

Owego Apalachin Central School District

# PLC Handbook



## *Professional Learning Communities At Work at OACSD*

“Strong professional learning communities produce schools that are engines of hope and achievement for students ... There is nothing more important for education in the decades ahead than educating and supporting leaders in the commitments, understandings, and skills necessary to grow such schools where a focus on effort-based ability is the norm.” Jonathon Saphier (Founder and President of Research for Better Teaching, Inc.)



# Introduction

## What are Professional Learning Communities?

Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) are groups of teachers who meet regularly as a team to analyze data for current levels of achievement, set student learning and achievement goals, identify essential learning skills, develop common formative assessments (check-ins), develop common benchmark assessments, share teaching strategies, and research and implement best practices. Teams will also meet vertically or across subject areas. The goal of teacher collaboration is to create conditions for perpetual learning and continuous improvement. Participation is the responsibility of every member of the organization.

## Why collaborate with PLC's?

“A PLC is composed of collaborative teams whose members work *interdependently* to achieve *common goals* - goals linked to the purpose of learning for all - for which members are held *mutually accountable* ...In a PLC, *collaboration* is a systematic process in which teachers work together interdependently, to analyze and *impact* professional practice in order to improve results for their students, their team, and their school.” (DuFour, DuFour and Eaker, 2008)

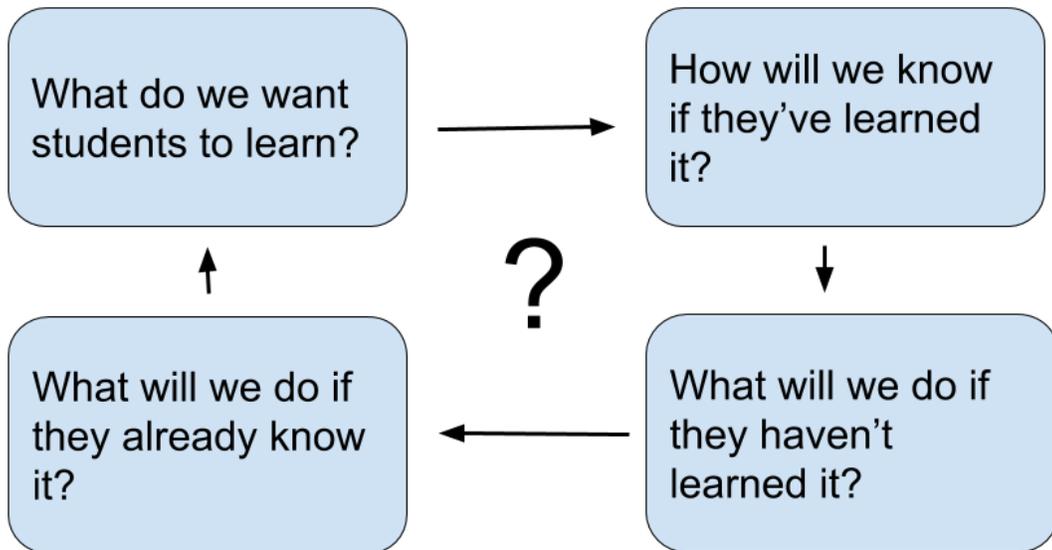
## 3 Big Ideas that Drive PLC's (Solution Tree)

**First**, the fundamental purpose of the school is to ensure all students learn at high levels...Members of a PLC work together to clarify exactly what each student must learn, monitor each student's learning on a timely basis, provide systematic interventions that ensure students receive additional time and support for learning when they struggle, and extend and enrich learning when students have already mastered the intended outcomes.

**Second**, schools cannot achieve the fundamental purpose of learning for **all** if educators work in isolation.

**Third**, schools must systematically monitor students learning on an ongoing basis and evidence of results to respond immediately to students who experience difficulty, to inform individual and collective practice, and to fuel continuous improvement.

**FOCUS ON LEARNING:  
4 KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK**



These 4 questions should be at the heart of every PLC discussion. In order to raise student achievement, Professional Learning Communities must be able to answer all four of these questions.

The fundamental purpose of the school is to ensure high levels of learning for all students. This focus on learning translates into four critical questions that drive the daily work of the school. In PLCs, educators demonstrate their commitment to helping **all** students learn by working collaboratively to address the following critical questions:

1. What do we want students to learn? What should each student know and be able to do as a result of each unit, grade level, and/or course?
2. How will we know if they have learned? Are we monitoring each student's learning on a timely basis?
3. What will we do if they don't learn? What systematic process is in place to provide additional time and support for students who are experiencing difficulty?
4. What will we do if they already know it? How can we enrich and extend learning? What are the implications for GOAL time?

