

# POWERFUL GUIDING COALITIONS

How to **Build** and **Sustain** the  
Leadership Team in Your PLC at Work®

BILL HALL



# “Do you have a cardboard box?”

## School-leadership is...

- found in the day-to-day interactions with others.
- embedded in the relationships school leaders have with students, teachers, parents, and the community.
- reflected in how leaders speak to and treat support personnel, vendors, and business partners.

Develop & grow leadership based on the cardboard box theory: *Keep it simple. Grow it slowly. Provide support and resources along the way. Focus on the personal and interpersonal levels, and the larger system components with benefit and strengthen.*



# “PLCs and Leadership Capacity”

## Focus on “Three-legged stool”

1. Mission
2. Vision
3. Values (Collective Commitments)

School-level leadership teams (Guiding Coalitions) create leadership capacity.

Implementing the PLC process has two distinct benefits:

1. Collaborative teamwork benefited students.
2. Working in collaborative teams introduced teachers to job-embedded leadership practices.

# “Leadership at All Levels”



Teacher leaders have the opportunity to simultaneously learn and lead, thereby creating pools of qualified personnel to fill leadership vacancies.

**“Job-embedded professional learning provided by school-based guiding coalitions became the mainstay and backbone of our leadership development initiatives.” P. 4**

# “Leadership at All Levels”

The Guiding Coalition is defined as,

“An alliance of key members of an organization who are specifically charged with leading the change process through predictable turmoil. Members of the guiding coalition should include opinion leaders-people who are so respected within the organization that others are likely to follow their lead.”

The Guiding Coalition sets the tone for the collaborative work done throughout the school.

# “Leadership at All Levels”

*A Powerful Guiding Coalition.....*

- Assemble a guiding coalition that is composed of the right people.
- Ensure that your guiding coalition operates with high levels of trust among its members
- Create and pursue a common goal shared by the members of your guiding coalition.

*Every employee in the school, regardless of position, length of experience, job responsibilities, and so on, has a professional obligation to help steer the direction of the school. The role of the Guiding Coalition is to lead and model how employees can fulfill their obligation to contribute in some way to leading the school.*



# “Leadership at All Levels”

## The School Leader...

- Principals must formally and purposefully create, develop, and lead a powerful Guiding Coalition within their schools.
- When a principal establishes and maintains a powerful Guiding Coalition, collaboration becomes the cultural expectation for every member of every team in the school.



# “About This Book”

This book explores how to create a powerful guiding coalition, how to continue to develop it, and how to sustain it through the following chapter focuses:

1. What a GC is, why having one is important, model of appropriate behavior, department team leaders, members' roles & responsibilities
2. Importance of learning, understanding, & leading the PLC basics (3 big ideas & 4 critical questions)
3. Three basic school structures to ensure a solid PLC foundation, school as PLC- “a community of professionals learning together
4. importance of building & maintaining powerful relationships with students, employees, parents, & the community (positive, professional, & sensitive)
5. Collaborative leadership as effective way to move teams toward higher levels of collaboration
6. Using leadership levers to help reduce the amount of leadership efforts required by school leaders (celebrate levers in place & introduce those not being used)



# “From Current Practice to Best Practice”

School leaders must clearly understand PLC terms, definitions, & concepts; PLC culture building must precede PLC foundation building.

Best practice leads schools toward collaboration, continuous improvement, & high levels of learning for ALL- staff and students.

Distribute leadership responsibilities through Guiding Coalition members.

View leadership actions through the “cardboard box theory”- simplicity, slow growth, & support through interpersonal connections.

# Chapter 1: Creating a Powerful Guiding Coalition

Mrs. Barton, Mr. Richardson, Mrs. Stanley

An alliance

People who are leaders and allies within the school

Not the school “dictatorship committee”

Willing to make more public their own practices

Focuses on continuous improvement

Supports the collaborative teams

The model team

Ensure organizational & cultural changes

# Traditional Leadership Teams

Tend to provide top-down administrators with a way to share information with select grade/department representatives.  
Focus on things, not people

# PLC Leadership Team

Must understand this team is leading the PLC process.

