It starts when a group of teachers meet regularly as a team to identify essential and valued student learning, develop common formative assessments, analyze current levels of achievement, set achievement goals, and then share and create lessons and strategies to improve upon those levels” (Schmoker, 2004).

“Common formative assessments provide regular and timely feedback regarding student attainment of the most critical standards, (and) also foster consistent expectations and priorities within a grade level, course, and department regarding standards, instruction, and assessment. . . . Most importantly, common formative assessment results enable educators to diagnose student learning needs accurately *in time to make instructional modifications*” (Ainsworth, 2007, p.95-96).

The schools and districts that doubled student achievement added another layer of testing – common formative or benchmark assessments. These assessments were designed to provide detailed and concrete information on what students knew and do not know with respect to specific learning targets. Educators focused their collaborative discussions on the formative benchmark assessment data to determine collectively how to craft instructional units to help students learn objectives for particular units. Effectiveness of instruction was transparent and the subject of public and professional conversations and the focus of ongoing professional development. (Odden and Archibald, 2009).

The key to improved student achievement was moving beyond an individual teacher . . . looking at his or her classroom data. Instead, it took getting same-grade teacher teams to meet, analyze the results of each interim assessment to understand what concepts in the curriculum were posing difficulty for students, share ideas, figure out the best interventions, and actually follow up in their classrooms (Christman, et al., 2009).

“To the extent that we team to 1) analyze, understand and deconstruct standards, 2) transform them into high quality classroom assessments, and 3) share and interpret results together, we benefit from the union of our wisdom about how to help our students continue to grow as learners” (Stiggins, 2005, p.82).

Linking Formative & Common Assessments

- Two strategies seem especially promising for schools. One is to expand the quality and variety of formative assessments; a second is to promote and organize collective inquiry into and discussion of student progress and achievement based on a range of assessments.

- Judith Warren Little, (2006), p. 9

The Most Powerful Strategy for Improving Student Learning

- Teachers work *together* in collaborative teams to:
 - **clarify what students must learn,**
 - **gather evidence of student learning,**
 - **analyze that evidence,**
 - **identify the most powerful teaching strategies.**
- Reflective teaching must be based on *evidence of student learning* and reflection is most powerful when it is collaborative.

□ John Hattie, 2009

Transparency Rules

There is no way continuous improvement can occur without **constant transparency fueled by good information**. Effective organizations create systems to ensure clear and continuous display of results and clear and continuous access to practice -- that is, what is being done to get the results.

- Michael Fullan (2008)

Why Common Assessments

- **Efficiency** - by sharing the load, teachers save time
- **Fairness** - promotes common goals, similar pacing, and consistent standards for assessing student proficiency
- **Effective monitoring** - provides timely evidence of whether the guaranteed and viable curriculum is being taught and learned
- **Informs individual teacher practice** - provides teachers with a basis of comparison regarding the achievement of their students so they can see strengths and weaknesses of their teaching
- **Team capacity** - collaborative teacher teams are able to identify and address problem areas in their program
- **Collective response** - helps teams and the school create timely, systematic interventions for students

The Tale of One Team: Essential Writing Skills for Students

Students will write descriptive paragraphs by:

- Developing a plan for writing
- Focusing on a central idea
- Grouping related ideas
- Including descriptive details that elaborate on the central idea
- Revising writing for clarity
- Editing final copies for grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling

The Tale of One Team: Bringing the Big Ideas to Life

- Developed four common writing prompts
- Agreed on the criteria by which they would judge the quality of student writing
- Practiced applying those criteria consistently to establish inter-rater reliability
- Identified anchor papers for each rubric stage
- Established the proficiency target of 3 out of 4
- Shared standards, rubric, and anchors with students, and taught them how to apply the rubric to their writing

SMART GOAL ACTION PLAN

TEAM: _____ Year: _____

District Goal 1: We will increase student achievement and close the achievement gap in all areas using a variety of indicators to document improved learning on the part of our students.

School Goal 1: We will improve student performance in language arts as measured by local, district, state/provincial, and National indicators.

TEAM SMART GOAL	STRATEGIES/ACTION STEPS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATES/TIMELINE	EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS
<p><u>Current Reality:</u> Last year, 85% of our students met or exceeded the target score of 3 on our District's Writing Prompt in May.</p> <p><u>SMART Goal:</u> This year, at least 90% of our students will meet or exceed the target score of 3 on our District's Writing Prompt in May.</p>	<p>Curriculum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarify & pace Essential Student Learning Outcomes in Writing utilizing Standards Documents, Curriculum Guides, assessment blueprints & data, Wish-List of Skills <p>assessments:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Develop, implement, and collaboratively score grade level formative writing prompts to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a.) frequently monitor each student's learning of essential writing outcomes b.) provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate progress in meeting and exceeding learning targets in writing; c.) learn with and from each other better ways to help students become proficient writers 3. Provide students with writing assignments in all subject areas & utilize a variety of instructional strategies to help students learn all Essential Writing Skills. 	<p>All Members of our Team</p> <p>All Members of our Team</p> <p>All Members of our Team Principal, Resource Staff, Volunteers</p>	<p>October 15th</p> <p>October -May checkpoints at mid-point of each grading period; (district benchmark assessments at end of each semester)</p> <p>Daily: September - May</p>	<p>Lists of Essential Student Learning Outcomes & Pacing Guide Increased results for all students on team, district, state/provincial, and national indicators</p> <p>Common Writing Prompts Common Writing Rubric Increased results for all students on team, district, state/provincial, and national indicators</p> <p>Commonly scored writing samples in multiple subjects; Increased results for all students on team, district, state/provincial, and national indicators</p>

<p><u>Current Reality:</u> Last year, 85% of our students met or exceeded the target score of 3 on our District's Writing Prompt in May.</p> <p><u>SMART Goal:</u> This year, at least 90% of our students will meet or exceed the target score of 3 on our District's Writing Prompt in May.</p>	<p>4. Initiate individual and small group sessions to provide additional intervention and enrichment focused on writing.</p> <p>5. Provide parents with resources and strategies to help their children succeed as writers.</p> <p>Staff Development:</p> <p>6. Develop, implement, and evaluate Our Team Action Research Project in Writing to improve our individual & collective ability to help our students learn to write at high levels.</p> <p>Use information from our common formative assessments to identify staff development needs & engage in ongoing, job-embedded staff development in the area of writing.</p>	<p>All Members of our Team</p> <p>All Members of Our Team</p> <p>All Members of Our Team</p>	<p>Daily: September-May</p> <p>1st Semester Workshop: 10/20 2nd Semester Workshop: 1/19 Newsletters; End-of-Grading Period Conferences</p> <p>Weekly collaborative team meetings; staff development days; faculty meeting sessions; additional professional learning time by request</p>	<p>Intervention/Enrichment Schedule; Student Learning Results</p> <p>Number of Parents in Attendance, Study Guides & Newsletters</p> <p>Common Assessments Quarterly Reviews; Mid -Year Progress Reports; End-of-Year Team Evaluations; Increased results for all students on team, district, state/provincial, and national indicators</p>
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ESSENTIAL WRITING SKILLS: COMMON ASSESSMENT RESULTS (TARGET SCORE 3/4)																
STUDENT	FOCUS ON CENTRAL IDEA			GROUP RELATED IDEAS			DESCRIPTIVE DETAILS			EDIT: CAP., PUNCT., GRAM. & SP						
	CLASS #1	CLASS #2	CLASS #3	TOTALS	CLASS #1	CLASS #2	CLASS #3	TOTALS	CLASS #1	CLASS #2	CLASS #3	TOTALS				
1	4	3	4		2	2	4		3	2	4		4	4	3	
2	4	4	4		3	4	3		3	4	4		3	4	4	
3	4	4	4		4	3	3		4	3	3		2	4	4	
4	2	3	3		1	2	4		2	3	4		2	4	4	
5	2	2	4		2	2	2		3	2	3		3	3	4	
6	2	4	3		1	3	3		1	4	3		3	4	3	
7	4	3	3		3	4	2		3	4	2		4	3	3	
8	4	2	3		2	2	3		3	2	3		3	3	3	
9	4	2	3		4	1	2		4	1	2		4	3	2	
10	4	4	4		3	3	3		4	3	3		4	3	3	
11	2	3	3		3	2	3		3	2	4		3	3	3	
12	2	3	3		2	3	3		3	3	4		4	4	4	
13	4	2	3		3	2	3		3	2	3		4	3	3	
14	2	4	3		1	4	3		3	4	3		3	4	3	
15	2	3	3		1	3	3		1	4	4		2	4	3	
16	4	3	3		3	2	3		4	3	3		4	3	3	
17	2	3	3		1	3	3		1	3	3		2	4	3	
18	2	3	4		2	2	3		3	2	4		3	4	4	
19	2	3	4		2	3	4		2	4	4		3	4	3	
20	4	2	3		3	1	3		3	1	3		4	3	2	
Average Score	3	3	3.4	3.1	2.3	2.6	3	2.6	2.8	2.8	3.3	3	3.2	3.6	3.2	3.3

Using Results to Improve Achievement

Consider the results of the first writing prompt and answer the following question:

How might the team analyze and report data in a way that is more aligned with learning for all?

