Okay, So We’re a Team. Now What?

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Every Child, Every Day—Whatever It Takes!

“It is easier to build a strong child than to repair a broken man.”

—Frederick Douglass

How Are We Playing?

Not playing?
Just playing?
Playing not to lose?
Playing to WIN!

What is my role, and how do we define winning?
Current Reality

Can you make every parent this promise?

“It does not matter which teacher your child has at our school. All children in every class will learn a guaranteed curriculum at high levels.

If your child needs extra time and support to learn at high levels, we guarantee he or she will receive it.”

Discuss your school’s current reality.

“Ultimately it will come down to this in your school: which do we value more, promoting the autonomy of adults to work in isolation and do as they please in their classrooms, or promoting high levels of learning for all students?”


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.

(McLaughlin, 1995)
Professional Learning
Community Defined

“It is an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators.”


Collaboration

When considering collaboration, it’s not a question of ... Did we spend time together, but rather, did the time we spent together influence our work?”

—Rebecca DuFour, PLC Institutes Keynote (2014)

The Big Ideas of a Professional Learning Community

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 the 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.
The First Big Idea of a PLC: Ensuring All Students Learn at High Levels

The fundamental purpose of the school is to ensure that all students learn essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions; and therefore we, as educators, are willing to examine all of our programs, practices, and procedures in terms of their impact on student and adult learning. We are willing to change traditional programs, practices, and procedures that are misaligned with promoting high levels of learning for all.

Four Key Questions of a Professional Learning Community

What do we want our students to learn?
How will we know they have learned it?
How will we respond when learning did not take place?
How do we respond when learning has already occurred?

Criteria for Identifying Essential Common Outcomes

To separate the essential from the peripheral, carefully apply these three to each standard:

1. **Endurance:** Are students expected to retain the skills or knowledge long after the test is complete?
2. **Leverage:** Is the skill or knowledge applicable to many academic disciplines?
3. **Readiness for the next level of learning:** Is this skill or knowledge preparing the student for success in the next grade or course?

Levels of Curricula at Work in Your School

1. **Intended**: What we want them to learn
2. **Implemented**: What is actually 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**.


Understanding The Standard

**Identifying the Learning Targets**

“Learning goals, targets, tightly align to the standards, representing the learning students need to reflect the essence of the standards.”

—Nicole Dimich Vagle (2015)

**Standard**: Determine the main idea of a text, differentiate between main idea and details and explain how each detail supports the main idea.

**Learning targets**:

- Determine the main idea of the text
- Differentiate between main idea and details
- Recount the key details
- Explain how each detail supports the main idea
If the purpose of school is truly to ensure high levels of learning for all students, then we must answer the second key question of a PLC:

How will we know learning has occurred?

Common formative assessments!

Assessments for Learning as the Catalyst for School Improvement

“Assessment for learning ... when done well, is one of the most powerful, high-leverage strategies for improving student learning that we know of. Educators collectively ... become more skilled and focused at assessing, disaggregating, and using student achievement as a tool for ongoing improvement.”


Assessments of Learning

Take place after learning has occurred.
Determine if learning did occur.
Make a statement about student status at a particular point in time.
Make comparisons and placement decisions.

(Chappuis, Stiggins, Chappuis, & Arter, Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing It Right—Using It Well, 2011)
Assessments for Learning

Occur while learning is still underway.
Diagnose students’ needs.
Plan the next steps in instruction.
Give students feedback they can use to improve performance.
Show students increments of achievement.

(Chappuis, Siggins, Chappuis, & Arter, Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing It Right—Using It Well, 2011)

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?

As assessment for learning, formative assessments should be used to help students understand:

1. The achievement target they are aspiring to
2. Where they are now in relation to that expectation
3. How to close the gap between the two

(Siggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Doing It Right—Using It Well, 2007)
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
- Create systems to ensure students receive additional time and support if they are not learning

What Happens When Kids Don’t Learn?

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

—Lezotte, Correlates of Effective Schools: The First and Second Generation (1991), p. 4

Sanger’s Pyramids of Intervention

Access Skills
Common Assessment
Daily Instruction
Does Good Teaching Matter?

“The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. The only way to improve outcomes is to improve teaching.”


What We Should See in Every Classroom

Lesson Objective: Do students know what they are learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Engaged content with others</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Engaged content within themselves</td>
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How do you know they are learning?

Checking for Understanding (CFU): Allows for adjustments in instruction to ensure learning

A Prerequisite for Systematic Intervention

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

- Essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions
- Common pacing guides or curriculum maps
- Common formative assessments
- Common standard of proficiency
- Students who need additional time and support based on the analysis of common assessment data
- A designated grade-level block of time for intervention or enrichment in addition to new direct instruction in all core subject areas
RTI Is …

- Deliberate collaboration focused on student learning
- Based on student achievement and learning data
- A process of continuous monitoring and change focused on ensuring student success
- A philosophy, not a program
- Fluid, not static

Creating Systematic Interventions

To ensure students receive additional time and support for learning:

- Beware of appeals to mindless precedent.
- The system of intervention should be fluid.
- Systems of intervention work most effectively when they are supporting teams rather than individual teachers.
- An intervention plan should recognize the unique context of the school.
- More of the same is not effective intervention.
- Realize that no support system will compensate for bad teaching.

What do we want all students to learn?

Determine essential standard or learning target.

Understand standard or learning target.

How will we know they have learned it?

- Teach.
- Check for understanding.
- Appropriately adjust.
- Differentiate.

Give common formative assessment.

Analyze data.

Plan based on CFA results.

How will we respond when learning has not occurred?

- Reteach. Individualize, small group, deploy, and so on.
- Reassess learning.

How will we respond when learning has already occurred?

- Enrich and deepen.
- Produce a product based on standard.
What’s Missing?

What learning targets were we monitoring?
How did each student do in regards to the specific learning targets?
Where did we have strengths even with those students who did not show mastery?
Strategic and specific data!
Remember, when talking about data, the conversation about how kids did should be at a level that would be appropriate if the kids were there with you!

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Three Things To Check

Does the learning target match the standard?
Does the assessment method meet the cognitive demand?
Do we include student self-assessment on learning targets leading up to and/or including the summative assessment?
I’ve got this! 😊
I have questions! :-)
I have no idea! 😞
Team Defined

“We define a team as a group of people working interdependently to achieve a common goal for which members are held mutually accountable.”


A Commitment to Continuous Improvement

A Professional Learning Community will always seek to improve and so will develop systems and processes that engage each member in a cycle of:

Gathering evidence of current levels of student learning
Developing strategies and ideas to build on strengths and address weakness in that learning.
Implementing those strategies and ideas
Analyzing the impact of the changes to discover what was effective and what was not
Applying new knowledge in the next cycle of continuous improvement

Seven Keys to Effective Teams

1. Embed collaboration in routine practices of the school with a focus on learning.
2. Schedule time for collaboration into the school day and school calendar.
3. Focus teams on key 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.
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.”