

OROVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

A Professional Learning Community

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”
Henry Ford

Oroville High School is utilizing the strategies imbedded in the PLC concept. These strategies focus on all members of the school working to continuously improve student learning. Our “Professional Learning Community” is composed of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve building goals for the specific purpose of improving student achievement. The teams share a common understanding that learning is the central purpose of school and their work is organized around three critical questions:

- 1) What is it we want all students to learn?
- 2) How will we know when they have learned it?
- 3) What will we do when some students learn it and others do not? (DuFour, 2000-01)

6 Essential Characteristics of a PLC

1. Shared mission, vision, values, goals

Educators in a PLC benefit from clarity regarding their shared purpose, a common understanding of the school they are trying to create, collective communities to help move to school in the desired direction, and specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented and time-bound (SMART) goals to mark their progress.

2. Collaborative teams focused on learning

In a PLC, educators work together interdependently in collaborative teams to achieve common goals for which they are mutually accountable. The structure of the school is aligned to ensure teams are provided the time and support essential to adult learning.

“Collaboration is a systematic process in which we work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results.” —adapted from *Learning by Doing*

3. Collective inquiry

Teams in a PLC relentlessly question the status quo, seek new methods of teaching and learning, test the methods, and then reflect on the results. Building shared knowledge of both current reality and best practice is an essential part of each team’s decision-making process.

4. Action orientation and experimentation

Members of a PLC constantly turn their learning and insights into action. They recognize the importance of engagement and experience in learning and in testing new ideas. They learn by doing.

5. Commitment to Continuous improvement

Not content with the status quo, members of a PLC constantly seek better ways to achieve mutual goals and accomplish their fundamental purpose of learning for all. All teams engage in an ongoing cycle of:

- § Gathering evidence of current levels of student learning
- § Developing strategies and ideas to build on strengths and address weaknesses in that learning
- § Implementing the strategies and ideas
- § Analyzing the impact of the changes to discover what was effective and what was not
- § Applying the new knowledge in the next cycle of continuous improvement

6. Results orientation

Educators in a PLC assess their efforts on the basis of tangible results. They are hungry for evidence of student learning and use that evidence to inform and improve their practice.

The success of the PLC concept depends not on the merits of the concept itself, but on the most important element in the improvement of any school—the commitment and persistence of the educators within it. — Richard DuFour

PLC Cycle

