Master Plan:

Journey to Authentic

Professional Learning Communities

2022

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Journey to Authentic Professional Learning Communities

"PLCs are about people, practices, and processes – they are not a program. They are fundamentally a change in culture." (DuFour & Fullan, 2013)

Purpose/Intention

Professional learning by participants is applied in the context of professional practice and is participatory and collaborative in nature. Broward County Public Schools strongly supports the Professional Learning Community (PLC) as the primary method for providing professional learning to staff. Learning is content focused, inclusive of a variety of learning strategies, sustained over time and incorporates the appropriate use of technology to support the learning. Implementation is the transfer of the learning from the professional learning to the work setting. This occurs over time and requires support for implementation to embed the new learning into practice.

Authentic PLCs provide a process through which adult learners establish a framework for professional growth and development. Teachers throughout Broward engage in PLCs to improve student outcomes at schools throughout the district. PLCs use data to determine student and educator learning needs; develop common team goals; engage in learning to implement research-based strategies and use formative and summative data to evaluate the impact of what was learned and implemented. A goal of Broward Schools' is to establish and ensure authentic PLCs in all assessed grades/subjects and K-2. CARE (Curriculum, Assessment, Remediation and Enrichment) Cycles provide further structure of the work of PLCs by guiding team conversations and plans for learning in Curriculum, Assessment, Remediation and Enrichment.

Needs Assessment

In 2013, PDSS developed and disseminated a revised Professional Learning Community (PLC) model, including an innovation configuration (IC) to guide its implementation. We strive to strengthen this culture that supports adult learning by providing a framework that affords every educator an opportunity to enrich his/her practice. Building on identified strengths, successes and opportunities evident in the district the Journey to Authentic Professional Learning Communities IC has been updated to a Master Plan. This master plan is designed to strategically provide guidance and support to the district's PLCs.

As a part of the ongoing cycle of continuous improvement for professional development, PDSS reviews multiple sources to determine the focus and relevant content of the professional development plan. This Needs Assessment Report is informed by multiple sources which included peer review journals, education organizations, data reports generated by the BCPS Professional Learning (PL) survey representing the 2021-2022 school year; and feedback from participants in specific activities designed to develop the capacity of District Professional Learning (PL) providers and facilitators.

The BCPS survey received responses from 8,242 instructional staff. Approximately 3 of 5 instructional staff (60%) have worked with BCPS for 10 or more years and 70% of teachers have worked with the district for more than 5 years. Figure 1. provides detail of the number of years instructional staff reported working in BCPS district.

Figure 1: Percentage of Instructional Staff by Years of Experience with BCPS

Source: BCPS Professional Learning (PL)survey 2021-22

Empirical evidence supports the concept that teacher experience is associated teacher effectiveness and student achievement. Podolsky and Darling-Hammond (2019), conducted a study to determine the relationship between experience on student achievement gains. The study reviewed 30 studies examining the effect of teacher experience on student achievement. They found a positive and significant correlation between teacher experience and teacher effectiveness in 28 of the 30 studies. Some experts feel that teacher effectiveness decreases with longevity. Specifically, teaching experience can be modeled as a non-linear or curvilinear relationship to account for the trend that individuals might improve for a certain amount of time, but then their increases in productivity may taper off and eventually decline (Podolsky and Darling-Hammond, 2019). This is an indicator for the need of ongoing professional development and emphasizes the need for a collaborative approach to the professional learning opportunities provided for teachers in the BCPS district. Teachers make greater gains in their effectiveness when they teach in a supportive, collegial environment, or accumulate experience in the same grade, subject or district; and more experienced teachers confer benefits to their colleagues. Podolsky, A., Kini, T. and Darling-Hammond, L., 2019). Ladd and Sorensen's (2017) study of 250,000 middle school students in North Carolina over a five-year period found returns to teaching experience in several outcome areas through at least 12 years of experience in both math and English Language Arts (ELA). This study also found returns to teacher experience with respect to student absenteeism and other desirable student behaviors. It is imperative that the district's level of teaching experience is preserved and supported through professional development.

