

Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities

Shared vision and values	Collective commitment of school and district staff, which is expressed in day-to-day practice across teams
Working teams with active communication structures	Collaboration to achieve common goals
A culture of actively seeking solutions	Openness to new ideas
Norms of collegiality	Allowing trust needed for effective discussion, sharing and problem-solving
Reflection	Allowing for collaborative process to study the operation and impact of actions taken.
Questioning of the status quo	Ongoing quest for improvement and professional learning
A willingness to change	Improved practice based on reflective and collaborative use of a variety of data.
A culture of accountability	Team goals, decisions, and who's responsible are recorded and tracked

Necessary Ingredients to Create an Effective PLC

Alignment	A clearly articulated vision for our school/district that focuses on educational achievement for all students. What does our school look like? What should it look like?
District Support	Systematic embedding of PLC practice at the District level in both leadership and district teams.
Purposeful Collaboration	Systematic embedding of collaboration into the routine practices of the school, "Teachers work in teams, engaging in an ongoing cycle of questions that promote deep team learning." <i>DuFour On Common Ground, p. 37</i>
Time	Collaborative team time that is 'sacred' to the school's schedule; Dedicated Team Time
Culture Committed to Improvement and Growth	Creating a culture that focuses on improving learning of adults and students. Enhancing that culture by creating and honoring "norms" of collaborative behaviors that allow team members to decide what will be discussed, the manner in how it will be discussed and the openness with which they offer and absorb various perspectives.
Clear Objectives	Clarification of essential learning outcomes (What do we want each student to know and be able to do?) and of formative assessments of learning progress (How do we know they have learned what we intended them to learn?).
Distributed Leadership	A shift from Principal/Superintendent as sole leader to the development of a vibrant leadership team and teacher leaders.
Space	A secured place free from distraction where professional learning can take place.