

THE THREE

BIG IDEAS

OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Big Idea #1 *Focus on Learning*

Focusing on what teachers want students to learn, how they will know when each student has learned it, and how they will respond when a student experiences difficulty.

Big Idea #2 *Collaborative Culture*

A systematic process in which teachers work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice. Teachers work in teams and develop strategic and measurable goals for learning.

Big Idea #3 *Focus on Results*

Using common assessments to compare how students are doing relative to one another. Colleagues help each other to identify successful strategies to promote student learning, while also identifying students who may need additional time and support for learning.

Mission Statement

Barrington Public Schools will collaboratively inspire, challenge and support all students to become lifelong learners, empowered with the knowledge and skills to contribute to society and realize their full potential.

Web information:

<http://www.allthingsplc.info/articles/articles.php>



Professional Learning Communities

“Doing Whatever It Takes”



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What is a PLC?

Learning by Doing

The Barrington Public Schools (BPS) continues its efforts to develop as a Professional Learning Community (PLC). A PLC is an educational model developed by former Illinois School Supt. Dr. Richard DuFour. The concept promotes organizational change with the goal of developing a new culture that focuses on learning.

This brochure contains an explanation of the PLC philosophy as well as how BPS is working to implement it.

Why are we doing it in the BPS?

Characteristics of a PLC

- **Supportive and Shared Leadership**- Staff works collaboratively and is supported by leadership willing to share decision making
- **Shared Mission, Values and Vision** – A clear purpose centered on student learning
- **Collective Learning and Application of Learning** – Teachers collectively examine student learning and address the needs of students
- **Supportive Conditions** – The physical environment supports staff interaction
- **Shared Practice** – Teachers learn as a group and reflect on each other’s teaching strategies

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James Callahan, Principal

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PLCs AT WORK

Elementary Schools:

Review student progress and student performance in grade-level collaborative teams

Analyze data to inform instruction

Develop intervention teams that match staff expertise to student learning needs

Observe teaching and learning through classroom walkthroughs and visitations

Develop goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound

Revise schedules to meet student needs for intervention and/or enrichment

Middle School:

Directs students to after-school, Saturday morning or vacation week support

Administers frequent formative assessments

Responds to students' needs by providing intervention strategies through the Flexible Academic Support Time (FAST) period

High School:

Develops action plans/ learning goals by department

Establishes norms to guide meetings/ data discussions

Builds collaborative teams to explore specific curriculum/ technology issues

Designs formative assessments to determine student understanding

District Level:

Developed District Smart Goals

Established District administrative collaborative team

Established collaborative team norms

Provides PLC professional development sessions



PLC BENEFITS

Benefits for Staff

- Reduction of isolation of teachers
- Increased commitment to mission and goals of school
- Shared responsibility for students' success
- Creates new knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learners
- Increased meaning and understanding of the content teachers teach and roles they play with students
- Higher likelihood that teachers will be well-informed, professionally renewed, and inspired
- More satisfaction, higher morals, lower rates of absenteeism
- Advances in making teaching adaptations for students and changes for learners more quickly
- Commitment to making significant and lasting changes
- Higher likelihood of undertaking fundamental, systemic change

Benefits for Students

- Decreased drop-out rate and fewer 'cut' classes
- Lower rates of absenteeism
- Increased learning that is distributed more equitably in smaller high schools
- Larger academic gains in math, science, history, and reading than traditional schools
- Smaller achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds.