
Improving Instruction Through PLCs

Taria Taylor - Principal
Carie Biggs - Teacher Leader
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Aylesworth Elementary School



Background Leading to Our Inquiry

Portage Township Schools has been working towards Marzano's definition of high reliability for the past 5 years. PTS fully committed to High Reliability Schools for the 2021-2022 school year. We hired Marzano coaches with the goal of all PTS schools being HRS level 1 certified by the end of the 2021-2022 school year. Throughout this process I, along with my school leadership team, have had the opportunity to closely examine our HRS level 1 data and determine what we needed to improve as a school. We found that there were areas of our PLC process that needed strengthening.

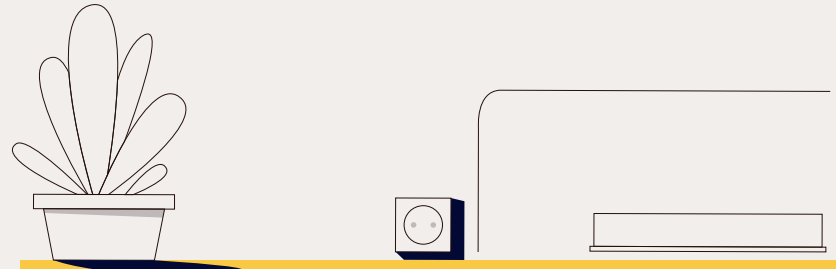
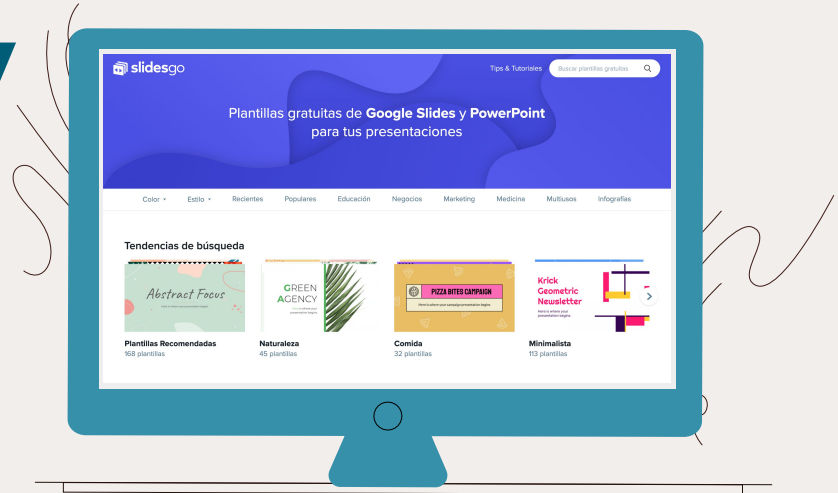


Background Leading to Our Inquiry

Aylesworth 1.4 Survey						
#	Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	A professional learning community (PLC) process is in place in our school.	0.00%	0.00%	3.70%	62.96%	33.33%
2	Our school's PLC collaborative teams have written goals.	0.00%	23.81%	9.52%	61.90%	4.76%
3	School leaders regularly examine PLC collaborative teams' progress toward their goals.	0.00%	31.58%	21.05%	47.37%	0.00%
4	Our school's PLC collaborative teams create common assessments	4.17%	4.17%	16.67%	58.33%	16.67%
5	Our school's PLC collaborative teams analyze student achievement and growth.	0.00%	12.50%	20.83%	41.67%	25.00%
6	Data teams are in place in our school.	4.76%	28.57%	42.86%	19.05%	4.76%
7	Our school's data teams have written goals.	5.26%	26.32%	47.37%	15.79%	5.26%
8	School leaders regularly examine data teams' progress toward their goals.	5.00%	25.00%	40.00%	25.00%	5.00%
9	School leaders collect and review minutes and notes from PLC collaborative team and data team meetings to ensure that teams are focusing on student achievement.	0.00%	18.18%	27.27%	45.45%	9.09%

Purpose of Inquiry

The purpose of our inquiry is to improve our PLC process with the ultimate goal of improving instruction. We will strengthen our PLC process by following the recommendations laid out in A Handbook for High Reliability Schools. We will also implement Data Cycles to monitor instruction.



Our Wonderings



Will improving HRS indicator 1.4 lead to an improved PLC process?



Will improving the PLC process lead to improved instruction and student achievement?



Will the staff see value in improving the PLC process?

Our Actions

1

- Examine HRS Level 1.4 Data with School Leadership Team
- Create an action plan to improve HRS Leading Indicator 1.4

- Create PLC norms and goals
- Set Data Cycles
- Review scores from Data Cycles

2

3

- Conduct PLC training with Team Leaders
- Review weekly PLC notes

- Set Data Team meetings
- Disaggregate school data
- Present school data to staff

4

Data Collection

We used the HRS Level 1 survey data that I received during year one of IPLI. I took this data to my school leadership team and we determined that we wanted to improve Leading Indicator 1.4 - Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and the achievement of all students. We would determine growth in this area by giving the HRS level 1.4 survey again.

Each grade level PLC determined priority standards and developed a data cycle calendar. PLCs create pre- and post-assessments and discuss how to improve instruction on the priority standards.

PLC notes are reviewed weekly. PLC notes are used to determine what parts of the PLC process need improvement and make suggestions to PLC teams.

