

# POSITIVE LEADERS CONNECTING

*Transforming Teachers to  
Teacher Leaders*

*NORTH VERMILLION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*

Principal: Brian Byrum

[bbyrum@nvc.k12.in.us](mailto:bbyrum@nvc.k12.in.us)

Team Members: Taylor Dicken & Amanda Hendrix

# Background:

- Small school
- Young/new staff
- 1 Administrator
- Big changes to curriculum and schedule for 2019-2020



- Development of common norms and accountability
- Create opportunities for teacher leaders
- Create “say” or “buy-in” on school wide decisions
- Create a leadership and advisory team to assist administration

# Purpose:

Therefore, the purpose of our Action Inquiry was to develop Professional Learning Communities in our building. When this was shared with the corporation administration team, we decided it would be a corporation initiative to review our professional development schedule and implement the proper PLC model at NVCSC.

With many important changes to be made before the 2019-2020 school year, we felt that staff and administration should work together to make these decisions. This would continue to build a cohesive culture as we move forward to improve student learning through vertical alignment corporation wide.

## Our Wondering:

With this purpose, we wondered if the PLC model would create a more applicable use of professional development time, improve teacher buy-in, and create teacher leaders.

Implementing the PLC model from the ground up is a new development for our staff. Our hope was that this model would also give teachers opportunities to discuss, share, and assist administration with decisions.

# Our Actions:

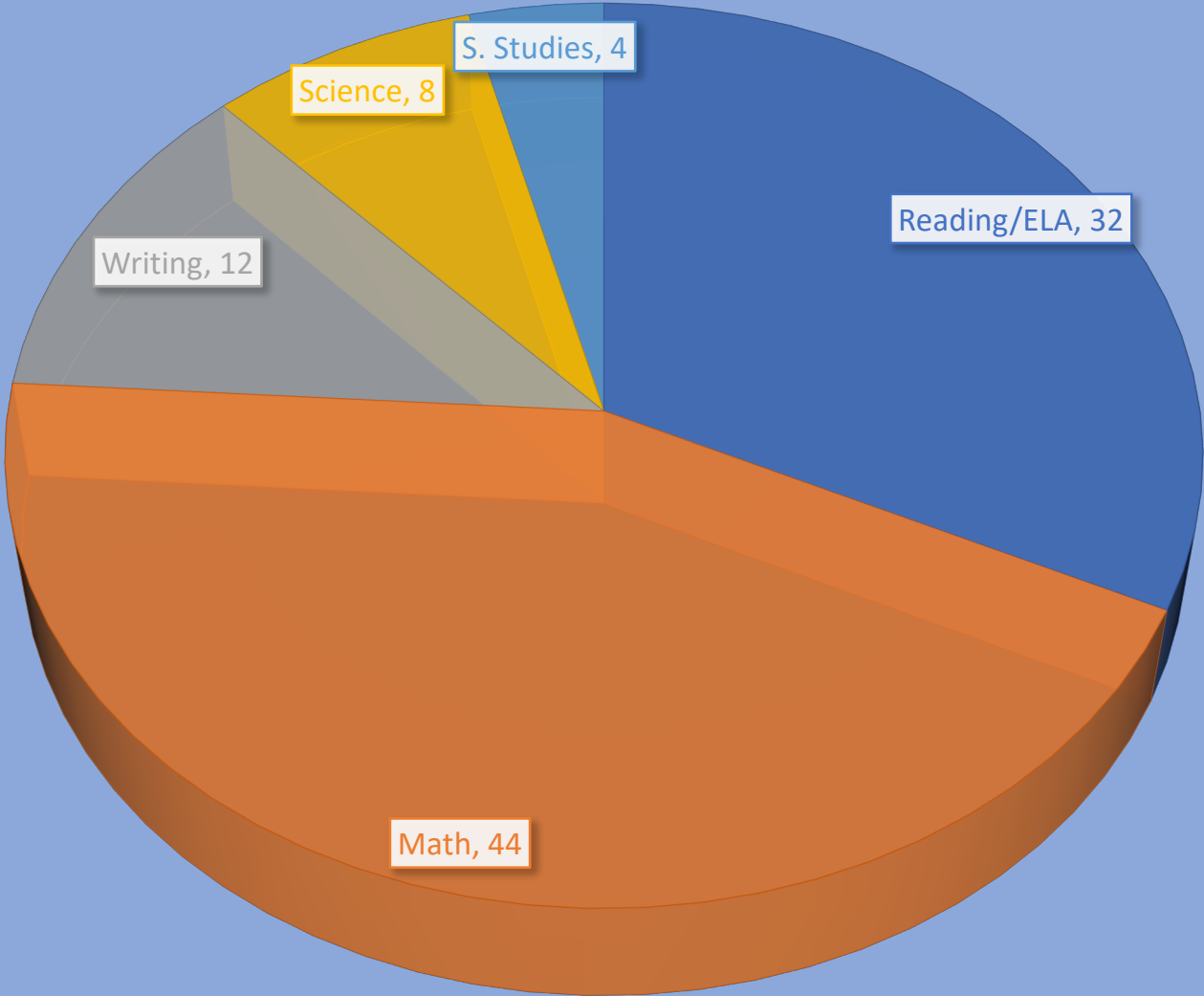
- Attended PLC Training (one in the fall and one in the spring)
- Staff took survey to determine strengths and weaknesses in relationship to content area
- Developed PLC groups according to content area
- Groups met to establish roles, norms, and what happens when norms are not met
- Groups were given agendas to meet and discuss monthly
- Facilitators would report back to administration with meeting notes
- A survey was sent out to the staff mid-year evaluating the PLC model
- Revisions were made based upon feedback