Using Results to Improve Achievement

Consider the results of the first writing prompt and answer the following questions:

- Which team member should take the lead in intervention for students having difficulty with **central idea**?
- Which team member should take the lead in intervention for students have difficulty with **editing**?

Using Results to Improve Achievement

Consider the results of the first writing prompt an answer the following questions:

- Which area should the team consider as a focus for its own professional development?
- What is an example of an interim SMART goal the team might set for central idea for the next writing assessment?

Assessing Your Current Reality

Consider the descriptions of 5 stages of PLC progress regarding:

A Focus on Results through providing teams with relevant information

Individually, silently, and honestly assess the current status of your school for each indicator on the Professional Learning Community Continuum

Progress and Problems

Share your assessment with your colleagues:

- Where are areas of agreement?
- Where are the areas of disagreement?
- Where can you celebrate the greatest progress?
- What areas are you finding problematic?

Closing the Knowing-Doing Gap

- What steps could you take to make progress in these indicators?
- Complete the “Where Do We Go From Here” worksheets to begin your plan for becoming a school committed to a focus on learning.

The Professional Learning Community at Work™ Continuum The Focus on Results in a PLC at Work (Part I)

DIRECTIONS: Individually, silently and *honestly* assess the current reality of your school’s implementation of each indicator listed in the left hand column. To assess district implementation, substitute the word “district” for “school.”

The Focus on Results in a PLC at Work (Part I)					
We assess our effectiveness on the basis of results rather than intentions.					
Indicator	Pre-Initiating	Initiating	Implementing	Developing	Sustaining
<p>The members of each of our collaborative teams are working interdependently to achieve one or more SMART goals that align with our school goals. Each team has identified specific action steps members will take to achieve the goal and a process for monitoring progress toward the goal. The identification and pursuit of SMART goals by each collaborative team are critical elements of the school’s continuous improvement process.</p>	<p>Goals have not been established at the district or school level. Teams are not expected to establish goals.</p>	<p>Teams establish goals that focus on adult activities and projects rather than student learning.</p>	<p>Teams have been asked to create SMART goals, but many teachers are wary of establishing goals based on improved student learning. Some attempt to articulate very narrow goals that can be accomplished despite students learning less. Others present goals that are impossible to monitor. Still others continue to offer goals based on teacher projects. There is still confusion regarding the nature of and reasons for SMART goals.</p>	<p>All teams have established annual SMART goals as an essential element of their collaborative team process. Teams have established processes to monitor their progress, and members work together in an effort to identify strategies for becoming more effective at achieving the team’s SMART goal.</p>	<p>Each collaborative team of teachers has established both an annual SMART goal and a series of short-term goals to monitor their progress. They create specific action plans to achieve the goals, clarify the evidence that they will gather to assess their progress, and work together interdependently to achieve the goal. This focus on tangible evidence of results guides the work of teams and is critical to the continuous improvement process of the school. The recognition and celebration of efforts to achieve goals helps to sustain the improvement process.</p>

Where Do We Go From Here? Worksheet School Improvement Goals Drive Team Goals

Describe one or more aspects of a professional learning community that you would like to see in place in your school.	What steps or activities must be initiated to create this condition in your school?	Who will be responsible for initiating or sustaining these steps or activities?	What is a realistic timeline for each step or phase of the activity?	What will you use to assess the effectiveness of your initiative?
<p>Each team translates school goals into a team goal.</p> <p>Goals are SMART: Strategic, Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Result-Oriented, and Timebound.</p> <p>Team members assist one another as they work together interdependently to achieve their collective goal.</p>				

The Professional Learning Community at Work™ Continuum The Focus on Results in a PLC at Work (Part II)

DIRECTIONS: Individually, silently and *honestly* assess the current reality of your school’s implementation of each indicator listed in the left hand column. To assess district implementation, substitute the word “district” for “school.”

The Focus on Results in a PLC at Work (Part II)					
Indicator	Pre-Initiating	Initiating	Implementing	Developing	Sustaining
<p>Collaborative teams or teachers regard ongoing analysis of evidence of student learning as a critical element in the teaching and learning process. Teachers are provided with frequent and timely information regarding the achievement of their students. They use that information to :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) respond to students experiencing difficulty 2) enrich and extend the learning of students who are proficient, 3) inform and improve the individual and collective practice of members 4) identify team professional development needs 5) measure progress toward team goals 	<p>The only process for monitoring student learning is the individual classroom teacher and annual state, provincial, or national assessments. Assessment results are used primarily to report on student progress rather than to improve professional practice. Teachers fall into a predictable pattern: they teach, they test, they hope for the best, and then they move on to the next unit.</p>	<p>The district has created benchmark assessments that are administered several times throughout the year. There is often considerable lag time before teachers receive the results. Most teachers pay little attention to the results. They regard the assessment as something that may benefit the district but is of little use to them. Principals are encouraged to review the results of state assessments with staff, but the fact that the results aren’t available until months after the assessment and the lack of specificity mean they are of little use in helping teachers improve their practice.</p>	<p>Teams have been asked to create and administer common formative assessments and to analyze the results together. Many teachers are reluctant to share individual teacher results and want the analysis to focus on the aggregate performance of the group. Some use the results to identify questions that caused students difficulty so they can eliminate the questions. Many teams are not yet using the analysis of results to inform or improve professional practice.</p>	<p>The school has created a specific process to bring teachers together multiple times throughout the year to analyze results from team-developed common assessments, district assessments, and state and national assessments. Teams use the results to identify areas of concern and to discuss strategies for improving the results.</p>	<p>Teachers are hungry for information on student learning. All throughout the year, each member of a collaborative team receives information that illustrates the success of his or her students in achieving an agreed upon essential standard, on team-developed common assessments he or she helped to create, in comparison to all the students attempting to achieve that same standard. Teachers use the results to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their individual practice, to learn from one another, to identify areas of curriculum proving problematic for students, to improve their collective capacity to help all students learn, and to identify students in need of intervention or enrichment. They also analyze results from district, state, and national assessments and use them to validate their team assessments.</p>

Where Do We Go From Here? Worksheet How Individuals and Teams Use Assessment Information to Improve Their Professional Practice

Describe one or more aspects of a professional learning community that you would like to see in place in your school.	What steps or activities must be initiated to create this condition in your school?	Who will be responsible for initiating or sustaining these steps or activities?	What is a realistic timeline for each step or phase of the activity?	What will you use to assess the effectiveness of your initiative?
<p>Each teacher and team receives relevant feedback. Information is provided regarding the extent to which students meet agreed upon standards of mastery on a valid test in comparison to all the students in the school attempting to meet the same standard. The teams utilize formative tests throughout the year to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify students who need additional time and support. ■ Help individual teachers identify areas of strength and weakness in their instruction. ■ Help the team measure progress towards its goals and identify areas in need of attention. 				



If the purpose of school is truly to ensure high levels of learning for all students, schools will:

- ✓ Clarify what each student is expected to learn - the essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions - of each course/subject, unit-by-unit
- ✓ Monitor each student’s learning on a timely basis through the use of frequent, formative common assessments
- ✓ Create systems to ensure students receive additional time and support if they **are not** learning
- ✓ Create systems to ensure students receive additional time and support if they **are** learning.