The experience of the district's staff is an important resource in creating an effective culture for student achievement but must be nurtured and supported through opportunities to identity trends, plan and understand their student's achievements through collaboration with colleagues. Integrating effectively structured professional learning opportunities into collegial environments can contribute to stronger returns to experience (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner, 2017). Many leading education organizations endorse to use and integration of professional learning communities (PLCs) as a source of continuous support for teachers. The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) (2021) stated, the very essence of a PLC is a focus on and a commitment to student learning. Meetings create a bond and builds a team of leaders within the school or district that eventually extends to build a strong team and enhance the strengths of others

that builds trust and makes relationships come to fruition. Learning Forward, The Professional Learning Association (n.d), specified, professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

In school year 2021-2022, approximately 98.5% of all eligible district staff registered to a PLC suggesting staff's interest and desire to make professional learning a priority to enhance their practice. Figure 2. below shows the total percentage of PLC registrations and registrations by school category.

Figure 2. PLC Registration Status 2021-2022

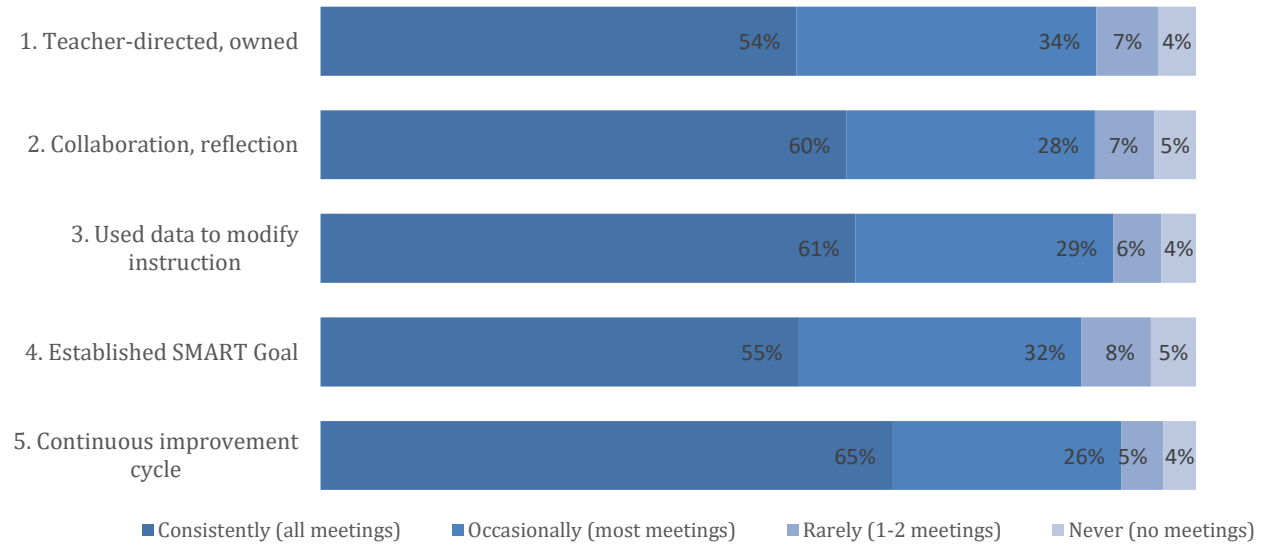
Grade Level	% Registered with a PLC 2021-22
Elementary	99%
High	94%
Middle	96%
Other	90%

The impact of BCPS PLCs was evaluated by using data reported in the BCPS PL survey 2021-22. The Instructional staff (n=4768) indicated the frequency with which they applied the following promising practices in a Professional Learning Community.

1. Focused on instructional methods that are teacher-directed and teacher-owned.
2. Supported a culture of collaboration and reflection to build capacity among all stakeholders.
3. Used data to modify instruction based on student needs.
4. Established and focused on a common SMART Goal for student learning.
5. Engaged in a cycle of continuous improvement to improve student outcomes.

The data indicated over 91% of teachers reported participating in a cycle of continuous improvement at most or all meetings. Most teachers (88%-90%) reported teacher-directed and teacher-owned methods, a culture of collaboration and reflection, and the use of data to modify instruction at most or all meetings. A slightly smaller percentage of teachers (86%) said that they established and focused on a common SMART Goal for student learning. Thirteen percent (13%) of teachers reported they rarely or never established and focused on a common SMART Goal for student learning. It is important to address the culture of collaboration, creating goals, planning and teacher engagement in a cycle of continuous improvement to improve student outcomes at the highest level possible by supporting the district's PLCs. Figure3 below details staff responses.

