

# Professional Learning Community

## Common understandings

Our district's Professional Learning Community (PLC) model is a collaborative framework that is important for Response to Intervention (RTI). It is the final component needed to establish our collective vision related to responding to the needs of our learners. Our efforts within this framework will be guided by our District's Strategic Goals for Learning:

- The continuous improvement of instruction and assessment
- Meeting the unique needs of each learner

### Why is Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools establishing a Professional Learning Community model?

Over 40 years of effective schools' research demonstrates that one of the most effective ways to improve student learning is through the systematic and innovative work of Professional Learning Communities. The PLC teams in our district will:

- focus on ensuring all students learn at a high level
- provide a systematic response to student needs for intervention and enrichment (personalized learning)
- partner together and have a collective responsibility for student learning

In addition, our district's PLC model will facilitate an open system of communication. What we learn through collaboration and innovation will help us identify our needs, next steps and areas of celebration. Educational experts recognize that the collaborative, focused work of PLCs contributes to higher levels of student learning.

### What is Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools' PLC Structure?

Our district has developed a PLC infrastructure that includes professional learning experiences that address provincial, district, and school level goals. In addition, teams will be developed within each school and across the district that focus on addressing student learning needs. These collaborative teams will be working to identify what is most important for our students to learn, to identify and share effective instructional practices and to reflect on the effectiveness of instruction, enrichment and intervention.

### How will the Professional Learning Community model be implemented in the district?

In order to design and implement PLCs in the most effective way possible, a two-phase implementation plan has been designed.

#### Phase 1

In the spring of 2014, there will be three early release days for students. The three sixty-minute blocks will be used to identify our school's collaborative vision, establish norms and plan for our fall assessment work.

#### Phase 2

Beginning in the fall of 2014, all Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools will have early release for students each Monday. Staff members will be engaged in professional learning and collaborative meetings to promote improved student learning.

Our district and school communities will work together to provide opportunities for families who may be unable to have their children at home during the PLC time. However, if children remain at school during the student early release time, alternate transportation may need to be arranged. Bus schedules will be adjusted according to the one hour early release schedule.

### How will this affect me?

#### Parents

Your child's school day will end one hour earlier on Mondays next year. Teachers will be working collectively to ensure that your child receives the foundational skills necessary to learn at their highest level. It is important to note that the collective work of our educators is critical to move our district towards a more personalized, responsive educational system that impacts your child's learning. In addition, all schools in our district will continue to exceed BC Ministry of Education standards for instructional time.

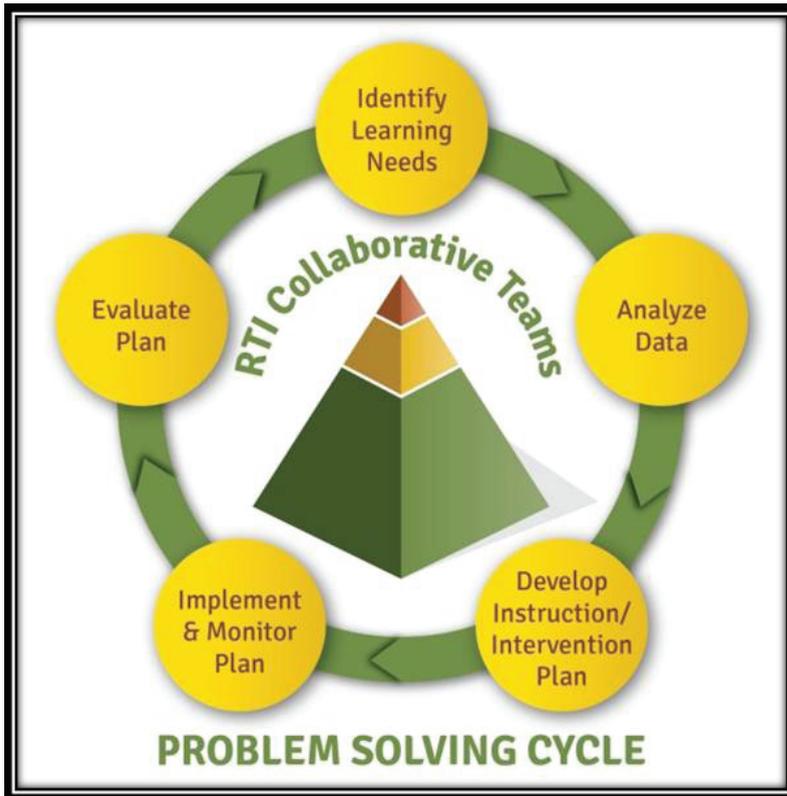


*The breakthrough we are seeking involves the education community as a whole, establishing a system . . . that will result in daily continuous improvement for all students in all classrooms.*

Fullan, Hill, Crévola (2006)

# Professional Learning Community

## Common understandings



### The Research Behind PLCs

There is no way to make whole-system reform work without the teaching profession and leaders working together for the collective good.

*Michael Fullan (All Systems Go 2010)*

The case for collaborative learning cultures – and their direct impact on school improvement and student achievement – has been made consistently and conclusively.

*Ontario Leadership Strategy (Bulletin # 3 Spring 2010)*

### Teachers

Within the workday each Monday our educational teams will have the opportunity to collectively identify the skills, knowledge and dispositions most critical for lifelong learning. Educators will have the opportunity to learn and share effective, innovative instructional practices. Our teams will reflect on the effectiveness of instruction, intervention, and enrichment as we work to meet the needs of our learners. In addition, we will have sustained opportunity for professional learning (in-service) related to provincial, district and school goals.

### Non-school based Staff

The consistent, district-wide early release time on Mondays will provide an opportunity for your family of schools to proactively identify times that you can attend professional conversations and learning experiences that align to the learning needs of our students.

### Education Assistants

Your involvement within the PLC framework is critical and may vary from week to week and school to school. At times, you may be supporting students who are unable to go home, providing homework assistance, attending in-service related to your work, or engaging in professional collaborative conversations related to your role within the school. The principal of your school will consult with you regarding your role and responsibilities.

### School Based Administrators

The PLC framework adopted by our district provides a consistent time for you to partner with your collaborative teams as they identify essential learning outcomes, share and reflect on instruction, intervention, and enrichment practices. In addition, you will facilitate the organization of professional learning (in-service) related to provincial, district and school goals.



**NANAIMO LADYSMITH**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Shared practice and collective inquiry help sustain improvement. Through continuous inquiry and reflective practice, we discover solutions and address student needs. (McREL 2003; Stroll et al., 2006)*