

# Professional Learning Communities Principles & Principal “Look Fors”

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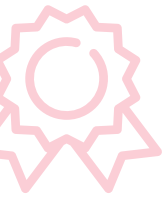
MDE Regional Literacy Coordinator



MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

December 2, 2021





1

**ALL** Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas



2

**EVERY** Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career



3

**EVERY** Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program

**EVERY** School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders

4



**EVERY** Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes

5



**EVERY** School and District is Rated "C" or Higher

6



## VISION

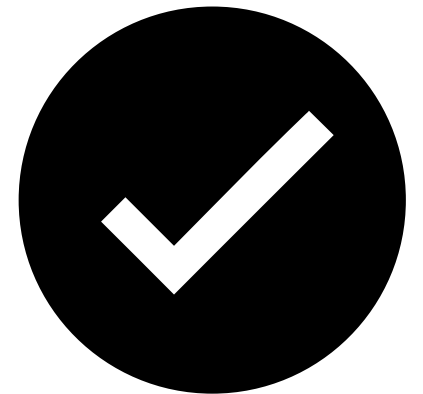
To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens



## MISSION

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

- Silence your cell phones
- Please check and/or reply to emails during the scheduled breaks
- Be an active participant
- Do not hesitate to ask questions



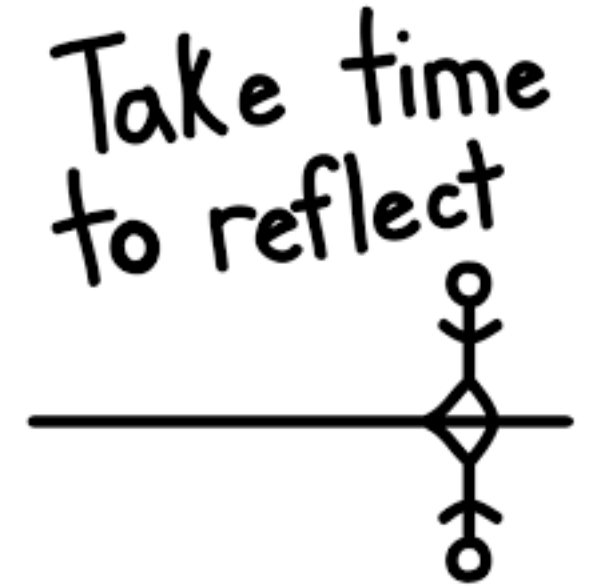
- Reflecting on Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Defining PLCs
- Shifting the PLC Culture
- Classifying Different Types of PLCs
- Identifying PLC Needs
- Preparing for Follow-Through
- Reviewing Principal Look-Fors in Observation Tools



