Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for Implementing the B.E.S.T Standards

Susan D. Walden
Coordinator, Professional Learning and Instructional Materials
Leon County Schools

Dr. Motoko Akiba
Professor, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies
Florida State University

Session Objectives

- Understand the Professional Learning Community (PLC) Model
- Connect PLC to the Implementation Process for B.E.S.T. Standards

What is a PLC?

An **ongoing process** in which educators work **collaboratively** in **recurring cycles** of **collective inquiry** and **action research** to achieve **better results** for the students they serve.

PLC Essential Elements

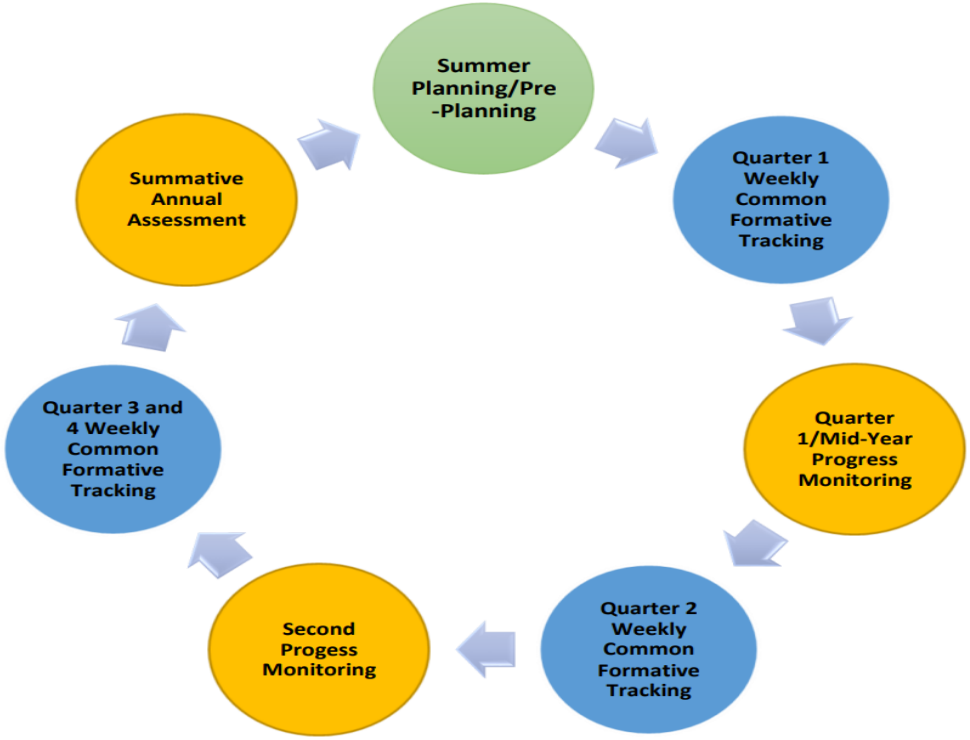
Ongoing, Cyclical, Collaborative Process	Collective Inquiry/Action Research	Achieve Better Results
Provides structure and clear expectations to engage all participants	Addresses specific questions and assists in decision-making or action	Defines clear outcomes and indicators of success

A Suggested PLC Process

PLC Assessment and Data Study Cycle

Progress Monitoring and Summative Assessment Analysis Focus (Protocol "Look Fors")

- Are there "extremes" in students we need to look at? (Who are highest, lowest, and was this expected?
- Do the *trends* of which students are performing well in specific areas agree with the trends seen in our smaller weekly data sets?
- If the trends **agree**, how can we continue to **maximize** use of the materials, routines, and resources we are using with the matched areas of needs?
- If the trends **disagree**, how should we **adjust** use of the materials, routines, and resources we are using with the matched areas of need?



Summer Planning/Pre-Planning

- Review summative data from last teaching cycle AND of incoming student performance
- Select "Power Standards"
- Identify common formative assessments
- Set up protocols, processes, teams, and meeting dates for collaboration.

Weekly Common Formative Tracking Focus (Protocol "Look Fors")

- How are the small, formative, daily tasks showing us trends in student growth?
- What adjustments are we making at a weekly/daily level based on common formative checkpoints?
- When we made the adjustments, did they work?

