Professional Learning Communities

District Leadership Forum

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Table of Contents

1) Executive Overview 4
Key Observations 4
2) PLC Benefits and Key Qualities 5
Motivations 5
PLC Structure 8
3) Strategies for Successful Implementation 11
Timeline 11
Professional Development 14
Assessment 19
4) Solutions to Implementation Challenges 22
Implementation Challenges Overview 22
Providing Collaborative Time 23
Engaging Autonomous Teachers 23
Re-training PLC Teams 27
5) Research Methodology 28
Project Challenge 28
Project Sources 28
Research Parameters 30
Appendix A 31
Data Analysis Protocol from *District E* 31
Appendix B 32
Common Assessment Checklist from *District A* 32

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1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Focus Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on data-driven practices to improve student learning. Contacts at most profiled districts attribute improvements in student achievement to PLC implementation. For example, at the PLC-pilot elementary school at **District F**, the number of students scoring at or above proficiency increased to 98 percent in reading, 96 percent in math, and 90 percent in writing. At **District D** and **District E**, contacts also note improvements in student learning after implementing PLCs. Contacts add that when schools implement PLCs with greater fidelity (i.e., develop effective standards, assessments, and data-driven interventions), those schools demonstrate greater achievement gains.

To increase administrator and teacher engagement, begin PLC implementation with pilot programs. At **District E** and **District F**, district administrators implemented one-school pilot programs to test PLC effectiveness. At District F, administrators designated a principal who expressed interest in and support for PLCs to lead the pilot at their elementary school. Contacts at both districts report that pilot program success increased PLC buy-in from administrators and teachers. For example, contacts at District E report that almost every principal voluntarily began PLC implementation after the pilot.

Develop a multi-year PLC implementation plan to ensure teacher mastery of PLC concepts. At **District A**, **District B**, and **District E**, administrators chose not to implement all aspects of PLCs immediately. Contacts at all three districts emphasize that administrators should avoid overwhelming teachers with unfamiliar, complex tasks early in the implementation process. Thus, administrators implemented PLCs sequentially over multiple years. For example, administrators at District E dedicated up to a year of professional development to each of the essential PLC questions.

To engage reluctant teachers, demonstrate PLC purpose through student achievement data presentations and mission statement exercises. At **District F**, contacts emphasize that administrators must begin implementation by helping teachers understand the purpose and effectiveness of PLCs. Contacts report that teachers become more willing to engage with PLCs once they understand the potential positive impacts. At District F, district administrators ask principals to present district-specific data on student achievement, discipline, and engagement to teachers to highlight areas of improvement that PLCs can address. At **District E**, administrators and teachers collaborate to develop PLC purpose and mission statements.

To assess PLC effectiveness, analyze district- and building-level student and teacher achievement data. At most profiled districts, administrators primarily use student achievement data to assess PLCs. Administrators expect to see improved student growth and progress across implementation on priority standards and state tests. For example, administrators at **District A** saw increases in the percentage of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who achieved proficiency in reading in each of the past five, five-year cohorts.[1] At **District D**, administrators also use teacher evaluations and principal interviews to assess PLC team performance.

1) AllThingsPLC. "See The Evidence," accessed May 29, 2019. http://www.allthingsplc.info/evidence/

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2) PLC Benefits and Key Qualities

Motivations

Implement PLCs to Increase Student Achievement Through Improved Teacher Instructional Practices

A Professional Learning Community (PLC) is an ongoing process in which teachers collaborate to complete cycles of inquiry and research to improve student learning.[2] At most profiled districts, administrators implement Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to improve teacher and student achievement. At **District F**, administrators implemented PLCs to improve student learning by improving teachers' ability to collaborate, select and implement effective instructional strategies, and identify students in need of support. Similarly, administrators at **District A** implemented PLCs to foster meaningful collaboration and improve student postsecondary performance (e.g., performance on college admissions tests, grades in college coursework).

In addition, administrators at **District D** established PLCs to comply with state mandates and reduce teacher workload. State legislators required the district to implement PLCs as part of the state's Race to the Top initiative—a competitive, U.S. Department of Education-funded grant initiative designed to incentivize school reform.[3] Also, administrators implemented PLCs to make teacher planning time more efficient. Because teachers collaborate to create effective curricula, lesson plans, and pacing guides in PLCs, teachers can use their individual planning time to focus on other critical tasks (e.g., student meetings).

To Avoid Potential PLC Failure, Implement Evidence-Based PLC Models with Fidelity

See **Page 8** for more information on the characteristics of successful PLCs.

Successful PLCs incorporate timely, directive interventions to support struggling students, ask teams of teachers to develop common formative assessments and pedagogical strategies, and encourage teachers to analyze student performance data to identify curricular gaps.[4] Without incorporating these key characteristics, PLCs do not always lead to increases in performance and achievement.

For example, a Journal of Education and Training study profiles a PLC initiative in a Texas district that failed due to an overly-narrow focus on data over student learning/reflective conversation, insufficient time for teachers to collaborate, disengaged administrators, and the lack of an iterative, ongoing process.[5] An article from Education World highlights potential reasons for PLC failure.

2) "About PLCs," AllThingsPLC. Accessed June 5, 2019. http://www.allthingsplc.info/about
3) "Race to the Top," U.S. Department of Education, accessed May 28, 2019, https://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/factsheet.html
4) Richard DuFour, "What is a Professional Learning Community," *Educational Leadership*, vol. 61, no. 8 (May 2004): 6-11. http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/may04/vol61/num08/What-Is-a-Professional-Learning-Community%C2%A2.aspx
5) Rachel L. Sims and G. Richard Penny, "Examination of a Failed Professional Learning Community," *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 2015): 43-45. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1054892.pdf

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Common PLC Implementation Flaws[6]

1. "**Insufficient access to timely data** on which to base instructional decisions."
2. "**Poor infrastructure** (especially lack of scheduled time for teachers to meet or inefficient use of the limited time available)."
3. "**Lack of teacher buy-in** for the process (perception that the decision to implement a PLC was imposed on teachers by administrators)."
4. "**Lack of teacher ownership** of the process (perception that administrators dictate what teachers do during their collaborative time)."
5. "A building culture in which teachers tend to **compete rather than to collaborate**."

Research also suggests that implementation fidelity impacts PLC benefits for teachers. When teachers use meeting time to focus on collaborative matters that do not relate to teaching practices (e.g., planning a future field trip), PLCs fail to change instructional culture.[9]

To prevent PLC failure, administrators must implement PLCs effectively. Contacts from **District D** and **District E** report that when teachers spend PLC meeting time focusing on topics unrelated to the PLC iterative process, student learning does not improve. Research supports this finding: student achievement gains vary with PLC strength (i.e., the extent to which PLCs incorporate PLC essential characteristics) and with the focus of PLC teacher teams.[7] To create consistent achievement gains for students, administrators should adhere strictly to an evidence-based PLC model, in which teachers should work in teams to develop instructional strategies based on student data and supported by professional research.[8]

Focus PLCs on Student Learning to Increase Student Engagement and Academic Achievement

Rick DuFour compiled an extensive list of research studies that support PLC implementation **here**.

