

Weekly Memo

"Pride in Excellence"

What's Happening This Week?

Monday:

Wear your favorite Super Hero shirt!

2nd Grade Planning Day

Bilingual Committee

Meeting 1 - 3 pm

Tuesday: Wear your favorite sunglasses!

Bus Evacuation Drills

IEP Marathon Day

Staff Meeting 3:25- 4:25 pm

Submit Supply Requests to Yesenia by 4:00 pm.

Wednesday:

Wear your favorite hat / cap

6th Grade Planning Day

Early Release Day PLCs.

Thursday:

Wear your favorite Crazy Socks

School Climate Training

Great Shake 10:18 am

Friday:

1st Grade Planning Day

Lion Pride Spirit Day -

STUDENT HELPERS:

Pledge of Allegiance: Morris

Cafeteria Helpers: Ellison

YARD DUTY:

Primary:

Yrigollen, Denney

Upper:

Sumner/ Sigala

After School:

Fourth Grade

REMINDERS:

*Students that are not in their

seats at 8:05 am are tardy.

Please send them to the office for a tardy slip. *Please make sure

that you are taking accurate attendance! PLEASE TAKE

ATTENDANCE BY 8:45 am:

Attendance:

Students - 96%

Staff:

Certificated- 96%

Classified - 94%

LCAP GOAL 1 - College and Career Ready

The District TOSA is available to work with grade levels with Close Reading Strategies.

LCAP Goal 2 - Proficiency for All - Grade level

planning days continue this week. How are we mapping the essential standards that students need to know?

LCAP Goal 3 - Safety

October is Bully Prevention Awareness Month. Don't forget to remind your students of the dress up days for "Stand Up for Others" week.

LCAP Goal 4 - Family and Community Involvement

The Art Fair and Family Reading Night is next week. What activities can we do to support reading at home?

LCAP Goal 5 - Retaining Qualified Staff - Attached to the Weekly is an article on PLCs.

LCAP 6 - Student

Support. Are there any students that would benefit from the CICO process?

Coming Up:

Art Fair / Reading Night

10/24. Student of the Month 10/26. PTO

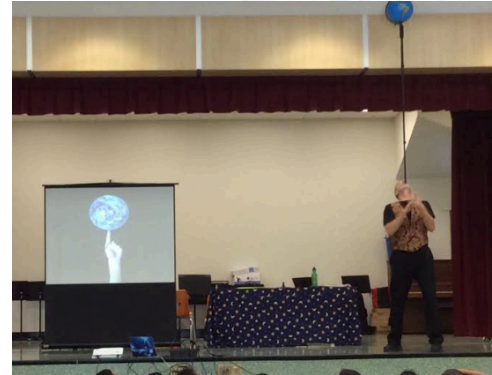
Halloween Dance 10/26

Halloween Parade 10/31 10:30 am



RECYCLING ASSEMBLY

October 9, 2018



Question of the Week: When are the bus evacuation drills?

Email answers to: jiverson@soledad.k12.ca.us



Elvia is collecting new or used costumes for students that might not be able to dress up this year. Please donate any that you may have!



**October is
Bullying
Awareness
Month**

What Are Professional Learning Communities?

It has been interesting to observe the growing popularity of the term *professional learning community*. In fact, the term has become so commonplace and has been used so ambiguously to describe virtually any loose coupling of individuals who share a common interest in education that it is in danger of losing all meaning. This lack of precision is an obstacle to implementing PLC processes because, as Mike Schmoker observes, “clarity precedes competence” (2004a, p. 85). Thus, we begin with an attempt to clarify our meaning of the term. To those familiar with our past work, this step may seem redundant, but we are convinced that redundancy can be a powerful tool in effective communication, and we prefer redundancy to ambiguity.

We have seen many instances in which educators assume that a PLC is a program. For example, one faculty told us that each year they implemented a new program in their school. In the previous year it had been PLC, the year prior to that it had been “understanding by design,” and the current year it was “differentiated instruction.” They had converted the names of the various programs into verbs, and the joke on the faculty was that they had been “UBDed, PLCed, and Died.” The PLC process is not a program. It cannot be purchased, nor can it be implemented by anyone other than the staff itself. Most importantly, it is ongoing—a continuous, never-ending process of conducting schooling that has a profound impact on the structure and culture of the school and the assumptions and practices of the professionals within it.

We have seen other instances in which educators assume that a PLC is a meeting—an occasional event when they meet with colleagues to complete a task. It is not uncommon for us to hear, “My PLC meets Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.” This perception of a PLC is wrong on two counts. First, the PLC is the larger organization and not the individual teams that comprise it. While collaborative teams are an essential part of the PLC process, the sum is greater than the individual parts. Much of the work of a PLC cannot be done by a team but instead requires a schoolwide or districtwide effort. So we believe it is helpful to think of the school or district as the PLC and the various collaborative teams as the building blocks of the PLC. Second, once again, the PLC process

has a pervasive and ongoing impact on the structure and culture of the school. If educators meet with peers on a regular basis only to return to business as usual, they are not functioning as a PLC. So the PLC process is much more than a meeting.