All Kids Can Learn

- Based on ability
- If they take advantage of the opportunity
- Something, and we will create a warm, pleasant environment for them
- And we will do whatever it takes to ensure they achieve the agreed-upon standards

The School’s Response

- Increased levels of time and support when student is not being successful
- Response is increasingly directive, not invitational
- Response is timely
- Response is SYSTEMATIC

A Support System for Students:

- Pre-enrollment initiatives
 - **Counselor watch/Good Friend/Privilege**
- For all entering students
 - **Daily meeting with a faculty advisor**
 - **Daily small group meeting with a senior mentor**
 - **Weekly meeting with counselor**
 - **Participation in two co-curricular activities**
 - **Progress reports or grades in every**

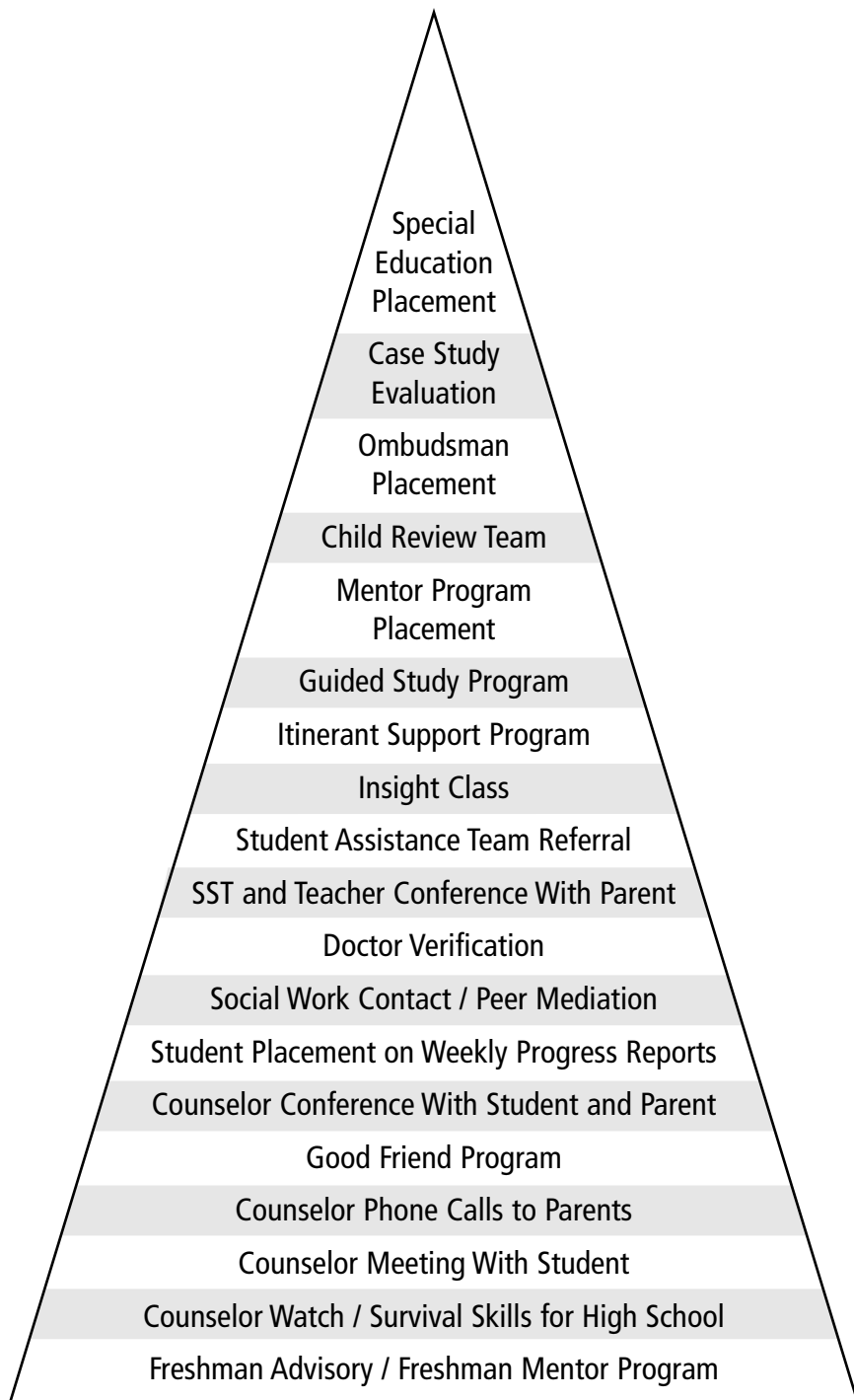
A Systematic Response to Students Who Are Not Learning

- At 3 weeks: conferences/ offer of tutoring services/ peer tutoring
- At 6 weeks: mandatory tutoring/weekly progress reports
- At 12 weeks: guided study and parent conferences
- At 18 weeks: mentor program

A Syllogism of What Should Be Rhetorical Questions

1. Do we believe it is the purpose of our school to ensure all students learn at high levels?
2. Do we acknowledge that students learn at different rates and with different levels of support?
3. Have we created a schedule that guarantees students they will receive additional opportunities for learning through extra time and support, in a systematic way, regardless of who the teacher might be?

WHATEVER IT TAKES



Adlai Stevenson High School Eight 50 Minute Periods

- Students take six classes (50 minutes)
- Freshmen and Sophmores have one study hall (50 minutes)
- Juniors and Seniors passing all classes have one free 50 minute period
- Freshmen have 25 min. advisory/25 min. lunch
- Sophmores, Juniors,and Seniors passing all classes get 50 minutes for lunch

Cinco Ranch High School Seven Periods

- Freshmen must enroll in one study hall to provide time for intervention
- Intensive study skills
- Target math study hall
- Before and after school tutoring. Each teacher tutors twice a week as part of his/her duty.
- Choice of detention or tutoring if fail to go to tutoring
- NHS students tutor during their study hall
- Progress reports or report cards every 3 weeks
- On-line credit recovery

Monticello High School Seven Period Block

- **Tuesday and Thursday - classes begin at 9:00am periods 1,3,7 meet for 90 minutes, 55 minutes for lunch**
- **Wednesday and Friday - classes begin at 9:00am periods 2,4,6 meet for 90 minutes, 55 minutes for lunch**
- **Tuesday - Friday - period 5 meets for 55 minutes**
- **Mondays -**
 - Required tutorial period from 8:50 to 9:30 for any student not passing classes or requested by teacher
 - Classes begin at 9:30, periods, 1,2,3,4,6,7 meet for 50 minutes, 35 minutes for lunch

Monticello High School

- Transition and Orientation Program - Freshmen and transfer students meet in and advisory program 25 minutes each day for first 9 weeks to assist with transition into high school
- CARE Program - Tuesdays through Fridays. Students not passing classes report to tutorial for first 25 minutes of their lunch period. Then provided 30 minutes for lunch.

Whittier Union High School

- Monday - 6 period day with 48 minutes each period
- Tuesday-Friday - modified block of 3 classes for 100 minutes for first 5 weeks
 - **beginning sixth week, students passing all classes with at least a C are released after 80 minutes for break, longer lunch, or early dismissal**
 - **students not passing classes with a C or better remain for intensive tutoring and small-group work**

Bernice McNaughton H.S.

- Supplemental math and English class based on proficiency assessment
- Math and science lunch labs
- RED (Remediation/Enrichment Days) after common assessments
- Directed learning for 30 minutes at end of day for study, homework completion, tutoring
- Hired full-time guided study teacher
- Grade 12 can carry lighter load if agree to tutor twice a week

Lakeridge Junior High

- Moved from 7 period day to modified A/B block with FLEX time
- Students enroll in four 80-minute periods
- 30 minutes carved out Tues-Friday for FLEX time. Students failing, report to mandatory tutoring. All others provided enrichment options or free time.
- Those with continuing academic difficulty can be assigned to a double period of language arts or math.

Margaret Mead Middle School

- 9 period day, 40 minutes each, with one period reserved for lunch
- Students missing assignments are assigned to Guided Study instead of lunch
- If Guided Study does not resolve their difficulties, they are assigned to Fast Track - an after school tutorial program
- If Fast Track does not resolve their difficulties they are removed from an elective and assigned to an intensive study skills class for 9 weeks.

A Crucial Caution

- No system of intervention can compensate for weak and ineffective teaching. At the same time that a school is working to develop time and support for student learning, it must take steps to create the powerful collaborative teams and common assessments that contribute to adult learning.

For Information on the Pyramid of Interventions of Schools Throughout the Nation

- Go to www.allthingsplc.info “Evidence of Effectiveness”
- Go to www.solution-tree.com or call 800.733.6786 to purchase *Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever it Takes*

What Happens When Kids Don't Learn?

High expectations for success will be judged not only by the initials staff beliefs and behaviors, but also by the organization's response when some students do not learn.

—Lezotte, (1991)

Critical Corollary Questions: If We Believe All Kids Can Learn

- What is it we expect them to learn?
- How will we know when they have learned it?
- **How will we respond when they don't learn?**
- **How will we respond when they already know it?**

Align School Structures

Traditional schedule

- Frequent interruptions to teaching or learning blocks
- Sporadic resource/specials classes throughout the week
- Sporadic planning time for instructional staff
- Little or no collaborative time built into the schedule
- No time for additional support built into the daily schedule *except* before- and after-school tutoring

New master schedule

- Protected time for teaching and learning
- Daily specials for all students
- Daily individual planning for all instructional staff
- Weekly collaborative planning for all teams
- Intervention or enrichment block for all grade levels during the school day

Is There a Better Way?

(Can we change the way we do things around here?)

How can our school better allocate
existing resources
— time, people, materials, money —
to provide additional support for **ALL**
students to learn at higher levels than ever
before?

