

PLC Project Leadership Team Packet

Information for Leadership Team Members

COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 15, 2012

PLC Project Training 2012-13

In order to support all schools in the secondary reorganization process, Columbia Public Schools will participate in the Heart of Missouri's Regional Professional Development Center's 3-year Professional Learning Communities Project. Each secondary school will identify a 7-member leadership team to participate in systemic and continuous professional development (see trainings below). Trainings will be facilitated by the Heart of MO Regional Professional Development Center. Onsite coaching for leadership teams will be provided by Kathy Ritter (former Rock Bridge High School Principal).

Summer 2012 Academy Leadership Team Training	July 16, 17, and 18 – 1818 W. Worley July 16 a.m. saved for Principals and administrators only and p.m. all team members
School Year 2012-13 Leadership Team Training - 5 full day trainings across the year	<u>Before school year begins:</u> August 1 – 1818 W. Worley <u>During the school year:</u> Oct. 11 – 1818 W. Worley Feb 21 – Location TBD April 30 – 1818 W. Worley <u>After school year ends:</u> May 29 – Location TBD June 11 (optional date if in school on May 29 due to snow days)
Principal only trainings – 2 days	Two dates during school year; can be hosted at a school site or at the RPDC, could be secondary principals' meetings.
Site visits/coaching by Kathy Ritter	Minimum of 4 visits per building by RPDC facilitator

*Optional: January 28-29 Powerful Learning Conference at Tan-Tar-A: Slots reserved for a few members of each school team to attend this conference. Funds to cover this cost will be the responsibility of each school.

**Missouri Professional Learning Communities
Curriculum/Training Framework**

Strand #1: Foundation for Learning Community Culture			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
A. Mission			
B. Vision			
C. Values / Commitments	C. Values / Commitments		
	D. SMART Goals		
E. School Culture	E. School Culture		

Strand #2: How Effective Building-Level Leadership Teams Work			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
A. Shared Leadership	A. Shared Leadership		
B. Meeting Conditions			
C. Communication			
D. Change Process	D. Change Process		
E. Progress Monitoring	E. Progress Monitoring	E. Progress Monitoring	E. Progress Monitoring
F. Feedback to Teams			
G. Support			

Strand #3: Administrative Leadership (Duties, responsibilities, and expectations of an administrative leader in the PLC process)			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
A. Modeling	A. Modeling	A. Modeling	A. Modeling
B. Change	B. Change	B. Change	B. Change
C. Communication	C. Communication	C. Communication	C. Communication
D. Shared Leadership	D. Shared Leadership	D. Shared Leadership	D. Shared Leadership

Strand #4: How Effective Teams Work			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
A. Meeting Conditions			
B. Collaborative Meetings	B. Collaborative Meetings	B. Collaborative Meetings	B. Collaborative Meetings
C. Corollary Questions	C. Corollary Questions		
D. Critical Issues	D. Critical Issues		
E. Evidence			
F. Focus on Results from Data	F. Focus on Results from Data		
G. Trust / Participation	G. Trust / Participation		

**Missouri Professional Learning Communities
Curriculum/Training Framework**

Strand #5: What Students Need to Know and Do			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
A. Essential Learning			
B. Identified ELOs			
	C. Unwrapped ELOs		
D. Instructional Timeline (map)	D. Instructional Timeline (map)		

Strand # 6: Assessment for/of Learning			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
	A. Purpose and Type		
	B. Methods		
		C. Feedback	
		D. Grading Practices	
	E. Student Involvement	E. Student Involvement	
		F. Scoring Guides	
	G. Data	G. Data	

Strand #7: Systematic Process for Intervention/Student Success			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
A. Collective Responsibility			
B. Data Communication			
C. Tier 1	C. Tier 1	C. Tier 1	
	D. Tier 2	D. Tier 2	
		E. Tier 3	
F. Protocols for Enrichment	F. Protocols for Enrichment		
		G. School-Wide Implementation	

Strand #8: Continuous Improvement			
YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
		A. Induction	
	B. Action Research	B. Action Research	
C. Data Analysis	C. Data Analysis	C. Data Analysis	
D. Celebration	D. Celebration		
F. Fidelity	F. Fidelity	F. Fidelity	F. Fidelity