Figure 3. Frequency of Application of Professional Learning Community Practices

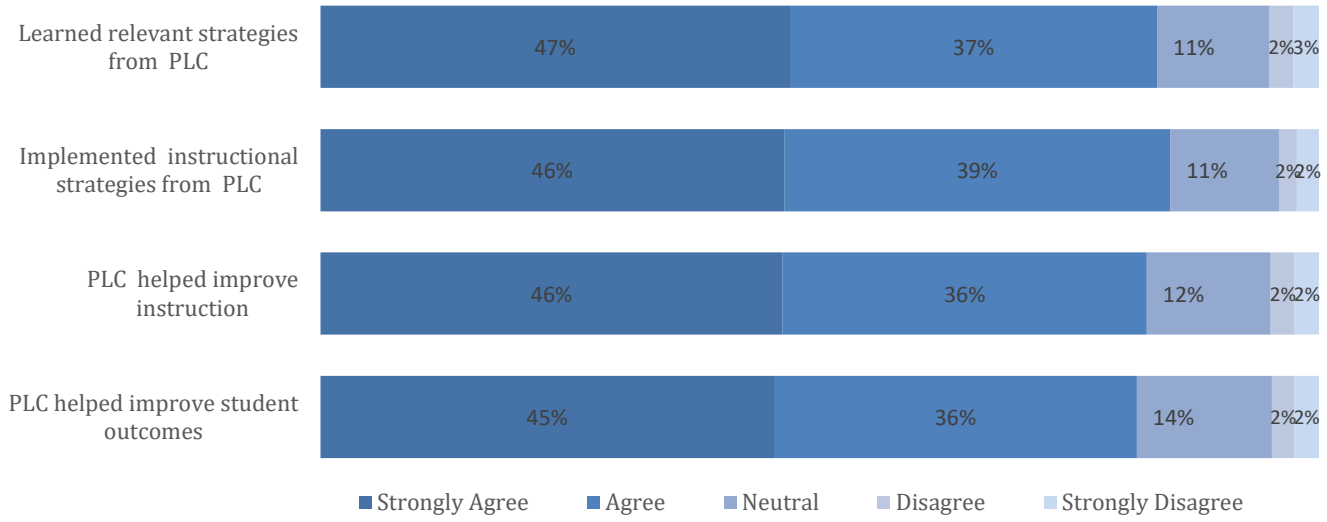


Teachers were asked to determine their perceptions of the impacts of their PLCs by responding to specified questions on the BCPS PL survey 2021-22. The data shows that the majority of teachers, 81% to 85% agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements regarding their PLCs:

1. I learned relevant instructional strategies from the PLC(s) in which I participated.
2. I implemented the instructional strategies learned during my PLC(s).
3. The instructional strategies learned during my PLC(s) helped me improve my instruction.
4. The instructional strategies I implemented from my PLC(s) helped improve student outcomes.

84% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed that they learned and implemented relevant strategies from their PLCs, this is the same rate reported in 20-21 in response to this statement. At least 82% of teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with each statement compared to 81% in 20-21 and 77% in 19-20. Results for all four items are displayed in Figure 4, below.

Figure 6. Reported learning, implementation and impacts of PLCs



The feedback surveys from teachers who participated in learning activities offered under the Journey to Authentic PLCs IC between June 2021 and September 2022 were reviewed and evaluated to identify learning opportunity for course participants. The data was gathered using the professional learning feedback survey integrated in the Learning Across Broward (LAB) software system. An aggregate report of the questions included in the surveys, and the participants' responses are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. PLCs feedback 2021-2022

Professional Learning Community Feedback SY21-22

Survey Instrument and Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A. Our PLC used data to determine student and educator learning needs.	47%	40%	9%	1%	2%
B. Our PLC members established common team learning goals.	48%	40%	8%	2%	2%
C. Our PLC engaged in adult professional learning aligned with student learning goals.	47%	40%	9%	2%	2%
D. Our PLC developed research-based implementation strategies.	44%	39%	12%	2%	2%
E. Our PLC used formative data to monitor progress.	46%	40%	10%	2%	2%
F. Our PLC used summative data to evaluate impact.	45%	40%	11%	2%	2%
G. Our PLC established and sustained a collaborative culture.	48%	39%	9%	2%	3%
H. Our PLC achieved or exceeded the SMART Goal we established at the beginning of the year.	42%	37%	17%	2%	2%

The tables on the following pages describe the Desired Outcomes for professional learning in support of the PLC team's role associated with the Journey to Authentic PLCs.