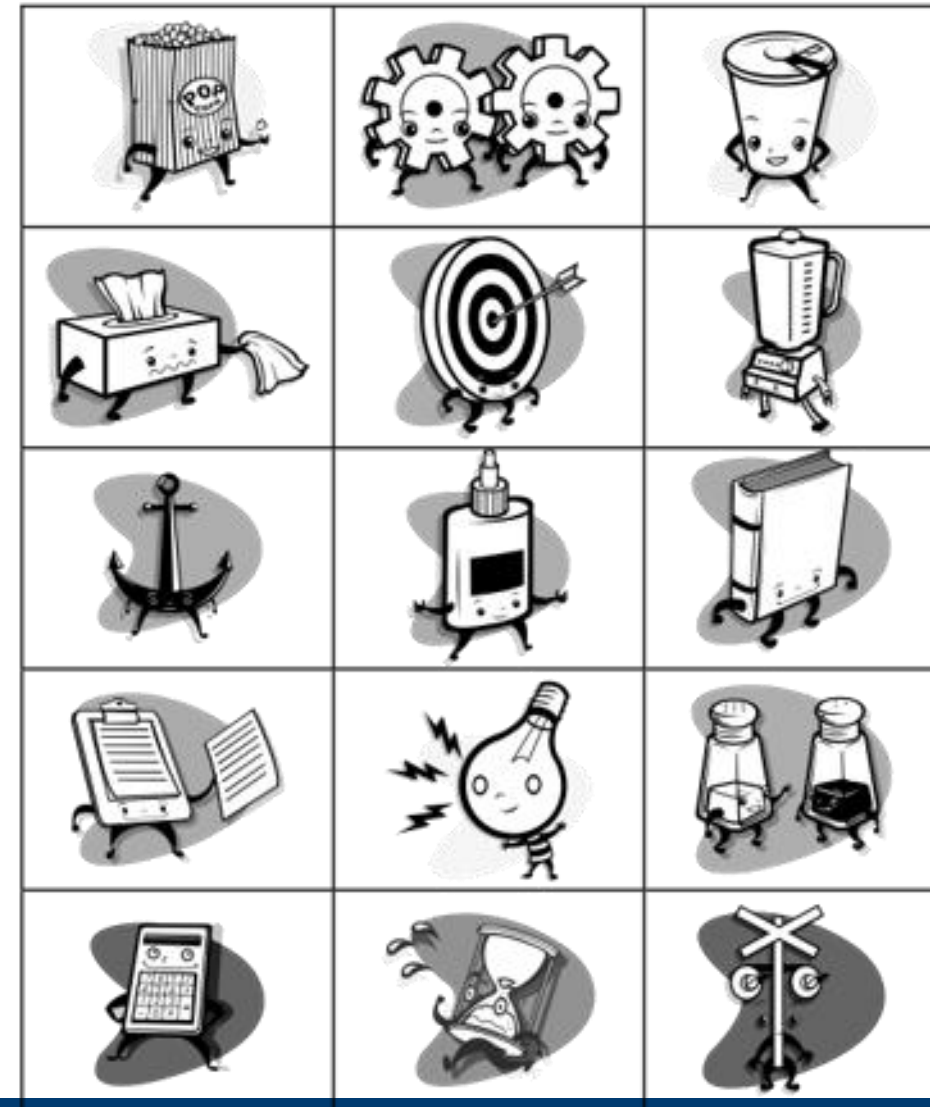
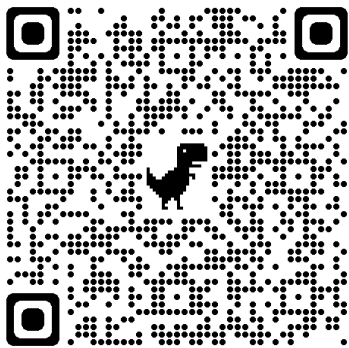
# PLC Reflection

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Critical Issues for Team Consideration



Choose the picture that best describes your team or the majority of your schools' teams. Be prepared to share why you chose that image.



## Rating Scale:

**1-4:** Not true of our team

**5-7:** Our team is addressing this

**8-10:** True of our team

1. We have identified team norms and protocols to guide us in working together.

2. We have analyzed student data and established SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Based) goals.

3. We have aligned our standards with state standards and assessments required of our students.

4. We have identified content and topics to which to devote essential time.

5. We have agreed upon how to best sequence content (pacing guides).



## Rating Scale:

**1-4:** Not true of our team

**5-7:** Our team is addressing this

**8-10:** True of our team

6. We have identified the prerequisite knowledge and skills students need in order to master the standards.

7. We have identified strategies and created instruments to progress monitor student knowledge and skills.

8. We have developed systems to assist students when they are lacking in specific areas.

9. We use the results of common assessments to assist each other in building on strengths and addressing weaknesses.

10. We formally evaluate our adherence to team norms and the effectiveness of our team at least twice a year.

# Defining a PLC

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Professional Learning Community



- A **group of educators** that meet during a regularly designated time to collaboratively **analyze evidence of student learning** in order to **adjust instructional practices** while addressing individual student needs and advancing student achievement.
- A setting where teachers and principals **collaborate** to continuously **increase their effectiveness** through their own ongoing learning.
- A powerful staff development approach and a potent **strategy for school change** and improvement (Hord, 1997).

## The Big Ideas:

- Focus on Learning: Ensuring that Students Learn
- Build a Collaborative Culture: A Culture of Collaboration
- Focus on Results

## Benefits of PLCs:

- Adds coherence and continuous learning to professional development
- Fosters teacher collaboration
- Improves the professional culture of a school

## Key Attributes of PLCs:

- Supportive and shared leadership
- Collective learning and application
- Shared values and vision
- Supportive culture and environment
- Shared personal practice (open door policy)



# Shifting the PLC Culture

*“It is impossible for a school or district to develop the capacity to function as a professional learning community without undergoing profound cultural shifts” (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008).*



Directions: Reflect on the list below. Indicate whether this is currently happening (present) or a potential future focus for your building(s).