Characteristics of a Professional Learning Community

- Leadership team [teachers and administrator(s)] meets regularly to share in the decision making process and to monitor building and team goals.
- Teachers collaborate in teams within a grade level/department or in groups with common topics. Participation is not optional.
- Teacher collaboration time must occur within the school day and within the school calendar year.
- Mission, Vision, Values-collective commitments, & Goals are the pillars of the schools culture.
- Focus is on learning for ALL students.
- Data is analyzed to develop SMART Goals (district, building, classroom/department).
- Common formative and summative assessments monitor student learning and instructional practices.
- Systematic interventions and incentives are in place.

The Leadership Team which attends the training sessions:

- Are learners, embrace change
- Are respected across the school
- Are able to confront conflict and understand conflict is part of change and learning
- Risk takers and use inquiry to learn and 'try out' strategies
- Understand and use data

The members of the Leadership team for the PLC project are expected to:

- Attend all trainings
- Meet routinely with the building leadership team to help plan school improvement practices across the school using the knowledge gained from the trainings
- Follow the MO PLC Implementation Rubric, examine Strand 2 below, examine the general criteria for Leadership Team members A-G

Strand #2: How Effective Building-Level Leadership Teams Work

	Deep Implementation	Proficient Implementation	Partial Implementation	Minimal Implementation
A. Shared Leadership	Proficient implementation plus: Ongoing monitoring and adjustments are evident over time.	The leadership team facilitates <u>and employs</u> practices of shared leadership with delineation of roles, processes and responsibilities (district leaders, principal leaders, teacher leaders).	The leadership team facilitates practices of shared leadership inconsistently and/or in a limited fashion.	Little or no evidence of implementation.
B. Meeting Conditions	Proficient implementation plus: Exceeds the time parameters of proficient	The leadership team meets at least twice monthly for a minimum of 45 minutes with appropriate resources and tools (e.g. markers, displays, appropriate data, etc.).	The meeting conditions are inconsistent, or implemented in a limited fashion.	Little or no evidence of implementation.
C. Communication	Proficient implementation plus: Ongoing monitoring and adjustments are evident over time.	The leadership team effectively communicates using norms, roles, and protocols (i.e., agenda, minutes, decision-making tools, inquiry processes, conflict resolution strategies).	The leadership team uses norms and protocols inconsistently and/or in a limited fashion.	Little or no evidence of implementation.
D. Change Process	Proficient implementation plus: Ongoing monitoring and adjustments are evident over time.	The leadership team facilitates the change process and models learning as the top priority for the school, advocating for the work of PLCs.	The leadership team facilitates the change process and models learning as the top priority for the school, advocating for the work of inconsistently and/or in a limited fashion.	Little or no evidence of implementation.
E. Progress Monitoring	Proficient implementation plus: Ongoing monitoring and adjustments are evident over time.	The leadership team reviews and provides progress monitoring of collaborative team goals and school goals.	The leadership team reviews and progress monitors team /school goals inconsistently and/or in a limited fashion.	Little or no evidence of implementation.
F. Feedback to Teams	Proficient implementation plus: Ongoing monitoring and adjustments are evident over time.	The leadership team regularly reviews and acknowledges collaborative team meeting records and gives feedback to the teams to ensure fidelity of PLC implementation.	The leadership team reviews and acknowledges collaborative team meeting records and gives feedback to the teams to ensure fidelity of PLC implementation inconsistently and/or in a limited fashion.	Little or no evidence of implementation.
G. Support	Proficient implementation plus: Ongoing monitoring and adjustments are evident over time.	The leadership team provides the necessary supports for effective collaboration and communication processes (i.e., time, high-quality professional development, team structures, etc.).	The leadership team inconsistently provides support for collaboration and communication processes (i.e., time, high-quality professional development, team structures, etc.), or does so in a limited fashion.	Little or no evidence of implementation.

