

Lowering Secondary School Failure Rates—*PLC Style*

Dr. Mark Weichel

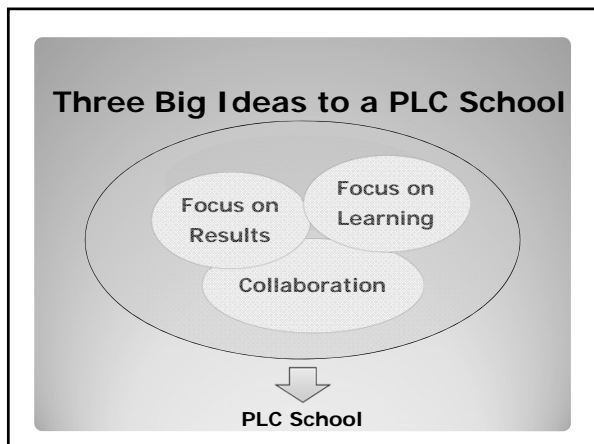
Outcome

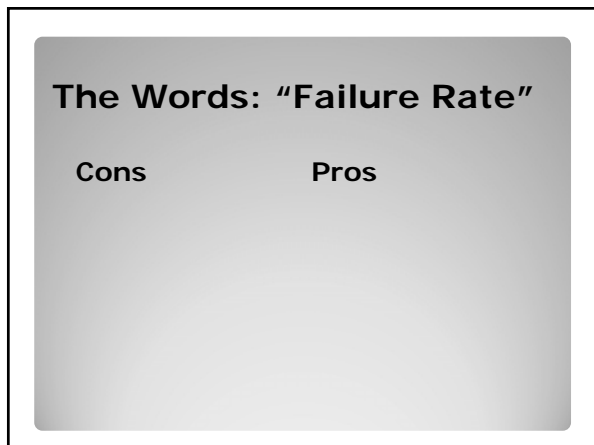
Attendees will understand a PLC approach by answering this question:

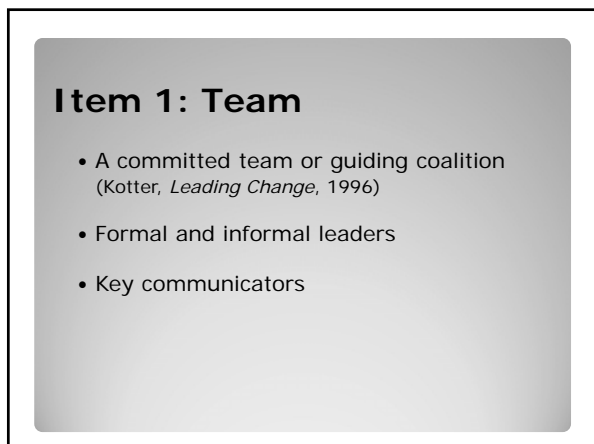
How should an administrator respond when classroom data indicate that a large number of students are failing?

Agenda

- Tenets of a PLC
- Controversial topics: Why study failure rates?
- The suggested items
- Questions, answers, and reflections throughout







Key Communicator Survey

- Who do you go to with questions at the school?
- Who do you go to with questions about education?
- Who do you go to with questions about noneducation topics?

A major study revealed that *all* successful organizations had a team's active involvement and support.

(Kouzes & Posner, The Leadership Challenge, 2003)

Item 2: Develop a Buildingwide Grading Philosophy

A buildingwide, best-practice grading philosophy supports learning and encourages student success.

(O'Connor, How to Grade for Learning, K-12, 2002)

Current Reality
Versus
the Experts

_____ Name of Department and School

Grading Feedback

In 2005, the secondary schools in PLV studied grading practices and made significant changes. This year, a committee is again reviewing the current practices and asking for your feedback. As a department, please answer the questions on the following chart by describing the range of your department's grading philosophies. In addition, there is a column "Notes for Committee" that departments can use to clarify or make notes that they would like the committee to consider. (* Please use the back side if you need more room to write)

Topic	"Range" of Current Practice	Notes for Committee
What is your department's grade allotment between assessments and homework? (ex. 70% assessments/30% homework)		
How is a CSA considered into a student's grade?		
How is a formative assessment/homework assignment considered into a final grade?		
How are teacher generated tests considered into a final grade?		
How are behaviors included into the final grade?		
How is attendance		

Topic	Best Practice Consideration
What is your department's grade allotment between assessments and homework? (ex. 70% assessments/30% homework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While formative assessments and homework can play a role in a standards-based grading system, major considerations should be given to summative. Districts using best-practice grading principles developed by leading experts range from 70/30 to 100/0 (summative/formative). Teachers should use agreed-upon performance standards as reference points for grades.
How is a CSA considered into a student's grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools and districts can't rely on state tests or standardized tests for feedback. Performance based assessments help students think at a higher level and actually improves scores on multiple-choice tests. These should be a contributing factor to an overall grade.
How is a formative assessment/homework considered into a final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mark or provide feedback on formative and summative assessments. It is acceptable to assign a score to a formative assessment. A teacher does not need to include all scores in determining a final grade.
How are teacher generated tests considered into a final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine grades based on a variety of end of unit assessments and course/grade level assessments which are completed more towards the end of the grading period. NO POP QUIZZES --- assessments shouldn't be a surprise. Use quality assessments that measure what you are teaching and at the appropriate level.
How are behaviors included into the final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate achievement from other dispositions such as effort and participation. Behaviors should not be involved in a grade.
How is attendance included into the final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate achievement from other dispositions such as effort and participation. Attendance should not be involved in a grade.
How is extra credit included in the final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra credit should not be a factor in determining a final grade.
How is late work included in the final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work handed in late should not exceed 2% per day, up to a maximum of 10% of grade


**Item 2b: Consistency
With "The Zero"**

Sample:
32 formative
8 summative

The Zero Debate: What %?

Missing Assignments	Zeros	50s	INC
1	84%	85%	85%
6			
12			

Item 3: Reporting the Grade

Papillion-La Vista High School Student: ALEXANDRIA WEICHEL -MURRAY Homeroom Teacher: SMITH-JONES, DANIEL Team: HLHS School Year: 2010-2011 Term: SEM1								Work Habits Definition +... on target -... = needs work Comes to class ready to learn, completes practice activities, and is engaged in classroom learning. This is NOT a part of the student's academic grade.			
Letter Grade	Grade Scale	Meaning			Letter Grade	Grade Scale	Meaning				
A	90-100	In-depth understanding of standards			D	60-69	Limited understanding				
B	80-89	Solid understanding			F	INC-59	Needs further assistance				
C	70-79	Partial understanding			P/NP	Pass/No Pass	Class not assigned weighted points				

H R	Course Title Teacher	Academic Reporting			Work Habits Absences Tardies			Non Academic Reporting			Comments
		Q	Q	S	Q	Q	S	Q	Q	S	
1	HON PHYSICS (Marsh, Pete)	A	A	A	Work Habits	+	+	+	+	+	Steven missed some critical days in class and also lost points for not having several of his lab assignments completed and/or completed accurately.
2	AP-CALCULUS A/B (Teacher name here)	B	B	B	Work Habits	+	+	+	+		
3	HON SPANISH III (Teacher name here)	C	C	C	Work Habits	+	+	+	+		
4	SIVC LRN-HOSP (Teacher name here)	B	B	B	Work Habits	+	+	+	+		
4	CERT NURS ASST (Teacher name here)	A	A	A	Work Habits	+	+	+	+		

What Impacts Teaching and Learning?

- A sound and viable set of standards that are taught in classrooms (Schmoker, *Results Now*, 2006)
- Effective teachers (Marzano, *What Works in Schools*, 2003)
- Ongoing and planned formative assessments (Popham, *Transformative Assessment*, 2008)
- A collaborative culture (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, *Learning by Doing*, 2006)

Item 4: Develop an Intervention Plan

1. Interventions
2. Systematic
3. Timely
4. Directive

(DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, *Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn*, 2004)

Item 5: Use Technology to Facilitate Frequent Dialogue

Tenth Grade

Crouch, Eric	Computer App II Honors Biology	INC 7%	3 5
Frazier, Tommy	American History English 9	15% 53%	5 5
Larson, Jordan	Algebra I	40%	5
Pavan, Sarah	Government AP	50%	5
Rozier, Mike	Algebra II	30%	5

