**South Elgin High School**

**PLC Day Proposal Site Exception**

***Introduction:***

As the external and internal demands related to the implementation of Common Core State Standards grow, it becomes increasingly difficult for teacher institute and SIP days, isolated from the day-to-day needs of a team, to provide sufficient support for the meaningful discourse all teachers need and desire. The PLC Days are an efficient way to provide time for teachers to work in PLCs in order to develop their instructional goals and analyze data to improve teaching and learning.

PLC Days will provide recurring blocks of time within the school calendar for teams of teachers to work to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment, and support for our learners. It will also allow staff to come together for monthly faculty meetings within the parameters of the regular school day, thus avoiding coaching and extra-curricular conflicts.

The plan allows all students to leave early twice per month during the school year 2014-2015. The plan calls for no change to transportation and no cost to the district. On days when students leave early, teachers will meet both in teams and as a staff. Students will be supervised in common areas by administrators and other non-instructional staff.

***Benefits to teaching and learning:***

* Students will receive aligned lessons and assessments from teachers in common courses
* Students will actively participate in engaging, highly-effective instructional units that are reviewed and/or authored by individual PLCs
* Teachers will participate in professional development and teamwork
* New teachers will have more consistent contact with fellow teachers regarding curriculum and course structure
* Teachers will have more consistent exposure to curriculum changes (i.e. Common Core State Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, PAARC Assessments, and ACT College Readiness Standards)
* Teachers will strengthen discuss, review, and implement instructional strategies
* Teachers will have time to develop common assessments and analyze student data
* Teachers will be able to create common, skill-based rubrics and discuss grading practices
* Teachers will work together to continue to develop a culture of collaboration
* Teachers will have time to prepare for standards based grading

***PLC Structure and Goals:***

Structure of PLCs:  Teachers who teach the same course (e.g. freshman English or economics) will form teams.  The team will work, with SIP team support and guidance, to establish a goal, develop an action plan, support each other through implementation, review data, and communicate the product/outcome.  Individuals who do not have a PLC can form interdisciplinary teams. Each PLC team will select a facilitator to organize materials and communicate with administration.  Some weeks, time may be allotted for multiple PLCs may to meet in vertical teams.

Overview of PLC Work: A major focus of the work will be curricular alignment.  In this process, teachers would work in teams to:

* Align Common Core State Standards with goals, instructional activities, and assessment;
* Establish criteria, proficiency standards, and performance level descriptors (rubrics) to measure progress toward agreed upon learning goals;
* Develop interventions by reviewing student work/products, analyzing the results, identifying and assisting students who need additional support to reach the goal, and discussing ideas to improve on the collective level of achievement of all students.

PLC Goals: To foster collaboration, promote ownership and enhance communication of best practices across curriculums, PLCs will create and share products developed during early release time.  Products may include (but are not limited to):

* A gap analysis of curriculum (what do the standards require that we do not address) and apply to the Standards for Transitions as proposed by CCSS
* More effective curriculum mapping and/or standardized instructional units and assessments such that students will receive more consistent feedback
* A pacing guide/calendar to ensure all standards are covered
* Methodologies (Best Practice) for engaging students
* Formative and summative assessments and format questions to the PARCC
* Plans to make constructive use of test results
* Conclusions from student assessment data: data analysis with the use of standardized test data, and school- and classroom-level assessments

***Data-driven decision evidence***

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ807003.pdf>

1. While there is no universal definition of a professional learning community, an international review of the literature indicates that PLCs appear to share five key components: shared values and vision, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, professional collaboration, and promotion of group and individual learning (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006).
2. Schools where these components are combined to focus on student learning are more effective in sustaining improved student achievement (Bredeson & Scribner, 2000; Louis, Toole, & Hargreaves, 1999).
3. The third organizational characteristic of a school , capacity-building, is key not only to implementation but the sustainability of professional learning communities (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). King and Newmann (2000) as well as Mitchell and Sackney (2001) have defined school capacity in terms of individual, collective (or interpersonal), and organizational factors. Individual capacity refers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of individual teachers in a school, while collective or interpersonal capacity is associated with the quality of collaboration among members of the teaching staff. Organizational capacity stems from structural factors that can help or hinder a school’s growth as a learning community. Massell and Goertz (2002) contended that capacity building provides consistency and focus, but it requires sufficient time and support to change teachers’ practices. This support must be developed through human resources and structural support from within the school (Bryk et al., 1999), within the district (Berends, Bodilly, & Kirby, 2002; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2002; Wohlstetter, Malloy, Chau, & Polhemus, 2003), and through networks beyond the district (Rusch, 2005).

***Assessing the Impact on Student Performance***  
<http://www.centerforcsri.org/plc/literature.html>

Improvement in student performance is at the center of PLC work. However, it can be challenging to show direct relationships between PLCs and student outcomes. Part of the difficulty lies in being able to first determine the presence of a PLC and then show that the work of the PLC resulted in improved student outcomes. Several studies have attempted to study this relationship. Researchers (Hughes & Kritsonis, 2007) selected a sample of schools from a database of schools with staff who had attended PLC workshops and that were possibly implementing PLCs. The mean length of time that sample schools (n=64) reported functioning as a PLC was 2.5 years. During a three-year period, 90.6 percent of these schools reported an increase in standardized math scores; 81.3 percent reported an increase in English/language arts scores between 5 points and 26 points.

