

Pleasant Grove Independent School District



Professional Learning Communities Handbook

The mission of Pleasant Grove Independent School District is to ensure high levels of learning for all students.

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Pleasant Grove Independent School District

Mission

The mission of Pleasant Grove Independent School District is to ensure high levels of learning for all students.

Vision

The vision of the Pleasant Grove Independent School District is to align policies, programs, and practices to reflect the commitment to ensuring high levels of learning for all students.

Collective Commitments

To ensure high levels of learning for all students, PGISD is committed to:

- Being responsible for the success and well-being of every student Pre-K through 12th grade
- Building a guaranteed and viable core curriculum and ensuring vertical articulation across all grade levels
- All students living independently having access to Tier I Instruction
- Develop and implement a consistent professional learning structure that promotes best instructional practices and ensures a high level of learning for all students
- Develop a district wide system of intervention framework

2022-2023 Goals

2022 Stretch Goals

Literacy Goal - The percentage of students who score Meets grade level or above on STAAR/EOC will increase from 57% to 100% by 2025.

Math Goal - The percentage of students who score Meets grade level or above on STAAR Math/EOC will increase from 63% to 100% by 2027.

2022 Summative Goals

1. District 2022-2023 Literacy Summative Goal 1: The percentage of students who score Meets or higher on STAAR/RLA (All grades RLA) will increase a minimum of 9% from 74% points to 83% for the 2023 accountability cycle.

2. District 2022-2023 Summative Goal 2: The percentage of students who score Meets or higher on STAAR/Math (All grades math) will increase a minimum of 6% from 66% points to 72% for the 2023 accountability cycle.
3. District 2022-2023 Summative Goal 3: The percentage of students who meet the college and career readiness indicator will increase a minimum of 2% points to 100% for the 2023 accountability cycle.

Professional Learning Community Overview

What is a Professional Learning Community?

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

--DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010

In Pleasant Grove Independent School District, the Professional Learning Community process is how we do school. It defines us as a district and our commitment to ensuring high levels of learning for all students. We are committed to continuous adult learning that improves individual and collective professional practices. When interviews for potential staff members are conducted, the PLC process is discussed in-depth to ensure the potential member of our professional learning community is aligned with our district mission, vision, and collective commitments. If an educator wants to be a part of the Pleasant Grove family of educators, he/she must commit to the PLC process.

Three Big Ideas of a Professional Learning Community

The essence of the PLC process is captured in three big ideas:

1. Focus on Learning: The fundamental purpose of the school and district is to ensure all students learn at high levels (grade level or higher).
2. Collaborative Culture: Educators work collaboratively and take collective responsibility for the success of each student. Ongoing collaboration is not an option.
3. A Results Orientation: To assess their effectiveness to ensure all students learn, educators focus on results – evidence for student learning.

Four Critical Questions That Guide the Work of Collaborative Teams

In order to achieve the goal of increased student achievement, members of the PLC need to define and answer the following key questions:

1. What do we want students to learn?
2. How will we know if they have learned it?
3. What will we do if they do not learn it?
4. What will we do if they already know it?

Professional Learning Community Expectations

Pleasant Grove ISD holds tight to the following Professional Learning Community expectations:

- Educators work collaboratively rather than in isolation, take collective responsibility for student learning, and clarify the commitments they make to each other about how they will work together. Collaborative teams understand all our students are all our students and working in isolation is not an option. With this clear understanding and a common purpose of ensuring high levels of learning for all students, educators are never left alone to solve problems or find solutions.
- The fundamental structure of the school becomes the collaborative team in which members work interdependently to achieve common goals for which all members are mutually accountable. Within the process of developing and monitoring common goals, teams are systematically able to analyze effectiveness and improve practices.
- The team establishes a guaranteed and viable curriculum, unit by unit, so all students have access to the same knowledge and skills regardless of the teacher to whom they are assigned. This ensures all students have access to the same curriculum and learning environments are equitable and consistent across grade levels and content areas.
- The team develops common formative assessments to frequently gather evidence of student learning. They also plan in advance how the assessments will be administered, evaluated, and used in the learning process.
- The team uses evidence of student learning to inform and improve the individual and collective practice of its members. Educators in a PLC assess their efforts on the basis of tangible results rather than opinions or assumptions. They are hungry for evidence of student learning and use that evidence to inform and improve their practice.
- The school has created a system of interventions and extensions to ensure students who struggle receive additional time and support for learning in a way that is timely, directive, diagnostic, and systematic, and students who demonstrate proficiency can extend their learning. This ensures all students receive the support they need to ensure their learning.

