Continuous Improvement Through Teamwork, Collaboration & Shared Leadership!

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Research has found that high-performing schools have a number of common characteristics:

What do you believe are the elements of successful schools? Write them down!

Introductions!

- Who are you?
  - Introduce yourself
  - Position
  - Location
- Talk about elements of successful schools and why you choose them

Characteristics of High Performing Schools

1. Common mission, vision, values and goals.
2. Ensuring achievement for all students with systems for prevention and intervention.
3. Collaboration focused on teaching and learning.
4. Using data to guide decision-making and continuous improvement.
5. Gaining active engagement from family & community
6. Building sustainable leadership capacity.

9 Common Characteristics

1. Clear and Shared Focus
2. High Standards and Expectations
3. Effective School Leadership
4. High Levels of Collaboration and Communication
5. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned with Standards
6. Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning
7. Focused Professional Development
8. Supportive Learning Environment
9. High Levels of Community and Parent Involvement
Ok, we know who Dr. Jay Marino is now…

So... What is Continuous Improvement?

Continuous Improvement... is like a bridge

But how?...

Teamwork, Collaboration & Shared Leadership; the pillars of successful organizations

Point A - “The Current State”

Point B - “The Desired State”
• Vision, Mission & Goals

The Road - A Continuous Improvement Journey

In Your School...

- Do people know the vision of the school?
- How has your school described “point B” or the “desired state” of your school?
- How do you communicate your school’s vision or “point B”?

REPRINTED FROM THE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP QUARTERLY

KEEPING THE “OLD” WAY OF DOING THINGS WHILE TRYING TO APPLY THE “NEW” DOESN’T WORK!

It requires a paradigm shift!

“If we resist change, we’ll fail,
If we accept change, we’ll survive,
If we create change, we’ll succeed.”
How Do We Lead Change?

No One Escapes Continuous Improvement! 21st Century Structures for 21st Century Learning and Leadership!
Continuous Improvement!

- Being better tomorrow than we are today...
- Being better next week than we are this week...
- Being better next month than we are this month...
- Being better next year than we are this year...

Backchannel With Me!

https://todaysmeet.com/marino

In the absence of clear direction, people will determine for themselves what is most important!

How to establish the point “B!”

School Mission

Continuous Improvement – At All Levels

Shared Leadership!

- Shared responsibility for problem identification, solutions, and action taking by a representative group that is acting collaboratively to solve agreed upon issues.

http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/
School Quality Management Team

Quality Management Team

School Leader  Teacher Group 1 or 2  Teacher Group 3 or 4  Teacher Group 5 or 6  Teacher Group 7 or 8  Teacher Art/Music/PE

Teamwork | Collaboration | Shared Leadership

After the video, introduce yourself! Compare the story to your teams:
- 1.) Effective teams need diversity! Do you have it?
- 2.) Unexpected consequences come from hasty actions! Are you hasty or strategic?
- 3.) Nobody likes team members that don’t contribute... Everyone needs to do their part!
- 4.) Don’t leave anyone out... Make sure that everyone feels part of the team!

Quality Management Teams
Decide together what’s most important...

- Who do we serve? (Customers/Stakeholders)
- What do we value? (Core Values/Beliefs)
- What is important to our school? (Key Goals)
- What kind of school do we want to become? (Vision)
- What is our school’s purpose? (Mission)
- How do we know if we are successful? (Data/Scorecard)

Leadership Teams
Set and Communicate Direction!

Leadership Teams Set and Communicate Direction!

How do Leaders Communicate Direction?

- List some strategies and practices that school leaders could implement to communicate goals and direction
- How do people know what is most important?

Dutch >
Hoe communiceren leiders de missie en visie? (richten en inrichten)

- Maak een lijst van strategieën en werkwijzen die leiders kunnen gebruiken om over de visie en doelstellingen te communiceren
- Hoe weten mensen wat het belangrijkste is?
Continuous Improvement – At All Levels

Shared Leadership Teams

Strategic Plan

Classroom Learning Community (All Students)

Professional Learning Communities (All Staff)

Involving All Teachers – Ownership!