Notes/Evidence:

THE LEARNING Principal

EVERY EDUCATOR ENGAGES IN EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EVERY DAY SO EVERY STUDENT ACHIEVES

Inside

- Standards guide leaders of professional learning, p. 2
- Balance is key for teacher leaders, p. 3
- Tool: Three levels of text, p. 6
- Tool: Descriptive review process, p. 7

Fall 2011

Vol. 7, No. 1

Leadership teams set the course for school improvement



By Valerie von Frank

Principals don't have to do it all. When it comes to leading school-based professional learning, a leadership team that coordinates what and how staff members learn is the better way to go, according to Linda Munger, a national education consultant and leader in professional learning.

"School leadership teams are based on the understanding that change is needed, change must occur at the school level, and school leaders create understanding of change and a sense of urgency and purpose for it," Munger writes (Munger & von Frank, 2010, p. 12).

While the principal sets the vision, the leadership team sets the course and coordinates faculty work to reach the goal. Principals distribute leadership to get teacher voices at the table when planning where to focus professional learning and when assessing progress toward goals.

"Schools need teacher leaders together with administration to guide school-based professional learning," Munger said in an interview. "They need to work together

with representatives from across the school. However the school organizes its professional learning teams, those teams need representation on a leadership team."

Leadership teams are different from other school-based teams, noted Munger. The leadership team takes responsibility for activating the school improvement plan through school-based professional learning and monitors progress, she said.

"Leadership teams make the school improvement plan come alive," Munger said. "In the past, I think we've just said to principals, 'School-based professional learning: Bless you, go do it.' Leaders at the school need to know what to do to have learning happen."

DEFINING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Principals begin by ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of quality professional learning, she said. (Learning Forward's definition of professional development is available at www.learningforward.org/standfor/definition.cfm.)

Continued on p. 4



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Continued from p. 1

Munger said many educators still see school-based learning as a book study or a workshop that, instead of being hosted at the district level, involves an expert coming to the school.

"They haven't defined learning well enough to buy into opportunities for learning," she noted.

School-based professional learning should involve educators working together to identify the area of greatest need for the individual school, to align with the district's goals, and to structure learning for teachers through team meetings, classroom observations, and other job-embedded strategies, said Munger. Leadership team members don't provide the professional development for colleagues as much as coordinate data examination, research effective strategies to meet specific needs, and work with the administration to ensure the goals the staff set are strategically aligned with district-level priorities.

"It's really all about the team leading the learning at the school," Munger said. "Schools need to put the learning into the team."

School teams need to understand what school-based professional learning really is, she said. That includes standards for professional learning and the definition of a cycle of improvement, as well as understanding how to evaluate staff members' progress toward reaching the goals of professional learning and student achievement.

Having a leadership team head these efforts is more likely to lead to schoolwide success, she said, because the principal isn't shouldering the burden alone. By having

representatives from grade-level or department teams on the leadership team, the representatives:

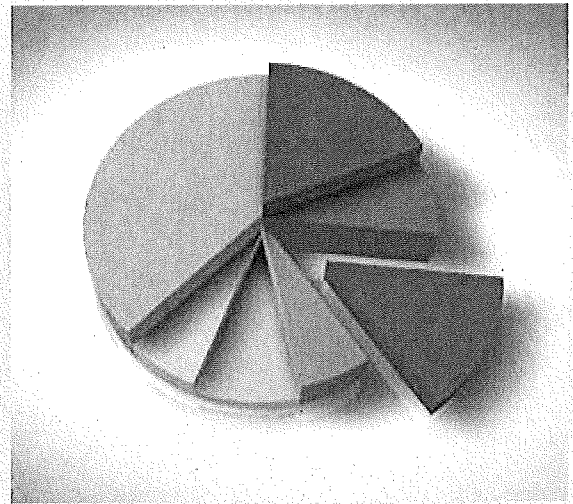
- Learn and use protocols they can bring back to their teams;
- Facilitate communication; and
- Ensure accountability by reporting learning teams' progress toward the school goal to the leadership team.

Munger likens a teacher group leading professional learning to students working in a cooperative group rather than working alone.

