

Administrator's Awareness

Messenger



Polk County School District (News Alert for Administrators)

Volume I

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Professional Learning Communities

What an expert in the field of education research tells us about PLCs

Dr. Shirley M. Hord, SEDL (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory)

In her article, *Creating an Effective Professional Learning Community that Leads to School Improvement*, Shirley M. Hord cautions educators that collaboration is good but "cannot be the major component of an effective PLC."

If you are wondering what she means by this, we can follow her lead and examine the three words that make up PLCs: Professional, Learning and Community.

She reminds educators that we, as well as our students, need to continue to learn. She states that "*To improve teaching quality in our schools, there must be continuous learning of the adults, and the PLC is the most powerful setting for this learning.*"

We are reminded in the article that data is important and from multiple sources we identify "a priority area." As professionals, we realize that staff development should lead us to "**new knowledge, skill development or application of new knowledge and skills.**" How do we ensure that this will happen? Dr. Hord suggests that we utilize the four

Stages of learning (Joyce and Showers):

1. Tell people how to do something or provide them with reading material.
2. Demonstrate or model the skill.
3. Give time for practice and low risk feedback.
4. Provide follow up or coaching.

The good news is that if we complete all four stages, the research indicates that **we can expect 95% success of application or transfer of knowledge and skill to the classroom.** Those are impressive results worth educators' collaborative efforts!

Educators should be thinking in broad terms of how we structure PLCs. There is a need, Dr. Hord suggests, for **a school-wide PLC at least once a month**, and she provides suggestions for schools too large to have whole school meetings. Who should provide the learning? The first place we look should be internally. Then we can look "at the Central Office, other schools, and/or consultants."

The following questions are suggested to help educators structure effective PLCs:

1. What is your learning focused on?
2. Why are you focusing your learning on (number 1)?
3. How are you learning?
4. How are you sharing with other learning teams/communities in your school?

In conclusion, Dr. Hord suggests that effective PLCs have the following five attributes:

1. Shared values and vision: agreed upon common goals that **all** are committed to pursue for the benefit of students.
2. Shared and supportive leadership.
3. Supportive conditions of physical space for meetings.
4. Supportive conditions of human and relational feelings, respect, high regard for one another.
5. Improvement efforts are supported peer to peer.

The end result is a PLC staff that learns together and their learning is directed to student needs. School improvement necessitates staff development and essential follow up! **No improvement can happen without change and no change can happen without learning.**

PLC Quotes:

"The constant collective inquiry into, 'What is it we want our students to learn?' and 'How will we know when each student has learned it?' is a professional responsibility of **every** faculty member."

"The very essence of a learning community is a focus on and a commitment to the learning of each student."

From "Learning by Doing," DuFour, DuFour, Eaker and Many

In This Issue

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"The teacher
is the chief
learner in the
classroom"

~Donald
Graves

Professional Development Showcase: "Best Practices" in Action

Purpose: To feature the effective, evidence-based strategies being positively implemented throughout our district with outstanding fidelity and thereby increasing student achievement as a result of participation in professional learning opportunities.

Do you have a teacher on your staff who is implementing a **teaching strategy** with enthusiasm and

precision? Are the students in the teacher's classroom making **learning gains** because of the implementation of these strategies? If you think of a teacher at your school as you read these questions, **please encourage that teacher to enter the PD Showcase!** It is our desire to be able to share video of district teachers demonstrating evidence-based teaching strategies that have increased learning

gains for students. This will be a resource for other teachers in our district who may benefit from your teacher's modeling of the strategy!

Don't forget that **you have the opportunity also** to showcase your implementation of evidence-based strategies that help teachers and students at your school. We look forward to viewing "best practices" of our district!

PD Showcase Incentives



32 GB flash drive



8 GB Nano Ipad



Nikon Coolpix L18



Flip Video Flip Ultra Camcorder

Samsung MP3 Player



IN A NUTSHELL



- * Increase student achievement
- * Enhance classroom instructional strategies
- * Promote rigor and relevance throughout the curriculum
- * Prepare students for continuing education and the workforce

Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol

The Florida Department of Education initiated the Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol in the Spring 2003 as a means to fulfill the requirements of **section 1012.98, Florida Statutes**. The Standards were revised and updated in 2010 to reflect the recent changes in law and current

research and practice. This legislation sets forth that the purpose of professional development systems is to increase student achievement, enhance classroom instructional strategies that promote rigor and relevance throughout the curriculum, and prepare students for continuing education and the workforce.



1012.98 School
Community
Professional
Development Act



Polk County Protocol Review, May 23-27, 2011