Research suggests that PLCs, when implemented effectively, do improve student outcomes. Contacts from **District D** and **District E** note that when schools implement PLCs with greater fidelity (i.e., with a focus on student learning and continuous improvement), those schools demonstrate greater student achievement gains. In a review of eight studies on PLCs, researchers found that when teachers participated in PLCs, student learning improved. Further, one large-scale study found that students from PLC schools outperform students from non-PLC schools.[10]

Impact of PLCs on Student Outcomes[11,12]

Student Test Scores Improve

At one middle school, the percentage of students who passed state tests in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies increased from 50 percent to over 90 percent

Minority Student Performance Increases

African American students in a PLC improved their performance more than comparable students in the same district

Student Engagement Increases

Student dropout and absentee rates decrease following PLC implementation

6) Celine Provini, "Why Don't Professional Learning Communities Work?" *Education World*, 2013, https://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/professional-learning-community-pitfalls-best-practices.shtml
7) Vicki Vescio, Dorene Ross, and Layson Adams, "A Review of Research on the Impact of Professional Learning Communities on Teaching Practice and Student Learning," *Teaching and Teacher Education*, no. 24 (2008): 86-87. http://www.k12.wa.us/Compensation/pubdocs/Vescio2008PLC-paper.pdf
8) Ibid.
9) Ibid., 85.
10) Ibid., 86-87
11) Ibid.
12) Shirley Hord, "Professional Learning Communities: What Are They and Why Are They Important?" *Issues … about Change*, vol 6, no. 1 (1997): 7. http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61/outcomes.html

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Contacts at profiled districts also report increases in student achievement. For example, in the pilot elementary school at **District F**, the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency increased to 98 percent in reading, 96 percent in math, and 90 percent in writing. Contacts also note that teachers in the districts' middle schools recognize students matriculating from this school as remarkably high performing. Lastly, at **District D** and **District E**, contacts report that administrators at multiple schools saw improvements in student learning after implementing PLCs.

PLCs Improve Teacher Professional Practice and Morale

See **Page 8** for a description of the core characteristics of PLCs according to the DuFour model.

Research suggests that PLCs lead teachers to implement new, more student-centered practices, including flexible classroom arrangements and adjusted lesson pacing for different mastery levels. For example, a study of 24 schools found that effective PLCs (i.e., PLCs that possess each of the core characteristics of the PLC model) led to a 36 percent increase in the amount of authentic pedagogy (i.e., pedagogy that emphasizes higher-order thinking and depth of knowledge).[13] Just as with student achievement, teachers only receive these benefits if administrators implement PLCs effectively.

Benefits of PLCs for Teachers[14,15]

Teacher Morale	Contacts at **District E** and **District F** report that PLCs create a positive impact on staff morale. Research also supports this finding. A survey of 393 schools found that participation in collaborative activities led to a positive impact on teacher morale and teaching practice. Also, other research suggests that PLCs reduce teacher absenteeism, decrease teacher isolation, and increase teacher commitment to school mission and goals.
Teacher Collaboration	Research indicates that effective PLCs encourage teachers to engage in collaborative activities and share teaching practices with other staff. Studies show that PLC structures allow teachers to collaboratively examine their practice through shared lessons, decision-making protocols, literature study circles, and classroom observations.
Teacher Authority	According to research, teachers who participate in PLCs report greater involvement in school-related decisions. At **District B** and **District D**, administrators designated specific teachers as PLC team leaders. Team leaders trained other teachers, led PLC meetings, reported on implementation results to district leadership, and gained some ownership over the implementation process. Contacts report that teacher-driven implementation is more effective than top-down implementation.
Teacher Learning	Research demonstrates that PLCs encourage teachers to seek and implement evidence-based research on teaching practices and student learning. For example, one study showed that teachers working collaboratively to improve African American literacy in their school reviewed and applied literature on culturally responsive teaching practices.

13) Vescui et al., "A Review of Research on the Impact of Professional Learning Communities on Teaching Practice and Student Learning," 83.
14) Ibid, 84-86.
15) Shirley Hord, "Professional Learning Communities: What Are They and Why Are They Important?" *Issues … About Change*, vol 6, no. 1 (1997): 7. http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61/outcomes.html

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See **Page 17** for a sample team meeting structure.

Choose the DuFour Model of PLCs to Ensure Teachers Use Collaborative Practices Supported by Research

All profiled districts implement the DuFour PLC model—developed by Rick and Becky DuFour and popularized by Solution Tree—to ensure implementation fidelity. In DuFour PLCs, teachers meet weekly for 45 minutes to 1.5 hours in collaborative teams (e.g., grade-level, departmental, vertical teams) to answer the four essential questions of PLCs. For example, at **District D**, teachers met twice weekly for 45 minutes each in early implementation, and then transitioned to once-weekly, 45-minute meetings.

Contacts at **District F** report that they selected the DuFour model because evidence-based research supports its effectiveness, and contacts at **District C** note that Rick and Becky DuFour create the best PLC research and practices. That said, profiled districts do implement adjusted versions of the model. For example, two profiled districts—**District A** and District C—modified the DuFour model to incorporate additional questions.[16]

DuFour PLC Model Four Essential Questions[17]

1. What is it we want students to know?
2. How will we know if our students are learning?
3. How will we respond if our students are not learning?
4. How will we enrich and extend learning for students who understand?

Administrators at **District A** added a second question: **How are we going to teach it?**

Administrators at **District C** added a fifth question: **How will we report student progress?**

Implement Every Component of the PLC Process to Maintain PLC Effectiveness

Contacts from **District A** and **District F** report that no one quality of PLCs is particularly effective. Rather, contacts suggest that PLCS are effective because they incorporate multiple evidence-based reforms that complement one another. Contacts report that the essential questions cannot function in isolation and suggest that administrators implement all aspects of the PLC process.

In DuFour PLCs, teachers use weekly PLC meetings to complete a cyclical, continuous-improvement process that addresses each of the PLC essential questions.

16) "Creating and Sustaining a Professional Learning Community," District C, provided May 6, 2019.
17) Ibid.

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Continuous Improvement Process at *District C*[18]

Over the course of multiple PLC collaborative meetings, teacher teams should repeat the following cycle:

1 Determine learning targets

- Analyze and unpack standards
- Develop rigorous learning targets
- Determine learning progressions

2 Select best practice teaching strategies

- Align content to learning targets
- Incorporate future-ready skills
- Integrate culturally responsive strategies

3 Assess student learning

- Align assessments to learning targets
- Use ongoing assessments for learning
- Analyze common assessment results collaboratively

4 Adjust student learning experiences

- Personalize learning through intervention
- Create multiple ways for students to access and express learning
- Continuously monitor student performance

5 Report student learning

- Provide frequent descriptive feedback
- Use standards-based grading practices
- Ensure grades reflect student learning

Contacts at **District E** report that in addition to the continuous improvement process, effective PLCs change the culture of schools to emphasize teacher collaboration. For PLCs to function effectively, teachers must believe that student learning is the central objective of the school and commit to norms of behavior that promote collaboration and professionalism. Research suggests that in effective PLCs, staff commit to the following cultural imperatives:

Five Imperatives of Effective PLCs[19]

At **District E**, district administrators and PLC teams worked together to develop PLC purpose statements and cultural norms to encourage teachers to adopt these imperatives. See **page 25** for more information on this process.

Shared Sense of Purpose
Staff agree on the school's mission and procedures.

Collective Focus on Student Learning
Staff emphasize pedagogical strategies that encourage higher-order thinking.

Reflective Dialogue
Staff engage in frequent, professional conversations about instructional practice.

Collaborative Activity
Staff cooperate to support student learning.

Deprivatized Practice
Staff share instructional practices and provide meaningful feedback on peer strategies.

