Faculty Meeting
Date: March 20, 2023
4:15 pm-5:30 pm

Purpose:	What is a PLC:
To analyze data, review protocols/procedures, and actively participate in collaboration and professional learning to ensure that all stakeholders (faculty, staff, students, parents, and community) have the information and resources needed to meet the commitments, goals and values of Shirley Hills Elementary School Improvement Plan.	As *defined by Dufour et al. (2010b, p.4), A PLC is "an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in reoccurring 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 <u>learning</u> for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.

1. Review of Norms, Purpose, and Protocols

2. Celebrations and Years of Service

3. Yes We Can Workshop Redelivery

4. Recalibrating our Practices

   SHES U: Morning Collaboration with Resource Teachers

   Focus on Collaboration:

   - Collaboration (Stages of Team Development & Chapter Studies)

   - Lesson Plans and Google Drive

   - Master Schedule

   - Intervention and Extension

   - Assessments (Map, I-Ready, GMAS, CFAs and Daily Formative Assessments)

5. Instructional and Operational Updates

6. Prepare Next Agenda:

7. Read Norms

Professional Resources:
- *Learning by Doing*
- *Taking Action*
- *Make It Happen*
- *Transforming School Culture*
- *Yes We Can*
- *Simplifying Common Assessments*
- *Design in 5*
- *Allthingsplc.com*
- *Big Book of Tools for Collaborative Teams*
- *You Can Learn*
- *Powerful Guiding Coalitions*
- *Amplify Your Impact, Thrive & Energize Your Teams*

Protocols:
- Review norms at each meeting
- Have a prepared timed agenda with relevant and timely topics
- Follow the agenda
- Redeliver major issues and allow discussion first to allow time for questions
- Have engaging activities
- Celebrate success

Norms:
- **Adhere to Professional Practices**
  - Be on time (start & end on time)
  - Respectful use of devices
  - Follow protocols
- **Be an Engaged Listener & Participant**
  - Respect the speaker
  - Active participation in opportunities for interactions
  - Remain on topic
- **Speak & Respond in a Professional Manner**
  - One person talks at a time
  - Be respectful of team members' opinions
  - Agree to disagree
  - Trustworthiness & dedication

<u>Notes:</u>

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Name	Role
Emma Robinson	SLP
Makayla Wall	SLP
Yolanda McDonald	2nd
Crystal Walker	2nd
Cartencia Jones	2nd
Robin Kruter	Interrelated
Michaela Simmons	K-2 MID
LeAnn Buttron	Small group PK
Stephanie Sheppard	PreK
Crystal Chiles	Small group PK
Susan Haeusler	Media Specialist
Amanda Dargan	Art
Scott Gunn	Music
LaNelda Taylor	Physical Education
Lataya Herron	2nd
LaSwanda Davis	LaSwanda 3rd
Amanda Dowd	ADowd 1st
April Graap	1st
Annie Cowan	SE
Elizabeth Jump	1st

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Name	Role
Jennifer Edmunds	3rd
Lara Stanley	3rd
Britney Fuldhum	4th
Brielle Hill	4th
Lou Wallace	Counselor
Ali Buzzell	EIP Reading
Annabelle Hill	5th Teacher
Amaris Nieves	K-Teacher
Christen Neal-Porter	3rd grade

Faculty Meeting

Date: March 20, 2023

4:15pm - 5:30 pm

Name	Role
Jasmine A. Young	5th grade
Angela T. Ezell	ETP Math
Brianna Simpson	Kinder
Charlene Steen	Kindergarten
Alicia Ussery	SPD K.
Stephanie Hawthorne	Kinder teacher
Matt DeWitt	APD
Christy Descartes	Transk
Christa Neal-Pate	3rd grade
Amare Niras	K-Teacher
Charlotte Dunlap	API

Six Indicators of a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

Indicator	Absent When...	Present When... Sounds like, feels like, look like
The school curriculum and accompanying assessments adhere to state and district standards.		
The school curriculum is focused enough that it can be adequately addresses in the time available to teachers.		
All students have the opportunity to learn the critical content of the curriculum.		
Clear and measurable goals are established and focused on critical needs for improving overall student achievement at the school level.		
Data are analyzed, interpreted, and used to regularly monitor progress toward school achievement goals.		
Appropriate school-level and classroom-level processes and practices are in place to help students meet individual achievement goals when data indicate interventions and extensions are needed.		

