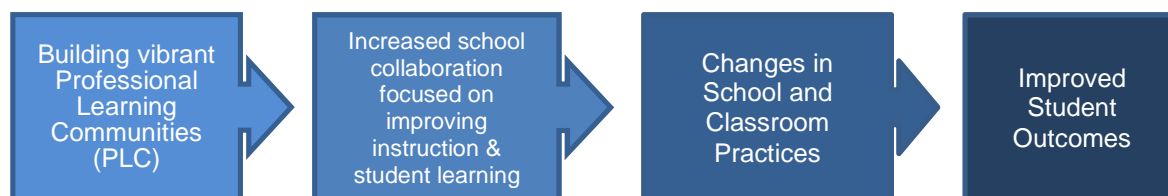## Introduction

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) provide a systematic means of improving instruction and school culture. By design, PLCs overcome the isolated, fragmented cultures in which teachers usually work. Studies show that building strong professional learning communities - focused on improving instruction, curriculum, and assessment – will result in increased teacher collaboration and an increase in the use of effective instructional practices in classrooms, leading to improved student achievement.

Building vibrant Professional Learning Communities (PLC) → Increased school collaboration focused on improving instruction & student learning → Changes in School and Classroom Practices → Improved Student Outcomes

Creating a Professional Learning Community, PLC, is very simply what it sounds like but its intent goes far beyond any acronym. Education *professionals* work together in regularly scheduled meetings structured around questions that expand *learning* which lead to improved teacher and administrator practice, thereby contributing to higher achievement for all students. PLCs create cultures that focus on improving the learning of adults and students. "Norms" of collaborative behaviors are created and honored that allow team members to decide what will be discussed, the manner in which it will be discussed, and the openness with which they offer and absorb various perspectives. PLCs are at the heart of collaborative teacher practice.

Forming PLCs can be hard work, but the Modules and resources within this website will equip you and your team to begin the process.

- **Module One** is intended for a small group of interested staff members to explore the characteristics of PLCs and how PLCs will benefit adult and student learning.
- **Module Two** builds on the understanding gained in Module One in order for your group to understand the structures and elements of school culture most critical to PLC success.
- In **Module Three**, groups will dive deeper into the core work of establishing and supporting strong teams.
- **Module Four** introduces some of the substantive work of PLCs, including protocols for Looking at Student Work (LASW), Peer Observations, and other data-related practices.
- Finally, **Module Five** will guide district level teams through the work of creating PLCs.

As you work through the Modules, remember that there is no set time frame for how long it will take your group to implement each Module or for the work that will need to be completed in between. The Modules should illustrate an arc of PLC formation and provide many of the resources that will support your efforts along the way.