

## Critical Elements of a PLC

The administrative team has had considerable discussion regarding the importance of creating shared knowledge about the critical elements of a PLC. While there are many component parts, in order to be functioning as a PLC, all elements need to be operational.

As an example, while teams might meet regularly and collegially to address teacher needs and learning, a PLC meets collaboratively to examine student learning and is focused on student achievement results. Similarly, while you may meet to work on an isolated element of a PLC, such as identifying power stands or developing common formative assessments, these elements are key parts of the whole.

There has been considerable good work done identifying what we want all students to learn. This fall, we will offer a course to help folks strengthen their understanding and use of common formative assessments, *common* in that they are administered to all and *formative* in that they help us know who has learned and who has not. A PLC team that has a grasp on this data can work within the team or the building-wide interventions to ensure gaps are addressed. When all of these elements are operational, a team can report that it is effectively working in a PLC.

## UPCOMING EVENTS, KUDOS AND DISTRICT DOINGS

**Kudos** to **Anna Nuttal** for receiving a \$6,900 grant award from the New Hampshire State Council on Art. The money will be used to establish **ArtWorks**, a program at PMS to expose students to potential careers in the arts.

**Friday, October 9th** will be **professional development day** in the district. PLC teams will be afforded time to look at data and develop SMART goals for the school year. Paraprofessionals are not scheduled to work this day.

The **Safe Routes to Schools Committee**, a group dedicated to encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle as well as increasing safety for those traveling to school on foot or by bike, has established **Thursday, October 29th as Walk to School Day**.

**Over the next month I will be able to spend a day at each building. I invite all interested staff to find time to participate and share your insights about the school district. The schedule below highlights the day long visits:**

PMS:	Friday, October 16th
Dondero:	Wednesday, October 21st
RJL Academy:	Thursday, October 22nd
New Franklin:	Wednesday, October 28th
PHS:	Monday, November 2nd
Little Harbour:	Thursday, November 5th



## Superintendent's Update

October 2009



**Portsmouth  
School  
Department**

*Educating all students by challenging them to become thinking, responsible, contributing citizens who continue to learn throughout their lives.*

## School Board Goals for '09 -'10

On September 22nd, the School Board established its goals for the 2009-2010 school year. These goals can be found on the district's website. A newsletter highlighting these efforts will be shared with the community in mid-October.

The school board's first goal speaks to their desire to realize the district's mission. The board will be "Supporting our efforts to build professional learning communities (PLCs) by reviewing and evaluating not only PLC implementation, but most importantly, the results of building level student achievement goals."

As the school year unfolds, principals will report to the school board on their building's progress toward PLC implementation. As the school year winds down, we expect to celebrate the student achievement goals each PLC team has developed and worked on during the year.

## Administrative Council PLC Goal for 2009-2010

Last spring a survey was administered to each school regarding PLC work in the district. For example, staff were asked : Has your team developed

goals for student learning? Across the schools, 85% of respondents answered yes. Last week, the administrative council revisited this survey data in order to establish its own SMART goal. The administrative team used a "data to goal" protocol that, from a district perspective, asked: *Which survey questions are most critical to see growth in this year? Which areas represent the greatest opportunity for growth?*

Using the protocol, two areas emerged as critical and offer the greatest opportunities for growth. Below are the survey areas:

### 1. How far along do you think your school is in working effectively as a PLC?

#### *We are already there*

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
13.6%	14.3%	5.9%	4.8%	0.0%	16.7%

#### *Most elements are in place*

50.8%	68.6%	29.4%	40.5%	14.3%	61.1%
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#### *We've started, but we have a way to go*

32.2%	17.1%	64.7%	52.4%	85.7%	22.2%
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#### *We have not started in any significant way.*

3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%
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### 2. To what extent has a vision for what makes an effective PLC been discussed?

#### **We have discussed and reached consensus on that vision**

School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
23.5%	43.8%	23.5%	24.4%	57.1%	35.3%

#### **We have talked about it as a faculty, but we have not reached consensus.**

41.2%	50.0%	70.6%	51.2%	14.3%	47.1%
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#### **We have been presented some information about it with no discussion.**

23.5%	0.0%	5.9%	22.0%	28.6%	17.6%
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#### **We have not talked or heard about it.**

11.8%	6.3%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%
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In light of this discussion, the Administrative Council PLC (ACPLC) set an initial SMART goal for the year.

**By the end of 2009-2010, at least 90% of staff will be able to identify that most or all elements of an effective PLC are in place in their building.**

The baseline data from the spring shows that 11% responded "we're already there" and 49% believe most elements are in place for a total of 60%.