

5-Minute Read #3/4 – PLC's Gone Awry

So, I am a new principal and notice that my PLC's are not functioning the way they ought to? I fire everyone and do a fresh start! Oh wait, I'm not in a certain district that shall remain nameless... Anyway, I have seen this more than once and have been in a PLC that felt it was a waste of time. So my answer to this is to always make PLCs focus on something that everyone wants to do. For my school, we tie our PLCs into our school wide Q-Comp goal. We negotiate with each other a method that we can all contribute to and not get overwhelmed by. We do the proper paperwork and there is a nice bonus for doing this extra work in the end. This allows PLCs to feel like a purpose in more than one way: student-centered ideas take place, and teachers feel like they're been properly compensated to take on the extra role. Now, this is in addition to our once a week team meeting that focuses on upcoming IEP meetings, upcoming events, Response To Intervention (RTI), PBIS, changes in the school and more. That type of meeting could be a second PLC in it of itself.

To actually answer the question of how to get the PLC back on track is the same strategy to get a teacher to try a new teaching technique, strategy or piece of curriculum. It takes patience, continually positive reinforcement and "support follow-through." That last part is when a teacher asks for something to benefit the PLC from their administrator, then that admin must follow through promptly and then even follow up. When a teacher is asked to change the way they do something (PLC or teaching or behavior response) then they need the proper support.

Love thy teacher! Teachers are the most important part of a student's learning. If a teacher is feeling supported in every way – response to behaviors, curriculum needed, support with parents, simple follow-through – then that teacher is going to excel in his or her profession and that student is going to get a better learning experience.

The bottom line is that administrators are where the buck stops. All eyes and judgements are on administrators. Keeping an open ear and a fair resolve will go a long way when change or redirection is needed.