ELA

Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade
RL.K.1 with prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	ELAGSE1RL.1 Literacy - Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	2RL1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
RI.K.1 with prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	ELAGSE1RI.1 Informational - Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.	2RI1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
RL.K.2 with prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.	ELAGSE1RL.2 Literacy - Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.	2RL2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
RF.K.3 Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.	ELAGSE1RF3: Foundation - Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.	N/A
RL.K.3 with prompting and support, identify character, setting, and major events in a story.	ELAGSE1RL3: Literacy - Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.	N/A
RI.K.2 with prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.	ELAGSE1RI2: Informational - Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.	2RI2 Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within a text.
LK.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.	ELAGSE1L2: Grammar - Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation and spelling when writing.	2W2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section

Math

Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade
K.NBT.1 Compose and decompose numbers from 11 to 19 into ten ones and some further ones to understand that these numbers are composed of ten ones and one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, or nine ones, e.g., by using objects or drawings, and record each composition or decomposition by a drawing or equation (e.g. 18 = 10 + 8).	MGSE1.NBT2 Understand that the two digits of a two-digit number represent amounts of tens and ones.	2.NBT.1 Understand that the three digits of a three-digit number represent amounts of hundreds, tens, and ones; e.g., 706 equals 7 hundreds, 0 tens, and 6 ones.

Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
K.OA.1 Represent addition and subtraction with objects, fingers, mental images, drawings, sounds, acting out situations, verbal explanations, expressions, or equations.	MGSE1.OA.6 Add and subtract within 20.	2.OA.2 Fluently add and subtract within 20 using mental strategies.3 By end of Grade 2, know from memory all sums of two one-digit numbers
N/A	MGSE1.NBT.4 Add within 100, including adding a two-digit number and a one-digit number, and adding a two-digit number and a multiple of ten, using concrete models or drawings and strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or relationship between addition and subtraction; relate the strategy to a written method and explain the reasoning used.	2.NBT.5 Fluently add and subtract within 100 using strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction.
K.CC.2 Count forward beginning from a given number within the known sequence (instead of having to begin at 1).	MGSE1.NBT.1 Count to 120, starting at any number less than 120. In this range, read and write numerals and represent a number of objects with a written numeral.	2.NBT.2 Count within 1000; skip count by 5s, 10s, and 100s.
N/A	MGSE1.G.3 Partition circles and rectangles into two and four equal shares, describe the shares using the words halves, fourths, and quarters, and use the phrases half of, fourth of, and quarter of. Describe the whole as two of, or four of the shares. Understand for these examples that decomposing into more equal shares creates smaller shares.	2.G.3 Partition circles and rectangles into two, three, or four equal shares, describe the shares using the words halves, thirds, half of, a third of, etc., and describe the whole as two halves, three thirds, four fourths. Recognize that equal shares of identical wholes need not have the same shape.
N/A	MGSE1.MD.3 Tell and write time in hours and half-hours using analog and digital clocks.	2.MD.7 Tell and write time from analog and digital clocks to the nearest five minutes, using a.m. and p.m.
K.MD.3 Classify objects into given categories; count the numbers of objects in each category and sort the categories by count.	MGSE1.MD.4 Organize, represent, and interpret data with up to three categories; ask and answer questions about the total number of data points, how many in each category, and how many more or less are in one category than in another.	2.MD.10 Draw a picture graph and a bar graph (with single-unit scale) to represent a data set with up to four categories. Solve simple put-together, take-apart, and compare problems