# Data Collection:

- From the survey of staff strengths, teams were developed.
- PLC foundations were established in each team as well as a 4-step response to violating norms. These were turned in to administration.
- PLC meetings were set and determined by facilitators and put onto a calendar for the year.
- After each meeting, notes were turned into administration for review.
- Team leaders with administration would make decisions and have discussions based on team meeting notes.
- A mid-year survey was taken by staff on the PLC model. *(One will also be completed at the end of the school year.)*

# Data Collection:

## PERCENTAGE OF TEACHER STRENGTHS



# Data Collection:

## Content Area Strengths:

*Soaring Toward Success by Growing and Learning Together*

### Cooperative Teams

Reading - 1st, 3rd, 4th, Title, Special Education, Special Area

Andrea Potter-math, yes	*Emily Swaby-yes	Gena Norman-math, no	*Kay Hicks-no
*Leann Parrish-yes	Audrey Lewis	*Jacquie Mack-yes	*Taylor Turchi-math,yes

Math - K, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, Special Education

*Dwight George-yes	Lorie Turchi-reading, yes	*Becky Orr-no	*Leanne Purdy-yes
Holly Wheaton	*Kaitlyn Lock-yes	*Taylor Dicken-yes	Kris McLain-reading,yes

Writing - K, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, Title, Speech, Special Area

*Monica Hartman-yes	*Heather Strubinger-yes	Kelly Orcutt	Colleen Leto-reading, no
Melissa Scaggs	*Kathy Jerome-yes	Allie Lindsey-math, yes	*Tiffany Crowder-yes

Science/Social Studies - K, 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, Special Area

Carol Barton	*Tammy Weir-yes	*Alisha Leonard-no	
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# Data Collection:

## PLC Foundations:

### *Soaring Toward Success by Growing & Learning Together* Cooperative Team Norms & Roles Discussion

#### 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 Big Ideas

- #1 A Focus on Learning
- #2 A Collaborative Culture & Collective Responsibility
- #3 Results Orientation
- #4 Hard Work & Commitment

#### PLC Essential Questions

- #1 What is it we want our students to know and be able to do?
- #2 How will we know if each student has learned it?
- #3 How will we respond when some students do not learn it?
- #4 How will we extend the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?

