Professional Learning Communities

An Infrastructure for Dropout Prevention and School Improvement

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Solutions
to the Dropout Crisis

How serious is the dropout problem?

- Almost 1/3 of public high school students fail to graduate each year.

- Globally, U.S. ranks 17th in high school graduation rates.

- Every school day, 7,000 students leave high school.

- Students from low-income families 6 times more likely to drop out.

Monrad, M. (2007). *High school dropout: A quick stats fact sheet.* Washington, DC: National High School Center, American Institutes for Research.

Characteristics of Struggling Schools

- Extremely low standards and expectations for students

- Very little use of data to identify and solve specific problems

- Limited capacity for implementing improvement efforts

- Little staff interest in quality instruction

- Less experienced, less qualified teachers and other instructional staff

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Characteristics of Struggling Schools

- High staff absenteeism and turnover rates

- Inadequate leadership for substantive change

- Atmosphere of distrust, disrespect, and barely controlled chaos

- Low morale

Chenowith, K. (2007). *"It's being done": Academic success in unexpected schools*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Cohen, M., & Ginsburg, A. (2001). *School improvement report: Executive order on actions for turning around low-performing schools*. Washington, DC: USDE.

Corallo, C., & McDonald, D. H. (2002). *What works with low-performing schools: A review of research*. Charleston, WV: AEL.

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What We Will Learn Today

- What **is** and **what is not** a professional learning community (PLC)

- How PLCs use research and data to address dropout prevention

- What leadership actions support PLCs in focusing on dropout prevention

- How to access and use tools, resources, and interventions to build a PLC that supports dropout prevention

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A Professional Learning Community IS NOT —

an end in itself

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A Professional Learning Community IS —

an infrastructure, or an internal support system, for achieving shared goals for students

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What's the Difference?

Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Teams

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Professional Learning Community Dimensions

- Shared values and vision

- Shared and supportive leadership

- Collective learning

- Supportive conditions

  - Structures

  - Relationships

- Shared personal practice

Hord, S. M. (1997). *Professional Learning Communities: Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement*. Austin: SEDL.

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Shared Values and Vision

- The shared mission and goals that the staff see as their common purpose

- A mental image of what is important to the organization and its individuals

- An unrelenting attention to student learning success

Hord, S. M., & Sommers, W. A. (2008). *Leading professional learning communities: Voices from research and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, p. 8, 10.

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Shared Values and Vision

- Attendance
  - Absenteeism rate

- Course performance
  - Course failures
  - Grade-point average
  - On-track indicators

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Shared Values and Vision

- Attendance
  - Absenteeism
    - Number of days absent during first 20 days and in each quarter of first year of high school

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Shared Values and Vision

- Course performance
  - Course failures
    - Number of Fs in any semester-long course during first year
  - Grade-point average
    - GPA for each semester and cumulative GPA
  - On-track indicators
    - Combination of the number of Fs in core academic courses and credits earned during the first year of high school

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Shared Values and Vision

Tools:

- Interviews

- Surveys

- Rubrics

- Facilitated conversations

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Shared and Supportive Leadership