2.MD.7 Tell and write time from analog and digital clocks to the nearest five minutes, using a.m. and p.m.	MGSE3.MD.1 Tell and write time to the nearest minute and measure elapsed time intervals in minutes. Solve word problems involving addition and subtraction of time intervals in minutes, e.g., by representing the problem on a number line diagram, drawing a pictorial representation on a clock face, etc.	(No Correlating Standard)	(No Correlating Standard)
2.MD.10 Draw a picture graph and a bar graph (with single-unit scale) to represent a data set with up to four categories. Solve simple put-together, take-apart and compare problems	MGSE3.MD.3 Draw a scaled picture graph and a scale bar graph to represent a data set with several categories. Solve one- and two-step "how many more" and "how many less" problems using information presented in scaled bar graphs.	(No Correlating Standard)	(No Correlating Standard)

| 2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
		ELA	
2RL.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.	3RL.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as a basis for the answers	ELAGSE4RL.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and drawing inferences from the text.	ELAGSE5RL.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
2RI.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.	3RI.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text; referring explicitly to the text as a basis for the answers	ELAGSE4RI.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and drawing inferences from the text.	ELAGSE5RI.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
2RL.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures; and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.	3RL.2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths, from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text	ELAGSE4RL.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.	ELA.5.RL.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.
2RI.2 Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within a text.	3RI.2 Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea	ELAGSE4RI.2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text	ELAGSE5RI.2: Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
2W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.	3W.4 With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. 3W.5 With guidance and support from adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing 3W.6 With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact with others.	W.4: I can produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task. ELAGSE4W: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types: informational, opinion and narrative.)	ELAGSE5W: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types: informational, opinion and narrative.)
	(Third grade will support 4th with by explicitly teaching strategies to determine the meaning of unknown words and monitoring with questions in our assessments)	ELAGSE4L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies	ELAGSE5L.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words or phrases based on 5th grade reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

Math

2.NBT.1 Understand that the three digits of a three-digit number represent amounts of hundreds, tens, and ones; e.g., 706 equals 7 hundreds, 0 tens, and 6 ones.	3.NBT.1 Use place value understanding to round whole numbers to the nearest 10 or 100.	NBT.3: Use place value understanding to round multi-digit whole numbers to any place.	HGSE.5.NBT.4 Use place value understanding to round decimals up to the hundredths place.
2.OA.2 Fluently add and subtract within 20 using mental strategies.3 By end of Grade 2, know from memory all sums of two one-digit numbers.	3.NBT.2 Fluently Add and Subtract within 1000 using strategies and algorithms based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction	NBT.4: I can fluently add and subtract multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm	HGSE.5.NBT.7 Add and subtract decimals to hundredths, using concrete models or drawings and strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction.
2.NBT.5 Fluently add and subtract within 100 using strategies based on place value, properties of operations, and/or the relationship between addition and subtraction.			
2.NBT.2 Count within 1000; skip count by 5s, 10s, and 100s.	OA.7 Fluently multiply and divide within 100, using strategies such as the relationship between multiplication and division or properties of operations. By the end of third grade, know from memory all products of two one-digit numbers	NBT.5 I can multiply a whole number of up to four digits by a one-digit whole number, and multiply two two-digit numbers.	5.NBT.5– Fluently multiply multi-digit whole numbers using the standard algorithm (or other strategies demonstrating understanding of multiplication) up to a 3 digit by 2 digit factor
		NBT.6 I can find whole-number quotients and remainders with up to four-digit dividends and one-digit divisors.	HGSE5.NBT.6 Fluently divide up to 4-digit dividends and 2-digit divisors by using at least one of the following methods: strategies based on place value and/or the relationship between multiplication and division.
2.G.3 Partition circles and rectangles into two, three, or four equal shares, describe the shares using the words halves, thirds, half of, a third of, etc., and describe the whole as two halves, three thirds, four fourths. Recognize that equal shares of identical wholes need not have the same shape.	NF.1 Understand a fraction 1/b as the quantity formed by 1 part when a whole is partitioned into b equal parts; understand a fraction a/b as the quantity formed by a parts of size 1/b	NF.1 Explain why two or more fractions are equivalent with models and generate equivalent fractions	HGSE5.NF.1 Add and subtract fractions and mixed numbers with unlike denominators by finding a common denominator and equivalent fractions to produce like denominators.
		G.1 Draw points, lines, line segments, rays, angles (right, acute, obtuse) and perpendicular and parallel lines; identify these in two-dimensional figures.	HGSE.5.G.1 Use a pair of perpendicular number lines, called axes, to define a coordinate system, with the intersection of the lines (the origin) arranged to coincide with the 0 on each line and a given point in the plane located by using an ordered pair of numbers, called its coordinates

