Minnesota Department of Education

June 2012

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs): Instruction-Focused School Guide

Guiding assumptions:

- Use evidence-based inquiry to identify instructional needs of students.
- Improve *standards-driven instruction* through the application of research-based instructional practices/strategies.
- *Continuously improve* student achievement gains (Plan, Do, Study, Act).

<table>
<tr><th>Elements of the PLC</th><th>Leadership: Site Focus</th><th>PLC: Classroom Focus</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Shared Vision:
Ensuring Learning for All Students
Does your school have a shared vision and shared values about teacher and student learning?</td><td>The Site Leadership Team: a group of teachers and a principal committed to building knowledge.</td><td>PLCs: a group of teachers committed to increasing student learning and achievement.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Establish effective team structures and select members.
Establish a shared understanding of the student-centered work.
Reflect on the existing vision and learning initiatives.
Explore shared values and establish a shared vision.
Build an action plan and communication plan.</td><td>Establish feedback loops of communication with the leadership team.
Establish shared understanding of PLC work.
Establish shared understanding of student-centered work.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Distributed Leadership
Does your school support collegial learning communities?</td><td colspan="2">Define leadership team roles.
Build individual leadership capacity:
• Facilitate effective meetings.
• Build effective teams.
• Anticipate perceived roadblocks.
Assess team performance and provide support for all levels of leadership.
Ensure accountability and communication with stakeholders.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Supportive Conditions
Is there a clear process used in your school to support professional learning and instructional improvement?</td><td>Plan and schedule professional development with these elements:
• Leadership and group facilitation.
• Data access and process analysis.
• Instructional strategy selection, implementation and fidelity.
• Observation process.</td><td>Communicate with the leadership team to identify professional development needs and create a training schedule.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Set weekly and monthly meeting schedules.
Plan ongoing coaching to support effective implementation at all levels.
Ensure a focus on instruction, learning and increased student achievement.</td></tr>
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<tr><th>Elements of the PLC</th><th>Leadership: Site Focus</th><th>PLC: Classroom Focus</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Results-Focused Implementation Inquiry
Is there a clear process used in your school to support instructional improvement?

</td><td colspan="2">Collect and chart data.
Analyze data and prioritize student needs based on Minnesota standards.
Set, review, and revise incremental SMART goal(s).
Select common research-based instructional strategies.
Plan and prepare instructional delivery:
• I do. . .We do. . .You do.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Monitor the progress of PLCs toward school/district goals.
Examine the PIP/PEP cycle (practice informs policy and policy enables practice).</td><td>Determine results indicators.
Plan for instruction.
Deliver instruction.
Share evidence of student learning.
Monitor progress.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Document progress and evaluate results.
Engage in reflection.
Determine next steps.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Reflection
Does job-embedded learning teach us about our instruction and student achievement?</td><td colspan="2">Reflect before, during and after implementation.
Reflect about PLC development.</td></tr>
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