- Shared decision making, but principal leadership remains highly relevant

- New way of thinking on part of principals and staff

- Open discussion of instructional problems and exploration of solutions

Hord, S. M. & Sommers, W. A. (2008). *Leading professional learning communities: Voices from research and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, p. 10-11.
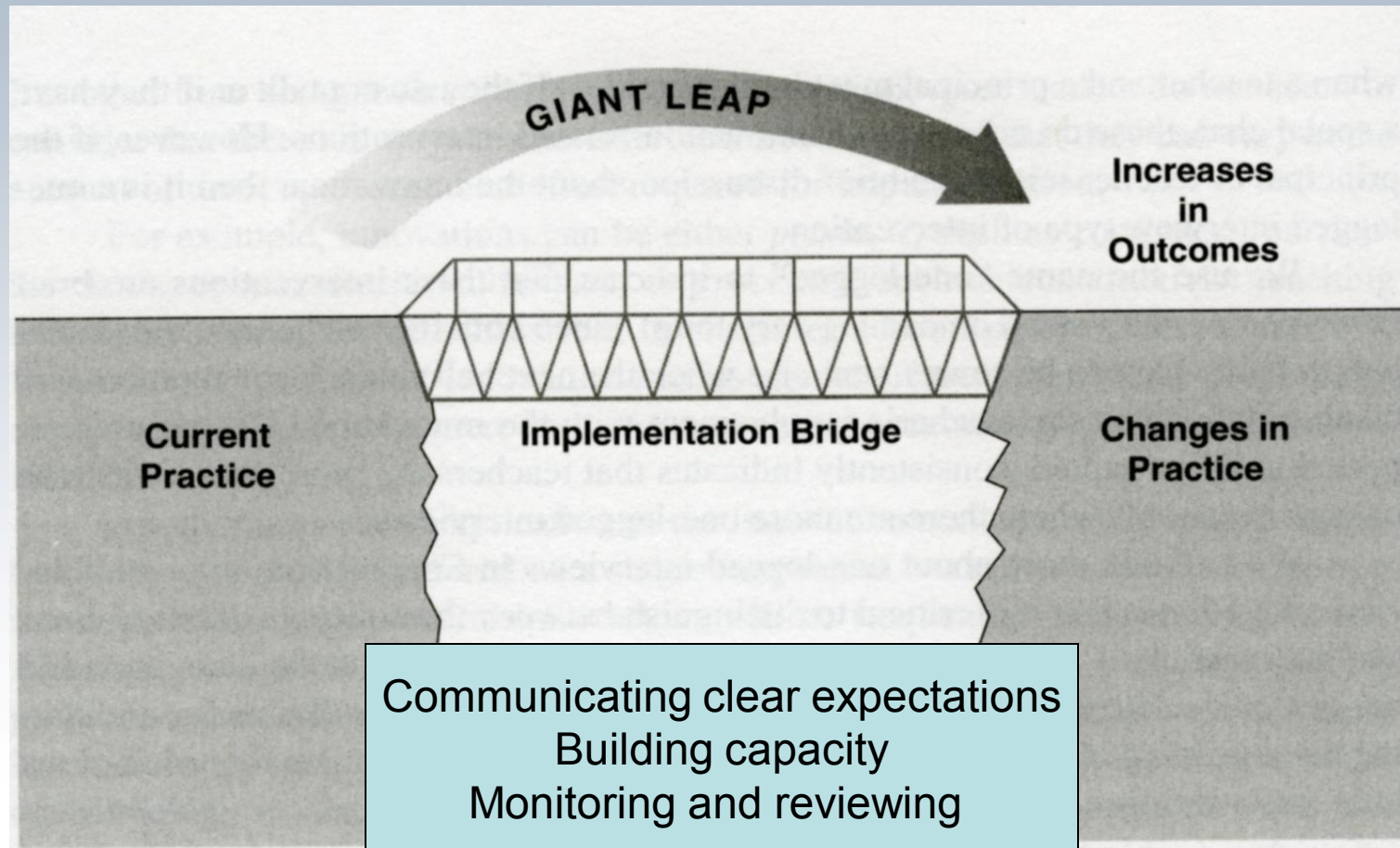
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Shared and Supportive Leadership

- Communicates clear expectations

- Builds capacity

- Monitors and reviews progress

Implementation Bridge

Adapted from Hall, G. E., & Hord, S. M. (2006). *Implementing change: Patterns, principles, and potholes*. Boston: Pearson.