• If people have no involvement... they will have no commitment. When people are committed, they will have ownership!

Teamwork!

• A cooperative effort in which each person contributes with different skills and expresses his or her individual interests and opinions to the unity of the group in order to achieve common goals.

- Wikipedia

What is a Professional Learning Community (PLC)?

□ A team with an intentional focus on learning which results in continuous school improvement
□ All teachers participate on a PLC!
□ Teacher as professional!

Effective Schools Vs. PLC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Schools Components</th>
<th>PLC Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Common mission, vision, values and goals.</td>
<td>1. Shared mission, vision, values goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Collaboration focused on teaching and learning.</td>
<td>2. Collaborative teams focused on learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ensuring achievement for all students with systems for prevention and intervention.</td>
<td>3. Collective inquiry into best practice and current reality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Using data to guide decision-making and continuous improvement.</td>
<td>4. Results orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Gaining active engagement from family &amp; community Building sustainable leadership capacity.</td>
<td>5. Action Orientation and experimentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>6. Commitment to continuous improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effective teams create norms and collective commitments they will make to each other!
Culture Shifts in a PLC

- **Shift in Fundamental Purpose**
  - From teaching to learning
- **Shift in Use of Assessments**
  - From summative to frequent formative
- **Shift in Response When Students Don’t Learn**
  - From remediation to intervention
- **Shift in the Work of Teachers**
  - From isolation to collaboration

Culture Shifts in a PLC

- **Shift in Focus**
  - From focusing on assignment completion to student learning
- **Shift in School Culture**
  - From independence to interdependence
- **Shift in Professional Development**
  - From learning individually to collaboration & teaming

PLC Crucial Questions

- **What do we want each student to know or be able to do?**
- **How do we know if they have learned it?**
- **How will we respond when some students don’t learn?**

Internalize and Personalize!

- At this moment...
  - What are the key learning’s so far?
  - What information is new? Different?
  - What are your reflections? Reactions?
  - What are your “take-aways” and what can you use tomorrow?
Why Continuous Improvement???

Connecting Continuous Improvement Practices to 21st Century Learning!

What’s So Different About a 21st Century Learning?

What is the role of the teacher in 21st century learning?

How would you describe 21st century learning?

How is 21st century learning different than traditional learning?

What are students engaged in?

Your poll will show here

1. Install the app from polliev.com/app
2. Make sure you are in Slide Show mode

Still not working? Get help at polliev.com/app/help or Open poll in your web browser
Professional Educators
Engage the 21st Century Learner!

teacher as facilitator

customized learning experiences

make it relevant

increasingly digital

embedded technology
critical thinkers and evaluators

effective communicators

lifelong learners

natural navigators

culture, time & distance
able to communicate across

able to create something new
Creativity and innovation!

Generating new ideas, products, processes, or ways of viewing things.

problem solvers!

self reflection

able to work as a team to reach common goals

Teamwork!
effective global collaborators

Collaboration!

See Shift as a process rather than an event

Shared Leadership!

able to lead or follow

We need to match today’s classroom with today’s students through a Classroom Learning Community!

Involving All Students—Ownership!

Expected Outcomes of the continuous improvement classroom

- Student ownership, responsibility and accountability for learning
- Increased academic achievement
- Student focused
- 21st century learning
- Improved results!

Continu verbeteren in de groep

Naar groeps- en teamwerk

Doelstellingen in de groep

Data analyse in de groep

Door leren geleerd groupassessment

Door leren geleerd ondersteunen

Learning portfolio
Affinity Diagram used to make Ground Rules

Engage Students in 21st Century Learning!

SMART Goals

SCHOOLDOEL: OP TIJD IN DE KLAS

(Tussen)doel:
97% van de leerlingen komt 's ochtends op tijd = 8.30 uur in de klas.