Tasked with achieving goals  
(page 12-14)

“powerful”

# Organization of Teams for PLC Implementation

“Who before what?”

Your school, your PLC, is your bus.

First seat: Principal

Guided Coalition sits in two areas of the bus.

Meets - sit up front with principal

Not meeting - sits with team

Teaching staff takes their collaborative team seats

Specialists & activity teachers join

Managers, supervisors, and support personnel



# Guided Coalition Membership

## Four Essential Types of Power

Power of position

Power of expertise

Power of credibility

Power of leadership ability

## Two Types of Members to Avoid

People who have big egos

People who cause a significant amount of distrust.

# Five Types of Adopters

1. Innovators
2. Early adopters
3. Early majority
4. Late majority (\*\*where we may be\*\*)
5. Laggards

# Chapter 2

## LEADING THE PLC BASICS

Darah Calico, Megan Greeson, Dana Gregory

*The leader sees things through the eyes of his followers.*

*He puts himself in their shoes and helps them make their dreams come true.*

*The leader does not say, “Get going!” Instead, the leader says, “Let’s go!” and leads the way.*

~Wilferd Peterson



# CREATING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

**Assess whether your school is ready for collaborative work**

Collaborative learning teams must have these criteria in place to operate as a team:

1. A Common Goal
2. Interdependence
3. Mutual Accountability

## **Common Goal** = Single Focus

All members clearly understand, agree on, commit to, & work toward goal  
communicating in common team-focused terms

### **Interdependence**

EVERYONE contributes!

Leads to synergy “1 + 1 = 3”  
finding a third alternative as a group better than  
you could arrive at individually

Out-of-the box thinking

Move beyond personal ideas/opinions/demands  
to what benefits the whole & achieves the goal

## **Mutual Accountability**

All team members are mutually accountable.

Moves you from “group” to “team”

Hold members accountable for:

- How they act
- How they meet team expectations
- How effectively they work together

Team is responsible for confronting & addressing violations by using measures/protocols established at team’s inception. Pre-established protocols put focus on behaviors and not on personalities.

# Leading the Three Big Ideas of a PLC

Leading the Focus on Learning

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What are  
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“Student learning is ***job one*** in our school,  
and everything we do must support it!”

Sharing collective best practices is a  
hallmark of high-performing collaborative  
teams.

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# Leading the Three Big Ideas of a PLC

Leading the Collaborative Culture and Collective Responsibility



**Collab  
alw  
collab**

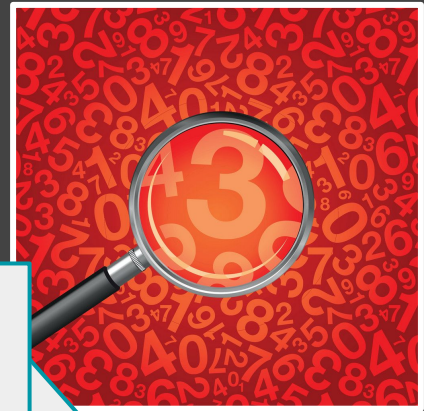
**Should two or three teams not meet the definition of being collaborative, the remaining teams have a collective responsibility to provide support and assistance to help the team leaders and teams that are struggling.**

**members  
are they  
uilding a  
ulture?"**

# Leading the Three Big Ideas of a PLC

Leading the Focus on Results

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Unless we  
results  
strategic  
responses,

- In order to focus on results, we have to:**
- Focus on the four critical questions
  - Create common assessments and use results to drive instruction, intervention, enrichment and extension

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# Leading the Three Big Ideas of a PLC

Leading Fidelity With PLC Principles and Concepts

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Spotty assessment  
our school  
headed, and  
actions we  
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The three big ideas are  
foundational.... But the four  
critical questions create the  
cycle of work!

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# Leading the Four Critical Questions of a PLC

The four critical questions are *the only* focus of conversation, discussion, and work of collaborative team time.