Item 5: Technology

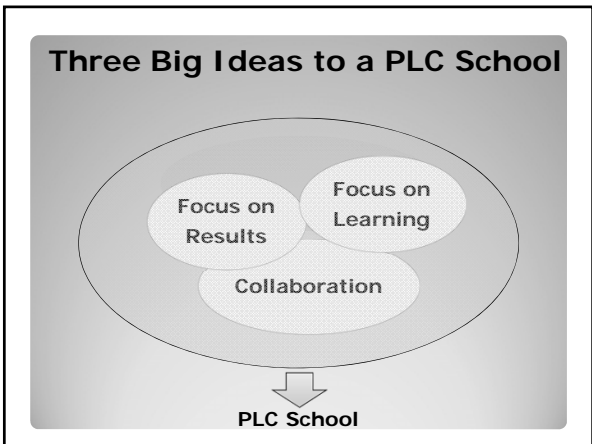
[At the end of the semester]

I noticed that 20 students failed your class.
Can you show me what you did to help each student pass?
Tell me how this will be corrected in the fall.

Item 5: Technology

[Three weeks into the semester]

Hey, I noticed that you had quite a group of students on the failure list that came out today.
I also noticed that a few students on the list haven't been in the office yet.
Do you want to send these students to me so I can get them going on interventions?



Final Thought

Continually reinforce principles of collaboration and frequent formative assessments.

Never stop measuring what matters.

By following these principles, improved teaching and learning and low failure rates can become the way your school does business.

Call to Action

What can you do in the next 24–48 hours to further the ideas you like?

Outcome

Attendees will understand a PLC approach by answering this question:

How should an administrator respond when classroom data indicate that a large number of students are failing?

Thank You!

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



Grading Feedback

Name of department and school: _____

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How is a CSA considered into a student's grade?		
How is a formative assessment or homework assignment considered into a final grade?		
How are teacher-generated tests considered into a final grade?		
How are behaviors included into the final grade?		
How is attendance included into the final grade?		
How is extra credit included in the final grade?		
How is late work included in the final grade?		
How do teachers in this department "calculate" a final grade (e.g., mean, median, and so on)?		
Does your department give zeros ?		

Grading Practices

The following represents best practice considerations in the area of grading by the leading authors. (Sources follow.)

Topic	Best Practice Consideration
What is your department's grade allotment between assessments and homework? (e.g., 70% assessments/30% homework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While formative assessments and homework can play a role in a standards-based grading system, major consideration should be given to summative. • Districts using best-practice grading principles developed by leading experts range from 70/30 to 100/0 (summative/formative). • Teachers should use agreed-upon performance standards as reference points for grades.
How is a CSA considered into a student's grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools and districts can't rely on state tests or standardized tests for feedback. • Performance-based assessments help students think at a higher level and actually improve scores on multiple-choice tests. • These should be a contributing factor to an overall grade.
How is a formative assessment or homework considered into a final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark or provide feedback on formative and summative assessments. • It is acceptable to assign a score to a formative assessment. • A teacher does not need to include all scores in determining a final grade.
How are teacher-generated tests considered into a final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine grades based on a <i>variety</i> of end-of-unit assessments and course/grade level assessments that are completed more toward the <i>end</i> of the grading period. • No pop quizzes: Assessments shouldn't be a surprise. • Use quality assessments that measure what you are teaching and at the appropriate level.
How are behaviors included into the final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate achievement from other dispositions such as effort and participation. • Behaviors should not be involved in a grade.
How is attendance included into the final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate achievement from other dispositions such as effort and participation. • Attendance should not be involved in a grade.
How is extra credit included in the final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra credit should <i>not</i> be a factor in determining a final grade.
How is late work included in the final grade?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work handed in late should not exceed 2% per day, up to a maximum of 10% of grade for that assignment. • Ensure that penalties do not distort achievement or motivation.
How do teachers in this department " calculate " a final grade? (e.g., mean, median, and so on)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather than averaging a score, look at the median or mode. • Use professional "best-judgment" and not just calculations. • Grade in pencil. • Never use group grading—assign an individual score to collaborative projects.
Does your department give zeros ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are using zeros, change today—by noon. • Assign a minimum score or value (such as 50) that is mathematically appropriate. • Use a symbolic representation (such as I or INC) of the lowest point on the scale.

Sources

- Guskey, T. R. (2010, October). Using standards and assessments to improve student learning. Presentation at Assessment Summit: Ahead of the Curve, Atlanta, Georgia.
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