



Calendar of Events:

- Oct. 2 District PD Day
- Oct 7-10 East Middle and High Academy
- Oct 9 Preschool/ Elementary Sp Ed Academy
- Oct 10 K-1 Academy
- Oct 14 Elementary Reading Festival
- Oct 16 West Middle and High Academy
- Oct. 24 5/4 Academy
- Oct. 28 High School Reading Festival

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Friday Focus

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The Big Ideas of PLC's

Professional Learning Communities is a term used to describe every imaginable combination of people within a school that has an interest in improving learning for students. These teams are most often comprised of groups of teacher colleagues who work together on developing, implementing, monitoring, and assessing a plan for educating a community of students. Richard Dufour, a leader in educational reform and one of the first to bring PLC's to the forefront, believes there are three Big Ideas to remember if PLC's are to be successful.

The first Big Idea is: Ensuring that Students Learn. "The professional learning community model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn." (Dufour) A focus on three questions will help a PLC monitor whether they are maintaining a strong vision of student learning: What do we want each

student to learn? How will we know when each student has learned it? How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?

Dufour also believes that a Culture of Collaboration must be at the center of all PLC work. This is his second Big Idea. "Educators who are building a professional learning community recognize that they must work together to achieve their collective purpose of learning for all." Collaborative conversations call on team members to make public what has traditionally been private—goals, strategies, materials, pacing, questions, concerns, and results. These discussions give every teacher someone to turn to and talk to, and they are explicitly structured to improve the classroom practice of teachers—individually and collectively.

The Third Big Idea of PLC

success is: A Focus on Results." Professional learning communities judge their effectiveness on the basis of results." Working together to improve student achievement becomes the routine work of everyone in the school. Every teacher team participates in an ongoing process of identifying the current level of student achievement, establishing a goal to improve the current level, working together to achieve that goal, and providing periodic evidence of progress.

Even when these three principles are put into place, we must remember that effective PLC's still depend on the hard work and dedication of the participants. It is not the merit of the PLC concept that will cause a school to rise to success. It is the commitment of the educators within the PLC that will foster student growth and achievement.



Words of Wisdom from Richard and Rebecca DuFour

"The culture of a PLC is characterized by collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals, for which each member is mutually accountable. Special attention must be paid to the "interdependence" and "common goals" if we are going to have high-quality collaboration and truly effective teams." ---Getting Started
"In short, there is nothing more important in determining the effectiveness of a team than each member's understanding of and commitment to the achievement of results-oriented goals to which the group holds itself mutually accountable." ---Learning by Doing
"The engine of improvement, growth, and renewal in a PLC is collective inquiry. People in such a community are relentless in questioning the status quo, seeking new methods, testing those methods, and then reflecting on the results." --PLC at Work
"The old adage, "PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT," is patently false. Those who continue to engage in ineffective practices are unable to improve, much less reach perfection. Therefore, all practices must be examined in terms of their impact on the desired results. --Learning by Doing