1. What do we want our kids to learn?
2. How are we going to get them to learn it?
3. What do we do if they don't learn it? (intervention)
4. What do we do if they do learn it? (extensions)

*How can we as team leaders on the Guiding Coalition think through the four critical questions and guide our teams?*



Just as teacher teams decide the “essential standards” of their content, members of the guiding coalition determine the “essential standards” we want to address with our collaborative teams.

Question One: ***What do we want all team members to know?***

Examples of “Essential Standards” for Guiding Coalitions:

- ✓ Teams must know what a PLC is.
- ✓ Teams must know the characteristics of a PLC.
- ✓ Teams must know how those characteristics are related to the research on effective teaching practices.
- ✓ Teams must know the benefits of working in collaborative teams.

\*Team leaders should also introduce PLC terms to teams so common vocabulary can be established.

## Question Two: *How will we know if our collaborative teams learned and understand the characteristics of a PLC?*

What evidence would suggest teams understand effective PLCs and are conducting collaborative meetings properly?

*Just like our classroom CFAs and CSAs*

- ✓ All team members arrive on time
- ✓ All team members are prepared with proper materials (data)
- ✓ All team members have the same data source to view (data spreadsheet)
- ✓ A team agenda is used
- ✓ Norm violations are referenced and violations are addressed
- ✓ One or more of the critical questions are the focus of the meeting

GC members bring their team observations and results to questions one and two back to the guiding coalition meeting and discuss questions three and four to determine next steps to support different team's needs.

Question Three: *What do we do for collaborative teams that DON'T understand effective PLCs?*

Question Four: *What do we do for collaborative teams that DO understand the concepts and characteristics of a PLC?*



**Conclusion:**

***How can we lead the PLC process without learning and experiencing what will be required of each collaborative team first?***

***Learn***

***Lead***

***Model***

***Support***

***“When collaborative teams pay close attention to the three big ideas and the four critical questions, your school will be on track to becoming a high-performing PLC.”***

Three Big Ideas:

1. A focus on teacher learning
2. A focus on a collaborative culture and collective responsibility for teachers
3. A focus on results of the work of teachers to better meet students' needs and improve teachers' work

# Chapter 3: Building a Solid PLC Foundation

## True PLCs

- True PLCs are guided by the three big ideas:
  1. Focus on the learning
  2. A collaborative culture and collective responsibility
  3. Results orientation
- Four Pillars:
  1. Mission
  2. Vision
  3. Collective Commitments
  4. Goals



## Chapter 3: Building a Solid PLC Foundation



*Having a good foundation!*

*\* Building a PLC without advance prepwork  
And foundation setting would be similar*

*To building a home on an uneven base of soft soil and shifting sand. A foundation rushed is a foundation ruined!*

*“You can’t Build a Great Building on a Weak Foundation”*

*—Gordon B. Hinckley*

## Chapter 3: Building a Solid PLC Foundation

- Footings that support the foundation must be put into place first!
  - Build shared knowledge of PLC characteristics and their links to the research of effective practices
  - Build shared knowledge of the current reality in your district or school
  - Develop a GC
  - Establish a common vocabulary
  - Celebrate!!!!





# Chapter 3: Building a Solid PLC Foundation

## Part 1 of the Foundation

*Must build shared knowledge of PLC*

- *School leaders must ensure all staff learn the basic PLC characteristics and concepts as part of the first steps to becoming a PLC*

## Part 2 of the Foundation:

*Build shared knowledge of the current reality*

- *We must have a clear understanding of where the school or district is with data over time*
- *Schools must look @ info that shows student achievement, tardies, attendance, graduation, discipline reports and demographic information.*



# Chapter 3: Building a Solid PLC Foundation

## *Part 3 of the Foundation:*

### *Development of a GC*

- *This is the most critical part of for a principal!*
- *The gilding coalition or leadership team becomes the team that provided advice and support to the principal and assists in leading the PLC initiative.*
- *Without a formal GC successful implementation and embedding of the PLC concepts in a school will be virtually impossible!*

## *Part 4 of the Foundation:*

### *Establishing Common Vocabulary*

- *All staff must understand the PLC terminology and they should have the same meaning to all staff.*

# Chapter 3: Building a Solid PLC Foundation

## Part 5 of the Foundation:

### Celebrate your progress on the journey!

- PLC experts have witnessed a shortcoming that is common to many schools: the lack of attention to meaningful celebrations
- We need to ask ourselves:
  - Do we regularly celebrate individual and team efforts?
  - Are recognition and celebrations part of your school's culture?
  - Do staff members celebrate their successes?



