

## Professional Learning Communities

*“The very essence of a learning community is a focus on a commitment to the learning of each student. When a school or district functions as a PLC, educators within the organization embrace high levels of learning for all students as both the reason the organization exists and the fundamental responsibility of those who work within it.”*

*(DuFour et al, 2006)*



**Building a Professional Learning Community requires time, courage and trust from educators. These extraordinary efforts reap manifold rewards for students.**



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## Professional Learning Communities

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**Make Our Schools a Priority**

Based on the work of Richard DuFour, et al

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## Professional Learning Communities provide:

- Common language and framework
- Data-driven process that leads to a results-oriented product: high student achievement
- Vehicle for collaboration so that educators share expertise and best practices
- Opportunity to learn from one another



Trust + Time + Teamwork >  
Professional Learning Community

"The challenge facing leaders in creating a collaborative culture is not in creating the teams, but rather in providing the focus, time, support, and parameters critical to effective teamwork." (Richard DuFour)

## The Essential Elements of a PLC:

1. ***A PLC is a collaborative venture.*** "A systematic process in which we work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results."
2. ***A PLC is always focused on student learning.*** "Attempts at school improvement are judged on the basis of how student learning is affected."
3. ***A PLC distributes leadership responsibilities.*** "Administrators are viewed as leaders of leaders. Teachers are viewed as transformational leaders."
4. ***A PLC narrows the curriculum to its essence.*** "Time is viewed as a precious resource, so attempts are made to focus efforts on less, but more meaningful content. The time that is saved allows the teaching of more meaningful content at a greater depth."
5. ***A PLC shares best practices as a means of improving instruction.*** The concept is specifically designed to develop the collective capacity of a staff to work together to achieve the fundamental purpose: high levels of learning for all students."
6. ***A PLC uses "assessment for learning" in addition to the usual "assessment of learning."*** "The traditional approach of using classroom assessments solely as a grading tool fails to utilize the enormous potential of such assessments to identify students who need additional support and to inform the teacher regarding effective and ineffective elements of his/her practice."

### Timing?

- ◆ Target 1-2x a week for 45 minutes
- ◆ Embed PLCs in the work day
- ◆ Look at scheduling possibilities
  - Common planning time
  - Late starts or early release days
  - Conference days



### What do teams do during PLC time?

- ◆ *Dialogue* about the four key questions:
  1. What do we want all students to learn?
  2. How will we know if they have learned it?
  3. How will we respond when they haven't learned it?
  4. How will we meet the needs of those who "already know"?
- ◆ *Analyze* timely, relevant formative and summative data to inform planning and instruction
- ◆ *Examine and discuss* student work
- ◆ *Develop* common assessments and rubrics
- ◆ *Identify* root causes and address barriers to learning
- ◆ *Develop and share* units/lessons and plan interdisciplinary units
- ◆ *Identify* students who need intervention/support/remediation and determine appropriate service
- ◆ *Identify* students who need acceleration and determine appropriate support and service
- ◆ *Provide* objective feedback to one another