18) "Creating and Sustaining a Professional Learning Community," District C, provided May 6, 2019.
19) Karen Louis and Helen Marks, "Does Professional Community Affect the Classroom? Teachers' Work and Student Experiences in Restructuring Schools," *American Journal of Education*, vol. 106, no. 4 (Aug. 1998): 545. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1085627?read-now=1&seq=14#page_scan_tab_contents

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To Access Implementation Resources and Consultant Support, Consider Partnering with External Vendors

At **District E**, administrators conducted an in-depth literature review of all three versions of *Learning by Doing*—a seminal Solution Tree text—to standardize PLC implementation best practices across the district.

All profiled districts partner with Solution Tree to implement PLCs, and contacts from all districts report that they are satisfied with **Solution Tree** services. Administrators at **District C**, **District E** and **District F** report that Solution Tree provides access to the strongest resources and research necessary to operationalize PLCs. Contacts from **District B** emphasize the utility of the DuFour's resources specifically (e.g., *Learning by Doing*[20]), which incorporate reproducible templates and protocols that administrators used to ease PLC implementation. Administrators at District E and District F also collaborated with Solution Tree leaders (e.g., Rick DuFour, Becky DuFour) to develop and publish additional PLC resources related to their districts' work.

Contacts at **District D**, District C, and **District A** highlight how Solution Tree provides easy access to conferences, where district and school administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers can access comprehensive trainings. Contacts report that these conferences allow the district to present a unified training message to all teachers across different years of implementation. Contacts at District A also highlight the quality of Solution Tree consultant support in areas such as math instruction.

Visit Solution Tree Partners to Assess Vendor Alignment with District Needs

Administrators at **District D** visited a district in Virginia that previously implemented DuFour model PLCs with Solution Tree, and subsequently decided to partner with Solution Tree due to the success of the partnership.

20) Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, and Thomas Many. *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work* (Bloomington, IN, Solution Tree Press, 2006).

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3) Strategies for Successful Implementation

Timeline

TAP combines formal teacher collaborative time with teacher career ladders, incentive compensation, and accountability systems. To learn more about the TAP system, consult the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching website **here**.

To Increase Administrator and Teacher Engagement, Begin Implementation with Pilot Programs

District administrators at **District E** and **District F** first implemented one-school pilot programs to test PLC effectiveness. At District F, an elementary school principal implemented PLCs modeled after recommendations in *Professional Learning Communities at Work*.[21] At District E, district administrators launched two distinct pilots to compare systematic, evidence-based educational reforms. One school implemented the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) merit pay model, and the other implemented PLCs. After two-year pilots, the PLC school demonstrated clear advantages in student achievement and in staff morale as compared to the TAP model. Thus, administrators elected to move forward with PLCs rather than the TAP model.

Select Pilot Program Location Based on Principal Engagement to Ensure Rigor of Implementation

At **District F**, a principal began PLC implementation at their school because of their independent interest in PLCs. District administrators then decided to expand this pilot initiative to the rest of the district based on its success.

Characteristics of *District E*'s Pilot Program

Principal-Led

The school principal planned and coordinated implementation at the school. Contacts report that **strong principal leadership** is crucial to train and hold teachers accountable.

Specific Focus

Rather than overwhelm teachers with massive curricular change, the school principal selected **one area of focus for the entire school**—nonfiction writing—as contacts cite research suggesting that nonfiction writing improves performance in other subjects.

Contacts at both districts report that pilot programs increased buy-in from administrators and teachers. At District E, contacts report almost every principal voluntarily joined the PLC movement after the pilot, as they saw the benefits PLCs brought to school culture and student achievement. At District F, contacts report that teachers in other schools asked for PLC implementation after seeing the improved academic outcomes of students who matriculated from the pilot elementary school. Contacts also report that the school board engaged completely with the PLC process due to the success of the pilot program.

21) Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker, *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 1998).

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Implement PLCs Over Multiple Years to Ensure Teacher Mastery of PLC Concepts

Administrators at **District A**, **District B**, and **District E** developed a multi-year PLC implementation process. Contacts at all three districts emphasize that administrators should avoid overwhelming teachers with unfamiliar, complex tasks early in implementation. Instead, administrators should move sequentially through each of the essential questions and provide consistent opportunities for concept review over multiple years.

Contacts at District A and District E report that administrators avoided even using the term "PLC" until teachers mastered the initial essential questions (i.e., four to five years after initial implementation). Contacts took this approach to avoid overwhelming teachers with the multiple complex tasks that make up PLCs—rather than focus on the initiative as a whole, teachers could focus on mastering each step.

Implementation Timeline at *District E*[22]

Year 0: Fostering a Collaborative Mindset

- Teachers and administrators participate in interdisciplinary book discussion groups.
- Influential teacher leaders visit a PLC at a Work Solution Tree conference.
- Administrators redesign the master schedule to include common planning time for grade-level teams and departments.

Later in the implementation process, administrators incentivize book readings through professional development credits tied to salary scale increases.

Year 1: Build a PLC Foundation (Critical Question One)

- Administrators and teachers collaborate to define behavioral expectations, PLC purpose statements, and teacher commitments for collaborative work.
- Teachers meet weekly to identify a guaranteed, common, viable curriculum and standards via district-developed protocols.

Teachers and administrators also collaborate to design responses to when teachers violate cultural norms (e.g., interrupt team members).

Year 2: Develop Common Assessments (Critical Question Two)

- Administrators train teachers to develop common assessment vocabulary and literacy.
- Teachers build and implement one common assessment per quarter.
- Teachers develop SMART (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Bound) goals tied to common and state assessments.

Administrators require teachers to design assessments collaboratively, administer unaltered assignments in all courses, and score and grade assessments as a team.

Sample SMART goal: 60 percent of second graders will demonstrate proficiency in reading by year end.

22) District E Administrator, "Successfully Implementing the Professional Learning Communities Model," *The PLC Institute*, provided May 9, 2019.

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Year 3: Integrate Data Analysis (Critical Questions 2 and 3)

- Teachers participate in continued assessment training and increase the frequency of assessments.
- Administrators train teachers on data analysis practices to assign students to intervention.
- Teachers analyze assessment data, identify students in need, and schedule intervention time.

Years 4 and 5: Formalize Intervention/Enrichment (Critical Questions 3 and 4)

- Administrators train teachers on systematic intervention practices and effective grading practices.
- Administrators create consistent structure for intervention/enrichment.
- In year 5, administrators train teachers on how to design activities for successful, high-achieving students (enrichment).

Administrators asked teachers to embed intervention and enrichment time in each course's unit plan. In this system, teams schedule intervention days following common assessments and regroup students across classrooms.

Year 6 and Onward: Refinement

- Administrators identify and resolve areas of improvement (e.g., increase assessment/intervention frequency, encourage student reflection).
- Administrators and teachers create consistent data analysis protocols.
- Teachers refine goals, standards, and units to increase rigor.

Clearly Communicate Implementation Expectations Annually Through Explicit District Communications[23]

Administrators at **District E** send a district-wide memo to teachers at the beginning of each implementation year that outlines school-wide expectations for PLC work. This allows principals to set expectations proactively and prevent teacher objections that might arise if teachers believe that the principal identified PLC tasks arbitrarily.

Begin Implementation with Strong Process Requirements But Increase Teacher Ownership as They Gain Experience

Administrators at most profiled districts implement a leadership framework that allows administrators to stipulate PLC requirements while still allowing teachers some ownership over the process. In this framework, administrators define certain "tight" requirements (i.e., strict requirements that all teachers must obey), but leave other aspects of the process "loose" (i.e., up to the discretion of teacher teams).