# Chapter 3: Building a Solid PLC Foundation

## *PCL Structure 4 Pillars:*

1. *Mission: Why do we exist?*
  - a. *Shared purpose of ensuring high levels  
Of learning for all students*
  
2. *Vision: What do we want to become?*
  - a. *Creating the structures and culture  
To ensure all students learn*

*GC will want to discuss how that vision will be*

*Used throughout the school year. How will we live the vision each day?*



# Chapter 3: Building a Solid PLC Foundation

## *PCL Structure 4 Pillars:*

### *3. Collective Commitments*

- *What commitments must we make to create the School or district that will improve our ability To fulfill our purpose?*
- *These are the promises the staff make on how they Will act and how they will treat each other.*



# Chapter 3: Building a Solid PLC Foundation

*PCL Structure 4 Pillars:*

## *4. Goals*

- What goals will we use to monitor our progress?*
- Easy way is Strategic and Specific, Measurable,*

*Attainable, Results Oriented and Time bound(SMART)*



# Chapter 4: **Building Powerful Relationships**

Jennifer Coats, Angie Gray, Jennifer McCullah



# Lead More, Manage Less

*“Leadership complements management; it doesn’t replace it.”*

(Kotter, 1999, p.52)

Leadership’s focus is **PEOPLE**.

Management’s focus is **SYSTEMS**.

*“Strong leadership without management can result in chaos, and strong management without leadership creates excessively bureaucratic schools where engagement is minimal and accountability for implementation is practically absent.” - Timothy Kanold*

# Model Strong Relationships

How the **school leader** treats, communicates with, and relates to the guiding coalition and staff sets the tone for relationships in the school.

A **first step** in modeling strong relationships in your guiding coalition is to develop **team norms** that show expectations for both the school leader and guiding coalition members.

**Team** developed and approved norms

**Team** refers to norms during meetings

**Team** addresses violations

Team norms should support powerful relationships. The relationship among the guiding coalition members provide the critical foundation for the rest of the staff.

# Building Trust

Trust is “the emotional glue that binds followers and leaders together...the basic ingredient of all organizations, the lubrication that makes it possible for organizations to work.” (Bennis & Nanus, 2007)

Principal sets the tone for building trust, but **cannot do the work alone!**

Key component: “We do what we say we will do”

Common obstacles or threats to trust:

- Top-down decision making
- Poor communication
- Inconsistent or inadequate follow through
- Frequent turnover of administration

# Building Trust

Five key ingredients to building trust:

1. Benevolence: showing consideration and sensitivity to employees' needs and interests
2. Honesty
3. Openness: sharing information; disclosure of facts, alternative, intentions, judgements, and feelings
4. Reliability: when one can depend on another consistently
5. Competence: ability to perform a task as expected and according to standards

# Be, Do, Have Model

The goal of becoming more powerful by increasing level of trust can be approached in one of three different ways:

- As victim: desire to HAVE drives everything; e.i. “I don’t have time yet!”; they wait for outside conditions to change before they move forward in their work
- As worker: seeks goals in the “do, have, be” order; thinks that “the more I do, the happier or more successful I will be”; often becomes exhausted with some much work as they “do, do, do”
- As winner: follows “be, do, have” model; begins with “What do I need or want to be?”; when they decide what they want to be and what they must do to accomplish that goal, the HAVE falls into place by itself

# Rebuilding Broken Trust

You cannot ignore broken trust in a relationship. It must be addressed and guiding coalitions must make it a point to address trust consistently.

Broken trust occurs with:

- Unfulfilled promises
- Broken confidentiality
- Other types of betrayal

Key points to keep in mind when trying to repair broken trust:

- Apologies are always good
- Sincerity and timing matter
- Repair is a bilateral process.