Collaborative Teams

Collaborative teams are decided by groups who share the same Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) by grade levels and content areas. There are occasionally singletons who do not have anyone in-district to meet with, so they have the option of meeting vertically or meeting virtually with someone who teaches exactly what they teach from another district. There is no opt-out for core collaborative team meetings. The time is provided during the work day and team members are expected to come prepared and focus on the work of teams.

Guiding Coalitions

“No one person will have the energy, expertise, and influence to lead a complex change process until it becomes anchored in the organization’s culture without first gaining the support of key staff members.” (Learning by Doing, DuFour et al.)

Each campus principal has established a Guiding Coalition to help with the implementation of the PLC process. A Guiding Coalition is a small cadre of staff members selected to help champion and lead the PLC process. This role is filled through an application process and they commit to building shared knowledge and helping implement the process. More than just communicators, they help with campus decision-making and problem solving. A campus cannot successfully implement the PLC process with fidelity without a dedicated and committed Guiding Coalition.

Campus Learning Coordinators

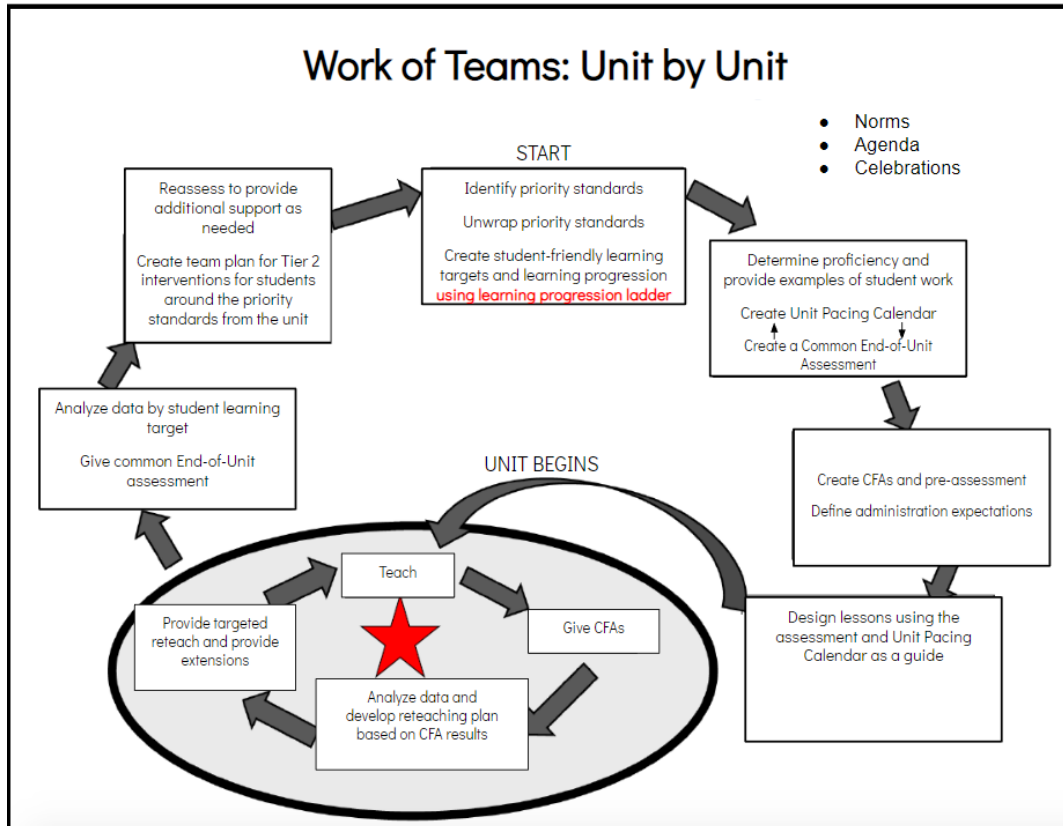
To support the work of teams, every campus has a Campus Learning Coordinator. All Campus Learning Coordinators are a part of the Learning Services Department and each is assigned to a specific campus. They themselves are a collaborative team and come together weekly to build shared knowledge, solve problems, and prepare to provide campus level support. They are the team who designs the roadmap of the Pleasant Grove ISD PLC learning journey. Having been exceptionally successful classroom teachers, they foresee obstacles, identify possible roadblocks, and face potential challenges head on before they cause issues at the campus level. CLCs work with campus administrators to provide support and professional learning about the PLC process. With the help of this team, implementing the PLC process has moved more quickly and successfully than would have been possible without them at Pleasant Grove ISD. They are leaders in every sense of the word and they are committed to leading others to ensure high levels of learning for all students.

