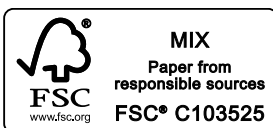


**Building Systems and Structures
to Support Your PLC:
Ensuring Teacher and Student Success
in Brick and Mortar, Blended,
and Virtual Environments**

Regina Stephens Owens




Solution Tree




MIX
Paper from
responsible sources
FSC® C103525

PLC
AT WORK



Building Systems and Structures to Support Your PLC
Ensuring Teacher and Student Success in Brick and Mortar, Blended, and Virtual Environments


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Our Mission

To ensure high levels of learning for *all* students.

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Our Goal

To achieve this goal, a school must:

- Ensure that a systemic process supported by structures is in place for efficiency and effectiveness.
- Ensure clarity in the system for the educator and learners to perform at high levels.

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Driving Question

Why do schools struggle with creating systemic processes that support high levels of learning for educators and learners?

1. The need for effectiveness and efficiency

The “Just Do It” Syndrome

2. The need for clarity

The “One More Thing” Syndrome

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Identification of Systems

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The Three Big Ideas

Focus on
Learning

Focus on
Collaboration

Focus on
Results

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Professional Learning Community

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.”

—Richard DuFour

The following is summarized from DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many’s *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work™*, 2010.

Fundamental Assumptions

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

Three Areas of Focus for a PLC (2010, p. 14)

1. **Focus on learning:** We accept high levels of *learning for all* students as the fundamental purpose of our school and therefore are willing to examine all practices in light of their impact on learning.
2. **Collaborative culture:** We can achieve our fundamental purpose of high levels of learning for all students only if we work together.
3. **Focus on results:** We assess our effectiveness of achieving high levels of learning for all on the basis of results rather than intentions. Individuals, teams, schools, and districts seek relevant data and information and use that information to promote continuous improvement.

Four Critical Questions (2010, pp. 219–220)

- What is it we expect our students to learn?
- How will we know when they have learned it?
- How will we respond when they already know it?
- How will we respond when they don’t know it?

(PLCs, page 1 of 2)

Six Essential Characteristics of Being a Professional Learning Community

The following is summarized from DuFour and Eaker's *Professional Learning Communities at Work™: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement* (pp. 196–100), 1998.

➡ Shared Mission, Vision, Values, Goals

What distinguishes a learning community from 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 behavior.

➡ Collaborative Teams

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.

➡ 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.

➡ Action Orientation and 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.

➡ Commitment to Continuous Improvement

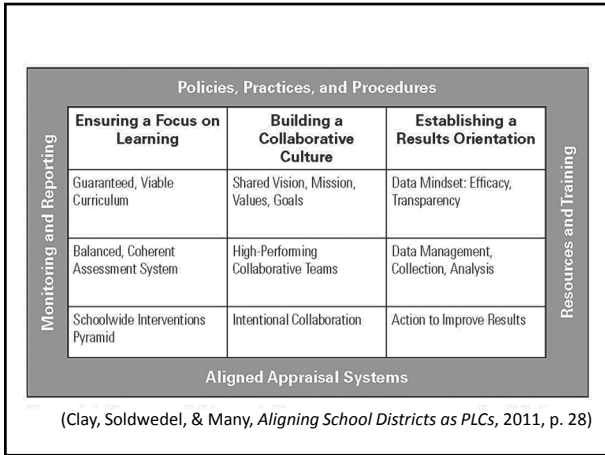
Members continually seek ways to bring present reality closer to future ideal. They constantly ask themselves and each other:

- What is our purpose?
- What do we hope to achieve?
- What are our strategies for improving?
- How will we assess our efforts?

➡ Results Focus

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.

(PLCs, page 2 of 2)



Effective and Efficient

Effectiveness (noun): the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result; success

Efficient (adj.): performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort


Being **effective** is about doing the *right things*, while being **efficient** is about *doing things right*.

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The Components Within the System

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Policies, Practices, and Procedures

Ensuring a Focus on Learning	Building a Collaborative Culture	Establishing a Results Orientation
Guaranteed, Viable Curriculum	Shared Vision, Mission, Values, Goals	Data Mindset: Efficacy, Transparency
Balanced, Coherent Assessment System	High-Performing Collaborative Teams	Data Management, Collection, Analysis
Schoolwide Interventions Pyramid	Intentional Collaboration	Action to Improve Results

Monitoring and Reporting

Aligned Appraisal Systems

Resources and Training

(Clay, Soldwedel, & Many, *Aligning School Districts as PLCs*, 2011, p. 28)

Self-Assessment for Building a Collaborative Culture

Focus on Collaboration: We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose of learning for all students. We cultivate a collaborative culture through the development and support of high-performing teams.					
Non-negotiable: Shared mission, vision, values, and goals					
	1 Haven't begun to address this issue (0)	2 Talking but no action yet (0)	3 Have begun to address this issue (1)	4 Have moved beyond implementation (2)	5 Process deeply embedded in our culture (3)
A	We have developed and deployed mission, vision, values (collective commitments), and goals to set clear direction for our district, our school, and our team/department.				
B	We recognize that specific behaviors and actions embody the vision, mission, values, and goals in our daily work. We identify the collective commitments we make to one another to ensure attainment of our mission, vision, values, and goals.				
C	We promote, through those specific behaviors and actions, a culture/teaching environment of personal growth and high performance. We foster shared accountability for continuous improvement.				

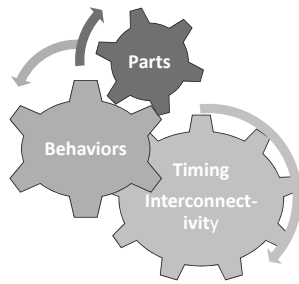
	1 Haven't begun to address this issue (0)	2 Talking but no action yet (0)	3 Have begun to address this issue (1)	4 Have moved beyond implementation (2)	5 Process deeply embedded in our culture (3)
High-performing collaborative teams					
Non-negotiable:					
D We are organized into high-performing, collaborative teams in which members work together interdependently to achieve common goals. We have developed and adhere to team norms and protocols.					
E We are provided time during the contractual day and school year to meet as a team. We support both vertical and horizontal team collaboration. We address transition and articulation from elementary to middle to high school and beyond.					
F We create a safe environment to report and compare data so as to learn from one another and share best practices.					
G We follow protocols that define how collaborative team time is to be used and artifacts that document how collaborative team time has been used.					

	1 Haven't begun to address this issue (0)	2 Talking but no action yet (0)	3 Have begun to address this issue (1)	4 Have moved beyond implementation (2)	5 Process deeply embedded in our culture (3)
Non-negotiable: Intentional collaboration					
H We use team time to engage in collective inquiry on questions specifically linked to gains in student achievement.					
I Each team is called upon to generate and submit products, which result from its work on the critical questions related to student learning. We know how the decisions we make during collaboration affect learning results.					
J We recognize and celebrate individual and team success aligned to our goals.					

Adapted from DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many (2006), Learning by Doing. Used with permission.

What Is a System?

A group of interdependent parts that together perform one or more vital functions



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Some systems share common characteristics:

- A system has parts and structure; it contains components that are directly or indirectly related to each other.
- A system has behavior; it exhibits processes that fulfill its function or purpose.
- A system has timing and interconnectivity; the parts and processes are connected by structural and/or behavioral relationships.

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Clarification of the PLC System

Non-negotiables	Parts/ Structures	+		-		Behaviors/ Dispositions	+		-		Timing/ Interconnectivity	+		-	
Building a Collaborative Culture															
Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals	• Written and expressed vision, values, mission, and goals (P) (at all levels)					• Intentional communication of vision, mission values • Intentional commitments (Norms)					• Intentional scheduling of meetings • Specific goals for all teams • Intentional celebration of goals and progress				
High Performing Collaborative Teams	• Team (P) • Agenda (S) • Safe Environment/ • Culture(P) • Critical Attributes of a Team(S) • Data (P) • Data Protocol(S)					• Adherence to norms and protocols • Display dispositions of a high performing team • Participation in data discussions					• Set schedule for submission and review • Set schedule for evaluation • Set schedule for review and consultation				
Intentional Collaboration	• Collaboration/ • Celebration (P) • Products/Artifacts(S)					• Adherence to Collective Inquiry					• Set schedule for review and consultation				

(Ideas for table from Clay, Soldwedel, & Many, *Aligning School Districts as PLCs*, 2011)

Clarification of the PLC System

Non-Negotiables	Parts and Structures	+	/	-	Behaviors and Dispositions	+	/	-	Timing and Interconnectivity	+	/	-
Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written and expressed vision, values, mission, and goals (P) (at all levels) 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentionally communicate vision, mission, and values. Make intentional commitments (norms). 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentionally schedule meetings. Set specific goals for all teams Intentionally celebrate goals and progress 			
High-Performing Collaborative Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team (P) Agenda (S) Safe environment, culture (P) Critical team attributes (S) Data (P) Data protocol (S) 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to norms and protocols. Display dispositions of a high-performing team. Participate in data discussions. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set schedule for submission and review. Set schedule for evaluation. Set schedule for review and consultation. 			
Intentional Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration, celebration (P) Products and artifacts(S) 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to collective inquiry 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set schedule for review and consultation. 			
Focus on Learning												
Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum (S) Unit and/or lesson plans 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish essential learnings by unit by course. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish schedule for production and review. 			
Balanced Coherent System of Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balanced assessment system (P) Products and artifacts (S) 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish common formative assessments. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate and establish schedule among core classes. 			
Schoolwide System of Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System of intervention (P) 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require rather than invite students to get extra time and support. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set schedule for implementation and evaluation. 			
Results Orientation												
Focus on Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a data management system. (P) Learning notebook (S) 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to data protocols. 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set schedule and timeline for data discussion. 			

(Credit: Ideas for table based on Van Clay, Soldwedel, & Many, *Aligning School Districts as PLCs*, 2011)

(page 1 of 1)

The Clarity of the System: Levels of Responsibility

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Smylie and Hart emphasize that increased student learning is inextricably tied to teacher learning and collaboration:

“It has become increasingly clear that if we want to improve schools for student learning, we must also improve schools for the adults who work within them. ... We have only recently come to understand that student learning also depends on the extent to which schools support the ongoing development and productive exercise of teachers’ knowledge and skills.”

—Smylie & Hart, “School Leadership for Teacher Learning and Change: A Human and Social Capital Development Perspective,” *Handbook of Research on Educational Administration*, 2nd ed. (1999), p. 430–431

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A Focus on Collaboration: Clarification of Roles and Levels of Responsibility

Non Negotiables		ARCI: Accountability, Responsibility, Consulted, Informed								
Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals	Parts/Behaviors/Timing Activities	Principal	Asst. Principal	Leadership Team	Depart. Chair	Team Leader	Educator	Counselor	Learners	
	Written and expressed vision, values, mission, and goals (P) (at all levels)	A/R	R	C	C	C	R	C	I	
	Intentional communication of vision, mission values	A	R	R	R	R	I	R	I	
	Commitments/Norms									
	Intentional scheduling of meetings									
	Specific goals for all teams									
	Intentional celebration of goals and progress									
High Performing Collaborative Teams	Parts/Behaviors/Timing Activities	Principal	Asst. Principal	Leadership Team	Depart. Chair	Team Leader	Educator	Counselor	Learners	
	Team (P)									
	Agenda (S)									
	Safe Environment/ Culture(P)									
	Critical Attributes of a Team(S)									
	Data (P)									
	Data Protocol(S)									

(Ideas for table adapted from APQC Education)

Focus on Collaboration: Clarification of Roles and Levels of Responsibility

Non-Negotiables		ARCI: Accountability, Responsibility, Consulted, Informed							
Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals	Part, Behavior, and Timing	Principal	Asst. Principal	Leadership Team	Dept. Chair	Team Leader	Educator	Counselor	Learners
	Written and expressed vision, values, mission, and goals (P) at all levels								
	Intentional communication of vision, mission, and values								
	Commitments and norms								
	Intentional scheduling of meetings								
	Specific goals for all teams								
	Intentional celebration of goals and progress								
High-Performing Collaborative Teams	Part, Behavior, and Timing	Principal	Asst. Principal	Leadership Team	Dept. Chair	Team Leader	Educator	Counselor	Learners
	Team (P)								
	Agenda (S)								
	Safe environment, culture (P)								
	Critical attributes of a team (S)								
	Data (P)								
	Data protocol (S)								

(Credit: Ideas for table based on work done by APQC Education, apqceducation.com)

(page 1 of 1)

Focus on Collaboration: Clarification of Roles and Levels of Responsibility

Non-Negotiables		ARCI: Accountability, Responsibility, Consulted, Informed									
Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals	Part, Behavior, and Timing	Principal	Asst. Principal	Leadership Team	Dept. Chair	Team Leader	Educator	Counselor	Learners		
	Written and expressed vision, values, mission, and goals (P) at all levels										
	Intentional communication of vision, mission, and values										
	Commitments and norms										
	Intentional scheduling of meetings										
	Specific goals for all teams										
	Intentional celebration of goals and progress										
High-Performing Collaborative Teams	Part, Behavior, and Timing	Principal	Asst. Principal	Leadership Team	Dept. Chair	Team Leader	Educator	Counselor	Learners		
	Team (P)										
	Agenda (S)										
	Safe environment, culture (P)										
	Critical attributes of a team (S)										
	Data (P)										
	Data protocol (S)										

(Credit: Ideas for table based on work by APQC Education, apqceducation.com)

(page 1 of 1)

A Results Orientation: Clarification of Roles and Levels of Responsibility


Non-Negotiables		ARCI: Accountability, Responsibility, Consulted, Informed							
Data Mindset: Efficacy and Transparency	Parts, Behaviors, and Timing Activities	Principal	Asst. Principal	Leadership Team	Dept. Chair	Team Leader	Educator	Counselor	Learners
	Establish a safe, data-enriched district, school, and team or department culture where we can share and compare results data as a way to demonstrate accountability and learn from one another.								
	Commit to aligning our work to the long-range goals and indicators or measures by which the district and school define our success.								
	Set district, school, and team or department goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and timely.								
	Address our gaps in relationship to the long-range district and school indicators or measures.								
	Set indicators, measures, and challenging yet attainable targets for our goals to be clear about what is most important to track and monitor for improvement.								
	Celebrate goals and progress intentionally to emphasize outcomes.								

(Credit: ideas for table adapted from Van Clay, Soldwedel, & Many, *Aligning School Districts as PLCs*, 2011)
(page 1 of 3)

Data Management, Collection, and Analysis	Parts, Behaviors, and Timing Activities	Principal	Asst. Principal	Leadership Team	Dept. Chair	Team Leader	Educator	Counselor	Learners
	Collect and analyze data and information to be certain we are addressing the needs. a. Identify students who need additional time and support for learning. b. Discover strengths and weaknesses in our individual teaching. c. Help measure our team's progress toward its goals. d. Define our action plans.								
	Ensure that students take responsibility for their own learning by collecting data to monitor and track their performance compared to high expectations and performance results of others.								
Responsibility for Action to Improve Results	Collect and analyze data and information to be certain we are addressing the needs and requirements of our stakeholders. Analyze data to: a. Identify students who need additional time and support for learning. b. Discover strengths and weaknesses in our individual teaching. c. Help measure our team's progress toward its goals. d. Define our action plans.								

	Parts, Behaviors, and Timing Activities	Principal	Asst. Principal	Leadership Team	Dept. Chair	Team Leader	Educator	Counselor	Learners
Responsibility for Action to Improve Results	Ensure that students take responsibility for their own learning by collecting data to monitor and track their performance compared to high expectations.								
	Share responsibility to act on data and develop plans to change present practices when our results are not where we want them to be.								
	Share evidence to show our results are improving compared to the past.								
	When results have not improved, we develop and test new theories and strategies while eliminating those that did not change results.								

Process, Protocols, and Potential Pitfalls

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Essentials	Evidence	Energy Expended
Type	purpose of team, vision, mission values, beliefs	definition, deliverable
Members	roster, agenda, data notebooks	lack of engagement or systems for correction
Positions	criteria, assignments, and responsibilities	ambiguity
Goals	SMART goals, results	shared agreement
Stats	reports of formatives, success of students, collaboration and work	lack of protocols , lack of electronic systems

Essentials	Evidence	Energy Expended
Schedule	team meetings, data meetings, CIA meetings, state of the school meetings	not scheduled during the day, shared team members, unenforced priorities
Meetings	notes, reports, student achievement data	lack of protocols, limited use of technology, lack of training, lack of connectivity to end results
Meeting expectations	norms, record of attendance, roles, responsibilities	noncompliance, lack of system and follow through, no celebrations

Essentials	Evidence	Energy Expended
Type	purpose of team, vision, mission values, beliefs	definition, deliverable
Members	roster, agenda, <u>data notebooks</u>	lack of engagement or systems for correction
Positions	criteria, assignments, and responsibilities	ambiguity
Goals	SMART goals, results	shared agreement
Stats	reports of formatives, success of students, collaboration and work	lack of <u>protocols</u> , lack of electronic systems

Clarification of the PLC System

Non-negotiables	Parts/ Structures	Behaviors/ Dispositions		Timing/ Interconnectivity	
		+	-	+	-
Building a Collaborative Culture					
Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written and expressed vision, values, mission, and goals (P) (at all levels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentional communication of vision, mission values Intentional commitments (Norms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to protocols Participation in data discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentional scheduling of meetings Specific goals for all teams Intentional celebration of goals and progress 	
High Performing Collaborative Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team (P) Agenda (S) Safe Environment/ Culture (P) Critical Attributes of a Team (S) Data (P) Data Protocol(S) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to protocols Participation in data discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to Collective Inquiry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set schedule for submission and review Set schedule for evaluation Set schedule for review and consultation 	
Intentional Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration/ Celebration (P) Products/Artifacts(S) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to Collective Inquiry 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set schedule for review and consultation 	

(Ideas for table from Clay, Soldwedel, & Many, *Aligning School Districts as PLCs*, 2011)

Timing and Interconnectivity

To create effective and efficient systems, understanding the relationship between time, interconnectivity, and data is essential. When evaluating your system, please consider these guiding questions.

- 1. Parts:** Do we have a system that works? Have we considered all the systems and data they produce?
- 2. Structures:** Do we have an efficient and effective way to capture and communicate the data? Have we articulated to each team the data points for which they are responsible? Do their agendas or SMART goals reflect the priorities?


Timing and Interconnectivity

- 3. Behaviors:** Do we have protocols that govern our behavior regarding data and continuous improvement?
- 4. Timing:** Have we considered a campuswide calendar of when data is reported? Have we considered the interconnectivity of all meetings and if the information shared is causing our system to produce the desired results? Are the meetings aligned for a quality instructional response?
- 5. Efficiency and effectiveness:** Is our system efficient and effective?

Clarification of the PLC System

Non-negotiables	Parts/Structures	Behaviors/Dispositions	Timing/Interconnectivity
Building a Collaborative Culture			
Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written and expressed vision, values, mission, and goals (P) (at all levels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentional communication of vision, mission values Intentional commitments (Norms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intentional scheduling of meetings Specific goals for all teams Intentional celebration of goals and progress
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Intentional Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration/ Celebration (P) Products/Artifacts(S) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to Collective Inquiry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set schedule for review and consultation

(Ideas for table from Clay, Soldwedel, & Many, *Aligning School Districts as PLCs*, 2011)


Brick and Mortar	Blended	Virtual
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Next Steps			
Policies, Practices, and Procedures			
Monitoring and Reporting	Ensuring a Focus on Learning	Building a Collaborative Culture	Establishing a Results Orientation
	Guaranteed, Viable Curriculum	Shared Vision, Mission, Values, Goals	Data Mindset: Efficacy, Transparency
	Balanced, Coherent Assessment System	High-Performing Collaborative Teams	Data Management, Collection, Analysis
	Schoolwide Interventions Pyramid	Intentional Collaboration	Action to Improve Results
	Aligned Appraisal Systems		Resources and Training

(Clay, Soldwedel, & Many, *Aligning School Districts as PLCs*, 2011, p. 28)

“We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”

—Albert Einstein

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Resources

Allthingsplc.info

APQC Education, www.apqceducation.com

Clay, V., Soldwedel, P., & Many, T. (2011). *Aligning school districts as PLCs*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Karhanek. (2004). *Whatever it takes: How professional learning communities respond when kids don't learn*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Thank You!

To contact Regina:
rowens007@gmail.com

Follow Regina on Twitter:
[@regina_owens](https://twitter.com/regina_owens)

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Thank You!

To schedule professional development at your site, contact **Solution Tree** at **800.733.6786**.

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