23) District E Administrator, "Successfully Implementing the Professional Learning Communities Model," 50.

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Sample Loose-Tight Requirements at Profiled Districts [24]

Tight Requirements		Loose Requirements
All teachers must meet weekly in collaborative PLC teams.	→	Teachers may adjust their meeting agenda and structure as they see fit.
All teams must develop behavioral norms and grade-level standards.	→	Teachers may determine the content of norms and standards.

Later in implementation, administrators at **District E** and **District A** loosened requirements to allow advanced PLC teams to create their own protocols and meeting structures. In this way, administrators empower PLC leaders, which further engages them in the PLC process and mitigates potential teacher pushback. Similarly, administrators at **District D** transitioned from attending every PLC meeting to visiting six a year, which allowed teachers to lead PLC meetings without administrative oversight. Per teacher feedback, administrators also allowed teachers to meet once a week for 45 minutes rather than twice a week.

At District A, administrators used teacher feedback to identify which requirements to loosen or eliminate. Teachers could submit proposals to design shorter/longer units or implement additional/fewer common assessments. Contacts report that this process gave teachers ownership over the PLC process.

To Maintain Teacher Engagement, Avoid Over-Prescribing PLC Protocols

At **District B**, contacts report that principals at times set overly stringent timelines and protocols for PLC implementation, which eliminated much of the authentic problem solving and teacher conversation that creates strong PLCs. Contacts recommend that administrators maintain some flexibility in PLC implementation.

Professional Development

Provide Early, Intensive Professional Development to Prepare Teachers and Administrators for Implementation

At most profiled districts, administrators and teacher leaders begin implementation by attending Solution Tree conferences and PLC intensives. At District F, board members also attend Solution Tree conferences alongside administrators to demonstrate the district's commitment to PLC implementation. Contacts report that Solution Tree conferences build shared, effective knowledge among principals, which mitigates future implementation discrepancies. At **District B**, **District E**, and **District F**, administrators send staff (e.g., principals, team leaders, interested teachers) to PLC conferences/intensives on a yearly basis to engage in continued learning opportunities.

At District B, **District D**, District E, and **District A**, administrators also provided onsite intensive trainings during early implementation. These trainings include site visits by Solution Tree experts, consultant-led trainings, and assessment intensives

24) District E Administrator, "Successfully Implementing the Professional Learning Communities Model," 38.

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from experienced PLC teams. At District B, administrators hosted five-day summer institutes with three to four days of follow-up training during the school year. Contacts at District A report that summer learning sessions allow PLC teams significant time to set up their meeting structures and identify evidence-based practices, which eases implementation.

Use Post-Training Implementation Requirements to Ensure Teachers Implement Training Material

At **District C**, administrators provided three full days of PLC training for teacher leaders spread throughout the school year. After each meeting, teachers commit to implementing one facet of the training by the next session (e.g., a new assessment protocol). District leadership follow up with participants three to four weeks after the trainings to provide support and hold teachers accountable.

Ask Principals, Instructional Coaches, and Teacher Leaders to Coordinate School-Specific Training

At **District E**, contacts emphasize that principals must completely understand and engage with the PLC framework, lead teacher PLC trainings and initial meetings, and hold teachers accountable for success.

At **District B** and District E, principals participate in reading groups to analyze seminal Solution Tree texts (e.g., *Learning by Doing*). Contacts at District E also note that district instructional coaches should participate in and lead PLC trainings, as they possess expertise in assessment practices and evidence-based instructional strategies that teachers can use to improve PLC function and student learning.

At District F, district administrators lead intensive trainings at regular principal meetings on PLC purpose, supporting research, and best practices (e.g., data analysis protocols). Contacts note that district administrators must emphasize the central purpose of PLCs: to improve professional practice to increase student learning. If principals understand and believe this message, they can more easily convince teachers at their schools.

At **District F**, all central district administrators collaborate to lead principal trainings and coordinate implementation. At **District D**, administrators hired a new district administrator specifically to oversee PLC implementation.

To Hold Teachers Accountable, Ask District Administrators and Principals to Attend PLC Meetings

At **District E** and **District D**, principals and district administrators attend PLC meetings to ensure teachers use PLC time effectively and to help resolve any implementation problems. At **District F**, district administrators visit school sites and sit in on PLC meetings to encourage teachers to remain on task.

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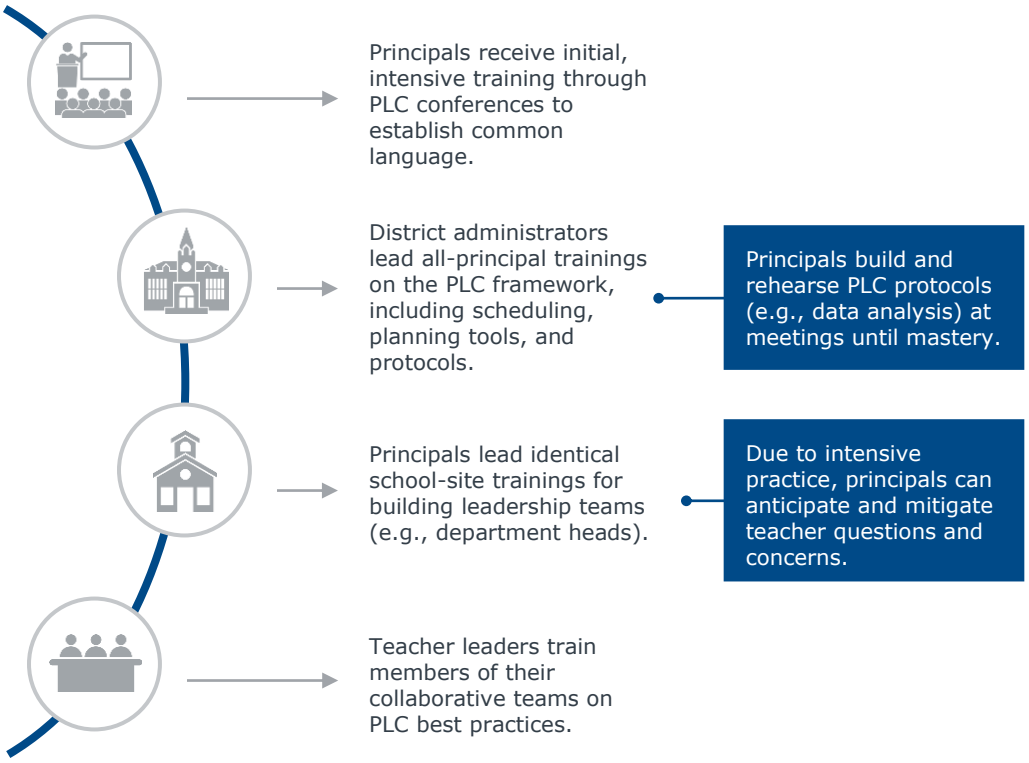
Professional Development Process at *District F*



At **District B**, administrators also designate teachers as peer assessment leaders. These teachers receive additional training related to assessment design, which they then provide to their collaborative teams.

Though principals at District F deliver trainings to existing department heads and grade-level teacher leaders, administrators at **District A**, District B, District E, and **District D** designate specific teachers as PLC leaders. PLC leaders receive additional PLC training from Solution Tree and district experts, facilitate school-specific reading groups, trainings, and workshops, and gather and report accountability metrics to district leadership. Contacts report that PLC leaders improve teacher engagement and collective efficacy.