Inside the Process: Collective Inquiry and Action Research

Initial Grade Level Instruction

-Identifying clear learning targets for grade level and standard-specific proficiency

-Providing initial instruction and formative assessment

-Collecting data to determine student needs relative to proficiency

Collective Inquiry and Action Research

-Posing meaningful questions to other educators based on data

-Proposing potential approaches for action

-Planning for and implementing proposed actions

-Reflecting on data-based results

-Planning continued action and posing new questions

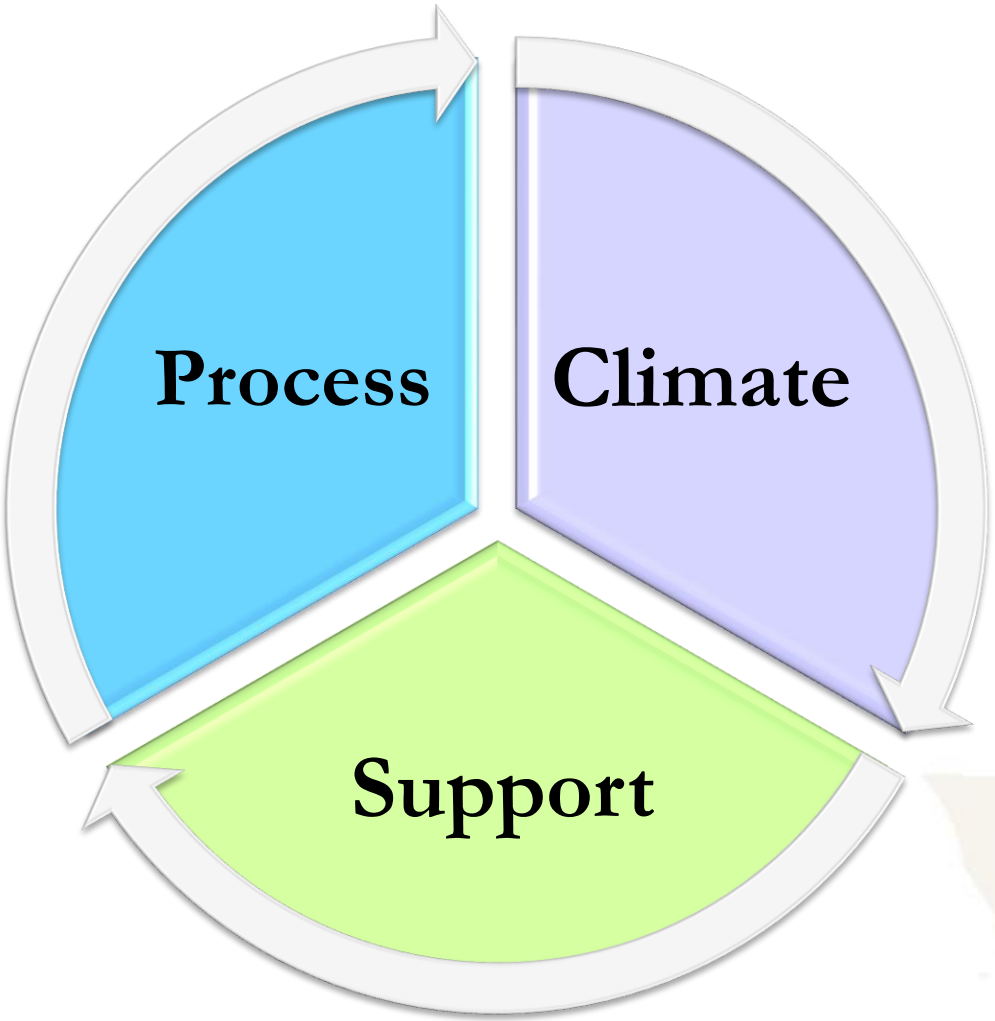
Sustained Job-Embedded Professional Learning

-Moving forward in instruction with increased individual and collective experience regarding the instructional methods that move students towards proficiency

5 Critical PLC Questions

- What do we want students to learn? **(Power Standards)**
- **What instructional strategies will we use to support students in learning it? (Thorough Planning and High Quality Resources)**
- How will we know when they have learned it? **(Common Formative Assessments)**
- How will we respond when students have difficulty? **(Remediation and Reteaching Plan)**
- How will we extend the learning for students who are proficient? **(Enrichment)**

Essentials for PLCs: 3 Dimensions



1. Process of PLCs

Protocols - Why do they matter?