Topic	Present	Future
Setting the Purpose of the Meeting		
Use of Assessments		
Teacher Response to Student Achievement		
Collaboration for Preparation and Planning		
School Culture/Climate		
Building Teacher Capacity and Content		

- Administer a PLC Needs Assessment
- Agree upon meeting time, location, and frequency
- Designate formal and informal leaders
- Establish team norms
- Create a PLC agenda and follow an inquiry cycle (Plan, Do, Study, Act) that embeds data







## SAMPLE MEETING AGENDA

FACILITATOR:	RECORDER:
TIMEKEEPER:	NORMS (LIST TEAM NORMS HERE):

**I. FOCUS IT:**  
**Review of meeting focus and desired end result (brief). Brief description of the process.**

- *What did we plan to accomplish today?*
- *What will we walk away having done or created? (e.g. what decisions, products, plan of action)*
- *What process will we be using? (e.g. brainstorming, protocol for looking at student work, identifying assessment items)*

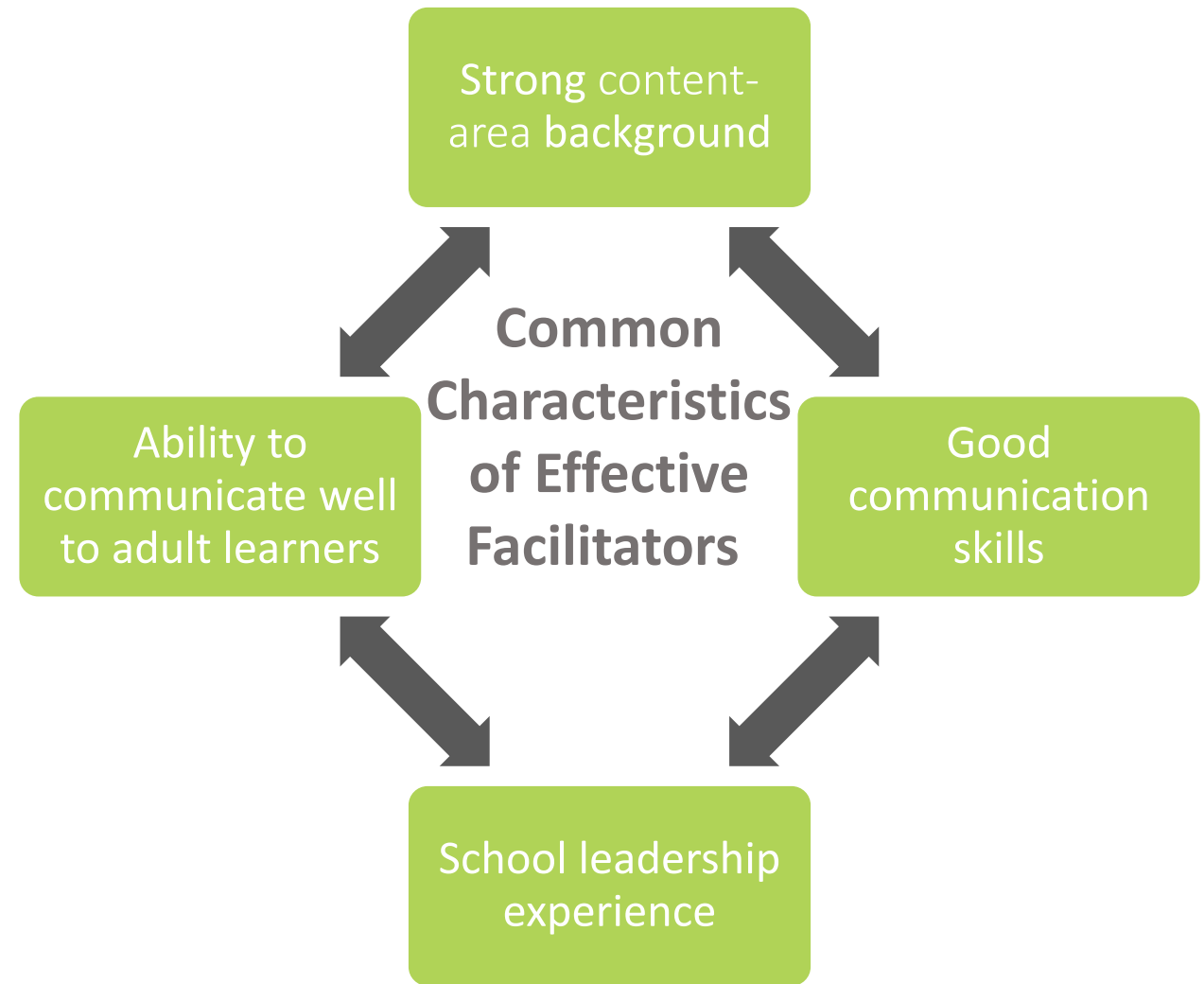
**II. DO IT:**  
**DISCUSSION/ACTION (Time allotted \_\_\_\_\_)**

- *Facilitator guides the team through the process.*
- *Recorder takes notes on key decisions or products made.*
- *Timekeeper helps to monitor the progress of the team during the allotted time.*

## Identifying a PLC Facilitator

### The PLC Facilitator

- organizes the team
- coordinates the selection of professional development materials
- ensures goals are met



## Trust Roles that Support Group Functioning

### Gate Keeper

Ensures that all members of the group have an opportunity to share

Asks for the opinions of quiet group members;

Encourages talkative members to be listeners;

Keeps communication flowing

### Encourager

Is friendly, warm, and responsive to others

Accepts and acknowledges the contribution of members

Encourages others to speak

## Trust Roles that Support Group Functioning Continued

### Compromiser

In the case of an impasse, clearly states the different ideas that have been expressed and asks group to look for common ground

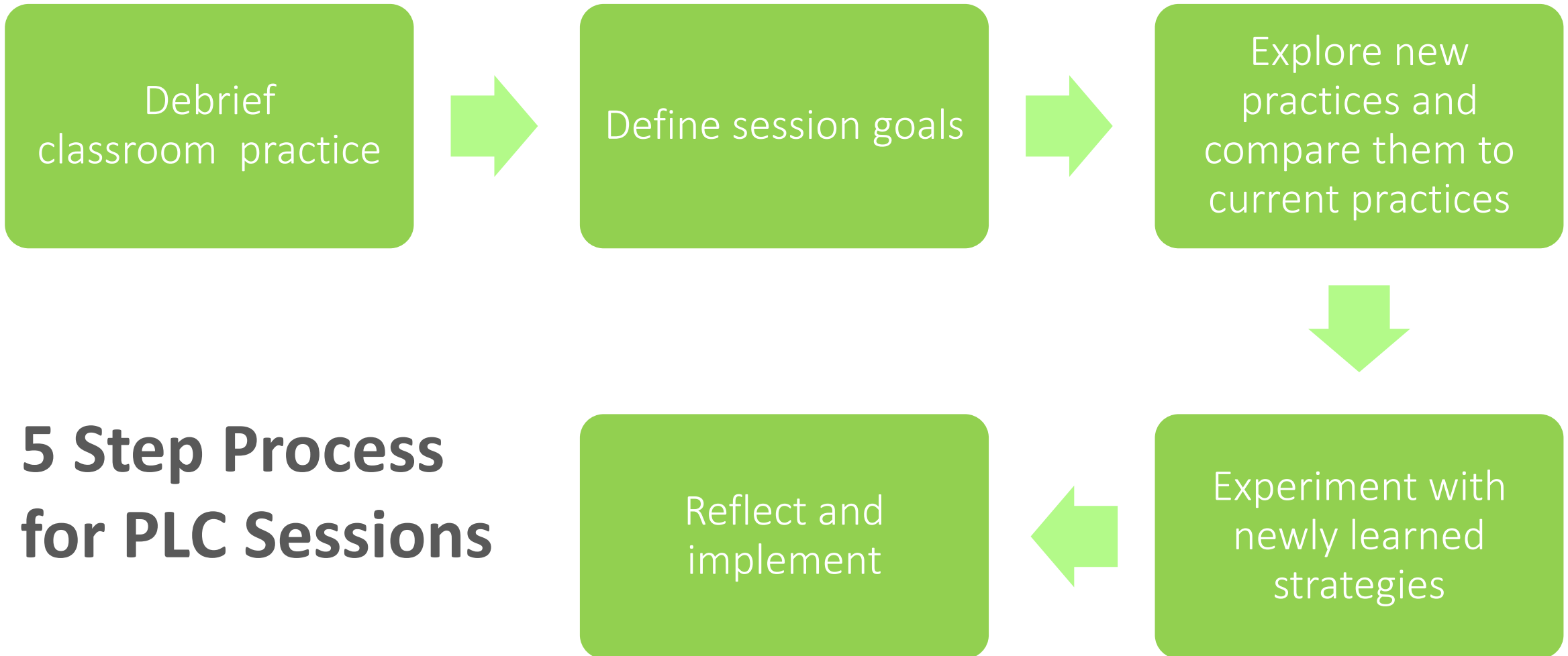
Offers compromises for opposing points of view

Is willing to yield when it is necessary for progress to be made

### Reflector

Senses feelings, moods, and relationships within group

Shares own feelings with group



### 5 Step Process for PLC Sessions

# Identifying PLC Needs

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### PLC Needs Assessment:

- A **needs assessment** is a systematic process for determining and addressing **needs** or *gaps* between current conditions and desired conditions or *wants*.
- The discrepancy between the current condition and wanted condition must be measured to appropriately identify the **need**.

Needs Assessment 2021-2022 Name: _____ Date: _____	<b>K</b> <sub>new before</sub> August 2021	<b>W</b> <sub>ant to</sub> Know More about	<b>L</b> <sub>earned</sub> Since August 2021	Notes
<b>Classroom Policy &amp; Procedure Strategies</b>				
<b>Integration of All Subjects into ELA</b>				
<b>Writing Strategies</b>				
<b>5 Components:</b>				
• Phonemic Awareness				
• Phonics				
• Vocabulary				
• Fluency				
• Comprehension				
<b>Centers Aligned to CCRS</b>				
<b>Center Accountability</b>				
<b>Data Driven Instruction</b>				
<b>Instructional Resources</b>				
<b>Technology Resources</b>				
<b>Differentiated Instruction In Centers</b>				
<b>Differentiated Instruction Teacher Center</b>				
<b>Direct Instruction</b>				



# Classifying Different Types of PLCs

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"Schools cannot achieve the fundamental purpose of learning for all if educators work in isolation" (R. DuFour).



## Meeting Options:

Whole Faculty

Special-Topic Teams

Interdisciplinary Teams

Grade-Level Teams

Subject-Area Teams

Between-School Teams



## Roles:

### Teachers

- collaborate
- contribute

### Principals

- Define school mission
- Manage instructional program
- Promote positive learning climate
- Ensure accountability

### Districts

- Collaborate on goal setting
- Identify non-negotiables
- Monitor goals
- Provide resources

Content PLCs	Planning PLCs	Data PLCs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purpose: enhancing teacher knowledge</li><li>• Building capacity and sustainability</li><li>• Example: article, book study, research</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purpose: building plans</li><li>• Planning as a grade level</li><li>• Vertical planning</li><li>• Example: planning for centers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purpose: reviewing and plotting data</li><li>• Using data to drive Instruction</li><li>• Example: using data to assign re-teach standards</li></ul>

**Data PLCs** will determine **Content PLCs** which drive **Planning PLCs**.

## Content PLC Topics:

- Program specific PLCs (LETRS, Phonics First routines, Heggerty hand motions, etc.)
- Component strategies/activities
- Phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension
- Article/book studies
- Writing strategies/activities (creating writing prompts and planning supports for writing instruction)
- Narrative, informational, and opinion writing
- Standard study (deconstruction)
- Classroom management

Vocabulary Lesson Planning

Day 1: Explicitly teach each word

- a) Pronounce Word → Motion for word!
- b) syllabicate or point out a feature
- c) Discuss a synonym or antonym
- d) Ask yes or no questions to deepen understanding
- e) Partner talk - Make a sentence

Day 2: Context Clues

- a) Assist w/ finding context clues
- b) Discuss

Day 3: More yes/no, example/non-example	Day 4: Kchoot Quiz or graphic organizer
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Vocabulary Instruction  
Which Words do I teach?