Components of Effective PLC Leader Programs at Profiled Districts

Provide additional compensation through stipends ($1,000 to $3,000 annually) to incentivize leaders to set aside planning time.

Host monthly meetings with PLC leaders to provide common trainings and assess the state of PLC implementation.

Select PLC leaders with positive attitudes, openness to change, and **influence among colleagues** to ensure that leads can contribute to PLC culture.

Standardize District-Wide Essential Learning Targets Through Formal, Consistent Collaboration Meetings

Though PLC teams work separately to develop norms, curricula, assessments, and other PLC protocols, district administrators at most profiled districts aim to create some district-level consistency across PLCs. At **District A** and **District F**, district administrators created formal professional development structures to ensure that

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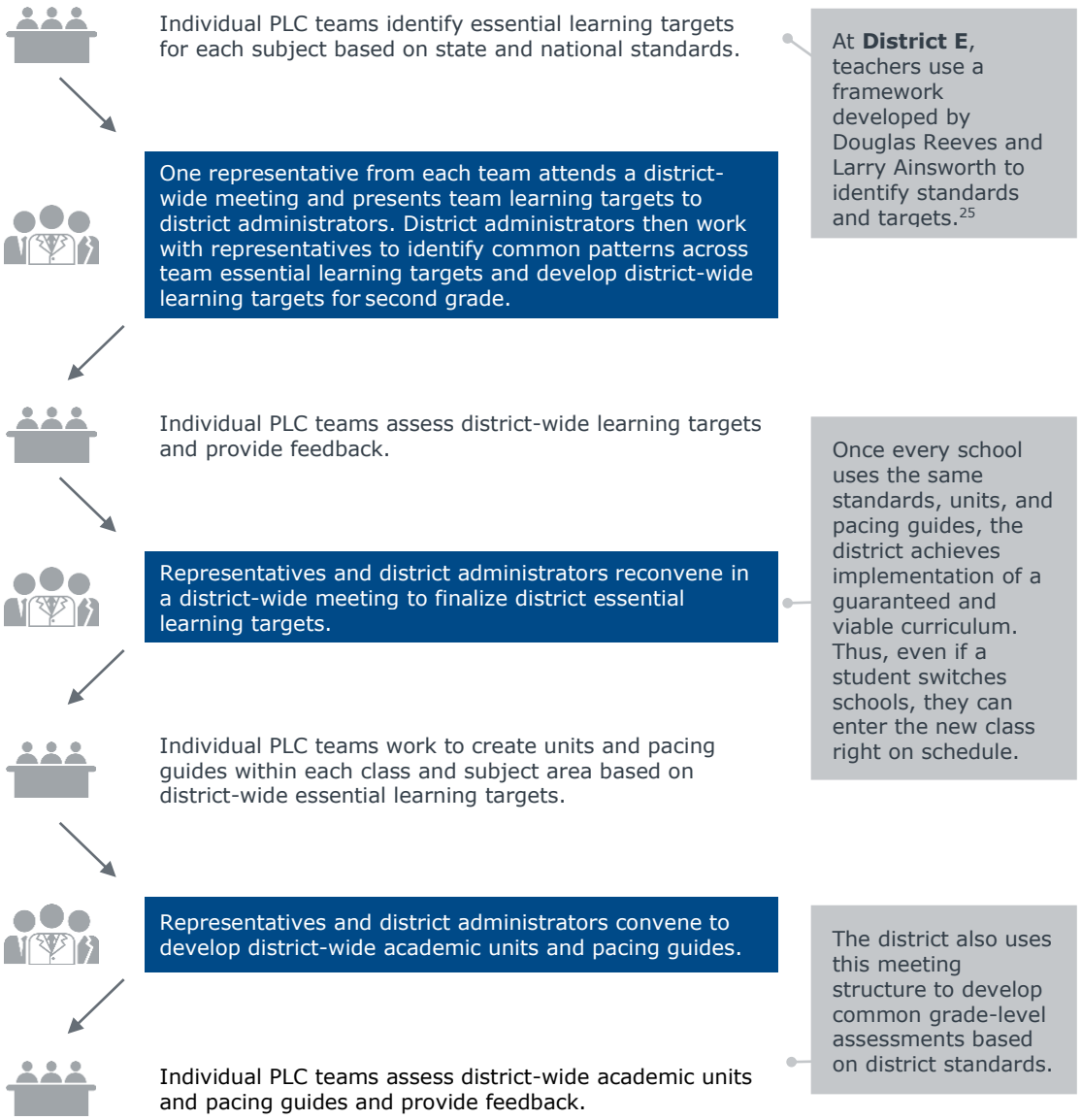
teams across the district use aligned, effective approaches to the four essential questions.

District F's approach creates horizontal consistency. It allows administrators to create standard essential learning targets, academic units, and schedules within subject areas/grade levels at all schools. District A's approach creates vertical consistency. It ensures that one grade level's essential learning targets align with those of the next grade level. Districts can implement both horizontal and vertical team meeting structures to ensure standards align across schools and grade-levels in every subject.

At District F, administrators use a horizontal meeting structure to create common standards and assessments for each grade level across multiple schools. In this structure, draft standards move from PLC team meetings to a central district meeting to incorporate both teacher and central feedback.

Second Grade Horizontal Meeting Structure at *District F*



25) Larry Ainsworth (Foreword by Douglas Reeves), *Power Standards: Identifying the Standards that Matter the Most* (Englewood, CO: Advanced Learning Press, 2003)

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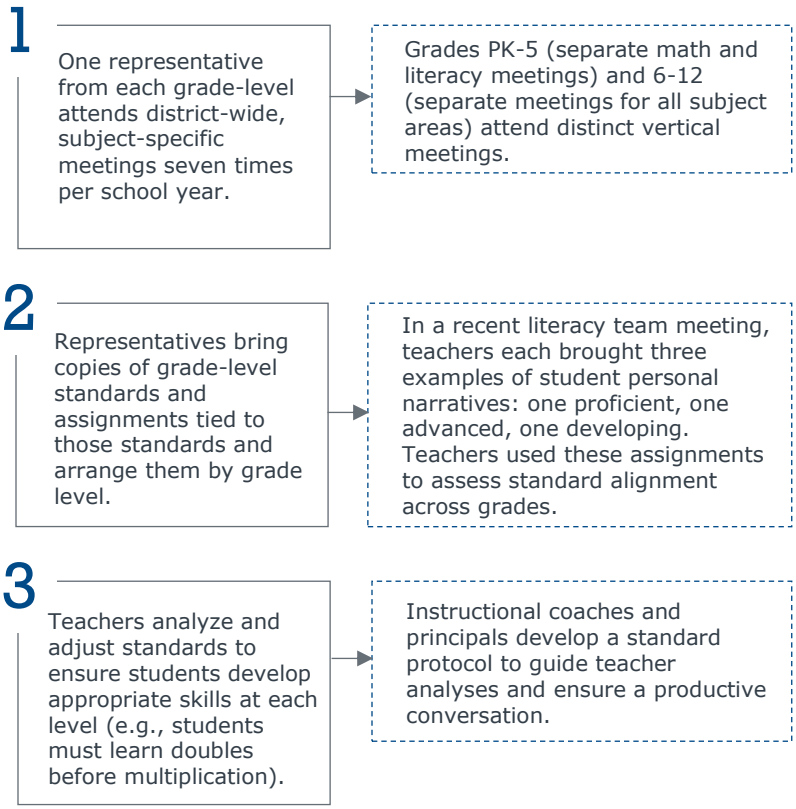
At District A, administrators host vertical team meetings to enable subject area teachers across all grade levels to restructure their curricula to ensure students are prepared to transition from one grade to the next. One representative from each grade level attends seven vertical meetings a year to ensure standard alignment from grades PK-12.