A Pre-Requisite for Systematic Intervention

Before effective systems of intervention can be created, teams must first be able to agree upon:

- Essential knowledge, skills, & dispositions;
- Common Pacing Guides/Curriculum Maps;
- Common *formative* assessments;
- Common standard of proficiency;
- Students who need additional time and support based upon analysis of common assessment data;
- **A designated grade-level block of time for intervention/enrichment in addition to new direct instruction in all subject areas.**

Third Grade Master Schedule For Instruction

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00 - 8:15	TEACHER WORK DAY BEGINS				
8:15-8:40	STUDENTS ARRIVE- BREAKFAST, MORNING WORK, TAKE-IN PROCEDURES				
8:40 - 8:50	TARDY BELL, MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS, INSTRUCTIONAL DAY BEGINS				
8:50 - 9:20	KINDERGARTEN READING BUDDIES				
9:25-9:55					
9:55 - 11:45	LANGUAGE ARTS/SOCIAL STUDIES				
11:45 - 12:15	INTERVENTION/ENRICHMENT				
12:20 - 1:15	LUNCH/RECESS				
1:15 - 2:15	MATH				
2:15 - 3:00	SCIENCE				
3:00 - 3:10	Afternoon announcements/K and 1st car riders and loading buses;3:05 dismissal for 2nd-5th grades; buses depart at 3:10				
3:10 - 3:30	<i>INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF PLANNING</i>				

3rd Grade Schedule For Instruction																					
	Monday			Tuesday			Wednesday			Thursday			Friday								
8:00 - 8:15	TEACHER WORK DAY BEGINS																				
8:15-8:40	STUDENTS ARRIVE- BREAKFAST, MORNING TAKE-IN PROCEDURES																				
8:40 - 8:50	TARDY BELL, MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS, INSTRUCTIONAL DAY BEGINS																				
SPECIALS	LIB	COM	GUI	MUS	PE	LIB	COM	GUI	PE	LIB	COM	GUI	MUS	ART	PE	LIB	COM	GUI	ART	PE	
8:50 - 9:20	3D			3J	3F	3J	3F	3F	3D	3J	3D		3F	3D	3J	3D	3D	3J			3F
9:25-9:55			3D								3F	3D			3J						
9:55 - 12:15																					
12:20 - 1:00	LUNCH: 3J 12:20 - 12:50; 3F 12:25 - 12:55; 3D 12:30 - 1:00																				
1:00 - 3:00																					
3:00 - 3:15	Afternoon announcements/K and 1st car riders and loading buses;3:05 dismissal for 2nd-5th grades; buses depart at 3:10																				
3:10 - 3:30	INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF PLANNING																				

Third Grade Master Schedule For Instruction															
	Monday			Tuesday			Wednesday			Thursday			Friday		
8:00 - 8:15	TEACHER WORK DAY BEGINS														
8:15-8:40	STUDENTS ARRIVE- BREAKFAST, MORNING WORK, TAKE-IN PROCEDURES														
8:40 - 8:50	TARDY BELL, MORNING ANNOUNCEMENTS, INSTRUCTIONAL DAY BEGINS														
SPECIALS	LIB	COM	GUI	MUS	PE	LIB	COM	GUI	MUS	PE	LIB	COM	GUI	ART	PE
8:50 - 9:20		3D		3J	3F		3J	3F		3D		3J	3D		3F
9:25-9:55			3D					3F			3F	3D		3J	
9:55 - 11:45	LANGUAGE ARTS/SOCIAL STUDIES														
11:45 - 12:15	INTERVENTION/ENRICHMENT														
12:20 - 1:15	LUNCH/RECESS														
1:15 - 2:15	MATH														
2:15 - 3:00	SCIENCE														
3:00 - 3:10	Afternoon announcements/K and 1st car riders and loading buses;3:05 dismissal for 2nd-5th grades; buses depart at 3:10														
3:10 - 3:30	INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF PLANNING														

1st Grade Schedule For Instruction		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday					
8:15 - 8:40	MORNING WORK/ BUDDY TIME/AR / BREAKFAST/			BOOKSTORE/BANKING PROC					
8:40 - 8:50	Attendance & Lunch Count / Pledges/ Morning Announcements								
8:50 - 9:30	WHOLE GROUP LANGUAGE ARTS LESSON								
9:30 - 10:00	SMALL GROUP GUIDED READING (GROUP 1) / LEARNING CENTERS (Group 1)								
10:00 -10:30	SMALL GROUP GUIDED READING (GROUP 2) / LEARNING CENTERS (Group 2)								
10:30 - 10:45	TEACHER READ-ALoud / SNACK								
SPECIALS:	LIB	COMP GUI	MUS	LIB	COMP GUI	PE	LIB	COMP GUI	ART
10:50 -11:25	1-R	1-J	1-H	1-J		1-R		1-H	1-J
11:30 -12:05	SCIENCE / SOCIALSTUDIES								
12:10 -12:55	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1:00 - 2:00	MATH								
2:00 - 2:30	P.E./RECESS								
2:30 - 2:50	L.A. End-Of-Day Closure								
	L.A. End-Of-Day Closure								
	L.A. End-Of-Day Closure								
	P.E./RECESS								
	MATH								

INTERVENTION/ENRICHMENT SCHEDULE

8:20 – 8:50:	FIFTH GRADE
8:50 – 9:20:	FOURTH GRADE
9:30 – 10:30:	FIRST GRADE – (CENTERS)
10:30 – 11:30:	KINDERGARTEN –(CENTERS)
11:40 – 12:15:	THIRD GRADE
12:15 – 1:00:	LUNCH/PLANNING
1:00 – 1:30:	SECOND GRADE
1:30 – 2:00:	*ADDITIONAL TIME K – 5 (BY REQUEST)
2:00 – 2:30:	FIFTH GRADE
2:30 – 3:00:	RECORD KEEPING/PLANNING

***IF YOUR GRADE-LEVEL NEEDS ADDITIONAL INTERVENTION TIME, PLEASE SEE THE PRINCIPAL (When no classes are scheduled, the tutors utilize time for Remedial Record Keeping, creating new centers for Pod, assisting students & teachers with requested tasks.)**

Extra Time and Support for Students in an Elementary School

- Utilize Existing Human Resources, such as:
- General Education Teachers
- Special Education Teachers
- Resource Specialists
- Teacher Assistants

in a **coordinated and systematic effort** to provide **additional time and support** for learning.

Resource Specialists & “Floating

- Instruct “flexible groups” of identified students;
- Deliver intervention/enrichment services to **supplement** (not supplant) new, direct classroom instruction;
- **Lead/supervise enrichment activities, allowing classroom teachers to serve as tutors for students identified for intervention.**
- Provide practice & reinforcement in study/test-taking/critical thinking/problem solving skills;
- Utilize/develop lesson plans & activities aligned with essential skills *in coordination with grade-level teams to guide their work*;

Teacher #1	Teacher #2	Teacher #3	Teacher #4	Floating Tutor #1	Floating Tutor # 2	Special Ed. Staff	Resource Specialist	Resource Specialist

