

## Why Should We Collaborate?

*When teachers work in collaborative teams schools are more likely to see gains in student achievement, find higher quality solutions to problems, promote increased confidence among staff, create an environment in which teachers support one another's strengths and accommodate weaknesses, provide support for new teachers, and provide all staff with access to an expanded pool of ideas, materials, and methods (Little, 1990).*

*"The single most important factor for successful school restructuring and the first order of business for those interested in increasing the capacity of their schools is building a collaborative internal environment." (Eastwood & Seashore Louis, 1992, p. 215)*

*Improving schools requires a collaborative culture: "without collaborative skills and relationships it is not possible to learn and to continue to learn" (Fullan, 1993, p. 18).*

*When groups, rather than individuals, are seen as the main units for implementing curriculum, instruction, and assessment, they facilitate development of shared purpose for student learning and collective responsibility to achieve it (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).*

*High-performing schools promote collaborative problem solving and support professional communities and exchanges among all staff. Teachers and staff collaborate to remove barriers to student learning and communicate regularly with each other about effective teaching and learning strategies. They have regularly scheduled time to learn from one another (National Education Association, 2003).*

*"[High-achieving schools] build a highly collaborative school environment where working together to solve problems and to learn from each other become cultural norms." (WestEd, 2000, p. 12)*

*"It is imperative that professional learning be directed at improving the quality of collaborative work." (National Staff Development Council, 2006)*

*“The key to ensuring that every child has a quality teacher is finding a way for school systems to organize the work of qualified teachers so they can collaborate with their colleagues in developing strong learning communities that will sustain them as they become more accomplished teachers.”* (National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future, 2003, p. 7)

*“Collaboration and the ability to engage in collaborative action are becoming increasingly important to the survival of the public schools. Indeed, without the ability to collaborate with others, the prospect of truly improving schools is not likely.”* (Schlechty, 2005, p. 22)

*“It is time to end the practice of solo teaching in isolated classrooms.”* (Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005)

*“[Today’s teachers must] transform their personal knowledge into a collectively built, widely shared and cohesive professional knowledge base.”* (Chokshi & Fernandez, 2004, cited in Fulton, Yoon, & Lee, 2005)

*Teacher collaboration in strong professional learning communities improves the quality and equity of student learning, promotes discussions that are grounded in evidence and analysis rather than opinion, and fosters collective responsibility for student success* (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006).

*“Quality teaching is not an individual accomplishment, it is the result of a collaborative culture that empowers teachers to team up to improve student learning beyond what any one of them can achieve alone.”* (Carroll, 2009, p. 13)

*High-performing, high-poverty schools build deep teacher collaboration that focuses on student learning into the culture of the school. Structures and systems are set up to ensure teachers work together rather than in isolation, and “the point of their collaboration is to improve instruction and ensure all students learn”* (Chenoweth, 2009, p. 17).