Korte omschrijving van het plan:
In elke klas besteden we er aandacht aan en we leggen uit waarom op tijd komen belangrijk is. Elke week wordt per klas gekeken hoeveel % van de leerlingen op tijd kwam.
Meetbare doelen voor de groep en de individuele leerling zijn:

- Gebaseerd op leren en prestaties
- Gemaakt met input van de leerling
- Smart geformuleerd
- Gebaseerd op data
- Gebaseerd op het lesprogramma

VAAG:
Met rekenen maken we zo min mogelijk fouten

SMART:
31 oktober 2011 hebben de leerlingen van groep 8 gemiddeld 90% van de krommgetallen met één cijfer achter de komma goed

midden- en onderbouw: gemiddeld 8 van de 10 sommen goed
Heldere en gedeelde focus (data muur – data map)
Regelmatige evaluatie van het onderwijs
Eigenaarschap van leerlingen
Reflectie en focus op ontwikkeling
21st Century Learning (communicatie, samenwerken, creatie)

Data Map, wat is het?
- Een map met:
  - Klassenafspraken
  - Missie van de klas
  - Individuele doelen, afgeleid van de groepsdoelen
  - Actieplan (hoe doelen bereiken)
  - Registratieformulieren

Data Folders
- Heldere en gedeelde focus (data muur – data map)
- Regelmatige evaluatie van het onderwijs
- Eigenaarschap van leerlingen
- Reflectie en focus op ontwikkeling
- 21st Century Learning (communicatie, samenwerken, creatie)
Goal Alignment!

What role can you play in helping educators be more effective in using data?

Welke rol zou u kunnen spelen om onderwijsgevenden te helpen bij het effectief gebruiken van gegevens (data)?

How can your school align goals and data for better results?
Student-Led Conferences
Reporting of Progress

- Student-lead discussion
- Refers to data folder
- Teacher serves as facilitator

What Are Class Meetings?

- Led and facilitated by students (rotation)
- Use student input tools to guide discussions
- Issues and concerns are discussed by students (focus on problem solving)

Oudergesprekken door kinderen

- Creëren van Eigenaarschap
- Gebaseerd op data (datamap/ doelen)
- 21st Century skills ontwikkelen als:
  ✓ Reflecteren
  ✓ Evalueren
  ✓ Kritisch denken
  ✓ Communiceren
  ✓ Presenteren

- Recognize progress toward mission and goals
- Focus on the Classroom Data Center!
- Celebrate improvements!
The Lotus Diagram

Consensograms

Affinity Diagrams
The “Sweet Spot” of Continuous Improvement!

Team Norms
SMART Goals
Data Focused
Collaboration
PLC Meeting
Quality Tools/ PDSA
Aligned to Plan
Research Based
Teacher Empowerment

Ground Rules
SMART Goals
Data Focused
Collaboration
CLC Class Meeting
Quality Tools/ PDSA
Aligned to Plan
Research Based
Student Empowerment

Continuous improvement in the classroom...
- is research based and gets results!
- supports 21st century learning!
- empowers and motivates the 21st century learner!

No One Escapes Continuous Improvement!
21st Century Structures for 21st Century Learning and Leadership!

No one escapes continuous improvement!

How will you embrace continuous improvement through teamwork, collaboration and shared leadership?

Future Planning

How will you get started with continuous improvement at your school?
- Leadership Teams?
- Professional Learning Communities?
- Classroom Learning Community?
  - SMART goals
  - Data centers and data folders
  - Quality tools & PDSA

What are your next steps?
What are the take-aways?
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Backchannel With Me!

https://todaysmeet.com/marino

Download free e-book!

http://www.jaymarino.me
## Continuous Improvement

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Ground rules created by students</th>
<th>Classroom mission statements</th>
<th>Classroom and student measurable goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality tools and PDSA used regularly</td>
<td><strong>The Continuous Improvement Classroom</strong></td>
<td>Classroom data centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom meetings facilitated by students</td>
<td>Student-led conferences</td>
<td>Student data folders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Supporting Documents**
Dr. J. Jay Marino – Personal Biography

Jay received his Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Northern Iowa; Masters Degree in Educational Administration from Arizona State University; Educational Specialists and Doctorate Degrees from Western Illinois University. Jay has led continuous improvement initiatives as an elementary and middle school teacher, elementary school administrator, Special Education Coordinator, Director of Technology, Director of Instruction, Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent of Schools. In addition, Jay serves as an international consultant assisting American and European school organizations in their continuous improvement efforts. Dr. Marino’s latest project is the “Jay Marino’s Excellent Schools Project” (http://www.jaymarino.nl/) launched in 2013 by Expertis.

Jay has delivered multiple key note presentations at local, State, National and International conferences. He has served regionally as the Chair of the Iowa Quality Center’s Advisory Council and nationally as the Chair of the American Society for Quality (ASQ) K-12 Educational Advisory Committee. Jay is currently the K-12 Systems Chair for ASQ in the Educational Division. Jay has been actively involved in State Quality Award programs as an applicant and an examiner and has assisted in obtaining State Quality Award recognition for school districts in both Iowa and Illinois.

Jay has served as an author for American and European books including: a chapter in Duurzame Schoolontwikkeling (2014). This book was published by the Dutch Center for Education Leadership (Expertis) where Jay serves as a primary consultant in Holland; Leading Continuous Improvement; Inspiring Quality Education Worldwide (Magistrum, 2011); and a book titled Quality across the curriculum; Integrating quality tools and PDSA with standards (The American Society for Quality, 2004).

In addition, the following articles have been published: A Study of School Boards and Their Implementation of Continuous Improvement Practices (The Journal for Quality and Participation; Vol. 34, Issue 2, 2011); The American School Board of Education: Results of Their Continuous Improvement Practices (Tijdschrift voor Orthopedagogiek, Vol. 50, 2011); An inside look at the books; The continuous improvement classroom series (The Journal for Quality and Participation; Vol. 34, Issue 1, 2011); National responsibility: Implementation analysis of the continuous improvement model to improve school board accountability (National Forum of Educational Administration and Supervision Journal; Vol. 26, No. 3, 2009-10); Boardroom to classroom: Continuous improvement in Cedar Rapids (The School Administrator; Vol. 65, Number 4, 2008); Plan on a page (Scholastic Administrator; Vol. 6, Issue 8, 2007); A new paradigm for organizational change: Involving customers and stakeholders in the improvement process (The Journal for Quality and Participation; Vol. 30, Issue 1, 2007); Involve all stakeholders in aligning district, school, and classroom goals (School Superintendent’s Insider; Vol. 9, Issue 9, 2007); Jay authored ASQ’s ImpaQT training™ for the School, a two-day training module for teachers and administrators and also served as the first moderator of the national Quality in Education blog hosted by the American Society for Quality.

Jay lives in Peoria, Illinois and is married to his wife, Laura and has four children; Jessica, Joey, Matthew, and Grace. Contact Jay via email continuous.improvement@jaymarino.me and learn more about Dr. Marino at his website http://www.jaymarino.me.
## Research Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9 Characteristics of Effective Schools</th>
<th>6 Characteristics of High Performing Schools</th>
<th>Instructional Strategies That Impact Student Achievement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear and Shared Focus</td>
<td>Common mission, vision, values and goals.</td>
<td>ID similarities and differences</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Standards and Expectations</td>
<td>Ensuring achievement for all students with systems for prevention and intervention.</td>
<td>Summarizing and note taking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective School Leadership</td>
<td>Collaboration focused on teaching and learning.</td>
<td>Reinforcing and providing recognition</td>
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<td>High Levels of Collaboration and Communication</td>
<td>Using data to guide decision-making and continuous improvement.</td>
<td>Homework and practice</td>
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<td>Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned with Standards</td>
<td>Gaining active engagement from family &amp; community</td>
<td>Nonlinguistic representations</td>
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<td>Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Building sustainable leadership capacity.</td>
<td>Cooperative Learning</td>
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<td>Focused Professional Development</td>
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<td>Setting objectives and providing feedback</td>
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<td>Supportive Learning Environment</td>
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<td>Generating and testing hypotheses</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Levels of Community and Parent Involvement</td>
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<td>Questions, cues, and advance organizers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Leiderschapstraining op niveau**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gedeelde Leiderschap</th>
<th>Niveau</th>
<th>Rollen en Verantwoordelijkheid PLG’s</th>
<th>Documenten/Doelen</th>
<th>Resultaten/Data</th>
<th>Overleg</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLG Bestuursteam</strong></td>
<td>BESTUUR</td>
<td>Bestuursteam</td>
<td><a href="#">1 Pagina Beleidsplan</a></td>
<td><a href="#">Management Dashboard</a></td>
<td>1 x per kwartaal</td>
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<td><strong>DLT:</strong> District Leadership Team</td>
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<td><a href="#">District Strategic Plan on a Page</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PLG Leiderschapsteam</strong></td>
<td>SCHOOL</td>
<td>Leiderschapsteam</td>
<td><a href="#">1 pagina Schoolplan</a></td>
<td><a href="#">Management Dashboard</a></td>
<td>1 a 2 x per maand</td>
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<td><strong>BLT:</strong> Building Leadership Teams</td>
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<td><a href="#">School Plan on a Page</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PLG Verbeterteams</strong></td>
<td>KLAS/Docenten</td>
<td>Verbeterteams</td>
<td><a href="#">1 pagina Verbeterplan</a></td>
<td><a href="#">Datamuur Classroom Data Center</a></td>
<td>2-4 x per maand</td>
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<td><strong>PLC:</strong> Professional Learning Communities</td>
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<td><a href="#">Class Room Plan on a Page</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PLG Klassenteams</strong></td>
<td>KLAS/Leerlingen</td>
<td>Klassenteams</td>
<td><a href="#">1 pagina Groepsplan</a></td>
<td><a href="#">Leerlingmap/portfolio ’s Student Data Folder</a></td>
<td>Dagelijks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CLC:</strong> Classroom Learning Community</td>
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<td><a href="#">Student Plan on a Page</a></td>
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*Alignment: een professionele integrale aanpak die het realiseren van de afgesproken doelen ondersteunt. Hierbij wordt er voor gezorgd worden dat er consistentie is tussen plannen, processen, informatie, middelen toewijzing, acties, resultaten en analyses op alle niveaus van de organisatie. *(Bron: Baldrige: Education Criteria for Performance Excellence)*

Dr. Jay Marino & Drs. Jan Polderman 2013
# John Kotter's 8 Step Change Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Transformation Suggestions</th>
<th>Implications for My System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Increase urgency</td>
<td>• Examine market and competitive realities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify and discuss crisis, potential crisis, or major opportunities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Provide evidence from outside the organization that change is necessary</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Build the Guiding Team</td>
<td>• Assemble a group with enough power to lead the change effort</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Attract key change leaders by showing enthusiasm and commitment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Encourage the group to work together as a team</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Get the Vision Right</td>
<td>• Create a vision to help direct the change effort</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop strategies for achieving that vision</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Communicate for Buy-in</td>
<td>• Build alignment and engagement through stories</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keep communication simple and heartfelt</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Teach new behaviors by the example of the guiding coalition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Empowering Action</td>
<td>• Remove obstacles to the change</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Change systems and / or structures that work against the vision</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Create short term wins</td>
<td>• Plan for and achieve visible performance improvements</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognize and reward those involved in bringing the improvements to life</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do Not Let Up</td>
<td>• Plan for and create visible performance improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognize and reward personnel involved in the improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reinforce the behaviors shown that led to the improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Make Change Stick</td>
<td>• Articulate the connections between the new behaviors and corporate success</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Shared Leadership Team Overview

*Setting and Communicating Direction Through Shared Leadership!*

**Team Membership**
- Total team membership is typically 25-30% of the total number of teachers in the school
- Members should represent a variety of grade levels and content areas, including special education and art/music/PE, etc.
- Membership should rotate each year (it is recommended that 1/3 of the team is replaced each year)

**Key Tasks of the BLT**
- Set and communicate direction at school through the following tools that are monitored regularly:
  - Plan on a Page (Mission, Vision, Values, Goals)
  - School Improvement Plan (SMART Goals & Action Plan)
  - Balanced Scorecard (Formative and Summative Data Aligned to Goals)
- Build leadership capacity at the school; engage and empower staff in decision making
- Align Professional Learning Community (PLC) efforts in school to the school improvement plan
- Ensure the 8 components of the Classroom Learning Community (CLC) are supporting the goals of the school.
- Assist in the planning (and facilitation) of staff meetings and the use of school improvement days or other professional development

**Best Practices**
- Ensure effective team norms are reviewed and adhered to regularly
- Evaluate meetings (using a simple plus/delta or some other instrument) and use the feedback to plan for the next meeting.
- Occasionally, use the *Shared Leadership Team Reflection* instrument to keep the team on track.
- Schedule regular meetings in advance (at a minimum of once per month- recommended twice a month)
- Communicate with the entire staff about the work of the team (send out agendas, minutes or other information so others are informed of what’s being discussed/acted on)
- Team members regularly facilitate “all staff” meetings at the school
- Ensure school goals are focused on through PLC SMART goal alignment, SMART goals in classroom data centers and student goals aligned in student data folders

**Typical Agenda Template for Shared Leadership Teams (estimated 60 minutes- modify as necessary)**
- Review team norms/collective commitments made to each other (2 minutes)
- Teambuilder/ice breaker (5 minutes)
- Review School Improvement Plan action plan/adjust actions and timelines as necessary (10 minutes)
- Discuss Professional Learning Community progress/report out (10 minutes)
- *Occasional Items as Needed (15 minutes)*
  - Review any incoming formative data/update and review scorecard
  - Plan for upcoming staff meeting and assign facilitators
  - Plan for upcoming school improvement/professional development days
- Set agenda for next meeting (5 minutes)
- Evaluate meeting; consider occasionally using the *Shared Leadership Team Reflection* instrument (5 minutes)
Shared Leadership Team Reflection/Assessment

School Name: ___________________________________________  Date: ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.) Our Team has set direction and we regularly communicate our progress with all stakeholders.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.) Our team evaluates each meeting and we use the input to improve future meetings.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.) Our team members follow the agreed-upon norms.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.) All teachers know the School Improvement goals at our school.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.) Our school’s Plan on a Page is posted in all classrooms.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.) All teachers at our school have created classroom SMART goals that are aligned to our School Improvement Plan.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.) Classroom data centers are being used by all teachers to track and monitor progress toward classroom SMART goals.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.) Students are tracking their individual progress toward classroom SMART goals in their data folders.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9.) All teachers at our school serve on a PLC team and have SMART goals aligned to the school goals.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.) All PLC teams at our school use the PDSA cycle to drive improvements on our SMART goals.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.) Our team meets regularly and follows a productive agenda.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.) When reviewing our PLC progress, we identified these indicators as strengths and improvement areas.</td>
<td>Strengths- PLC  Improvement Areas- PLC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next Steps for our Building Leadership Team:

An Overview of Professional Learning Communities

Definition
“...A Professional Learning Community is a collaboration of teachers, administrators, parents, and students, who work together to seek out best practices, test them in the classroom, continuously improve processes, and focus on results.”
Rick DuFour, 2002.

Fundamental Assumptions
1. We can make a difference: Our schools can be more effective.
2. Improving our people is the key to improving our schools.
3. Significant school improvement will impact teaching and learning.

The ONE Thing
in a Professional Learning Community,
“learning” rather than “teaching”
is the fundamental purpose
of your school.