Extra Time and Support for

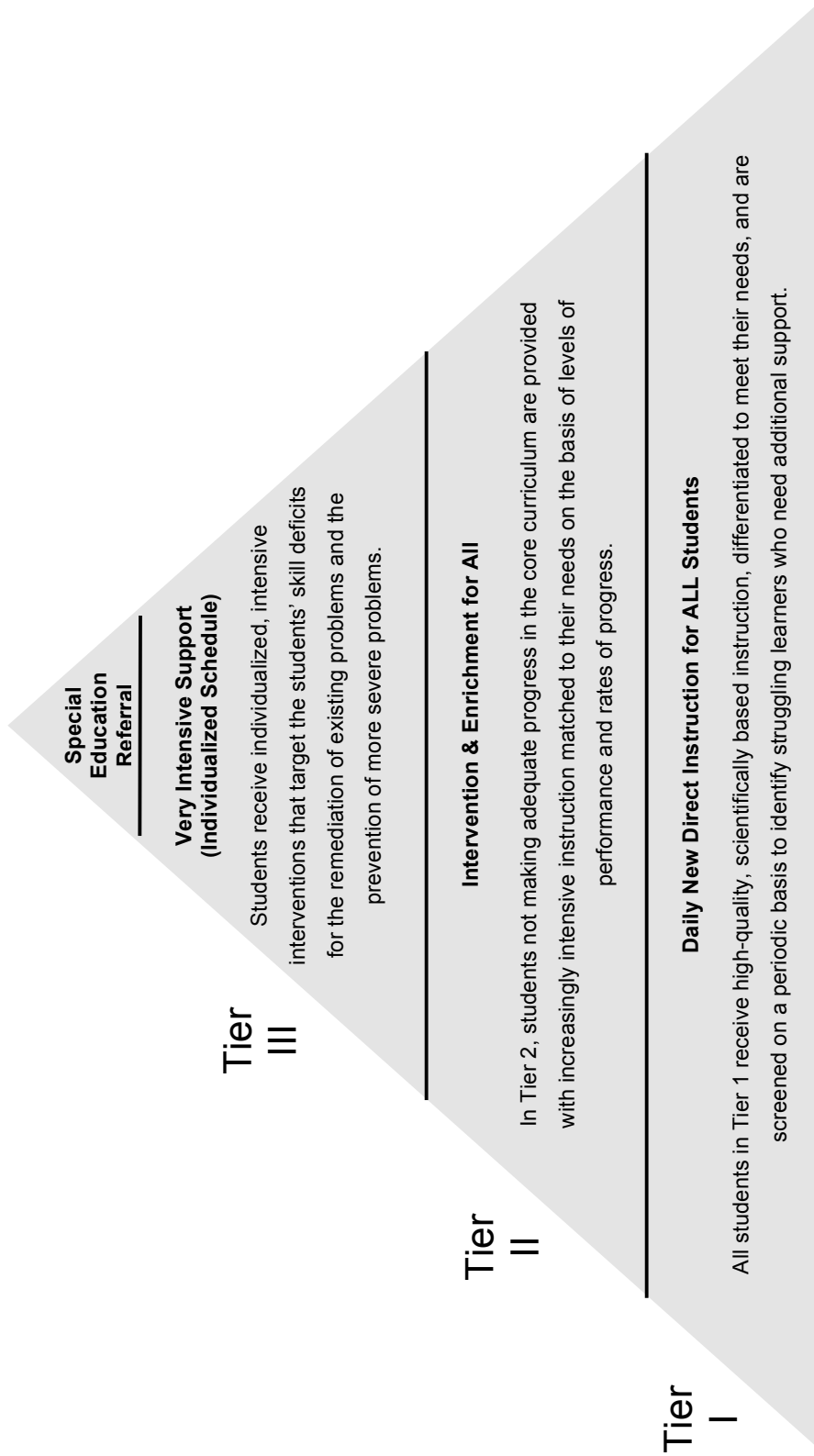
- Utilize Grade Level Teachers, Resource Specialists, Teacher Assistants, and Floating Tutors in a coordinated and systematic effort to provide additional time and support for learning.
- Develop strategies to enlist additional human resources in the effort to support students:
 - Parent volunteers
 - Business partners
 - Senior citizens
 - Partnership with the high schools
 - Partnership with area colleges

Extra Time and Support for Students

- Grade-level teachers, resource specialists, floating tutors
- Organize parent volunteers, business partners, senior citizens, and high school and college interns to serve as mentors and tutors along with the school-based team.
- Team designs parent materials for at home tutorials.
- **Develop buddy programs and peer tutoring.**
- **Save one student.**
- **Redefine focus of child study team to plan additional interventions.**

Extra Time and Support for Students in an Elementary School

- Utilize Grade Level Teachers, Resource Specialists, and Floating Tutors in a coordinated and systematic effort to provide additional time and support for learning.
- Develop Strategies to Enlist Additional Human Resources in the Effort to Support Students
- **Develop strong parent partnerships to provide students with additional Time & Support at home.**



**A Pyramid of Interventions
An Answer to “Response to Intervention” (Rti)**

Building Strong Partnerships The National PTA

- Conduct parent workshops at least twice each school year.
- **Provide tools, tips, and materials for at-home practice during parent workshops and via frequent grade-level newsletters.**
- Establish ongoing systems for two-way communication with each parent.
- Send student work folders home— with teacher feedback —for parent review, comments, questions, and signature.
- See Chapter 14 - *Revisiting PLCs at Work* for more information on parent partnerships

To sustain the continuous improvement momentum, PLCs...

...Celebrate small wins early and often!!



What Are You Celebrating?

- Celebrations weave our hearts and souls into a shared destiny. People come together to celebrate beginnings and endings, triumphs and tragedies.
 - **Bolman and Deal, *Leading With Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit***

Actively Promote a Climate of Achievement:

Incentives and Celebrations

- Recognize improvement/achievement on daily school announcements & within classrooms
- Create classroom, grade level and school-wide incentive programs (i.e. display “Hand in Hand We All Learn” people chain, recognizing books read.)
- Celebrate via classroom/school/district newsletters, media broadcasts, etc.
- Provide public recognition at awards assemblies, PTO/PTA Meetings, Family Nights, School Board Meetings, etc.
- Share professional learning & achievements at team, vertical, faculty, and district level meetings.

What was/is the Impact of Systematic Interventions?

Just to name a few...

- Increased student achievement on local, district, state/provincial & national indicators
- Decreased discipline infractions
- Improved perceptions about the school
- Greater job satisfaction for educators

Visit schools listed under
“Evidence of Effectiveness”

www.allthingsplc.info

Assess Your School’s Response When Kids Don’t Learn or Already Know It

- Are our students assured **extra time and support** for learning?
- Is our response **timely**? How quickly are we able to identify the kids who need extra time and support? Does our focus prompt intervention or enrichment rather than sluggish remediation?
- Is our response **directive** rather than invitational? Are kids **invited** to put in extra time or does our system **ensure** they put in extra time?
- Is our response **systematic**? Do kids receive this intervention or enrichment according to a schoolwide plan rather than at the discretion of individual teachers?

Guidelines for Applying as a National Model of a Professional Learning Community Evidence of Effectiveness

** In order to be considered for the All Things PLC website (allthingsplc.info), it is important to include information for all questions on this form.*

** If you would like an example to guide you please reference the website. Districts (Blue Valley) Elementary (Boones Mill, Snow Creek) Middle (Pioneer, Overland) High (Adlai Stevenson, James Madison)

School Information

School Name: Highland Elementary School
District Name: Montgomery County Maryland School District
School Address: 3100 Medway St, Silver Spring, MD 20902
School Phone: 301.929.2040
School Fax: 301.929.2042
Principal: A. Raymond Myrtle
Principal email: Ray_Myrtle@mcpsmd.org

Demographics

Number of Students: 639
Percent Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch: 73%
Percent of Limited English Proficient: 60%
Percent of Special Education: 13%
Racial/Ethnic Percentages:

- **White:** 5.2
- **Black:** 14.7
- **Hispanic:** 75.1
- **Asian/Pacific Island:** 4.9
- **Other:** 0.2

Student Achievement Data:

Percentage of students passing: School Scores/State Scores

Grade: 3	Reading HES/MD	Reading Adv. Prof. HES/MD	Math HES/MD	Math Adv. Prof. HES/MD
Year 2004-05	47/76	4/18	69/77	14/26
Year 2005-06	78/78	3/15	79/79	8/25
Year 2007-08	95/83	31/17	92/83	24/27
Year 2008-09	92/85	14/22	80/84	14/29

Percentage of students passing: School Scores/State Scores

Grade: 4	Reading HES/MD	Reading Adv. Prof. HES/MD	Math HES/MD	Math Adv. Prof. HES/MD
Year 2004-05	76/81	4/18	74/77	21/27

Year 2005-06	78/82	9/23	81/82	19/32
Year 2007-08	95/88	44/28	95/89	55/42
Year 2008-09	97/87	59/27	98/89	64/50

Percentage of students passing: School Scores/State Scores

Grade: 5	Reading HES/MD	Reading Adv. Prof. HES/MD	Math HES/MD	Math Adv. Prof. HES/MD
Year 2004-05	56/74	7/30	57/69	1/17
Year 2005-06	76/77	16/34	80/73	9/19
Year 2007-08	93/87	80/51	92/80	20/25
Year 2008-09	94/89	94/50	98/81	35/25

Please comment on any aspect of the data that you believe is particularly significant.

As the chart demonstrates, by 2008 Highland Elementary students outperformed students throughout the state in every subject area and grade level. When compared to schools serving similar populations of ELL and high poverty students, Highland ranked first in the state in both reading in mathematics. Furthermore, a higher percentage of Highland students achieved advanced proficiency in reading and math than the state as a whole. The difference in reading was particularly striking, with 55 percent of Highland students qualifying for advanced proficiency versus 36 percent of Maryland elementary students.

Within two years of beginning its school improvement initiative, Highland Elementary had been removed from the state’s program improvement list. In its fourth year it was presented the United States Department of Education Blue Ribbon Award. It serves as a model of what schools can accomplish when clarity about purpose, priorities, and processes replaces ambiguity; when interdependence replaces isolation; and when systematic and collective efforts replace rampant individual autonomy.

Please present additional information that indicates your efforts to build a professional learning community have had a positive impact on students and/or teachers.

