

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES/LEARNING TEAMS

The WCPSS believes that team-based collaboration is the means to continuous improvement and the achievement of the Board Goal. Participation is expected of employees.

A Professional Learning Community/Learning Team is made up of members who regularly collaborate toward continued improvement in meeting student needs. Using data, professional experience, and best practice, the team works toward realizing a shared vision for a better learning environment. The primary emphasis of this work is on the support of learning and meeting the needs of all students.

Every school-based certified staff member should have equal access to a minimum of one hour for participation in weekly professional learning communities and to the Board approved early release days for collaboration and job-embedded professional development. Central Services staff members should participate regularly in centrally-based learning teams.

### Role Responsibilities

The Board shall:

1. Provide weekly time for schools to operate as a collaborative community of learners.
2. Approve early release days for each calendar/track.
3. Fund, within the budget process, adequate resources to support the collaborative work of learning teams and job-embedded professional development.

The Superintendent shall:

1. Implement the policy.
2. Report to the Board on the implementation of the policy.
3. Report to the Board the achieved results.
4. Provide data that demonstrate the fidelity of implementation and impact on student achievement.

Central Services staff shall provide the following support to school-based professional learning communities::

1. Provide guidelines and resources.
2. Recommend and provide examples of research-based strategies.
3. Provide implementation training.

The School Improvement Leadership Team shall:

1. Work with the principal to devise a professional learning community implementation plan that includes job responsibilities for all staff members.
2. Clearly state in the School Improvement Plan how the time will be used. (G.S. 115C-84.2)

The Principal shall:

1. Ensure that there is a minimum of 1,000 hours of instruction within the minimum of 180 instructional days. (G.S. 115C-84.2)
2. Be responsible for the implementation of professional learning communities at the school level.
3. Communicate to the school community about the specific work being done, the importance of professional collaboration, and its impact on results.
4. Monitor and assess the progress of the implementation and improved results.
5. Ensure that the work hours should be no less than the workday established by the Board of Education.
6. Approve leave from Board approved early release and professional learning community time only in extenuating circumstances.

School-based staff shall:

1. Participate in job-embedded professional development and weekly professional learning communities.
2. Work in collaborative teams to:
  - a. Build shared knowledge regarding expectations for student learning.
  - b. Frequently monitor each student's learning.
  - c. Identify goals that focus on student learning and require evidence of improved student learning.
  - d. Create a process for additional time and support in response for when students experience difficulty or need enrichment.

Central Services staff shall:

1. Participate in regular professional learning teams.
2. Identify goals for improvement in support of the learning environment and require evidence of improvement.
3. Identify and share strategies.
4. Assess the impact of the strategies and share the results.

All school staff members are responsible for student safety and for the proper supervision of students. ~~In order to protect student safety and to provide for the proper supervision of students,~~ A professional's minimum workday shall extend from being ready to fulfill his or her professional duties 30 minutes prior to the start of the Board approved bell schedule ~~one-half hour before the students' instructional day begins until the students for which they are responsible have departed,—and the teachers have completed~~ The professional workday also includes the completion of their professional responsibilities to the students, ~~their~~ teams, and to the school.

1. Program development, school committees, professional growth activities, PTA meetings, faculty meetings, bus duty, parent conferences, special help for individual students and care of school property and equipment are examples of the kinds of activities which will require the continuation of professional service before the arrival of and beyond the departure of students.
2. Every school-based certified staff member should have equal access to a minimum of one hour for participation in weekly professional learning communities/teams and to the Board approved early release days for job-embedded professional development and collaboration.

Legal Reference: GS 115C-84.2

Adopted: July 19, 1976

Revised: August 17, 1998

## R&P – PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES/LEARNING TEAMS

A Professional Learning Community/Learning Team demonstrates the following characteristics:

1. Shared vision and values
2. Supportive conditions
3. Shared leadership
4. Collaborative culture
5. Collective inquiry
6. Focus on results

The professional learning community/learning team collaborates to answer the questions: (a) what is it that we want students to know, (b) how do we know if they know it, (c) what do we do if they don't know it or do know it? (DuFour Eaker, 1998)

### **PLC Day**

Every PLC Day the bell will ring one hour early for the departure of students. Professional learning communities should begin after the staff's responsibility for the safe departure of students has been completed. A professional learning community should last for an hour but can be extended by the consensus of the team.

### **Early Release Day**

The Board will approve early release days per calendar/track. On early release days, the bell will ring two and one half hours early for the departure of students. Early Release Day professional development and collaboration should begin immediately after the staff's responsibility for the safe departure of students has been completed. The professional development and collaboration should extend for three hours (not including time for lunch). It is the expectation that staff remain on campus for lunch.

### **Implementation Plan**

The principal and the School Improvement Leadership team shall create a Professional Learning Community Implementation Plan and schedule. It should include defining the professional learning communities that will operate for the year, assigning staff members to teams and scheduling meetings for the teams. The Implementation Plan should include processes for establishing norms, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and a method to make those items available.

No student activities should occur during early dismissal or early release time without approval by the principal due to an extenuating circumstance.

No off-campus meetings or sessions requiring the attendance of school-based staff should occur on any PLC Day.

DuFour, R., Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.