Components of Vertical Team Meeting Structure at *District A*



The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) Insights article **Implementing Effective Professional Learning Communities** supports using authentic student work to assess district priority standards.

Engage Teachers and Administrators in Active Learning Through Team-Based Practice and Observation Visits

See **Appendix B** for an early-implementation common assessment checklist from **District A**.

Contacts at **District A** and **District E** recommend that administrators encourage teachers to collaboratively develop PLC protocols and learn from their mistakes. Contacts report that this active learning approach is the best way to help teachers learn. In both districts, administrators implemented this approach in common assessment training. Teams of teachers design initial common assessments, ask students to take the assessments, analyze data from those assessments, and then adjust the assessments and repeat.

Contacts from District E report that though assessments yielded unhelpful data initially, teachers created extremely effective assessments after multiple iterations. Contacts from District A report that this approach also increases teacher trust and collaboration. Experienced and inexperienced teachers both lack assessment expertise and thus must work together and rely on each other to develop solutions to assessment problems. If administrators provided pre-made common assessments, teachers could implement them without working together, making mistakes, and resolving issues collaboratively.

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See **Appendix A** for a data analysis protocol from **District E**.

To support teams that fail to develop effective protocols in this process, administrators at **District B** and District E ask teachers to visit and observe other effective teams around the district. Principals at District B sometimes will transfer teachers who need additional support with PLCs to schools with effective PLC teams. At District B, administrators began implementation by sending teacher leaders to another district that recently completed full PLC implementation so that they could learn through observation.

To facilitate additional protocol sharing and collaboration across schools, administrators at District E implemented cross-school collaborations.

Cross-School Collaboration Structure at *District E*

1. Administrators select representatives from five different elementary schools to attend a collaborative meeting. Each representative is a member of a distinct PLC team.
2. Each representative brings district-wide common assessment data from their specific school site, and representatives collaborate to analyze the data and organize students for intervention/enrichment.
3. Representatives create new data analysis protocols based on the strongest practices from each school.

Assessment

To Assess PLC Effectiveness, Analyze District- and Building-Level Student and Teacher Achievement Data

At **District A**, **District B**, **District D**, and **District F**, administrators use student achievement data as their primary means to assess PLCs. Administrators look for improved student growth and progress across implementation on priority standards and state tests. For example, administrators at **District A** saw increases in the percentage of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who achieved proficiency in reading in each of the past five cohorts (five-year).[26]

At District F, administrators specifically assess student achievement on state assessments, district common assessments, and college preparatory tests (e.g., SAT). At District B, administrators track student grades, reading-level, and the number of students who require intervention. Administrators also track the SMART goal success of teacher teams.

At District D, administrators analyze both school-level and district-level data to assess school-specific implementation. Administrators then use teacher evaluations and principal interviews focused on teacher effectiveness to identify specific PLC teams and teachers in need of assistance.

Periodically, district administrators ask principals to rank all teachers in three groups (e.g., high-performing, middle, low) based on PLC performance. Administrators then target specific supports to teachers in each group.

26) AllThingsPLC. "See The Evidence," accessed May 29, 2019, http://www.allthingsplc.info/evidence/

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Collect PLC Team Artifacts to Assess Implementation Fidelity

At **District D**, administrators ask PLC leaders to submit team meeting minutes online for review by district administrators to ensure that teachers focus meeting time on the four essential questions. District administrators also ask PLC team leaders to submit evidence of practice (e.g., protocols).

Use Teacher Surveys to Assess Implementation Fidelity and Training Efficacy

The Education World article "Why Don't Professional Learning Communities Work" recommends that administrators use the **Professional Learning Communities Assessment Revised** (PLCA-R) to assess PLCs.[27]

At **District A**, **District B**, **District C**, and **District E**, administrators use surveys to assess PLC implementation at school sites. At District B and District C, administrators use surveys that ask teachers to identify to what extent their PLC teams align with district requirements and best practice.

At District C, two high school deans created their own survey. This survey specifically assesses evidence of practice (e.g., does your PLC team meet every week for at least one hour?). At District B, administrators adapted the DuFour's 18 Critical Issues survey to incorporate questions from the Solution Tree books *Learning by Doing* and *Building a PLC at Work*.

Administrators at District C and District A also use surveys to assess teacher training. At District C, administrators use a three-question survey at the conclusion of every professional development session. At District A, administrators use professional development exit tickets and Survey Monkey surveys to ask for teacher feedback.

Professional Development Assessment Survey at *District C*

3 Grounding Questions

- Did the trainers meet the goals and outcomes for the day?
- Will you implement what you have learned in the future?
- Will you continue to practice what you have learned?

Trainers add questions specific to the training session here to assess mastery

Complete 360 Degree Reviews of District and School Leaders to Assess Implementation Leadership

At **District A**, all district and team leaders receive 360 feedback reviews from colleagues and teachers, in which peers, supervisors, and reporting staff all provide feedback on the leader's performance.[27] Administrators use these reviews to assess the performance of implementation leadership.

27) Celine Provini, "Why Don't Professional Learning Communities Work?" *Education World*, 2013, https://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/professional-learning-community-pitfalls-best-practices.shtml

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At Profiled Districts, PLC Implementation Improved Student Achievement and Teacher Efficacy

Contacts at most profiled districts report that PLC implementation was effective. Solution Tree recognized **District A** and **District E** with Model PLC District designations, an honor that only 17 districts in the country received.[29] In order to achieve the model PLC designation, schools/districts must present clear evidence of improved student learning after at least three years of PLC implementation.[30]

Contacts at **District F** report that all teams now operate as PLCs and that the district hosts teams from numerous other districts to learn PLC best practices. Though implementation is still in progress at **District D**, contacts report that 75 percent of teachers operate strong, effective PLCs. At District A, 98.4 percent of teachers report a good understanding of PLCs, 98.3 percent of teacher report that collaboration is embedded into the district's practices, and 93.3 percent of teachers report that PLC activities increased their understanding of their students' learning.[31]

28) Susan M. Heathfield, "You Can Obtain Feedback for Performance Improvement Using 360 Reviews," *The Balance Careers*, December 30, 2018, https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-is-a-360-review-1917541
29) "See the Evidence," *AllThingsPLC/Solution Tree*, accessed May 23, 2019.
30) AllThingsPLC, "Apply to Be a Model PLC," accessed May 29, 2019, http://www.allthingsplc.info/evidence-submission-online
31) District A, "PLC Report," 2017.

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4) Solutions to Implementation Challenges

Implementation Challenges Overview

Implementation Challenges Relate Primarily to Teacher Resistance at Profiled Districts

Though contacts at most profiled districts report that PLC implementation was successful, contacts from successful profiled districts do report facing multiple implementation challenges. Because implementation challenges relate primarily to teacher pushback, administrators must engage teachers in implementation, collect and incorporate teacher feedback, allow teachers to own the process, and offer consistent professional development and training support.

Implementation Challenges at Profiled Districts

Time Investment

Contacts at **District D** report that teachers resisted PLC implementation because administrators required teachers to attend PLC meetings during traditional teacher planning time. Contacts at **District B** and **District C** also report this challenge. Administrators struggle to adjust master schedules and with encouraging teachers to give up classroom time.