#### Cooperative Team Roles

Facilitator  
Recorder  
Data Analyst  
Timekeeper

#### Cooperative Team Norms

- Each team should create its own norms
- Norms should be stated as commitments to act or behave in a certain way rather than as beliefs
- Reviewed until each member has internalized them
- Violations should be addressed
- Less is more

### *Soaring Toward Success by Growing & Learning Together* Collaborative Teams: The Foundation

Team Member Name	Role
	Facilitator
	Recorder
	Data Analyst
	Time Keeper
	Other

Norms
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What happens when we don't adhere to our norms?

Steps	Our Team's Response
1st Violation	Verbal Reminder
2nd Violation	
3rd Violation	
4th Violation	Refer to Admin

# Data Collection:

## Professional Development Calendar:

*Soaring Toward Success by Growing and Learning Together*

### October

	Tuesday	Wednesday
Week 1 2-3	Staff Meeting	<b>Tech Training Rotations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart Exchange/Notebook - laptop (Andrea)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apple Classroom - iPad (Amanda)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Google Forms - Bring a quiz or test you want converted into a Form &amp; laptop (Kara)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations (Brian)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Week 2 9-10	Parent/Teacher Conferences	Dismiss Early
Week 3 16-17	Fall Break	Fall Break
Week 4 23-24	PLC Development - Cooperative Team Norms/Roles	PLC Development - Cooperative Team Meeting *1st Team Meeting to designate Norms & Roles (see PLC Norms & Roles Google Doc)
Week 5 30-31	Tech Training Rotations #2	Cooperative Team Meeting - Prioritizing Standards

Focus

Smekens Vocabulary	Smekens Writing	Curriculum Calendars
Grade Level Reading List	SS/Science Units	Digital Curriculum

## Where We Are Heading Next:

Based on the information and the experience, we believe one meeting a month should be dedicated to content area PLC meetings. This would create more ongoing discussion and revision with curriculum. We also feel that it is beneficial for staff to meet outside their grade level (even though there will always be a difference in opinions and vision at times).

Therefore, we feel the PLC model is something we will continue with for the next school year. As we move forward, our PLC topics need to directly align with our school improvement plan.

# Data Collection:

## Mid Year PLC Survey by the Staff:

**Midyear PLC Survey**

This survey is intended to help us, as a school, learn more about the type of work that has occurred in PLC teams so far this year and how we can best plan our PLC work for the remainder of the year. The survey is divided into two sections: the ways in which your team has managed PLC meetings and the types of tasks on which your team has focused. Thank you for completing this survey in an honest and thoughtful manner.

Your grade level and primary subject area: Results - Mean

**Team-Based Collaboration: Meeting Management**

Please indicate the extent to which each of the statements below is true by circling one of the four numbers using the following scale:

1 = Very true      2 = True      3 = Somewhat true      4 = Not true

	1	2	3	4
<i>Mean</i> 1.65 We have an agreed-upon set of meeting norms in our PLC team (for example, expectations for participant behaviors during meetings).				
1.35 We follow our meeting norms consistently at PLC meetings.				
1.35 Our norms help us to have productive, effective conversations.				
1.30 We have clear tasks to perform at our PLC meetings.				
1.25 Our tasks relate directly to student learning goals.				
1.80 Our tasks are determined by consensus among our team members.				
1.33 A large majority of our PLC time (80 percent or more) is spent on tasks related to student learning goals.				
2.65 During PLC conversations, team members sometimes disagree about ideas or practices.				
1.76 When team members disagree about ideas or practices, we tend to discuss those disagreements in depth.				
1.65 When I disagree with something a member of my PLC has said, I almost always voice that disagreement.				
2.45 Within PLC meetings, we try to avoid emotionally charged or difficult topics or conversations.				
1.80 I feel a strong sense of attachment to my team.				

*only 4*

1 of 4

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2.46	If we were given the option of no longer meeting as a PLC, I would still want to continue the meetings.	1	2	3	4
1.33	I have improved as a classroom teacher as a result of the conversations and work we have done in our PLC.	1	2	3	4
1.35	I have made changes to my teaching practices as a result of the work that we have done as a PLC.	1	2	3	4

Comments:

1 of 4

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# Our Discoveries:

Learning Statement 1: The staff felt like the use of PLC meetings were a more productive use of professional development time. There were deeper discussions about topics relevant to instruction, curriculum, and schedule.