The Work of Collaborative Teams

The Pleasant Grove ISD Work of Teams is very defined and consistent across the district. To create a collaborative environment, teams begin with:

- Collaboratively developing team norms and protocols
- Creating and monitoring team SMART goals
- Utilizing collaborative team meeting agendas
- Making decisions based on consensus, and
- Collectively accepting responsibility for all students

Every campus in Pleasant Grove ISD has time built into each workday for core content areas to collaborate and work together. This collaborative team meeting time is protected and always focused on one or more of the four questions. The visual below identifies the cyclical work of teams, unit by unit.



Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

Pleasant Grove ISD uses TEKS Resources as a curriculum framework. However, the guaranteed and viable curriculum is created by collaborative teams working together to thoroughly and collaboratively answer question one of the PLC Process:

What is it we want students to learn and be able to do?

Priority Standards

Teachers build shared knowledge about their grade level and content area Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) so they can collaboratively prioritize the standards and identify the most essential knowledge and skills that students must learn to be successful in the next grade level and beyond. The process of identifying priority standards requires both horizontal and vertical articulation to identify important prerequisite skills and consistency about what learning should look like across grade levels. Once teams have identified their Priority Standards, each one is studied and unwrapped to ensure clarity and a common understanding about what students are expected to learn. Using the **Priority Standard Summary Chart**, teams map the learning progression and come to consensus about the learning targets and rigor for each standard. What learning should look like is clearly defined. Building this shared knowledge within collaborative teams is essential to providing clarity and a common understanding about what students must learn and be able to do.



PGISD Priority Standard Summary Chart

Priority Standard:

Ladder: Top rung is the standard in its entirety. Please write in the learning target for each rung until you reach the top rung. Add rows if needed.

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| | Priority Standard | |
| | Step 6 to Proficiency | |
| | Step 5 to Proficiency | |
| | Step 4 to Proficiency | |
| | Step 3 to Proficiency | |
| | Step 2 to Proficiency | |
| | Step 1 to Proficiency | |



PGISD Priority Standard Summary Chart

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Grade: | Subject: |
| Example of Rigor: What does proficient work look like? What DOK level? Provide an example or description. | |
| Prerequisite Skills: What prior knowledge, skills and/or vocabulary are needed for a student to master this standard? | |
| When Taught: When will this standard be taught? | |
| Common Assessments: What assessments will be used to measure student mastery? (CFA and Unit assessment) Link them here. | |
| Extension What will we do when the students have already learned this standard? | |
| Additional Instructional Materials (Link here) | |

Unit Plans

Part of developing a guaranteed and viable curriculum includes using the district Unit Planning Template. Once Priority Standards within a unit are identified and unwrapped, teams collaboratively design units of learning following the Work of Teams cyclical process. This includes creating the unit pacing calendar, setting unit SMART goal(s), and developing the unit assessment plan.