* Case studies of three elementary schools showed that during a five-year period, students from minority and low-income families improved their scores on state achievement tests from less than 50 percent proficient to 75 percent proficient. Strahan (2003) conducted interviews to examine the role of a collaborative professional culture on instructional improvement and found that working collaboratively in PLCs was a characteristic of these schools.
* Using multiple sources of data from a four-year evaluation of PLCs in an urban district, Supovitz (2002) found that an explicit focus on instructional improvement is necessary for PLCs to have a positive impact on improving teaching and learning. (Supovitz & Christman, 2003).

***Vote Results***

123/125 in favor of the site exception.

***Contract Language***

The portions of the contract being broken are as follows:

6.5 CLASS LOADS

“Beginning with the 2012-2013 school term, the following teacher collaboration time shall be implemented for the months of September through May: two hundred forty (240) minutes per month which can include SIP, RtI, PBIS, Grade/Dept./articulation committee meetings, and faculty meetings; with the exception of December which will be one hundred twenty (120) minutes. Informal collaborative meetings between two or more teacher also will be included. Collaborative time can be done during the work day when feasible. Collaborative time shall be a minimum of 30 minutes. Meetings may include, but are not limited to face-to-face, conference calls, interactive webinars and video conferencing. One (1) meeting will be led jointly by a site administrator and a teacher. This jointly-led meeting shall not exceed 75 minutes in length. All other meetings will be teacher-led. Teacher-led is defined as setting agendas, content, and delivery to colleagues. Evidence of work shall be recorded on a standardized time reporting form.”

The discrepancies between the present contract language and the PLC Days Proposal are as follows:

* The required 240 minutes per month include the meeting time that occurs during the PLC Days meeting time.
* The PLC Days meeting time will be designated for PLC meetings and a monthly faculty meeting.
* Evidence of work will be extended to a product that can be shared with administration and other teachers: this may include PLC meeting minutes and/or a product (e.g. an assignment, an assessment, a lesson plan, etc.). Products are defined as items that communicate or assess relevant standards to students. The scope and frequency of the products will be determined by the SIP team
* Note: To differentiate for individual needs, PLC groups will be determined by teachers in their respective departments. Teachers may choose to participate in multiple PLCs, and teachers will determine the arrangements for PLC meetings. All teachers are expected to participate in at least one (1) PLC.

***Accountability for Teacher Attendance/Product (who "owns" it? how is it monitored?)***

Teacher attendance at PLC Days will be monitored by the building principal through attendance accountability sheets during every PLC Day. PLC Days meeting minutes and products will be shared both in a common folder on the S drive and with instructional chairs and the building principal. One of the benefits of the PLC Day early release schedule is the elimination of after school conflicts that often occur within our present system.

***Plan for Students (how will families/communities "see" the benefit of lost instructional time?)***

Parent stakeholders will be oriented to the benefits of PLC Days in a number of ways before implementation.  Once final approval from the district and ETA is secured, the principal will conduct no less than two Parent Universities during the Spring of 2014 to outline the proposal to families with a succinct comparison of present instructional minutes versus PLC Days minutes. Parents will also be educated as to the benefits of PLC collaboration time in relation to Common Core Standards, PAARC assessments, Next Generation Science Standards, district grading initiatives, and the growth measures needed for teacher and administrator evaluation.

***Formation of PLC's (job role vs. "personality" chemistry)***

The structure of PLC Days will be clear and consistent. Each PLC team will be determined by courses taught and have a designated facilitator to work with teacher leaders and instructional chairs to set agendas, provide work products, and provide meeting minutes to the principal, instructional chair and other departments through the network S folder. The teaching, learning, assessment and grading goals for each quarter will uniform across every PLC and will be driven by both district and building goals. These goals will be conveyed during the monthly faculty meeting. Clear PLC discussion protocols will be formulated set to ensure maximum use of collaboration time.

***Accountability Goals aligned to CCSS, DIP, Destination 2015, College Readiness, Equity, etc.***

The accountability goals for PLC Days are as follows:

·         Common Core Standards- PLC Days will facilitate progress toward full implementation of common core standards by the target dates set by the district. For science, PLC Days allow for continued progression toward implementation of the Next Generation Science standards. Content areas outside the scope of either the Common Core or Next Generation Science Standards will be able to ensure fidelity of their curriculums to the Illinois Learning and ACT College Readiness standards.

·         Assessment-PLC Days will facilitate the development of Type 2 and Type 3 Assessments for the growth model portion of the Illinois Teacher Evaluation system.

·         Instructional Strategies PLC Days will foster the development of instructional strategies to improve student achievement toward closing the achievement gap. This collaborative time will also allow for professional development for continued progression on both the RTI and PBIS fronts.

·         Standards Based Grading Initiatives-  PLC Days will permit teachers to continue work on the 7 Guiding Grading Principles toward the goal of standards based grading implementation in 2016-2017.

***Structure of PLC Days***

First Wednesday

1:25- 2:55

Faculty Meeting

PLC Time

Third Wednesday

1:25-2:55

PLC Time