Six Indicators of a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

Indicator	Absent When...	Present When... Sounds like, feels like, look like
The school curriculum and accompanying assessments adhere to state and district standards.		
The school curriculum is focused enough that it can be adequately addresses in the time available to teachers.		
All students have the opportunity to learn the critical content of the curriculum.		
Clear and measurable goals are established and focused on critical needs for improving overall student achievement at the school level.		
Data are analyzed, interpreted, and used to regularly monitor progress toward school achievement goals.		
Appropriate school-level and classroom-level processes and practices are in place to help students meet individual achievement goals when data indicate interventions and extensions are needed.		

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF SHARED LEARNING EXPECTATIONS
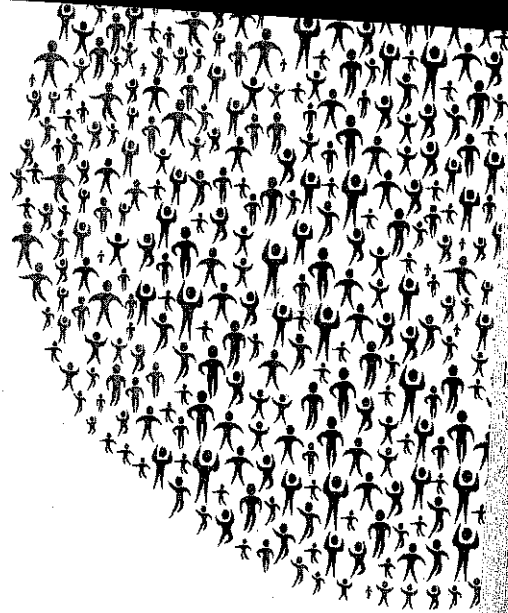
One of the most significant factors that impacts student achievement is that teachers commit to implementing a guaranteed and viable curriculum to ensure no matter who teaches a given class, the curriculum will address certain essential content.

—Robert J. Marzano

It is essential for all students to have access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum (Marzano, 2003; Saphier, 2005). A clear understanding of this concept is critical for its true implementation. *Guaranteed*, simply put, means that all students, regardless of teacher, eligibility, or status, will have access to the same standards, understandings, content, and skills across a school and system. All teachers have a unique style that, in the highest-performing classrooms, they adapt to meet the needs of the learners. While it is not essential that teachers instruct in the same way, all staff must focus on the same learning expectations for students during instruction and through assessment. *Viable* signifies that the curriculum must be doable within the time frame provided. When a curriculum is not viable, teachers feel they must cover content rather than help learners truly demonstrate mastery. In turn, students are not able to focus on deeply understanding the essential content. This is a careful consideration, as all states have assessments to which they are accountable; therefore, pacing must also allow for student success on these annual measures. Creating a guaranteed and viable curriculum relies on teams' collaboration in deciding grade-level and course expectations, content pacing, and assessment practices and on their regular review of performance data to make informed instructional decisions.

Saphier (2005) expands on the concepts of guaranteed and viable curriculum, outlining "an academic focus that begins with a set of practices that bring clarity, coherence, and precision to every teacher's classroom work" (as cited in DuFour et al., 2010, p. 71). Citing Saphier's (2005) work, DuFour and colleagues (2010) reiterate that "teachers work collaboratively to provide a rigorous curriculum" that all members of the teaching team agree on and understand and that "includes a compact list of learning expectations for each grade or course, and that provides tangible exemplars of student proficiency for each learning expectation" (p. 71).