- Keeping order
- Establishing expectations
- Providing mutual accountability
- Ensuring action beyond analysis

Example of A Protocol for PLC

Common Formative Assessment Reflection Agenda—9th Grade Teachers (1.5-2 hours depending on number of team members)

Opening (5 minutes) - Restating Learning Targets and Proficiency Markers/Expected Outcomes

Meeting Steps:

1. From the first set of formative assessments to the second set do you feel your students have improved their overall performance by completing and reviewing these tasks? **(No more than five minutes per team member.)**
2. Describe (USING DATA ONLY) where you see proficiency in student performance.
3. Describe (USING DATA ONLY) where you see student need.
4. What are the common patterns in error based on the data discussion in step one? **(Ten minutes of collective discussion.)**
5. What instructional methods or strategies might be useful in addressed the patterns of need and the patterns of success based on the collective discussion in step two? **(ten minutes for need; ten minutes for success)**
6. Lesson Planning Time – Remainder of Meeting (Also consider learning walk implementation time in other classrooms)
7. Final Step: Scheduling Next Meeting Time/Date (When will it be important/needed for us to come together again?)

Above protocol based on "Analyzing Formative Assessments Protocol" Handout from Solution Tree

2. Climate of PLCs

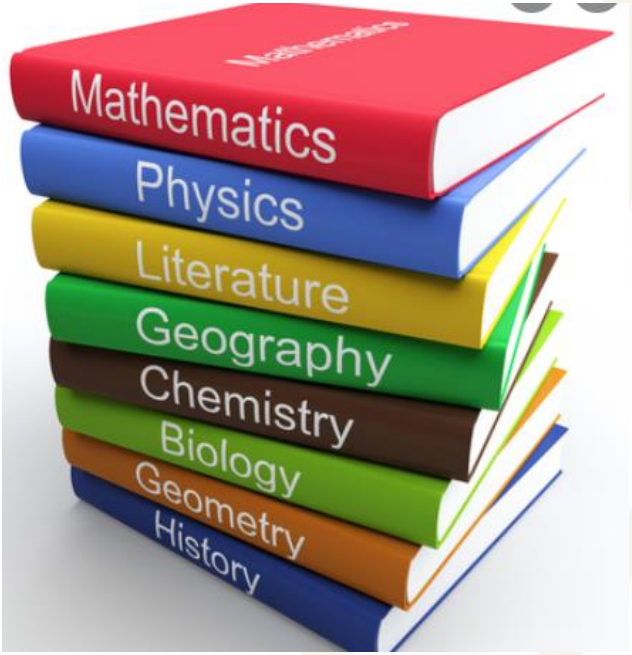
A. Teacher-Teacher Relationship

B. Teacher-Leader Relationship

C. Organizational Culture

- Trust, respect, and care
- Willingness to learn (vulnerability)
- Shared sense of responsibility for educating all students
- High expectation for all students
- Recognition of contribution
- Mutual encouragement

3. Support of PLCs



1. High Quality Materials

- Curricula
- Learning materials (content, student learning/thinking, teaching approaches)