Intentional Collective Learning and Its Application

- ## What the community determines to learn and how they will learn it in order to address students' learning needs is the bottom line.
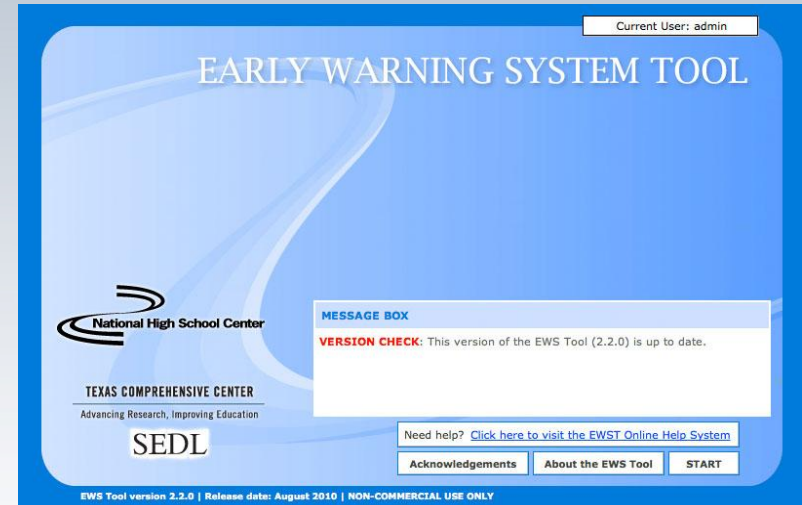
Hord, S. M. & Sommers, W. A. (2008). *Leading professional learning communities – Voices from research and practice* (p. 9). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

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- Data can be collected on students' dropout potential using the Early Warning Data System (EWDS)

http://txcc.sedl.org/resources/ewst/

The Early Warning System (EWS) Tool was originally developed by the National High School Center (NHSC) at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to automatically calculate high-yield indicators related to dropout. With permission of and in collaboration with the NHSC, the Texas Comprehensive Center (TXCC) at SEDL adapted the EWS to produce an online customized database version of the tool called the Early Warning Data System (EWDS).

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STUDENT DATA SCREEN

SAM HOUSTON HIGH SCHOOL | 2010-2011

| Student Data: Set-up | Semester 1 Data | Semester 2 Data | Full Year: Cumulative Summary Report | | Filter by last name | Show All |

STUDENT DATA: AT-RISK SUMMARY   INTERVENTION TRACKER   REPORTS

FULL YEAR	Year Totals				Risk Indicators: Sem. 1					Risk Indicators: Sem. 2				Risk Indicators: Year				
STUDENT NAME	AB	CF	CCF	CE	F20	Q1A	S1A	CF	GPA	Q3A	S2A	CF	GPA	AB	CF	GPA	STATUS*	IP
1. ALEXANDER, ALYSSA	0.01	0	0	5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	--	
2. ALLEN, JOHN	0.24	2	1	3	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	--	
3. ANDERSON, JORDAN	0.04	2	2	5	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	--	
4. BAILEY, CARLOS	0.03	0	0	5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	--	
5. BAKER, LAURA	0.04	0	0	5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	--	
6. BARNES, MORGAN	0.13	5	2	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	--	
7. BELL, STEPHANIE	0.06	0	1	4	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	--	
8. BENNETT, AMANDA	0.37	0	0	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	--	2
9. BROOKS, KYLE	0.08	0	0	5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	--	
10. BROWN, ARIEL	0.06	1	1	5	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	--	No	No	Yes	No	--	3
11. BROWN, JACQUELINE	0.04	0	0	5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	--	
12. BRYANT, MARK	0.17	4	1	2	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	--	
13. BUTLER, KAYLA	0.06	0	0	5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	--	
14. CAMPBELL, ALEJANDRO	0.20	1	0	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	--	4
15. CARTER, BRANDON	0.03	0	0	5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	--	
16. CLARK, NICHOLAS	0.04	0	0	5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	--	
17. COLEMAN, ALEXIS	0.03	0	0	5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	--	
18. COLLINS, ELIZABETH	0.11	4	3	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	--	
19. COOK, TAYLOR	0.04	0	1	5	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	--	

*To activate "Status" indicator, change **Data Entered/Imported** to "YES" for semesters 1 and 2 on the "Student Data: Set-up" tab

Note: The names and data in this chart are fictitious.