Bold - Implemented

| | | |
|--|-----------------|---|
| Grade: | Subject: | Unit: (Naming protocol) |
| Collaborative Team: | | Length of Instruction: # of Days |
| Priority Standards: | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List and link to priority summary chart. | | |
| Team Unit S.M.A.R.T. Goal | | |

Unit Pacing Calendar (EXAMPLE) [Checklist of items that need to be on the pacing calendar](#)

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|---|
| Day 1 Pre Assessment I can statement/s | Day 2 I can statement | Day 3 I can statement | Day 4 I can statement | Day 5 CFA (wherever it falls) I can statement |
| Day 6 CFA analysis I can statement | Day 7 Respond to CFA I can statement | Day 8 I can statement | Day 9 I can statement | Day 10 End of unit assessment |
| Day 11 Data analysis - plans to respond | Day 12 | Day 13 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Took 2 days to complete</div> | Day 14 | Day 15 |

Weekly Lesson Plans

| Week # | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Month | Add date here | Add date here | Add date here | Add date here | Add date here |
| I can statement | | | | | |
| Vocabulary | | | | | |
| Materials | | | | | |
| HOTS | | | | | |
| Warm Up | | | | | |
| I do | | | | | |
| We do | | | | | |
| You do together | | | | | |
| You do Evidence of Learning | | | | | |
| Homework (if assigned) | | | | | |

Common Assessments

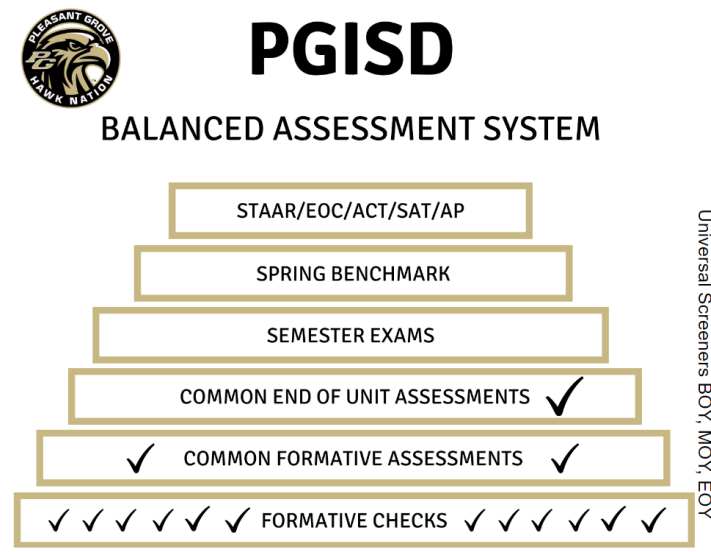
Based on the work of identifying and unwrapping the priority standards, teams create common formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments are created to monitor learning along the way and provide additional support as needed prior to the end-of-unit assessment. Common summative assessments are used to assess unit learning and identify students who will need Tier 2 support. Teachers also use data from formative and summative assessments to identify teacher strengths and grow their own instructional practices. Digging through the data, team members are able to identify which instructional strategies yield higher results than others and ensure all students have access to those best practices.

Tier 2 Support: Interventions and Extensions

Time for Tier 2 support is built into the school day. Based on the data analysis, students are identified for priority standard unit interventions and extensions. Teams create teacher action plans to identify student by student, standard by standard. Teachers collectively provide Tier 2 time and reassess to ensure student proficiency. This process is continued until every student demonstrates proficiency on the unit priority standards. The work of teams guides collaborative team planning by keeping teams focused on the right work.