Learning Statement 2: There seemed to be more “voiced” opinions by staff members when it came to decision making. This caused some tension among staff.

Learning Statement 3: Staff members noted it was nice to collaborate with teachers outside their grade level. From these discussions, vertical alignment was a result.

# Bibliography:

- Dufour, Richard & DeFour, Rebecca & Eaker, Robert & Many, Thomas & Mattos, Mike (2016) *Learning By Doing. A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press
- Marzano, Robert & Heflebower, Tammy & Hoeg, Jan & Warrick, Phil & Grift, Gavin (2016) *Collaborative Teams that Transform Schools. The Next Step in PLC's*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research

*Thank You For Listening*

# Indiana State University IPI Cohort 5

## Showcase Presentation Narrative

### **Title of Action Research:**

POSITIVE LEADERS CONNECTING

*Transforming Teachers to Teacher Leaders*

*NORTH VERMILLION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL*

Principal: Brian Byrum

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Team Members: Taylor Dicken & Amanda Hendrix

### **Background:**

North Vermillion Elementary School is very small with a population of just under 400 students in grade K-6. We have had several teachers retire over the last 5 years creating a very young and new staff. We have one administrator in the building with a lot of responsibility wearing many different “hats”. For the 2019-2020 school year, changes in schedule and curriculum need to be decided and implemented. Through action research, we felt we needed to be more intentional at creating more opportunities for teacher leaders, create a leadership team to help with “buy-in”, as well as develop common norms and accountability.

### **Purpose of Inquiry:**

The purpose of our Action Inquiry was to develop Professional Learning Communities in our building. When this was shared with the corporation administration team, we decided it would be a corporation initiative to review our professional development schedule and implement the proper PLC model at NVCSC.

With many important changes to be made before the 2019-2020 school year, we felt that staff and administration should work together to make these decisions. This would continue to build a cohesive culture as we move forward to improve student learning through vertical alignment corporation wide.

### **Our Wondering:**

With this purpose, we wondered if the PLC model would provide the framework to create a more applicable use of professional development time, improve teacher buy-in, and create teacher leaders.

Implementing the PLC model from the ground up is a new development for our staff. The staff sometimes confused Professional Development time and Professional Communities in thinking they were one in the same. Our hope was that the true PLC model would educate us on a true learning community and also give teachers opportunities to discuss, share, and assist administration with decisions.



### **Our Actions:**

After discussion, the administration team decided to move towards the PLC model corporation wide. The team attended the PLC training offered by Solution Tree. After attending that training, we pushed out a survey for our staff to identify where they felt they were the strongest in the content areas. After reviewing the survey results, the staff was placed in teams according to those strengths as well as a representation of different grade levels and special areas. Those teams then met to develop roles, norms, and consequences when norms are not met. Groups were given agendas and a PLC calendar was developed for at least one meeting per month. The Facilitator of each group met with administration to discuss meeting notes. A survey was sent out mid-year and another one at the end of the year to determine action, revisions, and to make decisions.

### **Data Collection:**

- From the survey of staff strengths, teams were developed. (Appendix 1)
- PLC foundations were established in each team as well as a 4-step response to violating norms. These were turned in to administration. (Appendix 2 and 3)
- PLC meetings were set and determined by facilitators and put onto a calendar for the year. (Appendix 4)
- After each meeting, notes were turned into administration for review. (Appendix 5)
- Team leaders with administration would make decisions and have discussions based on team meeting notes.
- A mid-year survey was taken by staff on the PLC model. (*One will also be completed at the end of the school year*) (Appendix 6)

### **Our Discoveries:**

Learning Statement 1: The staff felt like the use of PLC meetings were a more productive use of professional development time. There were deeper discussions about topics relevant to instruction, curriculum, and schedule.

Learning Statement 2: There seemed to be more “voiced” opinions by staff members when it came to decision making. This caused some tension among staff.