Based on our collective experience, we maintain that clearly answering PLC critical question 1, What is it we expect our students to learn?, is the first step and one of the most powerful steps to improving outcomes for students with special needs, and it begins to provide the foundation for establishing a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Looking at a typical high school special education resource teacher's caseload, for example, it is easy to see why answering this critical question is essential to creating comprehensive team support for students with special needs. Because mainstream teachers traditionally establish their own curricular priorities, implement their own individual grading practices, and assess students using their preferred methods, the weight given to things like homework, participation, and assessments can vary greatly and be a significant factor in success. In other words, what is required and expected for success is different from teacher to teacher. A resource teacher working with seven or eight students from different classrooms may thus have multiple sets of prioritized standards, assessments, and curricular content to navigate. Taking time to understand each general education teacher's individual practices is time spent away from helping students master targets. Unfortunately, situations where special educators must address gaps in general education teachers' practices are all too common, and they are disastrous both for the special education teacher and for students. Such practices highlight the way clearly defined learning targets can help improve instruction and communication between mainstream and special education teachers.

So how can systems truly implement a guaranteed and viable curriculum for students? In his report on levels of school effectiveness, Marzano (2012) identifies six essential indicators of a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

1. "The school curriculum and accompanying assessments adhere to state and district standards" (p. 10).

2. "The school curriculum is focused enough that it can be adequately addressed in the time available to teachers" (p. 10).

3. "All students have the opportunity to learn the critical content of the curriculum" (p. 11).

4. "Clear and measurable goals are established and focused on critical needs regarding improving overall student achievement at the school level" (p. 11).

5. "Data are analyzed, interpreted, and used to regularly monitor progress toward school achievement goals" (p. 12).

6. "Appropriate school-level and classroom-level processes and practices are in place to help students meet individual achievement goals when data indicate interventions are needed" (p. 12).

All this makes sense, but let's consider what these indicators look like when they are (or are not) put to use in our schools, and specifically how they apply to special education. Table 3.1 explains the evidence that shows these six indicators meet the needs of diverse learners and support special educators.

Table 3.1: Six Indicators of a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

Indicator	Absent When . . .	Present When . . .
The school curriculum and accompanying assessments adhere to state and district standards.	• Locally developed curriculum is not aligned to standards. • Classroom instruction is inconsistently aligned to standards or agreed-on priorities.	• Alignment is evident among state standards, local standards, local curriculum, grade-level and content-area pacing guides, team assessments, *and* classroom instruction.
The school curriculum is focused enough that it can be adequately addressed in the time available to teachers.	• Focus is on coverage of content, not mastery of content. • Less than 80 percent of students demonstrate proficiency on identified standards. • Intervention systems are overwhelmed. • Teachers experience burnout. • Students are stressed out. • There is a lack of clear understanding of and consistency about priorities in the curriculum.	• Pacing guides drive instruction within established time parameters consistently across classrooms and schools. • Priority standards are identified and are a focus for instruction. • Assessments align to priority standards to inform instruction and reporting.

Indicator	Absent When . . .	Present When . . .
All students have the opportunity to learn the critical content of the curriculum.	• Students with special needs are exposed to less rigorous standards than typical peers. • Students with special needs are exposed to fewer standards than typical peers. • Students with special needs are exposed to different standards than typical peers.	• Students with special needs are expected to master grade-level and course standards and are provided time, support, and resources to do so. • Special educators are an integral part of the grade-level or course collaborative team. • Students with special needs are exposed to rigorous texts. • Special educators participate in professional development about instructional practices alongside their general education peers.
Clear and measurable goals are established and focused on critical needs for improving overall student achievement at the school level.	• Practices are inconsistent across classrooms. • Instruction, assessment, and reporting vary from teacher to teacher. • A school, team, or both have absent or unclear goals. • There is a lack of focus on student-achievement data. • Data of students with special needs are absent in the data review and SMART goal process.	• Consistent instruction, assessment, and reporting practices are developed and discussed collaboratively. • IEP goals align to standards and target areas of deficit. • Accommodations are purposefully identified and utilized to help students access the curriculum; modifications are made sparingly.
Data are analyzed, interpreted, and used to regularly monitor progress toward school achievement goals.	• Data-analysis protocols are absent or ineffective. • Individual teachers examine their data; teams and the school do not. • Short-cycle review of progress-monitoring data is absent after special education eligibility is determined.	• Data drive instruction for all learners. • Additional time, support, and resources are provided for all students as needed. • Problem-solving processes continue after special education eligibility.