Three Big Ideas
Focus on Learning
Collaboration
Focus on Results

Four Corollary Questions
1. What should students know and be able to do as a result of this course, class, or grade level?
2. How will we know that the students are not learning?
3. How do we respond when students do not learn?
4. How do we respond when students learn more?

Six Characteristics of a Professional Learning Community

1.) Shared mission, vision, values, goals
What distinguishes a learning community form an ordinary school is its collective commitment to guiding principles that articulate what the staff of the school believes and that govern their actions and behaviors.

2.) Collaborative Culture
Professionals in a learning community work in teams that share a common purpose. They learn from each other and create the momentum that drives improvement. They build within the organization the structure and vehicles that make collaborative work and learning effective and productive.

3.) Collective Inquiry
People in a learning community relentlessly question the status quo, seek new methods of teaching and learning, test the methods, and then reflect on the results.
- They reflect publicly on their beliefs and challenge each other’s beliefs.
- They share insights and hammer out common meanings.
- They work jointly to plan and test actions and initiatives.
- They coordinate their actions, so that the work of each individual contributes to the common effort.
4.) **Action Orientation / Experimentation**
Members of professional learning communities constantly turn their learning and insights into action. They recognize the importance of engagement and experience in learning and in testing new ideas.

5.) **Commitment to Continuous Improvement**
Members of a learning organization are not content with the status quo and continually seek ways to bring present reality closer to future ideal. They constantly ask themselves and each other:
- What is our purpose?
- What do we hope to achieve?
- What are our strategies for improving?
- How will we assess our efforts?

6.) **Results Orientation**
Professionals in a learning organization recognize that no matter how well-intentioned the efforts, the only valid judgment of improvement is observable and measurable results. Assessment and re-evaluation are the keys to continued improvement. Collective inquiry, action orientation and experimentation, commitment to continuous improvement, and results orientation are the four habits of highly effective teams.

**Summary**
Each word of the phrase “professional learning community” has been chosen purposefully. A “professional” is someone with expertise in a specialized field, an individual who has not only pursued advanced training to enter the field, but who is also expected to remain current in its evolving knowledge base. The knowledge base of education has expanded dramatically in the past quarter century, both in terms of research and in terms of the articulation of recommended standards for the profession. Although many school personnel are unaware of or are inattentive to emerging research and standards, educators in a professional learning community make these findings the basis of their collaborative investigation of how they can better achieve their goals.

“Learning” suggests ongoing action and perpetual curiosity. In Chinese, the term “learning” is represented by two characters: the first means “to study”, and the second means “to practice constantly.” Many schools operate as though their personnel know everything they will ever need to know the day they enter the profession. The school that operates as a professional learning community recognizes that its members must engage in the ongoing study and constant practice that characterize an organization committed to continuous improvement.

Much has been written about learning organizations, but we prefer the term “community.” An organization has been defined both as an “administrative and functional structure” (Webster's Dictionary) and as “a systematic arrangement for a definite purpose” (Oxford Dictionary). In each case, the emphasis is on structure and efficiency. In contrast, however, the term “community” suggests a group linked by common interests. As Corrine McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson (1994) write: “Community means different things to different people. To some it is a safe haven where survival is assured through mutual cooperation. To others, it is a place of emotional support, with deep sharing and bonding with close friends. Some see community as an intense crucible for personal growth. For others, it is simply a place to pioneer their dreams.”

In a professional learning community, all of these characteristics are evident. Educators create an environment that fosters mutual cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth as they work together to achieve what they cannot accomplish alone.