1.0 PLC Team			
Desired Outcome 1.1: Uses data to determine current level of student/department performance in relation to standard mastery and/or educator/individual learning needs.			
DATA ANALYSIS Performance Indicators			
Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Consistently gathers and analyzes current data from multiple sources, including analysis of student work/employee performance, to make observations and inferences about student/district department needs in order to determine instructional and learning strategies for the full range of learners.	Most of the time gathers and analyzes current data from multiple sources, including analysis of student work/employee performance, to make observations and inferences about student/district department needs.	Occasionally uses, gathers and analyzes current data from a few sources.	Rarely or never gathers and analyzes current data.
Consistently facilitates and supports colleagues to independently identify trends, patterns, and root causes from multiple data sources and perspectives to monitor, predict and determine current levels of proficiency and areas of focus for teachers and students.	Most of the time facilitates and supports colleagues to independently identify trends, patterns, and root causes from multiple data sources and perspectives.	Occasionally facilitates and supports colleagues to independently identify trends and patterns from data sources.	Rarely facilitates and supports colleagues to independently identify trends and patterns from data sources.
Consistently shares and collaborates with colleagues the implications of data from multiple sources and perspectives on professional practice and student needs.	Most of the time shares and collaborates with colleagues the implications of data from multiple sources and perspectives.	Occasionally shares and collaborates with colleagues about implications of the data.	Rarely shares and collaborates with colleagues about implications of the data.
Consistently engages in analysis of student work as a measure of the instructional impact on student performance.	Most of the time engages in analysis of student work as a measure of the instructional impact on student performance.	Occasionally engages in the analysis of student work.	Rarely engages in the analysis of student work.

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Desired Outcome 1.2: Establishes common goals for professional practice and student learning.			
SMART GOAL Performance Indicators			
Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Consistently engages in collaborative conversations with colleagues to create a measurable PLC SMART goal to improve teacher practice and student achievement based on District, school, team, and classroom data. Consistently gathers and documents evidence of progress towards mastery of SMART goal. Consistently uses SMART goal to guide planning, action steps, and improvement efforts.	Most of the time creates a measurable PLC SMART goal to improve teacher practice and student achievement based on school, team, and classroom data. Most of the time, gathers evidence of progress towards mastery of SMART goal. Most of the time uses SMART goal to guide planning, action steps, and improvement efforts.	Occasionally creates a measurable PLC SMART goal to improve student achievement. Occasionally, gathers evidence of progress towards mastery of SMART goal. Occasionally uses SMART goal to guide planning, action steps, and improvement efforts.	Rarely creates a PLC SMART goal to improve student achievement. Rarely gathers evidence of progress towards mastery of SMART goal. Rarely uses SMART goal to guide planning, action steps, and improvement efforts.

Desired Outcome 1.3: Organizes and designs curriculum focus to facilitate and ensure student understanding and mastery of standards-based concepts and skills.			
CURRICULUM AND PLANNING Performance Indicators			
Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Consistently facilitates and supports colleagues to deconstruct standards and develop learning goals including performance measures with the rigor and complexity necessary to progress towards standards mastery. Consistently supports the implementation and pacing of curriculum to facilitate standards mastery and provide students ample time to learn, practice, and apply skills with rigor to progress towards standards mastery.	Most of the time facilitates and supports colleagues to deconstruct standards and develop learning goals to progress towards standards mastery. Most of the time supports the implementation and pacing of curriculum to facilitate standards mastery.	Occasionally deconstructs standards and develops learning goals. Occasionally supports the implementation of curriculum to facilitate standards mastery.	Rarely deconstructs standards and develops learning goals. Rarely supports the implementation of curriculum.