Indicator	Absent When . . .	Present When . . .
Appropriate school-level and classroom-level processes and practices are in place to help students meet individual achievement goals when data indicate interventions are needed.	• Curriculum is implemented inconsistently. • Resources are selected by individual teachers. • Intervention systems are haphazard and without clear criteria for entry, exit, or both.	• Research-based programming and best practices in instructional methodology are implemented at Tiers 1, 2, and 3. • Tier 1 intervention is aligned to priority standards. • Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are driven by diagnostic assessments to identify specific needs and implemented with fidelity.

Source: Adapted from Marzano, 2012.

Please note these beliefs apply to the vast majority of learners in the education system, special education entitled or not. When we consider students with significant cognitive impairments, we must, of course, approach these concepts with a slightly different perspective. We'll speak further to that point later in this chapter.

Establishing a School Culture That Supports All Students

We know that special education services are most effective when they:

- Are delivered in the general education setting to the maximum extent possible

- Are targeted to fill gaps between a student's disability and the demands of the setting

- Ensure the same opportunities to achieve high standards regardless of setting

But how do we build school cultures to accomplish all this? Simply put, we have to make some pivotal shifts. Table 3.2 (page 34) summarizes the schoolwide cultural shifts needed to support all learners.

In the absence of these shifts, educators will continue to perpetuate a belief system that presumes most students—not *all* students—can learn. If educators truly believe that all students can and will learn, then they must work to shift our culture to act in the same ways. These shifts demand teachers focus on each learner as a unique individual. Whether schools or districts are grappling with implementation of the CCSS or another set of state or national standards, they all must consider the importance of preparing students for their futures in college, careers, and beyond.

Table 3.2: Schoolwide Cultural Shifts Necessary to Support All Learners

From	To
A focus on teaching	A focus on learning
An emphasis on what was taught	A fixation on what was learned
Coverage of content	Demonstration of proficiency
Private practice	Open sharing of practice
Individual responsibility	Collective responsibility
Each teacher assigning priority to different learning standards	Collaborative teams determining the priority of standards

Source: DuFour et al., 2010.

Sadly, educators often doubt students with special needs' ability to meet these rigorous expectations. Our response as authors to such reservations is simple: *all* means *all*, with the understanding that educators may have to tailor instruction by providing scaffolds, accommodations, and modifications to ensure that all students are successful.

Instructionally, then, educators must first answer a fundamental question when considering, "Does *all* mean *all*?" That question is, "Will this student ever be expected to function independently when he or she leaves the public school system?" (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2009). As we outline in the following sections, answers to that question dictate at least two possible courses of action.

When Students Are Expected to Function Independently

Teachers have a moral obligation to make every effort to get students to proficiency. They cannot modify the standards students are expected to reach. Educators must include the vast majority of students and most eligibility categories in the goal to attain proficiency in the general curriculum. In fact, "Students with special needs must be challenged to excel within the general curriculum and be prepared for success in their postschool lives, including college or careers" (NGA & CCSSO, n.d.b, p. 1). More rigorous standards provide students with special needs with the opportunity to access rigorous academic content. In reaching this diverse student group, "how these high standards are taught and assessed is of the utmost importance" (NGA & CCSSO, n.d.b, p. 1). When educators continuously develop their understanding of "research-based instructional practices and focus on their effective implementation, they help improve access to mathematics and English language arts (ELA) standards for all students," including those with special needs (Massachusetts Department of

Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011, p. 99). In order for students with special needs "to meet high academic standards and to fully demonstrate their conceptual and procedural knowledge and skills . . . instruction must also incorporate supports and accommodations" specific to each learner's profile (NGA & CCSSO, n.d.b, p. 1).

When Students Are *Not* Expected to Function Independently

Teams must rephrase the critical questions to state, What do we want *this* student to know and be able to do? How will we know if he or she learns it? Such students will likely be working toward modified standards, but the work they must do remains standards aligned, purposefully scaffolded to increase rigor, and formatively assessed to provide feedback as well as to drive instructional adjustment.

