PLC FACILITATOR'S GUIDE
MODULE 1 – Why PLCs?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:
1. Why should we become a Professional Learning Community?
2. How can working collaboratively impact student success?
3. How can working collaboratively impact teacher and administrative professional growth?

MODULE OUTCOMES:
1. Gain a deeper understanding of the importance of PLCs and how they contribute to improved teacher practice and higher student achievement
2. Identify the characteristics of high functioning and effective PLCs

PLC NORMS:
- Active Listening
- Recognize that everyone is a learner
- Check your assumptions
- Trust the process
- Respect all voices
- Start and end on time

HOW WE WORK TOGETHER:
- We use **norms** to create safe spaces for working together
- We make use of **protocols** to structure discussions and keep the focus on student and teacher work as a means to improving teaching and learning
- We **model** tools and practices for PLC implementation, group activities to promote learning from each other, gradual release of responsibility as we go through the work, and sharing of our learning through presentations and peer critique

Time	Agenda Item	Framing of Activity	Materials	Rationale for Activity	Facilitator
9:00	Welcome, Agenda, Goals, & Norms	▪ Welcome, frame the day, & review agenda ▪ Overview outcomes & essential questions ▪ Overview norms of typical PLCs. Ask for additions and for participants to pick one norm each to focus for the day ▪ Participants will introduce themselves and share one question they have about work of PLCs	▪ Agendas ▪ Norms listed on chart paper	▪ Connect and structure the day. ▪ Introduce the use of norms. ▪ Understand participants initial wonderings about PLCs.	
9:20	Understanding PLCs - Article	▪ Overview protocols – they are agreed upon guidelines for conducting a focused and effective conversation. They vary depending upon the purpose and desired outcome of the conversation, but often keep the focus on student and teacher work as a means to improving teaching and learning ▪ Overview either the "Final Word" or "Text Rendering" protocol ▪ Introduce article and a framing question (identified previously). o Participants read the article with the protocol and framing question in mind. o Use "Final Word" protocol to discuss the reading ▪ Ask participants to share out any thoughts on the reading or any thoughts about the use of Protocols.	▪ Text Rendering or Final Word protocol (use Text Rendering if group has little experience with protocols) ▪ Article: _____	▪ Introduces the use of Protocols as a core practice of PLCs. ▪ Provides an initial window into PLCs.	
10:00	Understanding PLCs- Video	▪ Introduce video "About PLCs" - frame what the group will see. ▪ Introduce "Eye and Ear" protocol and ask participants to view video with protocol in mind. ▪ In small groups participants discuss if the video added any new insights. o Participants share any new questions. ▪ In large group, reflect "Why PLCs?" o "What are the implications for our work to form PLCs?" ▪ Before moving on, ask the group to reflect and check-in on where they are now in our understanding. Ask the group what more they need to know. Write down questions for future reference.	▪ Video ▪ Eyes & Ear Protocol ▪ Chart paper for questions	▪ Gives participants a chance to see PLCs in action. ▪ Continues to emphasize importance of protocols. ▪ Reflections will inform the work going forward.	
10:30		**STRETCH BREAK**			

10:40	Collectively Defining Effective and Ineffective PLCs	▪ Share "What a PLC is…" and ask the group, "How did this evolve?" and "Where do we see evidence of this in our own school?"
		▪ In pairs or triads, participants overview the attributes of PLC document and identify which attributes exist in their PLCs or schools and which their PLCs need the most.
		▪ As a group, determine a list of attributes that the PLCs need the most to be more effective.
		▪ Debrief, "What does this data tell us about what we now know about PLC? What more do we need to know?"
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		▪ Share "What a PLC is not…" and "PLC Meetings versus Typical Teacher Meetings"
		▪ In pairs or triads, participants discuss, "Where do we see evidence of this in our own school?" and "How did this evolve?"
		▪ Discuss as a group (ensure brief and thoughtful responses)
		▪ Debrief – "How is our understanding evolving as we see more examples of PLCs?"
		  o What does this data say about our understanding of PLC?
		  o Where do successes already exist in our school?
		  o Where are there challenges?
			▪ "What a PLC is…"
			▪ Attributes of a PLC
			▪ "What a PLC is not…"
			▪ "PLC meeting versus typical teacher meetings"
			
			**When the protocol is finished, take a photograph of the chart paper, record each entry as bullets under the prompt (no names) and share with the community and/or post the chart paper in a common faculty room
				▪ Developing a shared understanding of PLCs is important to sustain the work
				▪ Allows group to distinguish between meetings and the potential of PLCS
				▪ Allows participants a chance to explore current practice (not critique it)	

11:20	Characteristics of Effective PLCS	▪ With a deeper understanding of what PLCs look like, ask participants to share specific characteristics of PLCs that resonated in a particularly strong way. ▪ Also, share provided list of characteristics ▪ Ask if any more should be added to the list	▪ Characteristics of effective PLCs ▪ Chart responses	▪ Important to deepen understanding by thinking about the specifics of PLC work ▪ Continues to evolve a shared vision of PLCs	
11:35	What ingredients do we need to get there?	▪ With the list of characteristics in mind, ask the group, "what ingredients are needed to support effective PLCs?" o Prompt, "Given the current situation of our school, what ingredients do we need as a school or team to create effective PLCs?" ▪ If the group struggles to identify suggestions, provide one from the included list.	▪ Necessary ingredients for successful PLCs ▪ Chart responses	▪ The characteristics discussed are not ones that automatically appear. This reminds the group that certain structures support (or challenge) the development of PLCs.	

11:50		**LUNCH BREAK**			
12:30	Self-Assessment Survey	▪ Introduce the "Self-Assessment" survey and the purpose of assessing the current readiness of the school. ○ Frame the activity as identifying a "from here to there" conversation and what needs to be in place to make PLCs work. ○ Emphasize honesty and transparency in responses as norms that need to be in place to do this work. ○ Instruct teams of two go through the Self-Assessment Tool (Are you ready for PLC?) and respond to the queries.	▪ Self-Assessment tool ▪ Make sure to coach groups to answer why they selected their choices and to discuss what is in place and what will need to change at the school.	▪ This activity is critical to deeper discussion about where districts/schools are and what they need to be thinking about in this work. ▪ This may raise some hard questions usually around time, focus, decision-making and collaboration.	
1:30		**STRETCH BREAK**			
1:40	Futures Protocol	▪ The group will now create a vision for the school on what a PLC would successfully look like using the data from the Self-Assessment Tool. ▪ Facilitate protocol. ○ Present the goal of establishing a PLC with the characteristics described throughout the day. Ask the group to imagine what this looks and feels like in the future. Chart responses. ○ Then ask the group to better describe where you are currently. Pretend you're in the future reflecting back (talk in the past tense). ○ Facilitate a discussion of how the group "moved from the past situation to the current." ○ Document the future vision and the process by which the group imagined reaching that vision.	▪ Flipchart paper & markers for each group ▪ Future Protocol	▪ Shares a process to use to establish a vision, goals, and a plan of action for their PLCs ▪ For PLCs that lack a coherent vision and plan, this protocol helps people think about the end goals and work backwards.	
2:40	Closure	▪ Review the outcomes for the day and make sure that each was achieved. ▪ Participants share how each person did on their norm, and how the entire team did as a whole on the norms. ▪ Where are we now in our understanding? What more do we need to know?		We use these end of the day reflections to inform our work and to help us look at how Module 2 will best fit participants' needs	

		▪ Review the next steps and the next meeting dates/times			