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INTERVENTION TRACKER - CATEGORIES

Close

Intervention types (or categories) are used to categorize student interventions into groups. Each category is then summarized to show student performance outcomes across the duration of the intervention period. Click the category icon to view a summary of interventions within that group.

CATEGORY		DESCRIPTION	# INTERVENTIONS	
Tutoring		Various tutoring programs around math, reading, and science.	1	
Mentoring		Mentors are required to attend 4 hours of training and maintain	2	
Counseling		Individual, group, and family counseling will be delivered as	3	
Attendance monitoring		The attendance clerk will compare absences daily with her Liason List	3	
Progress monitoring			0	
Social Services		Regular contact and monthly meetings with a variety of social	1	

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Supportive Conditions: Structures

- Structural factors provide the physical requirements:
  - time
  - place to meet for community work
  - resources and policies to support collaboration

Hord, S. M. & Sommers, W. A. (2008). *Leading professional learning communities – Voices from research and practice (p. 9)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

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Supportive Conditions: Structures

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Supportive Conditions: Structures

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Supportive Conditions: Relationships

Relational factors support the community's

- – human and interpersonal development,

- – openness,

- – truth telling, and

- – focusing on attitudes of respect and caring among the members.

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Supportive Conditions: Relationships

- Norm

  – You are responsible for <u>your</u> students and <u>your</u> subject.

  – Find efficient teaching routines and methods, and stick with them.

  – Be wary of changes in curriculum and instruction: these too shall pass.

- Translation

  – Don't tread on other teachers' territory.

  – Avoid change.

  – Students and society will always have the same basic needs so ignore the new-fangled stuff.

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Supportive Conditions: Relationships

- "If they (teachers) related to me more and understand that at that point in time, my life was …what I was going through, where I lived, where I came from. Who knows?"

Bridgeland, J., DiJulio, J., & Morison, K. (2006). *The silent epidemic* (p. 12). Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises.
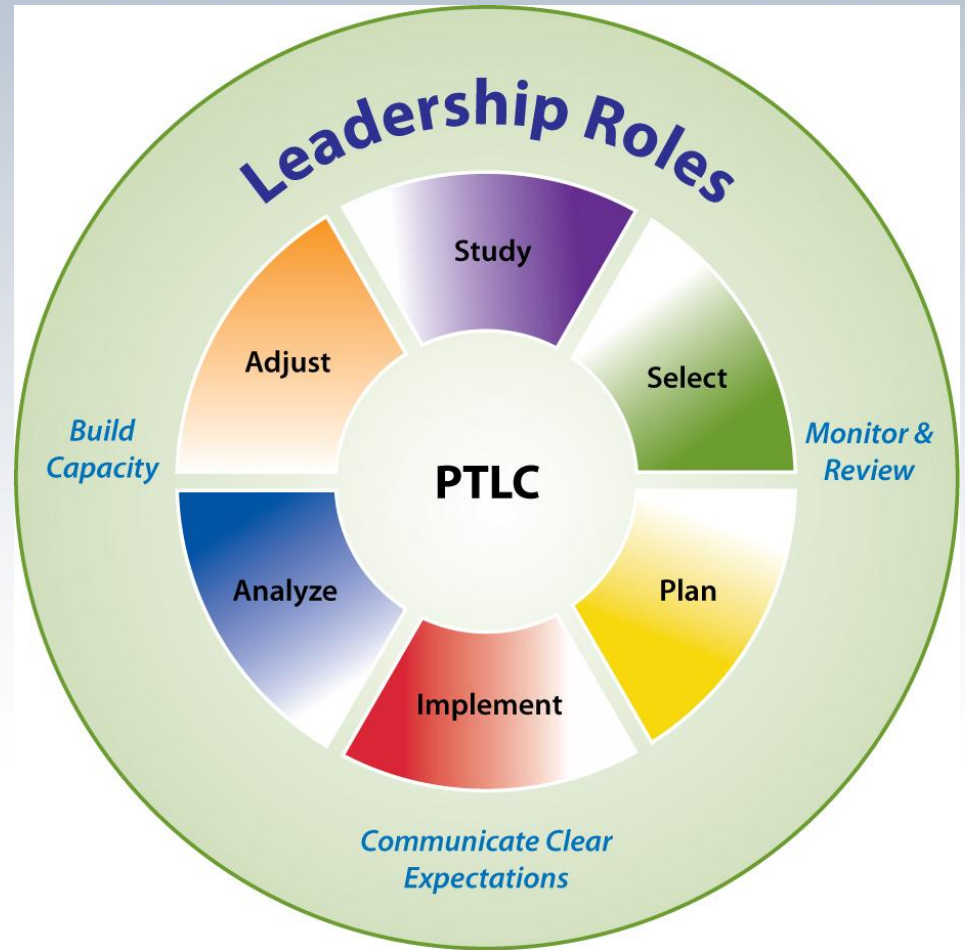
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Shared Person Practice