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Consistently focuses on providing opportunities to engage students in identifying what they know and need to learn, adapting resources, technologies, and standards-aligned instructional materials to extend student understanding and critical thinking about subject matter and learning. Consistently analyzes, adjusts, models and implements instructional strategies with fidelity to meet the needs of all learners at varied levels of performance.	Most of the time focuses on providing opportunities to engage students in identifying what they know and need to learn, adapting resources, technologies, and standards-aligned instructional materials to extend student understanding. Most of the time analyzes, adjusts, models and implements instructional strategies with fidelity.	Occasionally focuses on providing opportunities to engage students in identifying what they know and need to learn. Occasionally analyzes, adjusts, models and implements instructional strategies.	Rarely focuses on providing opportunities to engage students. Rarely implements instructional strategies.
Desired Outcome 1.4: Supports and maintains a culture of collaboration aimed at building capacity in all stakeholders with a focus on instructional practice and student standard mastery.			
COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES Performance Indicators			
Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Consistently facilitates, supports, and leads ongoing analysis of implementation and impact to support student learning and raise the level of standards mastery. Consistently maintains initiative in assuming leadership strategies that focus on maintaining collaboration and self-reflective approaches to positively impact instructional practice and increased standards mastery for all learners. Consistently engages in and fosters reflection among colleagues for school wide impact on continuously increasing student learning and standards mastery.	Most of the time facilitates, supports, and leads ongoing analysis of implementation and impact to support student learning. Most of the time incorporates self and team reflective practices designed to collectively impact a full range of learners. Most of the time engages in reflection with colleagues for school wide impact on continuously increasing student learning and standards mastery.	Occasionally facilitates and supports ongoing analysis of implementation. Occasionally, planning is done in collaboration with colleagues. Occasionally there is evidence that team members collaborate to determine current reality and engage in solution-based decisions.	Rarely facilitates and supports ongoing analysis of implementation. Rarely, planning is done in isolation. Rarely there is evidence that team members talk with each other about current reality and the challenges they face as a team.

Consistently develops and analyzes norms and uses protocols to ensure that norms are embedded, and protocols are implemented with fidelity.	Most of the time develops and analyzes norms and uses protocols to ensure that norms are embedded, and protocols are implemented with fidelity.	Occasionally analyzes norms and uses protocols.	Rarely analyzes norms and uses protocols.
Consistently ensures full team participation through equity of voice and sharing of responsibilities.	Most of the time ensures full team participation through equity of voice and sharing of responsibilities.	Occasionally ensures full team participation through equity of voice.	Rarely ensures full team participation.
Consistently gathers and shares research and teaching strategies.	Most of the time gathers and shares research and teaching strategies.	Occasionally gathers and shares research and teaching strategies.	Rarely gathers and shares research and teaching strategies.
Consistently assumes a leadership role to ensure that all team members capture and practice the cycle of continuous improvement.	Most of the time assumes a leadership role to ensure that all team members capture and practice the cycle of continuous improvement.	Occasionally assumes a leadership role to ensure that all team members capture and practice the cycle of continuous improvement.	Rarely assumes the leadership role to ensure that all team members capture and practice the cycle of continuous.

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Data Collection Plan: 1.0 PLC Team			
Level of Measurement	Instrument/Data Type	Frequency	Responsible for Collecting Data
1. Participants' Reactions	PLC Feedback Form Professional Learning EOY Survey Professional Learning Survey	1x/year 1x/year 1x/course	PLC Facilitators Inservice Facilitators PDSS Department
2. Participants' Learning	Formative Assessments embedded within courses	Ongoing	PD Specialist
3. Organizational Supports	PLC Monitoring Reports PLC Facilitation Action Plan	Ongoing 1x/year	Inservice Facilitator PD Administrator PD Specialist
4. Participants' Practice	PLC Minutes/Agendas PLC Observation Tool	1x/meeting Ongoing	PLC Facilitator PD Administrator PDSS Department BCPS Support Staff
5. Student Outcomes	PLC SMART goal Student Assessment Data	1x/year Ongoing	PLC Team PD Administrator PDSS Department

EVALUATION PLAN

Level 1. Participant Reactions		
Audience	Mid-Year Evaluation	End-of-Year Evaluation
PLC Team	PLC Mid-Year Survey	PLC Feedback Form Professional Learning EOY Survey Professional Learning Survey
Level 2. Participant Learning		
Audience	Mid-Year Evaluation	End-of-Year Evaluation
PLC Team	Formative Assessments embedded within courses	Formative Assessments embedded within courses
Level 3. Organizational Support		
Audience	Mid-Year Evaluation	End-of-Year Evaluation
PLC Team	PLC Monitoring Reports PLC Facilitation Action Plan	PLC Monitoring Reports PLC Facilitation Action Plan
Level 4. Participants' Use of New Knowledge and Skills		

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Audience	Mid-Year Evaluation	End-of-Year Evaluation
PLC Team	PLC Minutes/Agendas PLC Observation Tool	PLC Minutes/Agendas PLC Observation Tool
Level 5. Student Learning Outcomes		
Level of Impact	Mid-Year Evaluation	End-of-Year Evaluation
PLC Team	PLC SMART goal Formative Student Assessment Data	PLC SMART goal Summative Student Assessment Data

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