Highland Elementary was among the first schools in the county to participate in the Professional Learning Community Project.

Principal Myrtle readily acknowledges he was “tight” in stipulating clearly that profound changes were needed in the structure and culture of the school, that the changes would impact everyone in the school, that teachers would work together collaboratively rather than in isolation, that procedures would be put in place to monitor student learning, and that the school would intervene in a systematic and timely way when students experienced difficulty. He also demonstrated that he was perfectly willing to confront any staff member who was not contributing to this new direction. At the same time, however, Myrtle also committed to 1) engaging staff in the decisions regarding the implementation of the school’s new direction and 2) providing staff with the training, resources, and support to help them succeed at what they were being asked to do.

The school created several different structures to ensure teachers played an active role in guiding the improvement initiative. Myrtle met with team leaders and the two school-level union representatives twice each month to monitor any issues arising from the staff. These same leaders are joined by reading and mathematics coaches, counselors, paraprofessionals and parents every six weeks to review trends in school achievement and

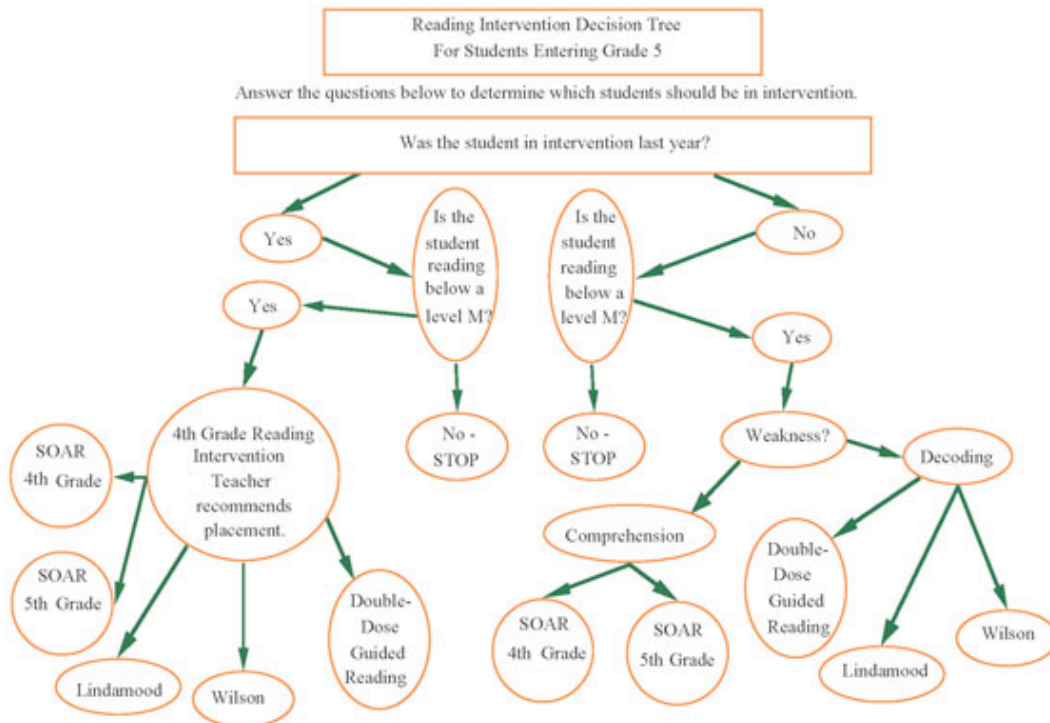
discipline data and to identify and address any concerns. Reading and math coaches helped grade-level teams become skillful in clarifying outcomes, gathering evidence of student learning, and addressing concerns. This widely dispersed leadership has created a greater sense of ownership among staff regarding the direction of their school.

Please elaborate strategies you have found to be effective in the following areas:

1. Creating systems of intervention to provide students with additional time and support for learning.

Reading Intervention at Highland Elementary School

Highland depicts its systems of intervention for reading in the form of a decision-making tree as shown below.



For example, if a fourth-grade student is having difficulty, the grade-level team reviews the data from running records and common assessments to determine if the student is reading at or above the K/L level on the district’s text gradient system or roughly mid-year of second grade. If the student is not proficient at that level, the team attempts to determine if the primary problem is decoding or comprehension. Students struggling with decoding are assigned to one of three options. The first is to provide the student with a double dose of guided reading instruction each day. The second option is to utilize the Wilson Reading System – a twelve-step system that provides direct, multi-sensory, structured, reading instruction aimed at providing students with skills in phonological coding. The third option, the Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing System, is another program aimed at developing phonemic awareness and phonics.

Students who have difficulty with comprehension rather than decoding are assigned to the SOAR to Success program which provides additional small-group guided instruction in reading comprehension using level-appropriate trade books. This program is designed to increase students’ understanding of what they read by engaging them in dialogue with the teacher to help them acquire the skills of summarizing, clarifying, questioning, and predicting.

In order to provide this additional time for reading instruction, each grade-level team carves out thirty to forty-five minutes in its daily schedule for intervention. The schedule for the 2008-09 school year is as follows:

Highland Elementary School Master Schedule

Kindergarten	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Reading/Writing 8:50 – 9:50 60 minutes	Reading/Writing 8:50 – 11:25 155 minutes	Math 8:50 – 10:15 85 minutes	Specials 8:55 – 9:40 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 45 minutes	Reading/Writing 8:50 – 11:15 154 minutes	Math 8:50 – 10:30 100 minutes
Specials 9:55 – 10:40 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 45 Minutes		Writing 10:15 – 11:00 45 minutes	Reading/Writing 9:40 – 12:00 140 minutes	Intervention Team 9:40 – 10:20	Intervention Team 9:00 – 9:30
Reading/Writing 10:40 – 12:25 105 minutes	Intervention Team 10:20 – 11:00	Specials 11:00 – 11:45 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 45 minutes	Intervention Team 11:15 – 12:00		Lunch/Recess 11:15 – 12:05 50 minutes
Intervention Team 11:25 – 12:25	Lunch/Recess 11:25 – 12:15 50 minutes	Lunch/Recess 11:50 – 12:40 50 minutes		Math 12:05 – 1:45 100 minutes	Specials 11:50 – 12:45 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 55 minutes
Lunch/Recess 12:15 – 1:15 60 minutes	Math 12:15 – 1:25 70 minutes	Reading 12:40 – 2:30 110 minutes	Lunch/Recess 12:00 – 12:50 50 minutes	Intervention Team 12:45 – 1:45	Reading/Writing 12:45 – 3:00 135 minutes
Math 1:15 – 2:30 75 minutes	Specials 1:25 – 2:10 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 45 minutes	Intervention Team 1:00 – 1:40	Math 12:50 – 2:30 100 minutes		
Science/Social Studies 2:30 – 3:00 30 minutes	Science/Social Studies 2:10 – 3:00 50 minutes	Science/Social Studies 2:30 – 3:00 30 minutes	Science/Social Studies 2:30 – 3:00 30 minutes	Specials 2:15 – 3:00 Music, Art, P.E., Library, Writing 45 minutes	Intervention Team 1:40 – 2:20

Intervention Team Daily Schedule

	Papallo/Casey	Whitthaus	Healy/Key	Chapman/Lee
9:00 – 9:30 am	5 th Grade Math	Planning		
9:40 – 10:20 am	Fourth Grade	Fourth Grade	Fourth Grade	
10:20 – 11:00 am	First Grade	First Grade	First Grade	
11:15 – 12:00 pm	Third Grade	Third Grade	Third Grade	Kindergarten

12:00 – 12:30 pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	11:25 – 12:25
12:30 – 1:00 pm	Planning	First Grade Math	Planning	Fourth Grade Math
1:00 – 1:40 pm	Second Grade	Second Grade	Second Grade	12:45 – 1:45
1:40 – 2:20 pm	Fifth Grade	Fifth Grade	Fifth Grade	
2:25 – 3:00 pm	Planning	Planning	Planning	

During intervention time additional personnel descend on the grade level to provide students with intensive small-group and individual support. Myrtle uses funding from Reading First, Title I, and discretionary district funds to hire part-time intervention teachers. Most of the intervention staff are certified teachers whose family situation or life-style make part-time tutoring a particularly attractive option for them. The school’s reading coach, reading specialist, and special education and ELL teachers also participate in this effort to provide students with additional focused support.

During intervention students from all of the classrooms in a grade level are regrouped and the staff provides specific, differentiated instruction based on the needs of students. While some staff members focus on enrichment, others are implementing the intervention plan for a small group. The intervention teachers are assigned specific students, by name, and they know exactly which skills they need to address with those students. Because assessment is ongoing, student placement in groups is very fluid and they are able to move into and out of groups as their proficiency dictates.