- Review of teacher's practice and instructional behaviors by colleagues to facilitate continuous improvement

- Built on mutual respect and trust

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Shared Person Practice

Professional Teaching and Learning Cycle (PTLC)

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Shared Person Practice

Tools:

- Lesson study

- Examination of student work

- Classroom visits

- Book studies

Interventions for Dropout Prevention

1. Catch-up courses
2. Equal access to rigorous coursework
3. Extended learning time
4. Multiple paths to graduation; time and location options
5. Tutoring

6. Block scheduling
7. 8th to 9th grade transition programs
8. Homeroom system
9. Ninth-grade academies
10. Small learning communities

Kennelly, L. & Monrad, M. (2007). *Approaches to dropout prevention: Heeding early warning signs with appropriate interventions*. Washington, DC: National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research.

Interventions for Dropout Prevention

- Verifying **implementation** for each intervention

- Verifying **impact** for each intervention

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Interventions for Dropout Prevention

Tutoring example for verifying implementation:

1. Determine tutee attendance and demographics

2. Determine alignment of the curriculum to the goal

3. Determine the impact of the instructional techniques

4. Determine the extent of collaboration with course teachers

Interventions for Dropout Prevention

Tutoring example for verifying impact:

1. Determine the goal:

    – To improve grades or

    – To improve test scores or . . .

2. Determine the data

3. Determine the frequency of data review

4. Determine staff and others who will review the data and adjust the intervention, if needed

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Dimensions of Professional Learning Communities

- Shared values and vision

- Shared and supportive leadership

- Collective learning

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Professional Learning Community Assessment (Revised)
(Hipp & Huffman, 2010)

	STATEMENTS	SCALE			
	Shared and Supportive Leadership	SD	D	A	SA
1.	Staff members are consistently involved in discussing and making decisions about most school issues.				
2.	The principal incorporates advice from staff members to make decisions.				
3.	Staff members have accessibility to key information.				
4.	The principal is proactive and addresses areas where support is needed.				
5.	Opportunities are provided for staff members to initiate change.				
6.	The principal shares responsibility and rewards for innovative actions.				
7.	The principal participates democratically with staff sharing power and authority.				
8.	Leadership is promoted and nurtured among staff members.				
9.	Decision-making takes place through committees and communication across grade and subject areas.				
10.	Stakeholders assume shared responsibility and accountability for student learning without evidence of imposed power and authority.				
11.	Staff members use multiple sources of data to make decisions about teaching and learning.				
COMMENTS:					

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