-Adapted from Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker (1998), Professional Learning Communities at Work
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ground Rules created by Students</th>
<th>Classroom Mission Statement</th>
<th>Classroom &amp; Student Measurable Goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Tools &amp; PDSA used regularly</td>
<td>The Continuous Improvement Classroom</td>
<td>Classroom Data Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Meetings Facilitated by Students</td>
<td>Student-led Conferences</td>
<td>Student Data Folders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you observed a Classroom Learning Community…

You Would See…

- 21st century learning!
- Student-created ground rules
- District and School mission statements and the school improvement goals in each classroom
- The classroom mission statement
- Classroom SMART goals and measures posted in the Classroom Data Center
- Data indicating class progress towards classroom goals (Charts, Graphs and other Quality Tools displayed in the Classroom Data Center)
- +/- Delta from the previous day/class feedback from the students
- Action plan for the day (based on the previous day’s plus/delta feedback from students)
- Chairs/desks/tables arranged to support collaborative work in achieving classroom goals (Cooperative Learning, Collaboration & Peer Teaching)
- Grade-level/course standards in kid-friendly language
- Flow charts of key classroom processes (morning routine, turning in homework, lab procedures, etc.)
- Regular class meetings where students facilitate the meeting (Goals are reviewed, progress is shared, ideas for improving the classroom learning system are discussed)
- Student data folders in which students monitor and track their performance
- Student-led conferences facilitated by students sharing their progress toward learning goals
- Students using quality tools and the Plan Do Study Act cycle to improve their learning

You Would Hear…

- The teacher talking to students about the “critical few” classroom goals and their alignment to the school improvement plan
- The students talking to the teacher about how they can work together to achieve the “critical few” classroom goals and the progress they are making
- Students talking to the teacher about their personal goals and action plans (that are aligned to the classroom goals, school improvement plan goals and District goals)
- Students able to describe and talk about the classroom learning system, the class mission, goals, measures, the Classroom Data Center and their student data folder

You Would Feel…

- Student centered environment focused on results
- A sense of a learning community
- Shared accountability, responsibility and ownership toward achieving class and personal goals
- Excitement and enthusiasm about learning
- Respect for different talents, competencies, and perspectives
- A willingness to collect and analyze data to improve the learning system
- A commitment to continual improvement
Try Out Improvement Theory

Plan for Continuous Improvement
- How will I sustain the positive changes?
- What area will I work on next?

Describe the current process for addressing the identified area of need.
- How is it connected to the mission and goals?
- What is the problem and why are we selecting it?
- What is the current way this process is done or handled?
- What are the key measures for this process?

Review data to determine baseline performance in the specific area identified.
- How big of a problem is it?
- What data do I have that show current levels of performance (baseline data) of the area I’m trying to improve?
- What do the data tell us? Any new insights?

Review the baseline data, what are the root causes that are producing the results I’m getting?
- What does research say about how this system could be improved?
- Study research-based best practice/improvement theory addressing areas of need.

Plan for Change
- How will I sustain the positive changes?
- What area will I work on next?

Standardize the implementation
- How can I incorporate the new way of doing things to make it part of my regular practice?
- How will I communicate/share this best practice/improvement theory?
- What staff development is needed?

Assess the impact through data review.
- Did my improvement theory work?
- How does this new data compare to the baseline data?

What is the research-based best-practice/improvement theory?
- What changes am I implementing?
- What are the drivers and restrainers?
- What is my data gathering plan to see if my improvement theory worked?

Define the System

Plan for Continuous Improvement
- Study the Results
- Try Out Improvement Theory
- Analyze Causes
- Review the baseline data, what are the root causes that are producing the results I’m getting?

Assess Current Situation
- Study the Results
- Try Out Improvement Theory
- Analyze Causes
- Review the baseline data, what are the root causes that are producing the results I’m getting?

Standardize Improvements
- Plan for Change
- Standardize the implementation
- Assess the impact through data review
- What is the research-based best-practice/improvement theory?

PDSA – Key Questions
Implementing Continuous Improvement - Journal

Day - Date

What I learned today:

◊

◊

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Application: to my classroom/work

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Outcome</th>
<th>Action Steps</th>
<th>Measure of Success</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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______________________________________
“No One Escapes Continuous Improvement”- Involving Everyone!

Goal Focus Area:

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<tr>
<th>Name the strategy or tool</th>
<th>Describe how stakeholders will participate, if applicable.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Teachers</td>
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