Teams collaborate in regard to the expectations for each individual learner so that their efforts merge into a cohesive support plan and maintain a results orientation based on the individual student's growth and progress. Collaboration is specific to functional curriculum implementation; that is to say, it is specific to the curriculum being taught. Teachers who support students with disabilities that rarely occur in terms of complexity or impact—what we call *low-incidence conditions*—collaborate with other teachers working with the same type of population to share best practices. Together, teachers and staff form a collaborative team and create a strategic plan for their collaboration, setting expectations for how (such as in person or electronically) and when they will regularly work collaboratively. For example, two elementary schools in two different Illinois school districts, Kildeer Countryside Community Consolidated School District 96 and Mannheim School District 83, created a partnership for their low-incidence program teachers. In the separate districts, collaboration was difficult due to the limited number of classrooms and, therefore, staff in place for students with significant needs. These two schools worked together to establish monthly conference calls with shared agendas in order to support each other, explore resources, problem solve, celebrate successes, and learn together. As these colleagues built both relationships and shared knowledge, their connections became even more deeply rooted and organic. Teachers and related-services providers in one school visited the sister school in order to see the environment and meet face-to-face with their colleagues. Teams from both schools found that collaborating with each other in person was incredibly powerful, particularly since they had invested so much time in sharing practices prior to the visits.

In fact, when teachers share their best practices, they affirm the goal of working collaboratively to ensure that all students learn at high levels. While the learning targets may look different from shared grade-level standards in order to meet the needs of individual students with significant special needs, teams still work to answer the

four critical questions for that student. In these considerations for students who are not expected to function independently, it is important to remember that:

> Some students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will require substantial supports and accommodations to have meaningful access to certain standards in both instruction and assessment, based on their communication and academic needs. These supports and accommodations should ensure that students receive access to multiple means of learning and opportunities to demonstrate knowledge. (NGA & CCSSO, n.d.b, p. 2)

The team of teachers and related-services providers (speech pathologists, psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and others) forms its own collaborative team, targeting each student's growth. Through the lens of the PLC questions that lead to high levels of learning for *all* students, collaborative teams provide the substantial supports these students need to learn and to demonstrate their knowledge.

Ensuring That All Students Learn at High Levels

Even for students with the most significant impairments, the expectation that learners can and will make progress is still very much in effect. Maintaining a growth mindset is essential. Students can and will do what educators believe they can do; if they put limits on students' abilities and potential, they essentially *guarantee* that those limits become learners' maximum potential. Therefore, it is the responsibility of every educator working with every student to put in place the conditions and beliefs that he or she can, and will, learn at high levels.

How do educators create the conditions where there are no limits put on student learning? The first and most important element to have in place is a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Without it, we leave curriculum access to teacher discretion, and therefore, student progress becomes unpredictable. When we recall our own days as students, we can probably remember anxiously awaiting the arrival of our schedules because we knew our assigned teachers would determine what our experience would be. Those of us in education who have our own children in school commonly wander into the counselor's or principal's office to discuss teachers who may best fit our own children's needs. Some may consider this access a perk of the profession. Those outside education may call it insider trading. We have inside information about what the outcomes may be for each teacher's students. We have to ask ourselves whether it is okay that outcomes from teacher to teacher may vary widely. Shouldn't there be some guarantees as to what students will be exposed to and learn? Shouldn't there be some consistency in the level of support they will receive when they aren't learning? Educators must agree that accepting such inconsistencies simply cannot continue,

particularly in light of the data presented about teachers' abilities to close the gap for students with special needs.

Yes We Can: Keys to Moving Forward

When general and special educators work together in collaborative teams to ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students, they model their commitment and belief that all students can learn. As you work with your team, consider the following keys to moving forward.

- Focus all collaborative teamwork on answering the four critical PLC questions as they relate to the grade-level standards.

- For students whose needs are so complex that the grade-level standards are not attainable, focus all collaborative teamwork on answering the four critical PLC questions as they relate to moving that student closer to functional access to the grade-level standards.

- Question mindset constantly: do we, as a team, really believe that *all* means *all*?

In part II, we examine how collaborative teams within PLCs can close the achievement gap by focusing on learning and results. Chapter 4 asks general and special educators to consider what they want students to know and be able to do. We provide a tool for unpacking standards to help guide teams as they answer this critical question.