Learning Statement 3: Staff members noted it was nice to collaborate with teachers outside their grade level. From these discussions, a more vertical alignment was a result.

### **Where Are We Headed Next?**

Based on the information and the experience, we believe one meeting a month should be dedicated to content area PLC meetings moving into next year. This would create more ongoing discussion and revision with curriculum. We also feel that it is beneficial for staff to meet outside their grade level (even though there will always be a difference in opinions and vision at times).

Therefore, we feel the PLC model is something we will continue with for the next school year. As we move forward and improve on our practices, we feel our PLC topics need to directly align with our school improvement plan to expand growth.

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Soaring Toward Success by Growing and Learning Together

## Cooperative Teams

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Carol Barton	*Tammy Weir-yes	*Alisha Leonard-no	
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## APPENDIX 2

### *Soaring Toward Success by Growing & Learning Together* Cooperative Team Norms & Roles Discussion

#### What is a PLC?

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#### PLC Big Ideas

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Recorder  
Data Analyst  
Timekeeper

#### Cooperative Team Norms

- Each team should create its own norms
- Norms should be stated as commitments to act or behave in a certain way rather than as beliefs
- Reviewed until each member has internalized them
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- Less is more

**APPENDIX 3**

*Soaring Toward Success by Growing & Learning Together*  
*Collaborative Teams: The Foundation*

Team Member Name	Role
	Facilitator
	Recorder
	Data Analyst
	Time Keeper
	Other

Norms
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

What happens when we don't adhere to our norms?

Steps	Our Team's Response
1st Violation	Verbal Reminder
2nd Violation	
3rd Violation	
4th Violation	Refer to Admin

APPENDIX 4

*Soaring Toward Success by Growing and Learning Together*

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Week 5 30-31	Tech Training Rotations #2	Cooperative Team Meeting - Prioritizing Standards

Focus

Smekens Vocabulary	Smekens Writing	Curriculum Calendars
Grade Level Reading List	SS/Science Units	Digital Curriculum

APPENDIX 5

11/13/18 P.L.C Meeting Notes

Those present:

Kaitlyn Lock  
Taylor Dicken  
Kelsey D

Jeanne Parody  
Kris McSpain  
Holly Wheaton  
Ari Turchi

1) Completed the 6 Skills focus and began with 5th grade skills.

2) Will continue 5th th. about Mr. George on Fred so he is going to provide his essential skills list that he uses currently for instruction. He shared w/ us his reasons for higher math scores last year. He continually pulled small groups for remediation while his student teacher led the regular lessons. He felt this gave crucial added time to help those struggling with skills. He thought this might be a good thing for any teacher w/ a student teacher to consider.

APPENDIX 6

### Midyear PLC Survey

This survey is intended to help us, as a school, learn more about the type of work that has occurred in PLC teams so far this year and how we can best plan our PLC work for the remainder of the year. The survey is divided into two sections: the ways in which your team has managed PLC meetings and the types of tasks on which your team has focused. Thank you for completing this survey in an honest and thoughtful manner.

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#### Team-Based Collaboration: Meeting Management

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1.33	A large majority of our PLC time (80 percent or more) is spent on tasks related to student learning goals.	1	2	3	4
2.65	During PLC conversations, team members sometimes disagree about ideas or practices.	1	2	3	4
1.76	When team members disagree about ideas or practices, we tend to discuss those disagreements in depth.	1	2	3	4
1.65	When I disagree with something a member of my PLC has said, I almost always voice that disagreement.	1	2	3	4
2.45	Within PLC meetings, we try to avoid emotionally charged or difficult topics or conversations.	1	2	3	4
1.80	I feel a strong sense of attachment to my team.	1	2	3	4

one 4

1 of 4



2.40	If we were given the option of no longer meeting as a PLC, I would still want to continue the meetings.	1	2	3	4
1.33	I have improved as a classroom teacher as a result of the conversations and work we have done in our PLC.	1	2	3	4
1.35	I have made changes to my teaching practices as a result of the work that we have done as a PLC.	1	2	3	4

Comments: