

The LBUSD Professional Learning Community Continuum¹

DRAFT – 4/6/05

Elements of a PLC	Initiation Stage	Developing Stage	Sustaining Stage
<p>Mission: Is it evident that learning for all is our core purpose?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goals related to improved student achievement are clearly understood by teachers. Course and grade level outcomes have been established. There is a disconnect between teacher content knowledge and the impact of their practices in the classroom. There are no clearly defined approaches to the implementation of instructional strategies to improve student learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attainment of outcomes and standards are clear and strategies to assess student mastery of standards-based outcomes are developed and monitored. Non-attainment of outcomes are addressed by teachers and departments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning outcomes are clearly articulated by all stakeholders. Outcomes are regularly monitored by stakeholders. The school develops interventions to provide more time and support for students experiencing initial difficulty in achieving the outcomes. Impact on student achievement drives practices, programs, and policies of the school which are continually assessed. Teams work together to enhance student achievement.
<p>Shared Vision: Do we know what we are trying to create?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an articulated vision statement for the school as well as site developed action and professional development plans. The majority of school personnel are unaware of the vision statement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams within the site create a school-wide vision statement. Teams own and endorse the school-wide vision they have created. Identified initiatives focused on improved student achievement are tied to the school-wide vision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principles of the school-wide vision are articulated and used as a guide for student and adult learning. With the high school indicators as a guide, the school-wide vision is used to assess effective strategies focused on student learning.

¹ Adapted from “The Professional Learning Community Continuum” in DuFour, R., Dufour, R, Eaker, R, and Karhanek, G. (2004) Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don’t Learn. National Education Service, pp. 249-253.

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<p>Shared Values: How must we behave to advance our vision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members articulate statements of beliefs or philosophy for their school. • Value statements are not yet impacting their day-to-day work or the operation of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams make conscious efforts to articulate and promote the attitudes, behaviors, and commitments that will advance their vision of the school. • Examples of the core values at work are shared and reinforced in stories and celebrations. • People are confronted when they behave in ways that are inconsistent with the core values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The values of the school are embedded in the school culture. These shared values are evident to new staff and to those outside of the school. • Values influence policies, procedures, and daily practices of the school as well as day-to-day decisions of individual staff members.
<p>Goals and Objectives: What are our priorities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members participate in a process to establish school and department professional development and action plans. • Objectives are written so broadly that they are impossible to measure. • Strategies are stated as projects or ideas to be accomplished. • Outcomes do not yet influence instructional decisions in a meaningful way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams work together to establish a plan that includes long-and-short-term improvements for the school. • Objectives are based on the high school indicators, are clear and include improvements in student performance. • Strategies and activities indicate the learning and actions of adults necessary to achieve the objectives. • Assessment tools and strategies are used to measure progress toward the objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plans are routinely used to guide professional learning and focus the teams' work. • Teams pursue measurable performance objectives as part of their routine responsibilities. • Successful strategies are celebrated and outcomes that fall short are examined and modified. • Staff members challenge themselves to identify and pursue challenging next-step objectives.
<p>Collaborative Culture: How do we work together?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams recognize a common curriculum that they are responsible for teaching. • There is some exchange of ideas regarding instructional materials, teaching strategies, or methods of assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members function in work groups that meet periodically to complete certain tasks such as reviewing intended outcomes. • Administrators solicit and value teacher input as improvement initiatives are developed and considered. • Administrators are regarded as having primary responsibility for school improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members are fully involved in the decision-making processes of the school. • Leadership is distributed among teams and staff. • Collaborative decision-making processes are embedded into the school culture and staff members have the information, training and parameters they need to make good decisions. • School improvement is viewed as a collective responsibility.

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<p>Trust Building: How do we build trust and collective responsibility?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members are reluctant to raise concerns and questions about difficult issues for fear of being misunderstood, of betrayal or of retribution from administrators or colleagues. • Reform work results from “negotiations” between adults - responsibility for “extra work” are taken in anticipation of a reward or future benefit. • Roles and expectations are not clear and individuals assume leadership when they wish to exercise personal initiative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration, alliances and support are evident among small groups. • Actions taken by leaders at all levels are understood and consistent over time. • Efforts are made to share information so that all members of the school community understand concepts, rationale, and actions. • Responsibilities for tasks are accompanied by resources (including mentoring) so that the team member responsible for the task has a good chance of completing the task successfully. • Leadership committees and other opportunities are in place to address operational and instructional issues. Protocols are developed describing agreed upon parameters to guide decision making and actions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members are confident that their ideas, concerns and questions will be heard. Motives are not questioned. Each team member takes responsibility for initiating and addressing “issues” that stand in the way of collaboration. • Opportunities are scheduled to “check in” with each other about how we are doing. • Acting in trustworthy ways is a primary value. • Team members share responsibility for tasks and can be counted on to complete tasks on time. • Protocols are used and decisions made within the parameters are accepted. Protocols are modified by teams based on their learning.

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<p>Professional Learning: How do the cycle of inquiry and action research improve teaching and learning?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams identify issues/problems, and work to clarify “focusing” questions to guide their work. • Data are referenced, but not understood. • Plans are general, and focused on meeting student achievement outcomes. • Some staff members participate in pilot action research projects. • Sharing of research findings is largely informal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams make time to discuss issues/problems and research and to focus attention on student performance data tied to specific outcomes (i.e. state expectations and school goals). • Teams gather data that inform decision making on a regular basis. • Teams use data to verify that they share an understanding of the “real” problems and issues (i.e. ask what the data say rather than rely solely on intuition). • Teams develop action plans that are specific about what teachers need to know and be able to do in order to influence student achievement. • Staff members have learned action research methods and understand ways that action research can improve their professional practice. • Findings generated by staff research begin to influence classroom practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle of inquiry is embraced as a “way of working” and team members hold each other accountable for implementing each step of the cycle. • Teams use data from formative and summative evaluations, to anticipate problems in student achievement. • Teams regularly engage and self-reflection, and make continuous progress in refining and revising inquiry questions and processes. • External review of the process and implementation of the cycle of inquiry is welcomed as a way to enhance and supplement team perspectives. • Topics for action research arise from the shared vision and plans of the school. • Staff members regard action research as an important component of their professional responsibilities. There are frequent discussions regarding the implications of findings as teachers attempt to learn from the research of their colleagues.

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<p>Effective Communication: How do we share information and learn collaboratively?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams communicate among themselves on an as needed basis and as time allows. • School-wide communication takes place through emails, bulletins and periodic (monthly) faculty meetings. • School professional development and action plans are posted and provided to teams and departments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams establish times and protocols for communicating with each other on a regular schedule tied to the shared objectives. • Responsibility for communicating information is clear. • Teams use professional development and action plans to build consensus and communicate about the teams' work. • Professional development and action plans are created collaboratively with the input of all members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams accept responsibility for asking questions and being well prepared to share information tied to objectives and team learning. • Various communication strategies are used and continually evaluated to assure all necessary information is shared in timely manner. • Efficient and effective use of time is critically reviewed and modified as needed. • Professional development plans are based on a focused outcome with emphasis on continuous improvement.
<p>Continuous Improvement with a Focus on Results: How do we monitor our progress?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team members track general indicators of achievement on High School Office goals, such as CAHSEE and CST scores. • Positive trends are celebrated. • Negative trends are dismissed or suppressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams use walkthroughs and other data gathering strategies to collect information needed to identify and monitor individual and team objectives related to LBUSD's High School indicators of success. • Progress is monitored regularly and teams discuss trends and contributing factors, and consider interventions to address trends and factors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every team member participates in a continuous cycle of systematic gathering and analysis of data to identify discrepancies between actual and desired results. • Specific objectives are developed to resolve discrepancies and strategies are created to achieve the goals, and track improvement. • Professional development and action plans are revised to meet new or changing conditions with a focus on continually reviewing data and devising instructional strategies that improve student achievement.

Glossary of Terms

Team – Any group of people who are trying to work as professional learning community.