Balanced Assessment System

Pleasant Grove ISD established a system to ensure both formative and summative assessments are used as a part of the learning process. These common assessments are developed collaboratively by grade level and/or content area teams purposefully and intentionally to identify whether or not a student is proficient. Formative assessments are checks along the way that indicate whether or not students are learning throughout the unit and prior to the unit assessment. This acts as a gauge as to whether or not a teacher needs to reteach a learning target to only a few specific students or the class as a whole. After several formative assessments, a common end-of-unit assessment is administered. Collaborative teams decide ahead of time how the assessment will be administered, scored, and analyzed. To ensure assessments are used effectively as tools for learning, the district developed the PG Balanced Assessment System:

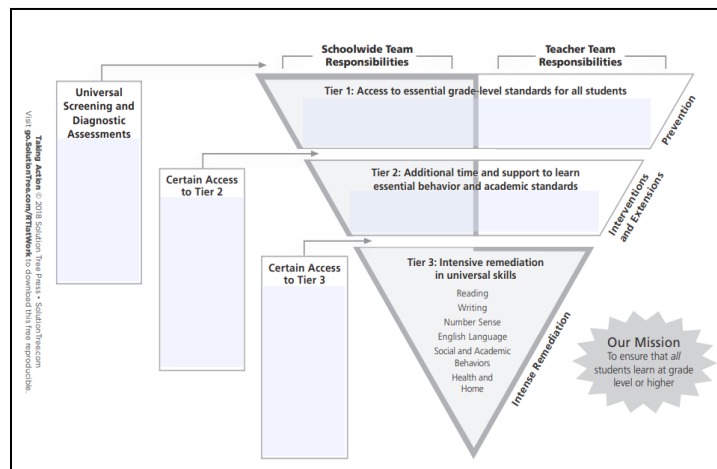


Response to Intervention

As a district focused on ensuring high levels of learning for all students, a Response to Intervention (RTI) plan ensures all students have access to essential learning as well as any additional support they may need to demonstrate proficiency on grade level/content area priority standards. All campuses provide Response to Intervention (RTI) time during the school day to ensure students get this support in a timely manner. RTI time is divided into three tiers:

- Tier 1: Best first instruction; all students have access to core Tier 1 instruction
- Tier 2: For students who did not master unit priority standards during the unit; scheduled time during the school day so students do not miss Tier 1 instruction; targeted, flexible, and fluid
- Tier 3: Provides intensive remediation in foundational skills which usually includes gaps from previous grade levels; scheduled during a part of the instructional day that does not prevent the student from receiving Tier 1 (and Tier 2, if needed) instruction

| Response to Intervention: RTI Process | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|-----------|
| Tier | Which Students | Who | When | Qualifier | Where | Resources |
| Tier 1 | Students requiring scaffolding of Best First Instruction based on Checks for Understanding and/or Pre-Assessment | Teacher | Within Best First Instruction | Daily checks for understanding and or formative assessments | Small group in classroom | |
| Tier 2 | Students who do not demonstrate proficiency on priority standards | Collaborative Team | Tier 2 time | Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) End of Unit Common Assessments | Collaborative teams develop Teacher Action Plans during data analysis meeting | |
| Tier 3 | Students who demonstrate gaps from previous school years | School wide | Tier 3 time Dyslexia class | Universal screeners Progress monitoring State Assessments | Teachers Support teachers | |



Access to this time does not happen by chance in Pleasant Grove ISD. Each campus has a systematic RTI plan that ensures every student who needs additional support will get that support during the school day. With a mission of ensuring high levels of learning for all students, the time and support students need to be successful are a priority.

Instructional Practices

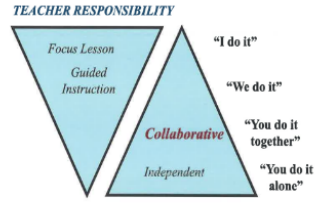
As a collaborative community of educators, Pleasant Grove ISD embraces research-based, highly effective instructional practices. As a district, we utilize the Gradual Release of Responsibility model of instruction.

