

Professional Learning Community Capacity Planning Checklist

Building the capacity of a professional learning community requires principals, instructional coaches, and teacher leaders to take practical steps to move their teams and teachers forward. While planning initial efforts to introduce PLC principles in your school, use this checklist to consider the kinds of tasks that your faculty is ready to tackle today, and indicate in the column on the right what investments are necessary to accomplish each task.

Capacity Factor: New Structures and Procedures	
Tasks Our Building/Learning Team Is Uniquely Prepared to Tackle	Investments Necessary to Accomplish Task (Time, Professional Development, Funding)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use curriculum mapping as an opportunity to identify essential elements of the required curriculum. Structured maps can be used as a planning guide for learning teams and eventually become a valuable communication tool for parents. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop tools for standardized lesson planning that highlight key features to be included in shared materials. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a collection of shared assessments that measure what students know and can do. These common assessments become the foundation for evaluating student performance and for identifying effective instructional practices. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a collection of rubrics that can be used to evaluate student performance on academic and performance tasks. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a system for collecting student achievement data from both formative and summative assessment sources. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop formalized processes for identifying students who are struggling academically and then for providing meaningful remediation. These processes often involve school professionals beyond the classroom. 	

Capacity Factor: Improved Communication	
Tasks Our Building/Learning Team Is Uniquely Prepared to Tackle	Investments Necessary to Accomplish Task (Time, Professional Development, Funding)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a shared mission and vision, a critical first step toward improving communication within any learning community. <input type="checkbox"/> Understand the important role that trust plays in team development and incorporate opportunities for shared experiences among members of a team, which helps to make communication safe. <input type="checkbox"/> Work through personality profile testing, which identifies the range of communication styles that exists on a learning team and draws attention to the diverse range of personalities that exists within a faculty. <input type="checkbox"/> Build time into the school day for both formal and informal conversations among colleagues. This forms the foundation for increased trust and open professional communication. <input type="checkbox"/> Use digital forums with discussion board technology or social networking services to open lines of communication by breaking down the physical barriers of time and place that can limit conversations within schools. <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in regular meetings focused by predetermined agendas and guided by a collection of norms and team-generated products—a required part of learning teams. 	
Capacity Factor: Improved Teacher Learning	
Tasks Our Building/Learning Team Is Uniquely Prepared to Tackle	Investments Necessary to Accomplish Task (Time, Professional Development, Funding)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create time and opportunities for teachers to observe their colleagues so teachers are exposed to new practices and develop a sense of inquiry about instruction. <input type="checkbox"/> Work through structured processes for reflecting on instruction. Examples include conducting action research, looking at student work, or Japanese lesson study. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Rethink instructional practices. Much like the study of medicine, successes and failures in an effective learning team are not attributed to individuals—they are, instead, attributed to the practices of individuals. <input type="checkbox"/> Receive training in the analysis of student achievement data. Together, teams learn to look for trends and repeating patterns in results collected from assessments. 	
Capacity Factor: Collective Ownership and Intelligence	
Tasks Our Building/Learning Team Is Uniquely Prepared to Tackle	Investments Necessary to Accomplish Task (Time, Professional Development, Funding)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create a structured process for documenting successful and unsuccessful instructional practices that can be reviewed by all members of a faculty. <input type="checkbox"/> Drive professional development with in-house presentations, honoring the knowledge that is held within the organization. <input type="checkbox"/> Administrators identify the positive deviants within the organization and encourage them to document the impact of their work on students. 	