Solutions:

- Adjust schedules to offer PLC meeting time outside of teacher planning time.
- Negotiate PLC time into teacher association contracts.

Teacher Autonomy

Contacts at most profiled school districts cite teacher desire for autonomy as one of the most severe obstacles to PLC implementation. Contacts at **District E** report that a small group of teachers prefer to work alone and resist collaborative changes. At **District A**, contacts report that many teachers were unwilling to eschew their standard curricula and units in favor of evidence-based, common curricula and assessments.

Solutions:

- Use student achievement data to demonstrate the district's need for reform.
- Generate PLC mission and purpose statements.
- Incorporate teacher feedback to adjust PLC professional development.

Inconsistent Professional Development

Though contacts at **District B** report that the district achieved effective implementation, they note that PLCs have begun to lose effectiveness due to staff turnover and lack of sustained, consistent professional development related to PLCs. Similarly, contacts at District C note that though they implemented PLCs 10-12 years ago, in more recent years teachers began to use PLC time to focus on managerial tasks rather than on the four essential questions.

Solutions

- Offer consistent professional development for experienced teachers and new hires.
- Implement formal PLC re-launch trainings that incorporate expectations for PLC meeting time.

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Providing Collaborative Time

Provide Collaborative Time Without Infringing on Existing Teacher Planning Time

Contacts at **District F** credit their successful mitigation of teacher resistance to board allocation of weekly dedicated time to PLCs. Because teachers did not have to give up their planning or break times to contribute to PLCs, they were less likely to resist PLC meetings. At **District A**, **District B**, and District F, administrators adjusted school master schedules to incorporate dedicated PLC collaborative time outside of standard class and planning times.

For more information on how to adjust school schedules to incorporate enrichment/teacher collaboration time, consult the following articles:

- **Finding Time for Collaboration**
- **Reimagining the School Day**

At District F, administrators implemented a one-hour late start every Monday. Administrators require teachers to meet during this common time to address the four essential questions of PLCs.[32] Similarly, at District B, middle and high school students leave an hour early every Wednesday, during which time teachers complete PLC tasks. Lastly, all schools at District A release students 1.5 hours early on Wednesdays so teachers can participate in PLCs.[33] Contacts at District F note that because they provided dedicated time for PLCs, they could more easily encourage teachers to devote PLC time to desired tasks rather than to administrative work.

Administrators at District B ask elementary school teachers to devote one planning period per week to PLCs. To replace lost teacher time, administrators hired staff to oversee recess every day. Teachers use duty-free recesses to complete planning tasks they would have completed during PLC time.

Incorporate PLC Collaborative Time into Teacher Association Contracts

At **District C** and **District D**, contacts report that some teachers strongly oppose using common planning time to complete PLC meetings. To appease these teachers, administrators successfully included contractual PLC time as a central component in teacher association negotiations. Thus, teachers understood that both their association and district supported PLC implementation, which mitigated resistance. That said, as teachers gained more experience, administrators relaxed PLC requirements from two meetings per week to one meeting per week, which allowed teachers to reclaim some planning time.

At District C, administrators negotiated PLC time in the association contract as well. Contacts specify that contract language should distinguish between PLC meeting time and collaborative meeting time. Contacts suggest that contract language incorporate required PLC tasks to prevent teachers from focusing on managerial tasks.

Engaging Autonomous Teachers

Use Student Achievement Data and Purpose Statement Generation to Engage Autonomous Teachers

At **District F**, contacts emphasize that administrators must begin PLC implementation by helping teachers understand the purpose and effectiveness of PLCs. If teachers understand the purpose of PLCs (i.e., to increase student achievement), they become more likely to engage with PLC implementation. Profiled districts use two approaches to help teachers understand the purpose and effectiveness of PLCs.

32)"Professional Learning Community," District F, accessed May 23, 2019
33)"District Calendar," District A, accessed May 31, 2019

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Strategies to Communicate PLC Purpose and Effectiveness at *District F* and *District E*[34]

1 **Demonstrate Student Need and PLC Effectiveness**

At **District F**, district administrators train principals on student achievement across all content areas, schools, and grade-levels, including postsecondary achievement, SAT scores, discipline, and attendance. District administrators then ask principals to identify areas that need improvement.

Training Process

1. District administrators use PLC research and evidence from the pilot program to show principals how the components of PLCs address real student needs in the district, including the need for assessment and intervention systems.
2. Principals repeat the presentation with their school leadership teams, who then take the data and evidence to their PLC teams so that individual teachers understand the district's need for reform.

2 **Generate Purpose Statements**

At **District E**, teachers and administrators spend multiple days establishing behavioral norms, PLC purpose statements, and district-wide commitments. Contacts report that this measured approach improves teacher engagement because it helps teachers to understand the motivation behind PLC implementation.

Purpose

- "The fundamental purpose of the school is to ensure that ALL students LEARN."

Commitments

- "We build and maintain meaningful relationships with our students."
- "We clearly articulate high expectations for student learning."

To Engage Autonomous Teachers, Incorporate Teacher Feedback to Provide Targeted Professional Development

Administrators at **District A** and **District C** engage autonomous teachers by designing PLC professional development based on teacher feedback. This provides teachers with some ownership over the implementation process. Contacts from District C note that this approach creates reciprocal accountability. As administrators ask teacher to complete PLC tasks, teachers have the right to expect support from those administrators. These contacts report that this strategy improves teacher engagement with the process.

Administrators from District C collect teacher feedback through surveys at the end of each professional development session. Based on initial session feedback for a three-day PLC intensive, administrators completely shifted the focus of the remaining two sessions. Administrators originally planned to focus on selected readings from *Learning by Doing* and effective assessment practices but realized that teachers needed review of the basic tenants, structure, and purpose of PLCs. Administrators

34) "School Purpose and Commitments," *District E*, provided May 9, 2019, in "Successfully Implementing the Professional Learning Communities Model," District E Administrator, 27-32.

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thus dedicated a large portion of the next session to descriptions of the PLC process before moving to data analysis.

The SEDL Insights Article **Implementing Effective Professional Learning Communities** notes that teachers benefit greatly from expert assistance in data analysis and other specialized PLC topics.

Use Teacher Feedback to Identify Necessary Supports

Based on feedback from teachers at **District D**, administrators created a data service center that sorts and analyzes discipline and student performance data from teacher assessments. A staff of 10-15 full time equivalents (FTEs) analyzes and organizes teacher-submitted online data, which teachers and administrators can then access during PLC collaborative time.

Sample Professional Development Needs Survey from *District C*

Teacher Needs Survey

Which of the following sessions would you be interested in?

- PLC Basics
- PLC Assessments – Formative versus Summative
- PLC Assessment Analysis – Pile Stack Plan

Optional Questions

- What is going well with your PLCs?
- What is a struggle for your PLC?
- What help does your PLC need?

At **District C**, administrators use **Google Forms** to deliver surveys to teachers.

At **District A**, administrators ask teachers to submit "one burning question." Contacts report that this question effectively identifies teacher concerns.

Allow Autonomous Teachers Flexibility to Develop Their Own Data Analysis and Team Protocols

Contacts at **District E** note that administrators empower PLC teams to develop customized data analysis spreadsheets, meeting structures, and other creative approaches to the four essential questions. Contacts report that this approach increases teacher engagement and improves the function of PLC teams.

