

## FINDINGS

1. The role of the Principal's Cabinet and the development of its members is inconsistent so far. Additional training and support throughout the year would improve the outcomes of PLCs.

2. After six months of implementation, K-5 teachers (including members of the cabinet) do not have a clear or uniform understanding of PLCs. Some valuable aspects of Dufour's model have not been implemented and will need to be in order to fulfill the district's vision.

3. Most teachers are comfortable with the shift to PLCs and value what they offer.

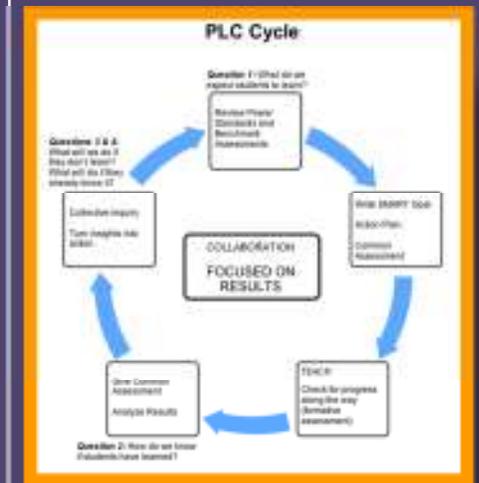
**"A Professional Learning Community [PLC] is composed of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all"**

**-Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, Many (2006)**

## SUMMARY

Mercer Island School District Adopted the Dufour PLC model prior to the start of the 2014-2015 school year. The plan was to redesign the Principal's Cabinet into a team of grade level teachers who would facilitate grade level meetings and lead professional development as directed by the building principal. At the beginning of the 2014 school year, these grade level teachers were asked to meet with the principal throughout the year to plan and prepare for upcoming PLCs as well as discuss other school business. As a member of that team, I had access to monitor and evaluate the progress of the implementation. The findings in my research showed that teachers welcomed the opportunity to participate in PLCs but had an inconsistent understanding of the work. Furthermore, training and support for the cabinet teachers was not provided and led to inconsistent facilitation and outcomes of PLCs.

## Using Principal's Cabinet to Implement a District's Vision of Professional Learning Communities



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# Research Questions

1. What is a Professional Learning Community?
2. What needs to be in place for schools to successfully introduce and implement Professional Learning Communities?
3. How does distributed Leadership impact a school community and the facilitation of Professional Learning Communities?

## Sample Survey Question

3. Review the tasks below and rank them based on the amount of time your PLC spends on each task.

|   | 0%                    | 10-20%                | 20-30%                | 30-40%                | 40-50%                |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment (aligned with standards) | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communicating, collaborating, and working together                        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Aligning assessment (data)  | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communicating, collaborating, and working together                        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Aligning instruction, assessment, and standards                           | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communicating, collaborating, and working together                        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Aligning instruction, assessment, and standards                           | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communicating, collaborating, and working together                        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Aligning instruction, assessment, and standards                           | <input type="radio"/> |
| Communicating, collaborating, and working together                        | <input type="radio"/> |

According to Thessin and Starr (2011), the critical responsibilities for district leaders of PLCs include:

1. **Ownership and support-** Districts must involve teachers and administrators in developing and leading the PLC process;
2. **Professional Development-** Districts must teach administrators and teachers how to work together effectively in PLCs;
3. **Clear improvement process-** Districts must show how PLCs fit into the districts improvement process so that each PLCs work fits into an overall plan;
4. **Differentiated support-** Districts must support schools according to their unique needs in order to help them move to the next step in their PLC growth.

## Survey Data Analysis:

My first piece of data collection was the fall survey distributed to teachers at my school. I used those responses from that survey to help guide my questions for the winter survey, including several repeated questions and some new ones as well. I made sure to ask a few repeated questions that would allow me to compare and monitor the development of PLCs over time. I looked at the responses of the repeated questions and created the table to the below.

Table: Fall and Winter Survey Results

|  | Strongly Disagree |        | Disagree |        | Neutral/Agree |        | Agree |        | Strongly Agree |        |
|--|-------------------|--------|----------|--------|---------------|--------|-------|--------|----------------|--------|
|  | Fall              | Winter | Fall     | Winter | Fall          | Winter | Fall  | Winter | Fall           | Winter |
| Who agreed that a learning community could be... | 1                 | 1      | 1        | 1      | 2             | 2      | 6     | 6      | 11             | 11     |
| Who agreed that a learning community could be... | 0                 | 1      | 2        | 1      | 2             | 2      | 5     | 6      | 12             | 7      |
| Who agreed that a learning community could be... | 2                 | 2      | 4        | 4      | 1             | 1      | 10    | 10     | 5              | 2      |
| Who agreed that a learning community could be... | 1                 | 2      | 1        | 2      | 2             | 1      | 6     | 6      | 10             | 6      |
| Who agreed that a learning community could be... | 2                 | 1      | 3        | 2      | 3             | 4      | 6     | 7      | 8              | 3      |

I recorded 3 interviews with teachers on staff. I made sure to interview a new teacher, a fellow cabinet member and a veteran teacher on staff.

**Q: "How would you describe the development of your PLC?"**

"My grade level was already on board in understanding what a PLC is and that it is beneficial. All the team is on the same page. The team really values our time together."

"Even without a PLC our grade level would still be meeting but the PLC allows that we have a good amount of time to focus. The PLC is helpful especially for a new teacher."

"If my team really understood the purpose of a PLC I would be more open to more work time with my colleagues but as it is now, we just chat and look at our schedules. As a fairly new teacher to the profession and the district I would love to have a more collaborative team..."