To ensure the communication essential to a coordinated effort, intervention teachers provide grade-level teams with scores from each embedded assessment as well as brief anecdotal feedback on the progress of each of the students they are serving. For example, one intervention teacher reported: “Becky has shown much growth this marking period; now uses all strategies; participates often; high level of effort continues; uses text support in written responses; still hesitates to use her own words in retelling but if encouraged will try; if she does not know the answer will search the text; oral reading is strong.”

This coordinated effort to clarify the specific knowledge and skills students are to acquire, to monitor each student’s proficiency, to respond to students in a systematic way, and to communicate results among all stakeholders has enabled teams to become what Myrtle describes as “well-oiled machines.” Students have clearly benefitted.

3. Building the capacity of teachers to work as members of high performing collaborative teams who focus the efforts of their team on improved learning for students.

The staff began the school’s transformation by adopting a common parallel schedule as the school’s new master schedule. The school established large blocks of uninterrupted time for math and language arts instruction at every grade level each day. The new schedule also assigned all the students of a particular grade level to art, music, physical education, library, and writing classes at the same time so that the grade-level team could have common planning for fifty minutes, four days each week. Myrtle stipulated that the teams were to reserve one of those days to focus their collaborative work on reading and another to focus on mathematics. ELL and special education teachers were also assigned to particular teams and helped to co-teach in many of the classrooms.

Teams were not merely encouraged to “go collaborate,” but were provided with a weekly template to help guide their work. The template helped the teams to establish the intended essential learnings for that week in reading, writing, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and math, and to translate the learnings into specific statements regarding what students would know and be able to do as result of the unit. Each team would also discuss whole group and small group instructional strategies and establish recommended topics, activities, and strategies for each day of the week. Finally, the template asked teams to clarify action steps that needed to be taken in order to implement its plan and assigned responsibility for each step to members of the team in order to divide the work and avoid duplicated effort. For example, at the conclusion of one meeting one teacher agreed to develop writing prompts, another to create independent work that would allow students to demonstrate their ability to determine cause and effect, and a third to develop the parent conference materials that would be sent home to parents.

Principal Myrtle also supported the work of the teams by providing time for them to collaborate beyond their common planning period each week. Once each quarter he hired substitute teachers to give an entire grade-level team a full day of uninterrupted collaborative time to plan their work for the coming quarter. Focused and job-embedded professional development was a major aspect of the improvement initiative at Highland Elementary. Staff members had access to both material and human resources to assist them in building shared knowledge about district and state learning standards, effective assessment practices, working collaboratively, and effective use of curricular programs that were available to assist them. Grade-level teachers learned how to co-teach more effectively with special education teachers, English Language Learners teachers, reading specialists, math specialists and intervention teachers.

With the benefit of this time and support, grade level teams were able to clarify essential learning standards in reading, writing, and mathematics for each unit of instruction. They were also able to create common formative assessments to monitor student learning. Most teams used a quick math assessment virtually every day and a more comprehensive assessment every few weeks. The teams typically administered reading and writing assessments every week or two.

Initially, teams would analyze the results of the assessments, and divide the students among the members of that team on the basis of student proficiency during the intervention period provided in the schedule each day. Teachers discovered that this strategy of short-term, focused intervention was effective in helping students acquire math skills, but it was not effective in helping many of their students who were struggling to read. At that point, the teams recognized they needed to have more sustained and focused intervention for reading, and they created the structures to the decision-tree support that kind of intervention.

List awards and recognitions your school has achieved:

- One of six schools in Maryland to receive the 2009 Blue Ribbon Award of Excellence from the United States Department of Education
- One of 12 schools in the nation to receive the 2009 Urban Schools of Excellence Award
- Featured in *Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever it Takes* as a model PLC
- Principal Myrtle was one eight principals in the nation to receive the Terrell Bell Award for outstanding school leadership from the United States Department of Education in 2009.

The Professional Learning Community at Work™ Continuum Learning as Our Fundamental Purpose in a PLC at Work (Part II)

DIRECTIONS: Individually, silently and *honestly* assess the current reality of your school’s implementation of each indicator listed in the left hand column. To assess district implementation, substitute the word “district” for “school.”

Learning as our Fundamental Purpose (Part II)					
We acknowledge that the fundamental purpose of our school is to help all students achieve high levels of learning, and therefore we are provide students with systematic interventions when they struggle and enrichment when they are proficient.					
Indicator	Pre-Initiating	Initiating	Implementing	Developing	Sustaining
<p>We provide a system of interventions that guarantees each student will receive additional time and support for learning if he/she experiences initial difficulty. Students who are proficient have access to enriched and extended learning opportunities</p>	<p>What happens when a student does not learn will depend almost exclusively on the teacher to whom the student is assigned. There is no coordinated, school response to students who experience difficulty. Some teachers allow students to turn in late work; some do not. Some teachers allow students to re-take a test; some do not. The tension that occurs at the conclusion of each unit when some students are proficient and ready to move forward and others are failing to demonstrate proficiency is left to each teacher to resolve.</p>	<p>The school has attempted to establish specific policies and procedures regarding homework, grading, parent notification of student progress, and referring students to child study teams to assess their eligibility for special education services. If the school provides any additional support for students it is either through a “pull-out” program that removes students from new direct instruction or optional after-school programs. Policies are established for identifying students who are eligible for more advanced learning.</p>	<p>The school has taken steps to provide students with additional time and support when they experience difficulty. The staff is grappling with structural issues such as attempting to provide time for intervention during the school day in ways that do not remove the student from new direct instruction. The school schedule is regarded as a major impediment to intervention and enrichment and staff members are unwilling to change the schedule. Some members of the staff are concerned that providing students with additional time and support is not holding them responsible for their own learning.</p>	<p>The school has developed a schoolwide plan to provide students who experience difficulty with additional time and support for learning in a way that is timely, directive, and systematic. It has made structural changes such as modifications in the daily schedule to support this system of intervention. Staff members have been assigned new roles and responsibilities to assist with the intervention. The faculty is looking for ways to make the system of interventions more effective.</p>	<p>The school has a highly coordinated, system of intervention and enrichment in place. The system is very proactive. Coordination with sender schools enables the staff to identify students who will benefit from additional time and support for learning even before they arrive at the school. The system is very fluid. Students move into intervention and enrichment easily and remain only as long as they benefit from it. The achievement of each student is monitored on a timely basis. Students who experience difficulty are required, rather than invited, to utilize the system of support. The plan is multi-layered. If the current level of time and support is not sufficient to help a student become proficient, he or she is moved to the next level and receives increased time and support. All students are guaranteed access to this system of intervention regardless of the teacher to whom they are assigned. The school responds to students, and views students who are failing to learn as “under-supported” rather than “at risk.”</p>

Assessing Your Current Reality

Consider the descriptions of 5 stages of PLC progress regarding:

Systematic Interventions Ensure Students Receive Additional Time and Support for Learning

Individually, silently, and *honestly* assess the current status of your school on the Professional Learning Community Continuum

Progress and Problems

Share your assessment with your colleagues:

- Where are areas of agreement?
- Where are the areas of disagreement?
- Where can you celebrate the greatest progress?
- What areas are you finding problematic?

Closing the Knowing-Doing Gap

- What steps could you take to make progress in these indicators?
- Complete the “Where Do We Go From Here” worksheets to begin your plan for becoming a school committed to a focus on learning.

Where Do We Go From Here? Worksheet

Systematic Intervention

Describe one or more aspects of a professional learning community that you would like to see in place in your school.	What steps or activities must be initiated to create this condition in your school?	Who will be responsible for initiating or sustaining these steps or activities?	What is a realistic timeline for each step or phase of the activity?	What will you use to assess the effectiveness of your initiative?
<p>The school has developed a system of interventions that guarantees each student will receive additional time and support for learning if he or she experiences initial difficulty. The interventions are timely and require, rather than invite, students to devote the extra time and receive the additional support for learning.</p> <p>The intervention plan is multi-dimensional. If one intervention strategy proves unsuccessful, the plan provides for alternative strategies to be used.</p>				



Common Mistakes in Building Consensus

- We try to go it alone, rather than building a guiding coalition including opinion leaders.

Include Opinion Leaders on Guiding Coalition

- Who supports an idea is more important to its adoption than the merits of the idea.
- About 15% of the members of organizations are Opinion Leaders - socially connected, knowledgeable, and trusted by others in the organization. Get them on board and the others will follow.

- Patterson , et al., 2008

Common Mistakes in Building Consensus

- We try to go it alone, rather than building a guiding coalition including opinion leaders.
- We use a forum that is ill-suited to the dialogue that is typically necessary for consensus.
- We use a process that allows cynics and skeptics to dominate.
- We pool opinions rather than build shared knowledge.

