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Professional Learning Communities: Empowering Site Leadership Through Staff Development and Training

Plan and Process for Commitment and Longevity for BISD PLC Initiative

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# Overview

The most promising strategy for sustained school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community. By definition, a professional learning community (PLC) 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. PLC’s operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is job-embedded learning for educators. When district leaders commit to districtwide PLC implementation, they base their decision on a clear understanding of what PLC implementation means, and what it will take to make it happen. The information presented will reflect the foundational components in continuing the journey toward districtwide implementation of PLC’s.

Goals:

1. By the end of the 2018 - 2019 school year, at least 9 out of 18 schools will be *sustaining* as measured by the [PLC Continuum](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Fnsft6_PJPTDx_3BIt33453n2CAgB_gYe8YSHYggMFc/edit#gid=0).
2. By the end of the 2019 -2020 school year, campuses will meet the [district outcome goals](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1btKA12zPNYGzQLC51VFxFYLLunUMPGu73gkhDgRP1ic/edit#slide=id.g4142067399_1_117) for student performance and will be a *Sustaining* PLC District.

# [PLC Professional Development Plans by Campus: Monitoring the Process](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TwfAwY5NJptHE2CKkvZ7dVTOEl-3KkDXl1qjBa5RVoU/edit)

As part of our BISD culture, we “measure what we treasure.” We want to ensure, however, that we are measuring what really matters. As Rich Smith (2015) states, “ Monitoring the wrong things can lead to an enormous waste of time and energy and turn collaboration into a bureaucratic paper chase.” Our goal is to effectively provide support, coaching, and guidance as schools move toward institutionalizing the process. The link above will be a tool for principals and principal supervisors to evaluate our progress as we work toward achieving effective and successful PLC implementation.

# Conclusion

Commitment to implementation must be a multiyear process that continually deepens understanding of the PLC process. Districtwide PLC implementation must be well thought out and focused with an intentional commitment from district leadership. Our goal is to create a long term plan, or system that produces high levels of learning for all students in BISD. Above all, we must never lose focus on our ultimate goal: to *ensure learning for all.* Our efforts to seek best practices, to use the Eight-Step Process to inform instructional practices, and ensure learning through a collaborative culture will exemplify our quest in setting the standard for educational excellence.

# [2018 - 2019 Timelines for Conferences and On-Site Training](https://docs.google.com/document/d/14J5X1ChG3JJ2WKkT1_WZi2GDl7Hw2AKYa5fyKChACu0/edit?ts=5b929b3c)

In an effort to deepen knowledge and expertise at school sites, districts should select cohorts of campus leaders (teachers) from each campus to go through the initial PLC training. The goal is to build capacity among the teams and create PLC *leaders among leaders,* or guiding coalitions*.*  Teachers returning from cohort training bring new excitement, ideas, and perspectives back to their teams. This new energy reignites teams’ and schools’ desires to collaborate with an intense focus on student learning. It is critical that the principal attend training with the cohorts to signify the importance of the training, and to embrace the goals of ensuring learning for all teachers and students. We are recommending that district leaders (Cabinet) attend, also, so that all attendees see the district’s commitment to PLC implementation.

# [Budgetary and Personnel Resources to Ensure Successful Implementation](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1r065l-R-sGKRzYhZReZqPb_N_chVBtQjKaFCy3clhVM/edit)

While some campuses have Title funds or campus funds available to send staff to PLC professional development, ensuring all campuses are able to send a cohort to training on Professional Learning Communities is a priority. To ensure each campus can do this, it is essential that the district provides funding and a designated number of slots for PLC training for each campus. Campuses would be encouraged to supplement with campus funds by sending staff beyond the number of allocated slots. The sheet above provides an estimate of professional development expenditures for one, five, or ten slots per campus.

# Works Cited

Smith, Richard W. *How to Launch PLCs in Your District.* Solution Tree Press, 2015.

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