## OA Instructional Guidelines

### Setting Instructional Outcomes:

- ★ Clear with high expectations
- ★ Educational risks encouraged
- ★ Students have choice
- ★ Blueprints followed



### Culture for Learning:

- ★ Safe and respectful
- ★ Promotes students taking initiative
- ★ Engaged and empowering
- ★ ALL means ALL



### Communication and Questioning:

- ★ Promotes higher level responses
- ★ Often student-generated
- ★ Students thoughts and questions are validated



### Checking for Understanding:

- ★ Embedded and continuous
- ★ Feedback is specific and timely
- ★ Data is used by teachers and students
- ★ Multiple opportunities to learn and be evaluated



- ***The above areas exemplify guidelines for good classroom instruction.***

# OA Essential Learning Skills:

*These are skills our students need in order to be successful in coursework, on assessments, at college, in careers, and in life.*

## **TOP 10 OA ESSENTIAL LEARNING SKILLS:**

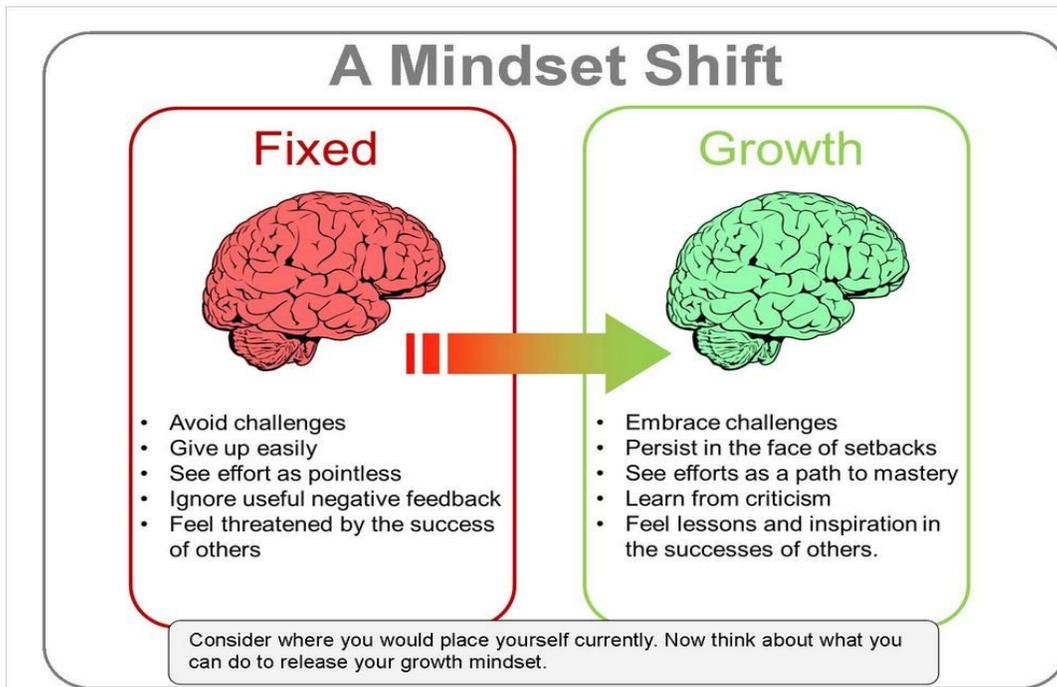
1. Analyze text or data strategically for: understanding, connections, structures, essential information, and annotation
2. Develop an argument or claim and support it with details and evidence
3. Develop, use, and align common language in Vocabulary
4. Organize information/See relationships, patterns/Use Models of Organization/Plan
5. Communicate clearly and effectively in reading, writing, speaking and listening/Collaborate
6. Make inferences and predictions/Summarize
7. Identify main idea, theme, key phrases and issues
8. Evaluate and Synthesize multiple sources of information/Research
9. Apply background and content knowledge to skills/Demonstrate
10. Think critically and creatively/Strategize/Problem Solve (multi-step)





<b>INSTEAD OF.....</b>	<b>TRY THINKING....</b>
I'm not good at this	What am I missing?
I give up	I'll use a different strategy
It's good enough	Is this really my best work?
I can't make this any better	I can always improve
This is too hard	This may take some time
I made a mistake	Mistakes help me to learn
I just can't do this	I am going to train my brain
I'll never be that smart	I will learn how to do this
Plan A didn't work	There's always Plan B
My friend can do it	I will learn from them

**Help our OA students develop a growth mindset by modeling it.**



## Data Protocol

In considering the data set, discuss and record your shared thoughts on the following ...

<p><b>Question 1</b>                  What do we want all students to know or be able to do?  <i>(Clarify standards and targets of focus)</i></p>	<p><b>Question 2</b>                  How will we know if students have mastered the standards of focus?  <i>(Determine proficiency indicators)</i></p>
<p><b>Question 3</b>                  How will we respond for students who have not yet learned?  <i>(Discuss interventions)</i></p>	<p><b>Question 4</b>                  How will we respond for students who have already demonstrated mastery or are ready to do more?  <i>(Discuss extension and enrichment)</i></p>
<p>1. <i>Based on the data, how does data differ classroom to classroom?                  (Here's what ...)</i></p>	
<p>2. <i>What are the implications of this information? Which instructional strategies helped students learn? What skills did the proficient students demonstrate in their work that set their work apart?                  (So what?)</i></p>	
<p>3. <i>So what's the plan?                  (Now what? Who? What? When?)</i></p>	