A Cardinal Rule of PLCs

- The answer to the question, “how do we begin.....” virtually every aspect of the PLC concept is *building shared knowledge*. Put another way, a *learning* community always begins the decision-making process by *learning together*.
- Building shared knowledge is the prerequisite homework of a PLC when it is time to make a collective decision.

Common Mistakes in Building Consensus

- We try to go it alone, rather than building a guiding coalition including opinion leaders.
- We use a forum that is ill-suited to the dialogue that is typically necessary for consensus.
- We use a process that allows cynics and skeptics to dominate.
- We pool opinions rather than build shared knowledge.
- We feel we need consensus on each, specific detail of implementation.
- We set an unrealistic standard for consensus and invest too much energy in resisters.

Consensus

We have arrived at consensus when all points of view have been heard, and the will of the group is evident--even to those who most oppose it.

Necessary Commitments From the Principal

- Provide time for teachers to meet in teams, on a regular basis, during school day.
- Provide resources and training for teams as identified by team.
- Protect our school from competing improvement initiatives.
- Will not use results of common assessments in teacher evaluation.

Cons

Pros

Fist to Five

- 5 - I'll champion
- 4 - Strongly Agree
- 3 - Agree
- 2 - Reservations
- 1 - Oppose
- Fist - Veto

Consensus

We have arrived at consensus when all points of view have been heard, and the will of the group is evident--even to those who most oppose it.

Focus on Behavior

- The central challenge and core problem of all substantive change initiatives is *changing people's behavior*. Change efforts must focus on what people do, and the need for significant changes in what people do.

□ John Kotter and Dan Cohen, *The Heart of Change*

Which is Most Likely To Persuade an Educator to Change?

- Supervision and evaluation process
- Workshops or Courses
- A research article or book
- Evidence of his/her skewed grade distributions

Three Powerful Levers to Change Behavior

- Kerry Patterson's research on the most effective strategies for changing someone's behavior cites 3 powerful levers.
- Effective PLCs are designed to use all three!

Lever One: Concrete Evidence of Irrefutably Better Results

- Nothing changes the mind like the hard cold world hitting it with actual real-life data.
 - **Patterson, et. al**
- Teachers have to feel there is some compelling reason for them to change practice, with the best direct evidence being that students learn better. The key to enduring change in teacher practice is demonstrable results in terms of student achievement.
 - **Richard Elmore, 2003**
- Transparency of results creates an aura of "positive pressure - pressure that is actionable in that it points to solutions and pressure that at the end of the day is inescapable."
 - **Michael Fullan, 2008**

Lever Two: Positive Peer Pressure

- When seeking tools to influence, no resource is more powerful and accessible than the people who make up our social networks. The approval or disapproval of our fellow human beings can do more to assist or destroy our change efforts than almost any other source.
 - Patterson, et al. (2008)

Lever Three: Personal Experience

- The great persuader is personal experience. It is the mother of all cognitive map changes!
 - **Kerry Patterson, 2008, p. 51**

Bringing the Big Ideas to Life: Turn Aspirations Into Actions

We must turn aspirations into actions. It will not be enough to run visioning workshops; the visions will have to be reflected in daily behaviors. It will not be enough to declare an intent; leaders will have to deliver results. **To accomplish results leaders engage employees' hearts (emotions), minds (cognitions), and feet (action).**

—Dave Ulrich, (1996), p. 211

Learning by Doing

Capacity building ... is not just workshops and professional development for all. It is the daily habit of **working together**, and you can't learn this from a workshop or course. You need to learn it by doing it and having mechanisms for getting better at it on purpose.

—Michael Fullan (2005)

Recommended PLC Definitions

We suggest the following definitions for key terms regarding PLCs.

Professional Learning Community: educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve. PLC's operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.

Simultaneous Loose and Tight School Culture: a leadership concept in which leaders encourage autonomy and creativity (loose) within well-defined parameters and priorities that must be honored (tight). The concept has also been referred to as “directed empowerment” (Waterman, 1987), a “culture of discipline with an ethic of entrepreneurship” (Collins, 2001, p.124), and “defined autonomy” (Marzano and Waters, 2009).

Team: a group of people working *interdependently* to achieve a *common goal*, for which members are held *mutually accountable*. Collaborative teams are the fundamental building blocks of PLCs.

Collaboration: a *systematic* process in which people work together, *interdependently*, to analyze and *impact* professional practice in order to improve individual and collective results.

Critical Questions of Collaborative Teams: In a PLC, collaboration focuses on the critical questions of learning: 1) what is it we want each student to learn, 2) how will we know when each student has learned, 3) how will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning, and 4) how will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient?

Essential Learnings: the critical skills, knowledge, and dispositions each student must acquire as a result of each course, grade level, and unit of instruction. Essential learnings may also be referred to as essential outcomes, power standards, or guaranteed curriculum.

Common Assessment: an assessment to monitor the learning of students who are expected to acquire the same knowledge and skills. The assessment will include the same instrument or a common process that uses the same criteria for determining the quality of student work. State and provincial assessments and district benchmark assessments are “common” assessments; however, in a PLC, common assessments are also created by a team of teachers who are collectively responsible for the learning of a group of students.

Formative Assessment: an assessment *for learning* used to advance and not merely monitor each student's learning (Stiggins, 2002). Formative assessments are used to monitor each student's learning on a timely basis and to ensure any student who experiences difficulty reaching or exceeding proficiency is given additional time and support as well as additional opportunities to demonstrate his or her learning. Formative assessments are also used to help students monitor their own progress toward an intended standard of proficiency.

Summative Assessment: an assessment of learning (Stiggins, 2002) designed to provide a final measure to determine if learning goals have been met. (Ainsworth and Viegut, 2006). Summative assessments yield a dichotomy – pass or fail, proficient or not proficient. Additional support is typically not forthcoming.

Reciprocal Accountability: “For every increment of performance we ask of educators, there is an equal responsibility to provide them with the capacity to meet that expectation” (Elmore, 2006, p. 93). For example, principals of professional learning communities recognize they have an obligation to provide staff with the resources, training, mentoring, and support to help them successfully accomplish what they have been asked to do.

Team Norms: In PLCs norms represent collective commitments developed by each team to guide members in working together. Norms help team members clarify expectations regarding how they will work together to achieve their shared goals.

SMART Goal: goals that are Strategic & Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Oriented, and Time-Bound (Conzemius & O’Neill, 2005).

Pyramid of Interventions: a school-wide plan that ensures every student in every course or grade level will receive additional time and support for learning as soon as they experience difficulty in acquiring essential knowledge and skills. The intervention occurs during the school day and students are required rather than invited to devote the extra time and secure the extra support for learning.

Recommended PLC Resources

For interactive, no-commerce PLC information, visit allthingsplc.info.

For books, videos, or events, contact Solution Tree
at solution-tree.com or (800) 733-6786.

Books

- Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes* (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek 2009).
Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008).
A Leader's Companion (Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, 2007).
Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006).
Professional Learning Communities at Work Plan Book (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2006).
On Common Ground: The Power of Professional Learning Communities (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, Eds., 2005).
Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004).
Getting Started: Reculturing Schools to Become Learning Communities (Eaker, DuFour, & DuFour, 2002).
Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

Videos

- The Power of Professional Learning Communities at Work: Bringing the Big Ideas to Life* (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2007).
Let's Talk About PLC: Getting Started (DuFour, Eaker, DuFour, & Sparks, 2003).
Through New Eyes: Examining the Culture of Your School (DuFour, 2002).
How to Develop a Professional Learning Community: Passion and Persistence (DuFour, 2001).

Articles (Available at allthingsplc.info.)

- "Leadership Is an Affair of the Heart." (Rick DuFour). *Journal of Staff Development*, Winter 2004.
"What Is a Professional Learning Community?" (Richard DuFour). *Educational Leadership*, May 2004, 61(8), 6-11.
"Building a Professional Learning Community." (Rick DuFour). *The School Administrator*, May 2003.
"Central-Office Support for Learning Communities." (Rebecca Burnette DuFour). *The School Administrator*, May 2003.
"How We Formed Our Community: Lights and Cameras Are Optional, but Action Is Essential." (Becky Burnette DuFour). *Journal of Staff Development*, Winter 2002.
"Pull Out Negativity by Its Roots." (Rick DuFour & Becky Burnette). *Journal of Staff Development*, Summer 2002.
"The Learning-Centered Principal." (Richard DuFour). *Educational Leadership*, May 2002, 59(8), 12-15.

Other Resources

National Staff Development Council: www.nsd.org

American Association of School Administrators: www.aasa.org

"Learning Communities: What Do They Look Like and How Do You Get There?" Special issue of *The School Administrator*, May 2003.