Gradual Release of Responsibility

| Lesson Component | Teacher Responsibility | Student Responsibility |
|--|--|--|
| Modeled Instruction "I do it." Strategies <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Explicitly states student-friendly learning target(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Connects new learning to previous learning and students' background knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Provides direct instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Models skills/concepts and metacognitive thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Actively listens and follows along <input type="checkbox"/> Asks for clarification <input type="checkbox"/> Takes notes (when appropriate or applicable) |
| Guided Instruction "We do it." Strategies <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Provides relevant and engaging interactive instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Practices with students <input type="checkbox"/> Checks and monitors student understanding of new learning <input type="checkbox"/> Prompts and provides clues when appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Provides scaffolding, additional modeling, and accommodations when appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Adjusts instruction as needed <input type="checkbox"/> Provides corrective and affirming feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Guides students to learn new skills and strategies | <input type="checkbox"/> Practices new skills and learning <input type="checkbox"/> Completes practice/tasks alongside teacher and peers <input type="checkbox"/> Receives feedback and continues to practice |
| Collaborative Learning "You do it together." Strategies <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Involves students using academic language and being individually accountable for their contribution to the effort. <input type="checkbox"/> Prompts and provides clues when appropriate | <input type="checkbox"/> Works collaboratively with peers to apply new knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Consolidates understanding among peers/team before applying independently |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Conducts formative assessments and provides feedback | |
| Independent Learning "You do it alone." Strategies <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Provides corrective and affirming feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluates and determines understanding of skills/concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Provides scaffolding, additional modeling, and accommodations when appropriate to support independent practice | <input type="checkbox"/> Asks and responds to questions <input type="checkbox"/> Uses accommodations when appropriate to complete tasks <input type="checkbox"/> Receives feedback and continues to develop understanding of skills/concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates understanding of concepts |

Fisher Frey Gradual Release of Responsibility Model



A Model for Success for All Students

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2008). *Better learning through structured teaching: A framework for the gradual release of responsibility*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Cultural Shifts in a Professional Learning Community

| A Shift in Fundamental Purpose | |
|---|--|
| From a focus on teaching... | to a focus on learning |
| From emphasis on what was taught... | to a fixation on what students learned |
| From coverage of content... | to demonstration of proficiency |
| From providing individual teachers with curriculum documents such as state standards and curriculum guides... | to engaging collaborative teams in building shared knowledge regarding essential curriculum |
| A Shift in Use of Assessments | |
| From infrequent summative assessments... | to frequent common formative assessments |
| From assessments to determine which students failed to learn by the deadline... | to assessments to identify students who need additional time and support |
| From assessments used to reward and punish students... | to assessments used to inform and motivate students |
| From assessing many things infrequently... | to assessing a few things frequently |
| From individual teacher assessments... | to assessments developed jointly by collaborative teams |
| From each teacher determining the criteria to be used in assessing student work... | to collaborative teams clarifying the criteria and ensuring consistency among team members when assessing student work |
| From an over-reliance on one kind of assessment... | to balanced assessments |
| From focusing on average scores... | to monitoring each student's proficiency in every essential skill |
| A Shift in the Response When Students Don't Learn | |
| From individual teachers determining the appropriate response... | to a systematic response that ensures support for every student |
| From fixed time and support for learning... | to time and support for learning as variables |
| From remediation... | to intervention |
| From invitational support outside of the school day... | to directed (that is, required) support occurring during the school day |
| From one opportunity to demonstrate learning... | to multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning |
| A Shift in the Work of Teachers | |
| From isolation... | to collaboration |
| From each teacher clarifying what students must learn... | to collaborative teams building shared knowledge and understanding about essential learning |
| From each teacher assigning priority to different learning standards... | to collaborative teams establishing the priority of respective learning standards |
| From each teacher determining the pacing of the curriculum... | to collaborative teams of teachers agreeing on common pacing |
| From individual teachers attempting to discover ways to improve results... | to collaborative teams of teachers helping each other improve |