So, what is a PLC? We argue that it 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. The following section examines the elements of the PLC process more closely.

A Focus on Learning

The very essence of a *learning* community is a focus on and a commitment to the learning of each student. When a school or district functions as a PLC, educators within the organization embrace high levels of learning for all students as both the reason the organization exists and the fundamental responsibility of those who work within it. In order to achieve this purpose, the members of a PLC create and are guided by a clear and compelling vision of what the organization must become in order to help all students learn. They make collective commitments clarifying what each member will do to create such an organization, and they use results-oriented goals to mark their progress. Members 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.

A corollary assumption is that if the organization is to become more effective in helping all students learn, the adults in the organization must also be continually learning.

Therefore, structures are created to ensure staff members engage in job-embedded learning as part of their routine work practices.

There is no ambiguity or hedging regarding this commitment to learning. Whereas many schools operate as if their primary purpose is to ensure that children are taught, PLCs are dedicated to the idea that their organization exists to ensure that all students learn

essential knowledge, skills, and dispositions. All the other characteristics of a PLC flow directly from this epic shift in assumptions about the purpose of the school.

A Collaborative Culture With a Focus on Learning for All

Collaboration is a means to an end, not the end itself. In many schools, staff members are willing to collaborate on a variety of topics as long as the focus of the conversation stops at their classroom door. In a PLC, *collaboration* represents a systematic process in which teachers work together interdependently in order to impact their classroom practice in ways that will lead to better results for their students, for their team, and for their school.

Collective Inquiry Into Best Practice and Current Reality

The teams in a PLC engage in collective inquiry into both best practices in teaching and best practices in learning. They also inquire about their current reality including their present practices and the levels of achievement of their students. They attempt to arrive at consensus on vital questions by building shared knowledge rather than pooling opinions. They have an acute sense of curiosity and openness to new possibilities.

Collective inquiry enables team members to develop new skills and capabilities that in turn lead to new experiences and awareness. Gradually, this heightened awareness transforms into fundamental shifts in attitudes, beliefs, and habits which, over time, transform the culture of the school.

Working together to build shared knowledge on the best way to achieve goals and meet the needs of clients is exactly what *professionals* in any field are expected to do, whether it is curing the patient, winning the lawsuit, or helping all students learn. Members of a *professional* learning community are expected to work and learn together.

Action Orientation: Learning by Doing

Members of PLCs are action oriented: they move quickly to turn aspirations into action and visions into reality. They understand that the most powerful learning always occurs in a context of taking action, and they value engagement and experience as the most effective teachers. Henry Mintzberg's (2005) observation about training leaders applies here: deep learning requires experience, which requires taking action. It "is as much

about doing in order to think as thinking in order to do” (p. 10). In fact, the very reason that teachers work together in teams and engage in collective inquiry is to serve as catalysts for action.

A Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Inherent to a PLC are a persistent disquiet with the status quo and a constant search for a better way to achieve goals and accomplish the purpose of the organization. Systematic processes engage each member of the organization in an ongoing cycle of:

- Gathering evidence of current levels of student learning
- Developing strategies and ideas to build on strengths and address weaknesses in that learning
- Implementing those strategies and ideas
- Analyzing the impact of the changes to discover what was effective and what was not
- Applying new knowledge in the next cycle of continuous improvement

The goal is not simply to learn a new strategy, but instead to create conditions for a perpetual learning environment in which innovation and experimentation are viewed not as tasks to be accomplished or projects to be completed but as ways of conducting day-to-day business—*forever*. Furthermore, participation in this process is not reserved for those designated as leaders; rather, it is a responsibility of every member of the organization.

Results Orientation

Finally, members of a PLC realize that all of their efforts in these areas (a focus on learning, collaborative teams, collective inquiry, action orientation, and continuous improvement) must be assessed on the basis of results rather than intentions. Unless initiatives are subjected to ongoing assessment on the basis of tangible results, they represent random groping in the dark rather than purposeful improvement. As Peter Senge and colleagues conclude, "The rationale for any strategy for building a learning organization revolves around the premise that such organizations will produce dramatically improved results."

This focus on results leads each team to develop and pursue measurable improvement goals that are aligned to school and district goals for learning. It also drives teams to create a series of common formative assessments that are administered to students

multiple times throughout the year to gather ongoing evidence of student learning. Team members review the results from these assessments in an effort to identify and address program concerns (areas of learning where many students are experiencing difficulty). They also examine the results to discover strengths and weaknesses in their individual teaching in order to learn from one another. Most importantly, the assessments are used to identify students who need additional time and support for learning. Frequent common formative assessments represent one of the most powerful tools in the PLC arsenal.

Please also see [What Is a “Professional Learning Community”?](#)

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Many, T. (2006). [Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work™](#), pp. 2-4.