Our Data

Aylesworth 1.4 Survey		SURVEY 1 DATA		SURVEY 2 DATA							
#	Question	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly agree	
1	A professional learning community (PLC) process is in place in our school.	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	3.70%	0.00%	62.96%	9.50%	33.33%	90.50%
2	Our school's PLC collaborative teams have written goals.	0.00%	0.00%	23.81%	0.00%	9.52%	4.80%	61.90%	14.30%	4.76%	81.00%
3	School leaders regularly examine PLC collaborative teams' progress toward their goals.	0.00%	0.00%	31.58%	4.80%	21.05%	0.00%	47.37%	23.80%	0.00%	71.40%
4	Our school's PLC collaborative teams create common assessments	4.17%	0.00%	4.17%	0.00%	16.67%	4.80%	58.33%	9.50%	16.67%	85.70%
5	Our school's PLC collaborative teams analyze student achievement and growth.	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	0.00%	20.83%	0.00%	41.67%	19.00%	25.00%	81.00%
6	Data teams are in place in our school.	4.76%	0.00%	28.57%	4.80%	42.86%	9.50%	19.05%	23.80%	4.76%	61.90%
7	Our school's data teams have written goals.	5.26%	0.00%	26.32%	4.80%	47.37%	14.30%	15.79%	28.60%	5.26%	52.40%
8	School leaders regularly examine data teams' progress toward their goals.	5.00%	0.00%	25.00%	4.80%	40.00%	14.30%	25.00%	28.60%	5.00%	52.40%
9	School leaders collect and review minutes and notes from PLC collaborative team and data team meetings to ensure that teams are focusing on student achievement.	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	4.80%	27.27%	4.80%	45.45%	14.30%	9.09%	76.20%

Discoveries



PLC goals have given the process a greater purpose.



Establishing Data Teams has led to PLCs being more data driven.

Improving the PLC process has led to more cohesive teams.



You can never be too transparent regarding the PLC process.



Next Steps

Review 1.4 Data with School Leadership team to determine continued areas of growth.



Continue to monitor Data Cycles.

Complete HRS Level 1 Certification.



Begin HRS Level 2 Certification.

Bibliography

- Marzano, Robert J., Warrick, Phillip B., Rains, Cameron L., Durour, Richard: Leading a High Reliability School. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2018.
- Marzano, Robert J., Warrick, Phillip B., Simms, Julia A.: A Handbook for High Reliability Schools: The Next Steps in School Reform. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Resources, 2014.



Thanks!

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Improving Instruction Through PLCs

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Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slides 2 & 3)

Portage Township Schools has been working towards Marzano's definition of high reliability for the past 5 years. PTS fully committed to High Reliability Schools for the 2021-2022 school year. We hired Marzano coaches with the goal of all PTS schools being HRS level 1 certified by the end of the 2021-2022 school year. Throughout this process I, along with my school leadership team, have had the opportunity to closely examine our HRS level 1 data and determine what we needed to improve as a school. We found that there were areas of our PLC process that needed strengthening. As we go through the HRS Level 1 certification process, Aylesworth staff will focus on improving our PLC process with the end goal of high achievement for all students.

The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 4)

The purpose of our inquiry is to improve our PLC process with the ultimate goal of improving instruction. We will strengthen our PLC process by following the recommendations laid out in A Handbook for High Reliability Schools. We will also implement Data Cycles to monitor instruction.

Our Wonderings (Slide 5)

With this purpose, we wondered:

- Will improving HRS indicator 1.4 lead to an improved PLC process?
- Will improving the PLC process lead to improved instruction and student achievement?
- Will the staff see value in improving the PLC process?

Our Actions (Slide 6)

Aylesworth Elementary School has had a PLC process in place for many years. As we examined our HRS data we found that there were parts of the PLC process that were not clear to all staff members or were absent from the process altogether. We honed in on creating school and grade level data teams and determined what data each team was responsible for. Our school leadership team met once a month to discuss progress and ensure we were on track to meet our goals for improvement. Our actions are outlined below:

- Examine HRS Level 1.4 Data with School Leadership Team
- Create an action plan to improve HRS Leading Indicator 1.4
- Conduct PLC training with teacher leaders

Our Actions Continued:

- Create PLC norms and goals
- Set Data Cycles based on Priority Standards
- Regularly review scores from Data Cycles
- Review weekly PLC notes
- Determine our Data Teams
- Set Data Team meeting schedule
- Disaggregate school data
- Present school data to staff

Data Collection (Slide 7)

We used the HRS Level 1 survey data that I received during year one of IPLI. I took this data to my school leadership team and we determined that we wanted to improve Leading Indicator 1.4 - Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and the achievement of all students. We would determine growth in this area by giving the HRS level 1.4 survey again in late March, 2022.

Each grade level PLC determined priority standards and developed a data cycle calendar. PLCs create pre- and post-assessments and discuss how to improve instruction on the priority standards.

PLC notes are reviewed weekly. PLC notes are used to determine what parts of the PLC process need improvement and make suggestions to PLC teams.

Our Data (Slide 8)

Our data consists of the results of our HRS level 1.4 survey. The Aylesworth staff took the survey two times, once during the 2020-21 school year, and again in March of 2022.

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Our Discoveries (Slide 9)

- Improving the PLC process has led to more cohesive teams.
- PLC goals have given the process a greater purpose.
- Establishing Data Teams has led to PLCs being more data driven.
- You can never be too transparent regarding the PLC process.

Our Next Steps (Slide 10)

- Review 1.4 Data with School Leadership Team to determine continued areas of growth.
- Continue to monitor Data Cycles.
- Complete HRS Level 1 Certification.
- Begin HRS Level 2 Certification.

Bibliography (Slide 11)

Marzano, Robert J., Warrick, Phillip B., Rains, Cameron L., Durour, Richard: Leading a High Reliability School. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2018.

Marzano, Robert J., Warrick, Phillip B., Simms, Julia A.: A Handbook for High Reliability Schools: The Next Steps in School Reform. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Resources, 2014.