

# **Elgin High School**

## **PLC Site Exception Proposal (Revised)**

### **Introduction:**

(all changes to previous site exception highlighted in green)

As we move swiftly into the implementation of Common Core State Standards, standards based grading, RtI and PBIS initiatives, it is difficult for teachers to meet the demands of these new initiatives without the support of colleagues. The intent of dedicated PLC time is to offer teachers collaborative time which will allow them to meet in PLCs to meet the instructional demands of these initiatives while also discussing and analyzing data that drives decisions in improving teaching and learning. The allotted PLC time will also provide teachers built-in blocks of time to work on and continually assess “curriculum development and implementation, analysis of student growth, and professional practice” that is required to be addressed in the new Professional Practice Days in the 2014-2017 Agreement.

PLC time will provide recurring blocks of time within the school calendar for teams of teachers to work to improve curriculum, instruction, assessment, and support for students. Staff may choose during this time to combine PLCs for meetings if mutual interests or student needs are involved, such as teachers meeting because they teach freshmen and there are issues particular to freshmen that need to be addressed or if an entire department would like to meet in order to do vertical alignment of curriculum.

The plan allows all students to arrive late once per week during the school year 2014-2015<sup>1</sup>. The plan calls for no change to transportation and no cost to the district. On days when students arrive late, teachers will be able to meet both in curricular teams and cross-curricularly. 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/individual lessons 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)
- 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 troubleshoot standards based grading and align teaching and grading
- Teachers will have time to prepare for the newly required Professional Practice Days agreed to

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<sup>1</sup> Students will receive 344 minutes of instruction which still exceeds the 300 minute minimum required by state code.

in the 2014-2017 Agreement.

**PLC Structure and Goals:**

Structure of PLCs: Teachers who teach the same course (e.g. freshman English or economics) will form teams<sup>2</sup>. 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 what the PLC is working on/has accomplished with staff. Dependent on the needs determined by PLCs, multiple PLCs may decide to meet in vertical teams.

Overview of PLC Work: A major focus of the work will be curricular alignment and review of student work to determine student needs. 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 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 PLC time<sup>3</sup>. 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 common instructional units and assessments such that students will receive more consistent feedback and aligned expectations across grade levels
- A review of and alignment to district curriculum or AP curriculum to ensure all standards are covered
- Methodologies (Best Practice) for engaging students
- Formative and summative assessments which format questions to the PARCC exam and/or AP exam
- 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

As PLCs work toward self-directed goals, the list of products/outcomes will change and grow based on PLC identified teacher and student need. The goals should be aligned with the building/SIP goals but tailored to the subject area, age of students and needs demonstrated by student performance.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The composition and structure of the PLCs will be determined by teachers. In order for teachers to collaborate, they need not be part of a PLC. Dissenting teachers can opt out of PLCs but are still required to abide by the contract language governing reporting and dismissal times (6.23) and must submit a plan for how they are using the allotted PLC time to divisional and/or building principal in lieu of participating in a PLC.

<sup>3</sup> Creation and dissemination of materials will be decided upon within PLCs and overseen by PLC leaders.

<sup>4</sup> While aligned with building/SIP goals, the PLCs are not being dictated what to do by building administration or SIP team, this provision is to allow PLCs to work with larger building goals in mind, not just

### *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.centerforesri.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)

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subject-specific needs. Dissenting teachers can opt out of PLCs but are still required to abide by the contractual reporting and dismissal times (6.23) and must submit a plan for how they are using the allotted PLC time to divisional and/or building principal in lieu of participating in a PLC.

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**

\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ in favor of the site exception.

### **Contract Language**

The portions of the contract being addressed are as follows:

Note: we are not making any changes to the required PPD or DCD. We are not making any changes to the requirement of Department/Staff meetings. We are requesting time be built into the work day to accomplish the necessary tasks to make the PPD and DCD time more productive and valuable.

### **6.5 TEACHER COLLABORATIVE TIME**

Beginning with the 2014-2015 school term, the following Teacher Professional time shall be implemented within the Board-approved school calendar and will be designated as Professional Practice Days and District Collaborative Days.

In each year, there shall be an equal number of Professional Practice Days and District Collaborative Days not to exceed 10 total days for each teacher. Professional Practice Days and District Collaborative Days shall be 5 hours and 15 minutes in length (not including breaks or lunch) during the course of the normal school day, with specific hours of attendance to be determined by the School Improvement Plan team. Staff/Department meetings will occur either before or after a normal student attendance day for the site.

In the case where the teacher's instructional time is divided between sites, then the teacher shall declare a home site by September 1 of the respective school year and shall inform the building administrators of the declaration. Where no designation is made, the building administrators shall determine the home site. These teachers may choose to fulfill Teacher Professional Time at assigned sites and/or within District Area as defined in 13.12.1 Areas.

### **6.51 Professional Practice Days (PPD)**

On each PPD, all teachers will select to participate in a collaborative activity with a defined group of colleagues. The focus of the collaboration will be the needs of the students assigned to those teachers through curriculum development and implementation, analysis of student growth, and professional practice as defined in the Teacher Appraisal Plan. The Collaborative Teams will provide a copy of their agenda to the SIP team so that the SIP team may incorporate the information into their planning and reporting process. Each Collaborative Team will submit the agenda to a member of the SIP team no later than 3 days following the collaborative meeting. Teachers will meet for a total time not to exceed 5 hours and 15 minutes (not including breaks or lunch) scheduled during the course of the normal school day. Teachers may choose to meet with more than one Collaborative Team within that time.

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

Individual teachers will maintain a running record of attendance and work done during PLC Days through the “U-46 Certified Staff Member Collaborative Conversation Log,” which will be available upon request to building administrators. The document will be available via GoogleDrive so that all PLC members can have live updates of materials created. PLC meeting products will be shared amongst PLC members via GoogleDrive and therefore can be easily accessed by PLC members or shared with instructional chairs and the building principal if needed<sup>5</sup>. One of the benefits of the PLC schedule is the built-in dedicated time for teachers to meet with colleagues systematically and not just with those who share a planning period.

***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, SIP team representatives will present at at least one Parent University during the Fall of 2014 to reiterate the purpose and use of PLC time 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 PLCs***

The structure of PLC Days will be clear and consistent. Each PLC team will be determined by courses taught and have a designated teacher leader<sup>6</sup>, as chosen by the PLC, to set agendas, provide work products, and provide assistance in maintaining the Collaboration Log. The teaching, learning, assessment and grading goals for each quarter will be central to PLC discussion and goals, and will be driven by both district and building goals. PLCs will set their own norms and discussion protocols 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.

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<sup>5</sup> The scope and frequency of the creation and dissemination of the product will be decided upon within the PLC, with the PLC leader serving as the point person for communication of materials if needed. Dissenting teachers can opt out of PLCs but are still required to abide by the contractual reporting and dismissal times (6.23) and must submit a plan for how they are using the allotted PLC time to divisional and/or building principal in lieu of participating in a PLC.

<sup>6</sup> Teachers have the option to choose, dissolve and create PLCs as the needs of teachers and students change over the course of the year. Dissenting teachers can opt out of PLCs but are still required to abide by the contractual reporting and dismissal times (6.23) and must submit a plan for how they are using the allotted PLC time to divisional and/or building principal in lieu of participating in a PLC.

- 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 integration of RtI and PBIS within classes.
- 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 full implementation in 2016-2017.

### **Structure of PLC Days**

7:40-8:30 am every Tuesday

### **Addressing Needs of Teachers**

1. Traveling ETA members: Teachers who are assigned to multiple buildings can attend the PLC meetings at the teacher's discretion. ~~They will still be responsible for the 240 contractual minutes of collaboration.~~
2. Part-time ETA members: Teachers who are only part-time will be allowed to participate in the PLC meetings at the teacher's discretion.
3. Dissenting teachers: Must submit a plan to the divisional/building principal explaining how the time allocated for PLC time will be used in lieu of participating in a PLC.