2. Funding and Resource Availability

- Subs for classroom observation (creative ideas; TEC funds)
- In-service points

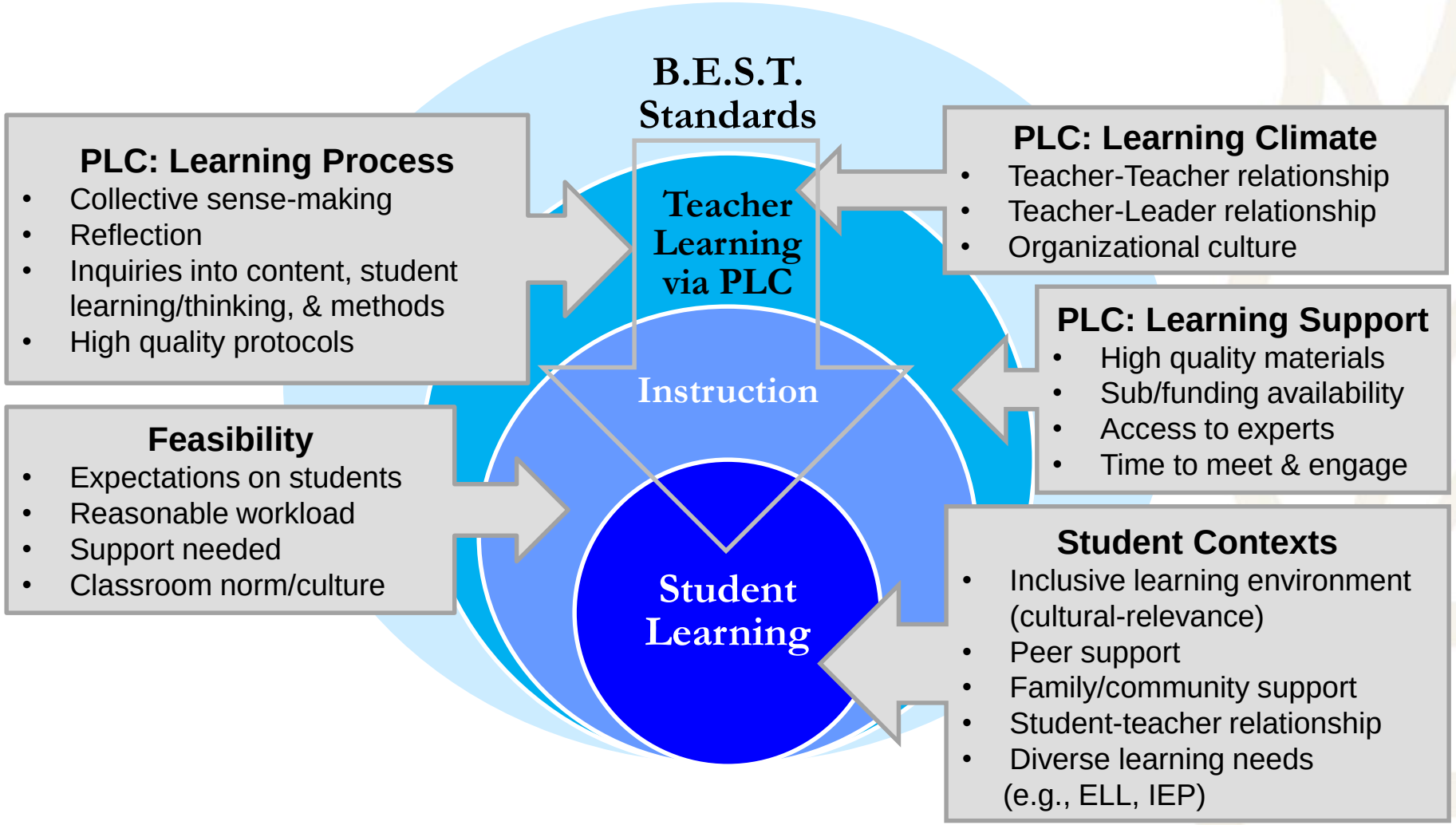
3. Access to Experts

- Instructional coaches
- Knowledgeable others

4. Time to Meet & Engage

- Scheduling

Implementing the B.E.S.T Standards



PLCs at Work

For the scenario, we will discuss

- What may be the possible factors that could be causing a lack of student growth?
- How could the PLC process help (or be improved) in the scenario described?
- If you were leading this team, where would you start the work of a PLC to help them grow?

Scenario #2

- Mr. Dobbs is the APC at a local middle school. Three times per year he procures substitute teachers for all of his teachers within a subject area. On those three days, he asks teachers to review quarterly progress monitoring scores in depth. He is growing frustrated that, in spite of the many resources he has put into creating this time and space for data study, there has been little to no positive increase in student achievement.

Protocols for Every Step

- Choosing a PLC Focus
  - ATLAS: Learning from Student Work (SRI)
  - Goal Setting Protocol (SRI)
  - Critical Issues for Team Collaboration (Solution Tree ATP)
  - Identifying Power Standards Protocol (Solution Tree Link)
  - Prioritizing Standards Using R.E.A.L. Criteria (Solution Tree Link)
- Establishing PLC Roles and Climate
  - Becoming One Community (SRI)
  - Cultural Shifts in a Professional Learning Community (Solution Tree ATP)
- Reviewing/Choosing Resources
  - Choosing a Question Protocol (SRI)
  - Curriculum Map (Solution Tree ATP)
- Holding Team Data Discussions
  - ATLAS: Learning from Student Work (SRI)
  - Data Protocol (Solution Tree ATP)
- Group Problem-Solving Sessions
  - Consultancy Protocol (SRI)
  - Consensus Based Decision-Making Process (SRI)

School Reform Initiative (SRI)

SCAN ME

Solution Tree All Things PLC

SCAN ME

Key Question: Does the protocol lead us to action?