| A Shift in Fundamental Purpose | |
|---|---|
| From privatization of practice... | to open sharing of practice |
| From decisions made on the basis of individual preferences... | to decisions made collectively by building shared knowledge of best practice |
| From "collaboration lite" on matters unrelated to student achievement... | to collaboration explicitly focused on issues and questions that most impact student achievement |
| From an assumption that these are "my kids, those are your kids"... | to an assumption that these are "our kids" |
| A Shift in Focus | |
| From an external focus on issues outside of the school... | to an internal focus on steps the staff can take to improve the school |
| From a focus on inputs... | to a focus on results |
| From goals related to completion of projects and activities... | to SMART goals demanding evidence of student learning |
| From teachers gathering data from their individually constructed tests in order to assign grades... | to collaborative teams acquiring information from common assessments in order to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) inform their individual and collective practice, and 2) respond to students who need additional time and support |
| A Shift in School Culture | |
| From independence . . . | to interdependence |
| From a language of complaint... | to a language of commitment |
| From long-term strategic planning... | to planning for short-term wins |
| From infrequent generic recognition... | to frequent specific recognition and a culture of celebration that creates many winners |
| A Shift in Professional Development | |
| From the external training (workshops and courses)... | to job-embedded learning |
| From the expectation that learning occurs infrequently (on the few days devoted to professional development)... | to an expectation that learning is ongoing and occurs as part of the routine work practice |
| From presentations to the entire faculties... | to team-based action research |
| From learning by listening... | to learning by doing |
| From learning individually through courses and workshops... | to learning collectively by working together |
| From assessing impact on the basis of teacher satisfaction (Did you like it?)... | to assessing impact on the basis of evidence of improved student learning |
| From short-term exposure to multiple concepts and practices... | to sustained commitment to limited, focused initiatives |

Professional Learning Community Implementation Timeline

Year 1: 2018-2019

Year one was focused on building shared knowledge within district leadership. The mantra for the year was “learn, but don’t sink the ship.” The Leaders of Learning spent a year learning from the experts, reading the book, and exploring what this might look like at Pleasant Grove ISD. A Solution Tree consultant provided learning specifically on culture and the foundational pieces of the PLC process.

Year 2A: 2019-2020

During year two, the leadership team continued to build shared knowledge and at the same time, Guiding Coalitions were created and their learning launched. They also were instructed to “just learn” and not sink the ship. This year did not end as planned as schools closed due to the pandemic, but it did not stop our learning. The pace may have slowed a little, but our learning continued.

Year 2B: 2020-2021

Due to the return to school being anything but normal, our professional learning was initially focused on how to continue the learning for our students. But, as always, we made and implemented our plans with the PLC process in mind. We continued building capacity in leadership and in the guiding coalition about the PLC process as much as possible. We met as collaborative teams, created unit plans, and administered common assessments. Data was analyzed and responded to collectively by collaborative teams. We brought in a Solution Tree expert on assessment practices and began building our capacity and how and why we assess and how that information is used to move learning forward.

Year 3: 2021-2022

In year three, administration and guiding coalitions continued building shared knowledge and very intentionally and purposefully the deep learning launched for all core teachers. Non-core received overviews and had the process explained from the 10,000 foot view, but core teachers began really digging into the work. Most campuses had planning time built into their days, goal setting, unit plans templates, and assessment expectations were put into place, and data was strategically analyzed and monitored to ensure all students demonstrated proficiency on all priority standards.

Year 4: 2022-2023

The summer before year four, 107 staff members attended the PLC Institute in Little Rock, Arkansas. We knew this was what would give us that final push to level us up as a district. Year four also marked the year that every campus in the district had built into their daily schedules a time for core collaborative teaming meetings in addition to their standard conference periods. This time is protected and solely dedicated to the work of teams.

Everything we do is now looked at through the lens of the PLC process and whether or not it will ensure high levels of learning. Our focus on learning is sharper than ever. We will continue to grow and learn as a district and hold tight to our mission of ensuring high levels of learning for all students.

2022-2023 Collaborative Team Meetings (updated coming soon)