"If you give kids a worksheet to do that they can do on their own, they're not going to buy into a cooperative group," she said. "If teachers are just writing a lesson plan, they may not need a group. If they are learning the Common Core standards or how to score student writing, those are things they can't do by themselves. If you're implementing something new, you may need others' help."

CREATING A LEADERSHIP TEAM

Principals setting out to create a strong leadership team



The leadership team's role

School leadership team members lead and support professional learning by:

- Adopting school goals and selecting strategies to achieve them;
- Understanding student data and using data to set school goals;
- Monitoring implementation of school action plans and progress toward goals;
- Establishing learning teams and guiding the teams' focus;
- Recommending priorities for structuring and scheduling learning teams;
- Keeping staff focused on improving student performance;
- Evaluating potential initiatives and opportunities.

Source: Hirsh, 2007.

carefully evaluate potential members' knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Principals may select members, but may ask first for volunteers who are committed to the process and willing to serve. The principal may then consider how closely teachers match the desired knowledge, attitude, and skill levels and may need to plan some specific learning that team members will need in order to grow into the role.

Some criteria for selecting those to serve on the leadership team are:

- Respect for and influence among colleagues;
- Knowledge and leadership capacity;
- Unique or specialized perspective that the individual would bring to the team;
- Grade-level or content-area expertise;

Continued on p. 5

Continued from p. 4

- Specialized training;
- Relationships with key members of the staff;
- Sense of the school's history, traditions, and context;
- Aspiration to become an administrator; and
- Ability to balance the team makeup (McKeever, 2003, p. 52).

Teams typically include five to 12 members and participation rotates, with three years being a target to allow individuals to develop in the role (Munger & von Frank, 2010).

TEAM LEADERSHIP

Principals have a critical role in developing the leadership team members' abilities. To be able to develop capacity in individual learning teams, leadership team members need guidance on their roles, responsibilities, effective meetings, and understanding change and its impact, according to Munger. The job of finding ways to improve instruction to better meet students' needs then rests with the team.

"The leadership team is there to discuss strengths and what we, as a school, need to work on," Munger said. The leadership team takes responsibility for a cycle of continuous improvement.

"The team looks at teacher practice so that it's not just the principal," she said. "Somebody besides the principal needs to collect and monitor the data. It's the cycle of reviewing strengths and areas of improvement, and deciding what we need to go back and look at again."

Leadership team members collect data through student performance indicators, classroom observations of teacher practice, and teaching artifacts, she said, and continuously consider the next steps to schoolwide improvement. Munger suggests that leadership teams conduct learning walks that are separate in term and conduct from any administrative walk-throughs so that the sense of a formal evaluation is not present and teachers are more at ease with the purpose of the walks.

"Learning walks are just learning where teachers are in their instruction and what they may need to learn based on the school goal," she said. "Then the team comes back to look at the data and determine whether they see the learning the same way or are looking at it differently. Teachers are much more open to learning walks (rather than evaluation), and the principal feels better that it's not about him or her doing all the data collection" to plan staff professional learning.

While it takes work, the shift to a leadership team leading professional learning can shift faculty members' views of their own teaching practice and foster an environment more focused on mutual accountability for student achievement rather than fear of evaluation, Munger said. She said

numerous schools and districts with which she works across the country are making the shift.

GREEN BAY, WIS.

In Wisconsin, Mark Smith, principal of Green Bay's Edison Middle School, is trying to put his school on the cutting edge. He has increased the district's scheduled early release days for professional learning from four to six for his building and, based on Munger's counsel, created a leadership team that "knows how to work through a rhythm of learning."

Originally, Smith said, a school improvement committee included as many as 40 teacher representatives, a group that proved unwieldy. He formed a subcommittee of the group to focus specifically on instructional issues, a committee whose work was so effective that the administration and faculty decided to redefine the small group as the leadership team.

The team—administrators and representatives from various departments—researched instructional strategies around identified areas for improvement, specifically strategies for reading informational text. Team members recommended several strategies to the faculty as a whole, and Smith said individual teachers then selected the one or two strategies they felt they could best use. The approach has changed professional learning in the school, Smith said.

