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Greetings,

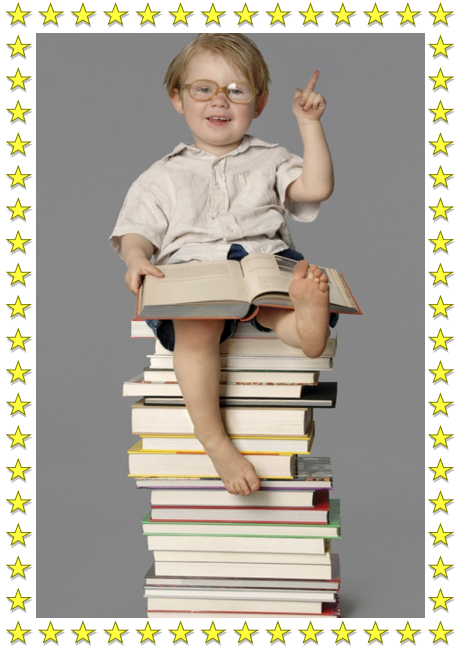
A term that has become commonplace in education today and one that you may have heard in various schools in country is “Professional Learning Communities”. PLC’s allow educators to work collaboratively to help all students to learn at high levels. PLC’s operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for all educators. At its April, 2009 meeting, USD 207 Board of Education approved the calendar for the 2009-2010 school year. This calendar provides for scheduled early dismissals for this job embedded professional development.

The following information packet is designed to inform you as to the 2009-2010 calendar and to answer key questions you may have regarding Professional Learning Communities. We are excited to continue on the journey of PLC’s and to continue our focus ensuring all students learn at high levels!

Geri Parscale
Director of Instruction, USD 207

Early Dismissal Dates

September 18	September 25
October 2	October 9
October 30	November 20
December 4	January 29
February 5	February 26
March 5	March 12
March 2	April 16
April 23	April 30
May 7	



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

How are Professional Learning Communities making an impact when teachers have less time with students?

In order for teachers to serve students' needs appropriately they must have the opportunity to work collaboratively, learning from other colleagues. This learning takes place during PLC time. When teachers return to the classroom they are more effective in working with all levels of students.

Are students being assessed too frequently?

Teachers use data from state and district assessments to mold their instruction. Frequent checking of student progress is key to differentiating learner needs. This ensures that teachers are teaching what has been identified as essential.

What is the difference between planning time and collaboration?

Planning time is embedded into each teacher's day for making parent contact, discussing student progress, planning for daily lessons, scheduling meetings, etc. Collaboration time is a time for teachers to work together in analyzing student work, assessment data, and discussing the latest educational trends that impact student learning.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

A Guide for PLC's At Work



Ensuring All Students Learn at High Levels





Three Big Ideas!

Fort Leavenworth USD207

In a Professional Learning Community, there are three core principles that guide work.

1. A Focus on Learning

The mission of schools operating as a PLC is that all students will learn at high levels. To do this, professionals use 4 questions to guide their work:

1. What do we want students to learn?
2. How will we know when each student has learned it?
3. How will we respond when a student does not learn it?
4. How will we respond when a student already knows it?

In a PLC, educators have a razor-sharp focus on learning and it allows them take the mission of ensuring success for all students to a higher level.

2. Working in a Collaborative Culture

In a PLC, professionals work in collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals.

Working collaboratively allows members of the group to:

- Gather evidence of current levels of student learning.
- Develop strategies and ideas to build on strengths and address weaknesses.
- Implement the strategies and ideas.
- Analyze the impact of the changes.
- Apply new knowledge for continuous improvement.

The early release time at USD 207 will be structured to focus on these areas, creating conditions for on-going learning and student achievement.

3. A Focus on Results

Professional Learning Communities make decisions on their effectiveness by analyzing results. As we work together to improve student achievement, we turn student data into useful information, helping professionals to identify how students perform on a skill. We can examine the results to discover strengths and weaknesses and learn from one another.

An Opportunity To Learn

As we move into the 2009-10 school year, we are excited for the opportunities for continued learning. We share in a genuine commitment to high levels of learning for all, we will be living the mission. The journey in living as a PLC continues...

“Learning for All”

