

Starting off in the Right Direction: PLC's Overhaul

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Background That Led to Your Team's Inquiry:

With changes in administration and staff, we felt there was a little bit of a disconnection within our teams and content areas. New initiatives being implemented, 1:1 being fully carried out, and standardized tests being changed were all causes for strain, and we felt it was important for our staff to try to work more collaboratively together, instead of being stressed individually. Our purpose was to become more focused in our team meetings and to restructure the agendas with a more targeted approach. We also want our content areas to have time to meet to discuss standards and unpack the important elements that students must know in time for testing. Finally, we want the staff to feel like they can really work together by knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses, which will in turn make all meetings more conducive in achieving our school's goals.

Statement of Your Team's Wondering:

How can restructuring current protocols create targeted PLC agendas and aligned curriculum discussions in order to work more collaboratively as a staff?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into our wondering, we completed the Compass Activity with the staff. We allowed staff first to vote on which direction represented each staff (N, S, E, W) and then we allowed staff to vote on their own direction. Staff then shared and discussed what others voted and what their perceptions were. This allowed for open conversations regarding perception versus reality. We re-visited our PLC's and looked at the balance across teams.

The next activity involved staff collaboration while re-vamping our Non-negotiables within our building. Staff brainstormed these, opened them up for feedback, and then finalized the list as a staff. Throughout the year, we re-designed our PLC's and through our PLC process, we unpacked and worked on our overall scope and sequence across content areas. This has been beneficial PD over the course of the year that we will be building on as we move into next year.

Stating Your Team's Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing our data we learned:

1. Teacher teams need to be more balanced in order to be productive. Everyone needs to know their strengths within their team to make the team work more efficiently.

Data:

- 21.4% of staff were East
- 14.3% of staff were West
- 35.7% of staff were North
- 28.6 of staff were South

The compass activity allowed us to break down the teaching teams, discuss each of the roles within a PLC, and then assign roles that would benefit the team more. The compass activity information was share with teachers within their teams. Teachers reflected throughout the year on the benefits of knowing their teaching teams and their role within the meetings.

2. Expectations were not clear in all classrooms and setting non-negotiables cleared up any misconceptions.

Data: Created Non-Negotiables for SRJHS

3. Intensive curriculum collaboration with specific timelines set with expectations is productive and useful for all teachers.

Data:

- 126 additional hours were spent on PD (12 full days, 12 1/2 days)
- 6 PD Days already built in

Staff Survey:

- 91.7% feel that PLC agendas are more focused.
- 100% of staff feel that PD time was beneficial working on curriculum.
- 75% of staff feel they know their colleagues weaknesses/strengths better. The other 25% felt they knew staff very well prior to this year.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

Our journey this year through IPLI year #2 has not only helped us to grow as a school, but as a staff bringing us closer than prior years. As a staff, we focused on simplifying and focusing on expectations, time management, and curriculum. Over the course of the year, we learned that there are gaps in curriculum that needed to be re-vamped and spent valuable time working to re-vamp curriculum. As a staff, we developed school-wide non-negotiables that has clear expectations across the building.

As the staff at SRJHS begins to move forward the following will be in place:

- Non-negotiables will be posted on posters throughout the building.
- The new PLC format will be maintained, but re-visited as needed based on staff feedback.