"It's no longer a passive learning opportunity," Smith said. When Edison teachers focus on professional learning, they work with and watch one another.

The new leadership team maintains a clearly defined focus on instruction and nurturing teacher learning around improved practice. Team members guide and facilitate others' learning.

"I'm learning along with the teachers," Smith said. "We have transformed from a group learning how to lead into a group of change agents leading by example; we have moved from the theoretical to the practical."

REFERENCES

Hirsh, S. (2007, Summer). White paper. Unpublished manuscript.

McKeever, B. & The California School Leadership Academy. (2003). *Nine lessons of successful school leadership teams*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd.

Munger, L. & von Frank, V. (2010). *Change, lead, succeed: Building capacity with school leadership teams*. Oxford, OH: NSDC.

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Team Leaders in a Professional Learning Community

Posted on July 22, 2009, by [Janel Keating](#) and [Robert Eaker](#)

By Robert Eaker and Janel Keating

Collaborative teams are the engines that drive professional learning communities. It is simply impossible to ensure high levels of learning for all students if teachers are working in isolation. The quality of work performed by teams depends on team leaders who join with their principal to direct the team's work ensuring that the team is focusing on the right things and continually improving, laboring together to improve student learning. Just as district success depends on the leadership capability of superintendents and school success depends to a great degree on the leadership of principals, the success of collaborative teams depends on the leadership capacity of team leaders.

Ironically, the role of team leader is one of the least examined aspects of school structure and culture. How are team leaders selected in traditional schools? The answers include asking for volunteers and saying, "We're willing to let you if you are willing to do it?", automatically rotating leaders each year, voting, and using the role of team leader to provide leadership opportunities for all teachers. One team shared that they used the "huddle up" strategy. It went like this: "You have 10 minutes to huddle up with your department and pick your team leader!" In short, in many districts, the role of team leader what they are to do and how they are selected goes largely unexamined.

Compare how team leaders are selected with other aspects of schooling. For example, think about how the head football coach at the high school selects his coaching staff. He would give considerable thought to who should fill each role. He wouldn't just rotate his offensive coordinators each year or simply search for volunteers! He would select the best person to fill the position, and the position of offensive coordinator would be well defined and the role expectations clearly communicated.

The first step in addressing the role of team leader is to collaboratively develop a position description. It is unreasonable to have expectations of team leaders without clarity regarding what the role entails. While each school culture is different, a few things would be consistent in schools seeking to function as professional learning communities. For example, team leaders are expected to lead the development and adherence to team norms, clarify and add meaning to essential learning outcomes for each subject or course, develop and utilize formative common assessments, analyze student learning student by student, skill by skill, direct students to specific additional time and support or enrichment, seek out and share best practice, and lead the team in a process of developing and monitoring the attainment of SMART goals. In short, the team leader fulfills the role of serving as the *leader* of the team!

Additionally, considerable thought should be given to the relationship between the principal and team leaders. Just as principals should be part of a high-performing administrative team at the district level, team leaders should play an integral role as members of the principal's leadership team at the school level. Leaders of professional learning communities, whether at the district

level, school level, or team level, are constantly and consistently modeling the work of high-performing collaborative teams; focusing on improving student learning; practicing, rehearsing, and modeling the work that ultimately will be expected of others; and developing a culture of continuous improvement.

Not only should thought be given to position descriptions and the team leader's role as part of the school leadership team; considerable thought must also be given to the kind of training and support team leaders need in order to be successful. If we expect team leaders to perform their duties at a high level, they deserve the support, resources, and training necessary to successfully do the job they are asked to do.

Reflection

Simply organizing a school into collaborative teams, in and of itself, will do little to improve learning levels of students. The fundamental question is, "What do collaborative teams do, and how well do they do it?" And the answer to this question depends, to a great degree, on the role of team leader. How they are selected and what they are expected to do.

In the White River School District, in Buckley, Washington, considerable thought has been given to the role of the team leader. Below you'll find the position description for a *team leader* that was collaboratively developed and is currently utilized across the district.