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Train Engaged Teachers to Respond to Resistors with Evidence-Based Strategies

At **District C** and **District E**, administrators train teachers on how to respond to resistors during professional development sessions. At District E, administrators implement strategies from the book *Transforming School Culture*, which offers strategies to deal with four types of resistors.[35] Administrators counsel teachers to prioritize teachers who require a rationale to participate (i.e., believers) or who require further training to gain confidence (i.e., tweeners) over teachers who resist change regardless of evidence (i.e., fundamentalists). Administrators provide teachers with a road map to help them identify and engage different resistors.

The author of *Transforming School Culture* recommends the following strategies to reduce fundamentalist behavior:

- Transparent communication
- Building trust
- Providing professional support
- Consistent accountability systems.[37]

Four Types of Resistors[36]

Believers

Teachers intrinsically motivated to support student achievement through any means.

Tweeners

Teachers who are new to school culture and require additional training or assistance to support PLCs.

Survivors

Overwhelmed teachers who seek to survive without participating in new initiatives to support learning.

Fundamentalists

Teachers who support the status quo and actively organize against any form of change to maintain autonomy.

At District C, administrators train teachers on strategies to respond to resistors taken from the DuFours' *Learning by Doing*.

Responding to Resistors Training at *District C*

1 Identify Reasons for Resistance

- Teachers read pages 221-232 from Chapter Nine of *Learning by Doing*.
- Teachers work in building teams to identify causes for various resistance themes at their building.

2 Learn Strategies to Respond

- Teachers read pages 213-219 of *Learning by Doing*, which suggest strategies to respond to resistance.
- Teachers work in building teams to identify building-relevant strategies and suggest additional approaches.

3 Host Idea Exchange

- Multiple building teams exchange lists of resistance strategies.
- Teams edit each list and add additional strategies.
- Teams review edits, host a discussion, and identify the top three response strategies.

The article **Creating Buy-In for PLCs** suggests that educators use the following strategies:

- Demonstrate the effectiveness of PLCs through site visits, PLC institutes, and outside presenters.
- Celebrate students and staff publicly and frequently for PLC achievements.
- Select engaged teachers to serve on a PLC implementation leadership team.

35) Anthony Muhammad, *Transforming School Culture: How to overcome Staff Division* (Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2009).
36) Anthony Muhammad, "Understanding the Framework for Change," *Source*, 2012. https://www.advanc-ed.org/source/understanding-framework-change
37) Ibid.

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Administrators at District C also emphasize the power of celebration. Contacts note that when teachers celebrate PLCs, it creates excitement even among resistors. For example, teachers and administrators could select a PLC team of the month to highlight exceptional PLC progress.

Re-training PLC Teams

Provide Ongoing Trainings to Avoid Decreasing PLC Effectiveness Over Time

At many profiled districts, administrators provide continuous professional development to maintain teacher learning related to PLCs. For example, at **District D**, district administrators lead monthly PLC leader trainings and host annual summer PLC intensives for new hires and teacher teams.

That said, contacts at **District B** and **District C** report that PLCs in the district lost some effectiveness due to teacher turnover and a lack of continued professional development. At both districts, administrators are currently re-launching PLCs through formal professional development processes.

PLC Re-Launch Process at *District C*

Reassess PLC Procedures

Instructional coaches gather to re-develop the district's PLC handbook. Coaches assess PLC materials and handbooks at national districts with effective PLCs and build a new digital handbook with links to effective frameworks from *Learning by Doing*.

Administrators create a concise, digital new handbook. The previous version was 60 pages long.

↓

Tour District Schools

District administrators visit every staff meeting and school across the year to present the handbook and clarify district expectations for PLC meetings. Administrators clarify "loose" and "tight" requirements to guide expectation conversations.

Administrators clearly define both staff and administrative responsibilities to create reciprocal accountability.

↓

Launch Formal PLC Trainings

Administrators host teachers on a voluntary basis for three days of PLC instruction, spread across the school year. Two teachers/administrators from every school attend. Administrators structure sessions to provide teachers with actionable strategies to implement at school sites between sessions.

Administrators plan to host a second, three-day summer intensive that focuses specifically on quality assessment practices.

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5) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member district approached the Forum with the following questions:

- What research exists that supports and/or refutes the effectiveness of PLCs?
- What research exists that provides strategies to implement and operate effective PLCs?
- Why did profiled districts implement PLCs?
- What PLC model do profiled districts use?
- Do profiled districts partner with a vendor to implement and operate PLCs?
  - If so, which vendor do profiled districts use and why?
  - Are profiled districts satisfied with the vendor?
- How did profiled districts implement PLCs?
  - Did profiled districts find these implementation processes effective?
  - What challenges did profiled districts encounter when implementing PLCs?
- How did profiled districts ensure stakeholder buy-in with the implementation of PLCs?
- What professional development opportunities do profiled districts offer related to PLCs?
- How do profiled districts assess the effectiveness of PLCs?
- What qualities of PLCs do stakeholders at profiled districts find most useful?
- How have profiled districts adapted PLCs in response to stakeholder feedback after implementation?

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Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed instructional administrators at districts with award-winning PLCs and districts with comprehensive, publicly available PLC resources.

A Guide to Programs/Districts Profiled in this Report

District	Location	Approximate Enrollment
District A	Midwest	2,000
District B	Midwest	18,000
District C	Midwest	11,000
District D	Mid-Atlantic	16,000
District E	Mountain West	3,500
District F	Pacific West	3,500

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Appendix A

Data Analysis Protocol from *District E*

Ask teachers to answer the following questions as a PLC team:[38]

Data Analysis Protocol
Overall, what went well? What should we celebrate?
Which students struggled to understand?
Which students have demonstrated a basic understanding but could use some reinforcement?
What instructional strategies or lessons worked well to achieve high levels of understanding?
Which students are ready for a thinking challenge related to this concept?
What instructional strategies or lessons worked well to achieve high levels of understanding? If one teacher's students seemed to perform better, how was that achieved?
Based on student work, what patterns of misunderstanding do we see among those who struggled? Are they all struggling with the same thing, or do we see multiple issues?
For the middle group, what needs reinforcement?
What ideas do we have for challenging students who are ready?
What is our schedule for intervention/enrichment and who will teach each group?
What is our plan for reassessment after our intervention/enrichment time?

38) "Data Analysis Protocol – Hingepoint Question," *District E*, Provided May 9, 2019, in "Successfully Implementing the Professional Learning Communities Model," ed. District E Administrator, *The PLC Institute*.

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Appendix B

Common Assessment Checklist from *District A*

Ask teachers to complete the following checklist for each common formative assessment as a PLC team:[39]

Not Yet	Refining	Yes	Indicators	Comments, Questions, Next Steps
			Our team has identified an Essential Learning Target (ELT) and agreed on the specific skills and concepts we're trying to teach and assess.	
			Our team has determined the quality of work/level of mastery our students should have on the ELT we're assessing.	
			Our Common Formative Assessment (CFA) creates an appropriate number of items (3-5/ELT) to effectively assess learning.	
			Our team has reached an agreement on when to administer the CFA.	
			Our team has discussed the results of the CFA in terms of… • What we learned while creating the CFA. • What we learned during the administration (did it take a lot of classroom time, were students confused with the instructions?) • What kinds of results did we have in common? • What were the differences between classrooms? • Does the assessment provide us with information that will impact our teaching?	
			Our team is ready to learn more about the Data Analysis Process.	

39) "Team Check for Common Formative Assessments," *District A*, provided May 2, 2019.

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