# Empower Others

Respect + Competence + Personal regard for others + Integrity = Empowerment

Eight elements to empower culture:

1. Delegate for individual growth and development
2. Establish specific expectations for the outcomes
3. Give staff freedom over how they complete tasks or assignments
4. Offer resources, tools, and support necessary to accomplish the work
5. Provide specific and meaningful feedback
6. Be receptive to the staff's points of view and suggestions
7. Connect their work back to the vision of the school
8. Show appreciation for their contributions

# Seek Information and Awareness and Acknowledge Needs

Our Administrative Team:

- \*Reminds employees that he or she is valued
- \*Involve everyone
- \*Acknowledge that you are listening



# Conclusion and Reflection

## Recipe for a Successful Guiding Coalition:

Ingredients: The right staff members with the right qualities and shared purpose to transform the school into a high-performing collaborative culture.

+

The process to create, develop, and sustain a *powerful* guiding coalition.

=

An atmosphere and culture in which trust and empowerment are readily available and accessible.

# Chapter 5: Promoting Collaborative Leadership

- Eisenhower's philosophy of leadership
  - If you try to push a piece of string across a flat surface, it bunches up making it difficult to move, if you pull the string, it moves easily.
- Leaders are more effective when they lead or pull by being encouraging, providing resources and professional learning, and supporting the efforts of others.
- "A guiding coalition that collectively pulls as a team exhibits what is described as collaborative leadership" (p. 107)

# Benefits of Collaborative Leadership

- Leadership is leveraged: team shoulders the responsibility
- Multiple leaders offer multiple perspectives
- Responsibilities can rotate among members
- Teams can develop processes and systems that are sustainable
- Builds capacity and re-energizes teams

Situational leadership: using the best style of leadership to match a specific set of circumstances.

# Strategies to Implement Collaborative Leadership

- Clarify your primary purpose for the change
- Keep communication lines open
- Build partnership skills
- Don't waste time
- Don't be afraid to show vulnerability
- Use the PLC Block-and-Tackle System
- Review, Redo, and Renew

# Growth Mindset vs. Innovator's Mindset

- Embrace challenges to grow and learn
  - Show perseverance in the face of obstacles
  - Hard work and effort= success
  - Criticism provides feedback for learning
  - Other's success is a source of inspiration and education
- Seek challenges as opportunities to grow and develop
  - When obstacles arise, they shift thinking to look for opportunities and possibilities
  - Hard work and effort are continuous, they believe it is important to make time to create new solutions/ideas for growth
  - Criticism provides feedback that creates the opportunity to implement new and better idea for learning from others
  - Other's success is something to learn from and modify to apply in their own context to create success

# Leadership for All Personalities

- The initial challenge of leadership is to get all faculty members with varying personality styles, degrees of knowledge, motivation, and experience to move together in a new direction.
  - True colors: spectrum of four colors to represent and differentiate four distinct personality styles
- The Oranges (Promoters)
  - “Fire, ready, aim!”
- The Blues (Supporters)
  - “Ready, ready, ready, aim, fire!”
- The Golds (Controllers)
  - Ready, aim, fire, fire, fire!”
- The Greens (Analyzers)
  - “Aim, aim, aim, ready, fire!”
- Every person is a unique blend of the four colors or styles; no colors in the system good, bad, wrong, or right.

# Sample Strategies for Leading and Collaborating with Different Styles

- The Oranges (Promoters)
  - Work in teams, encourage movement, use turn-and-talk to process information, use brainstorming, use role-playing activities, include humor
- The Blues (Supporters)
  - Great and introduce team members, use icebreakers, take breaks, provide snacks, celebrate, recognize individuals for their efforts, use group learning activities that encourage participation, allow for staff to share personal experiences
- The Golds (Controllers)
  - Use agendas, announce decision-making options, announce team roles, start and end on time, announce and get agreement on ground rules, use graphic organizers, give opportunities to facilitate
- The Greens (Analyzers)
  - Provide data, give time to process information, provide reviews and wrap-ups, give time for reflections, clarification, questions, and answers, get desired outcomes and learning outcomes, provide research based-information