Position Description: Team Leader

A high-performing collaborative team of teachers is the heart and soul of a school that functions as a professional learning community, and a highly effective team is invariably led by an effective team leader. The success of the White River School District to achieve its mission of ensuring high levels of learning for all students depends to a great degree on the leadership capacity of the team leaders in each school. Thus, the selection of team leaders in White River is a thoughtful, informed, and deliberate decision of critical importance.

The educators who serve in this very important role are expected to coordinate and *lead* the work of their team. They will work closely with the Learning Improvement Coordinator within their building and *report directly to the building principal*. Additionally, team leaders serve as contributing members of the principal's administrative team. Team leaders are expected to articulate and communicate to the administration faculty questions, needs, and concerns, while at the same time communicating and explaining the rationale and specifics of the administration's plans and initiatives to the faculty. In short, the team leader serves as the *key communication link* between the administration and the faculty.

Team leaders are expected to enhance the capacity of their team to work *interdependently* to achieve *common* goals for which team members hold themselves *mutually accountable*. In fulfilling the role of leading their team, team leaders are responsible for such functions as leading the team in preparing and utilizing team norms, planning agendas, chairing meetings, serving as a direct communications link between the administration and the faculty, leading the work of teams in analyzing and improving student learning data, seeking out and experimenting with best

practices, leading the collaborative development and attainment of learning improvement goals, and identifying and communicating professional development needs. *Team leaders must work continually to enhance the effectiveness of their team by ensuring that the team focuses on the critical questions and practices associated with improving student learning in a manner that is reflective of the highest quality.*

Educators who serve as team leaders must have a *demonstrated record of effectiveness in their own teaching*, and they must have *earned the recognition and respect of their peers*. Team leaders must have excellent planning and organizational skills as well as the ability to work well with others. In order to enhance the leadership capacity and effectiveness of others, team leaders must model a desire and willingness to continually learn, constantly seeking ways to first improve themselves so that they can more effectively lead their team.

In short, the White River School District is seeking *outstanding* individuals to *lead* building-level collaborative teams of teachers in order to more effectively impact student learning levels, *student by student, skill by skill*, relentlessly and continually!

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3 Responses to “Team Leaders in a Professional Learning Community”

1.  Spelling says:

[July 24, 2009 at 1:13 pm](#)

My concern is that my Teacher Leadership Team has six members and we do not have all content groups represented on the Leadership Team. We are a small faculty of 33. We use to have 8 members (two were guidance counselors) and have been on the leadership team for 5-7 years. Several have asked to step down due to burn out and other obligations...we have had several young and enthusiastic teachers get on the team, yet every content team will not be represented, matter of fact I will have two social studies teachers on the Leadership Team. I am excited about getting some new blood on the team and am hoping the outgoing members will be assets outside the Leadership Team.

[Log in to Reply](#)

2.  grrlgenius says:

[July 26, 2009 at 2:09 am](#)

We had very good luck allowing everyone to take turns being the leader of their team. Each year, every team chooses a leader and a Jr. leader. The Jr. does all the grunt work for the team and is my (the principal) contact for business items to and from the team. The idea is that they are the backup in case the leader is absent and to help practice

guiding the team for a year before they are the one in charge. We support our leaders with monthly support and professional development meetings. Some people who were reluctant to step forward finally took a turn our third year in. Some of them absolutely floored me...lots of amazing leadership from unexpected people. We had a staff of 30, with six teams. We also had four others who managed our vertical curriculum teams, and lots of chances for others to participate in task forces like our School Plan or RtI groups. Overall, I think this rotating leadership structure has resulted in everyone feeling much more connected and capable. I am very proud to say that our school climate and much improved results are an indication of the success of this distributed leadership!

[Log in to Reply](#)

3.  *Bill Hall* says:

July 28, 2009 at 12:43 pm

Bob and Janel have hit the leadership nail on the head! Team leader identification, selection and training must be a formal and purposeful part of PLC development. These critical components cannot be left to chance. Whether we are talking about leading a PLC or sitting as a member of the school's leadership team/guiding coalition, training, coaching and mentoring must be in place for these essential positions to take root and flourish. The position description is a great idea.