**Tier III Words**  
Low-Frequency  
Content Specific

**Tier II Words**  
High-Frequency  
Versatile across many contexts

**Tier I Words**  
Everyday language  
Conversational

SYLLABICATION ROUTINE

1. Label the vowels.
2. Draw a bridge between the vowels
3. Label the consonants on the bridge.
4. Divide using the pattern/rule.
5. Label the syllable types.
6. Read the syllables.
7. Read the word.

alligator  
procedure  
escape  
adventure

## Content PLC Questions:

- Why is this strategy, skill, or content important for the teacher to know?
- Do teachers have access to the necessary resources to implement these strategy or skill? If not, how will I get this to them and ensure they can sustain the practice?
- Will teachers of all ability levels realistically be able to implement this content?
- Have we visited the MDE Scaffolding Document to make sure we have dissected the standard and taught all components?



### Planning PLCs:

A lesson plan is the instructor's road map of what students need to learn and how it will be done effectively during the class time.

Planning should take place collaboratively.

- A successful lesson plan addresses and integrates these three key components:



Goals for student learning



Teaching/learning activities



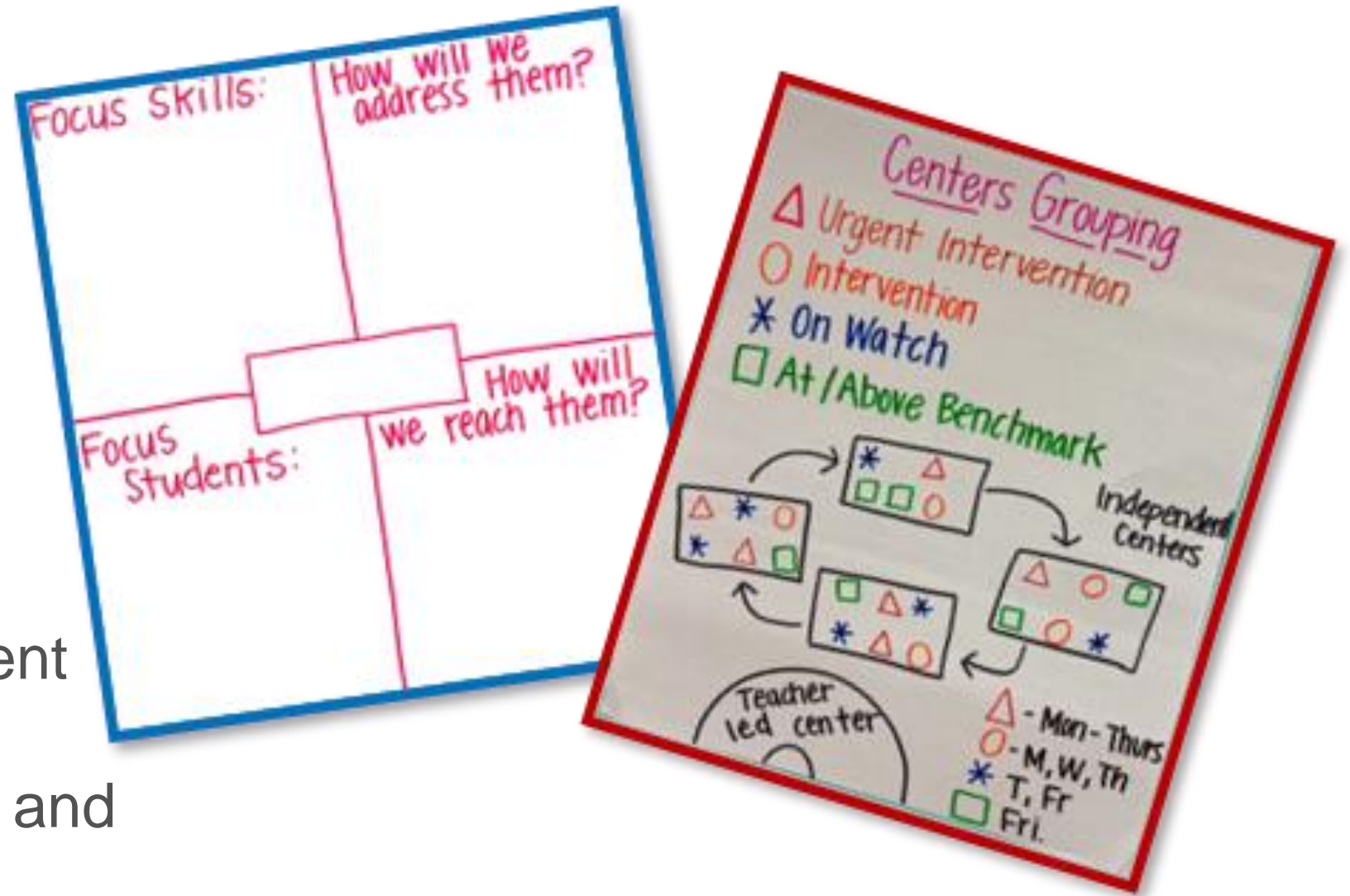
Strategies to check student understanding

*Stiliana Milkova, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching*



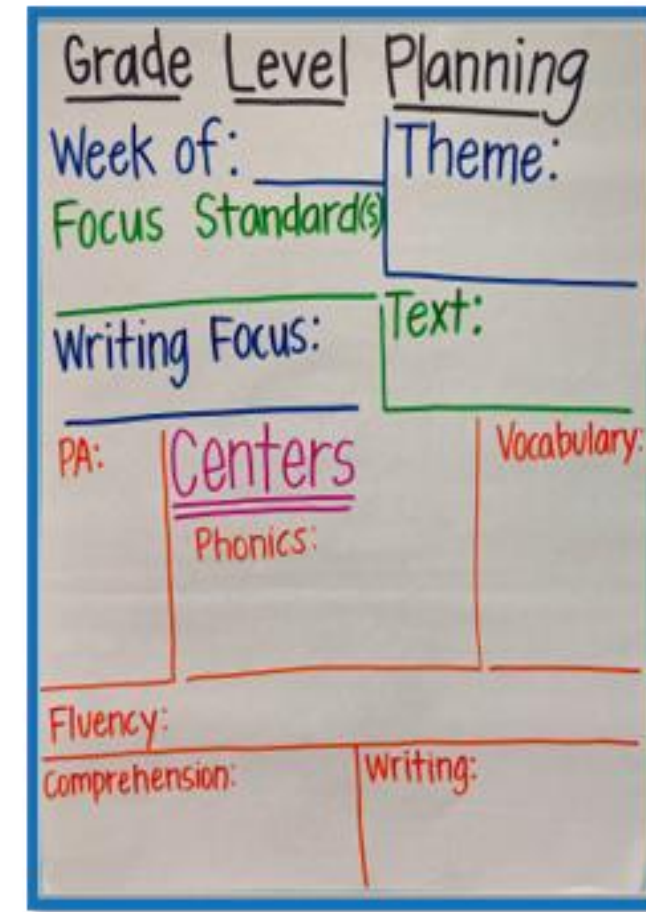
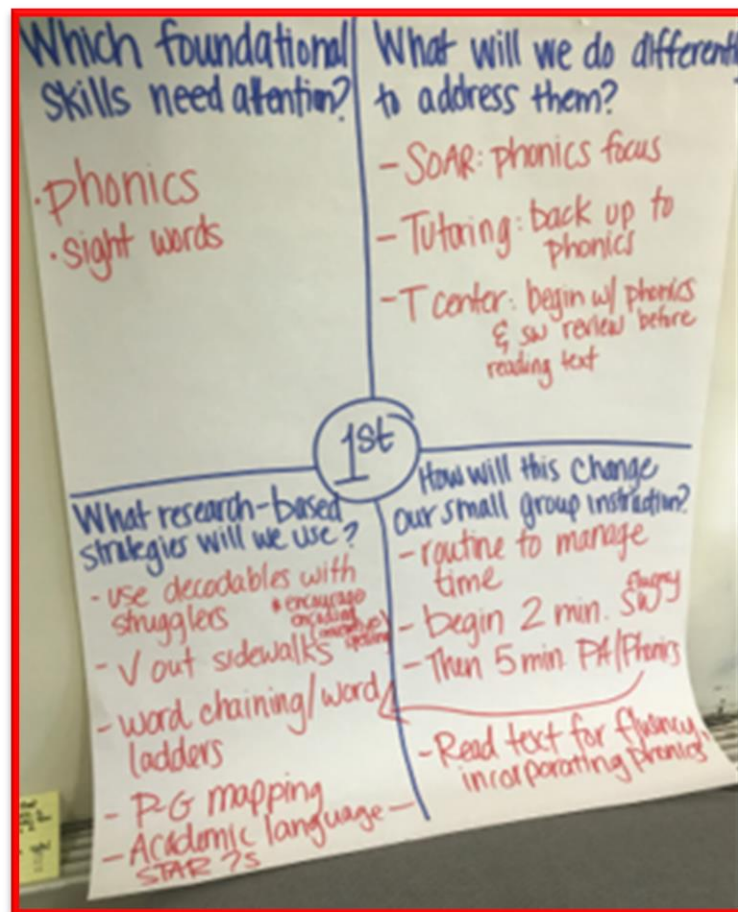
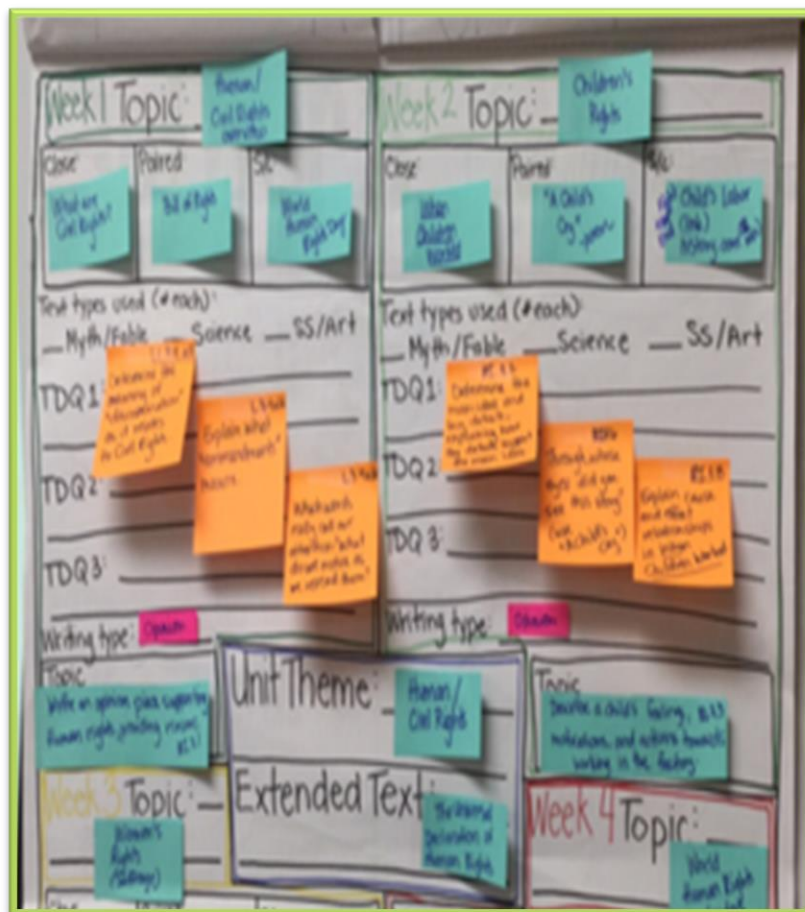
## Preparation:

- Reading script
- Anchor chart
- Student friendly definitions
- Higher order thinking questions
- Student engagement strategies
- Pre-requisite skills and standards



### Planning Questions:

- Have we collaboratively decided what we will specifically teach and when it will be taught? How are we monitoring our implementation of the curriculum?
- How do we decide what is prioritized within a unit? Are we referencing the standards?
- How do our students know what they are supposed to be learning?
- Are we embedding research-based practices in our daily instruction with fidelity? What programs/tools are we using with fidelity?
- Can students enter any of our classrooms and receive the same powerful curriculum and expectations for learning?



## Data PLCs:

- Confirm changes are occurring during instruction by conducting ongoing data meetings.
- Engage grade level team members in a collaborative process to examine student data and make effective instructional decisions.
- Ensure all students are making progress and educators are giving them what they need.





### Data Questions

#### **Data Understanding and Analysis:**

- What do you notice about the overall student levels of performance?
- What are your successes? Areas of need?
- What are the patterns in standards or standards across all classrooms? Across each teacher's classroom?
- What do you notice about patterns in individual student growth?  
What do you notice about patterns across classrooms and across teachers?

### Data Questions

#### Root Cause:

- What do you hypothesize could be the root causes behind the data?
- Which of the possible root causes can you control?
- Which of the root causes if addressed will make the biggest difference in student results?



## Data Questions

### **Instructional Moves to Address Data Findings:**

- What instructional strategies or teaching ideas could we use to address the areas of need?
- What will each /all of us do to increase the level of student proficiency in the targeted areas?

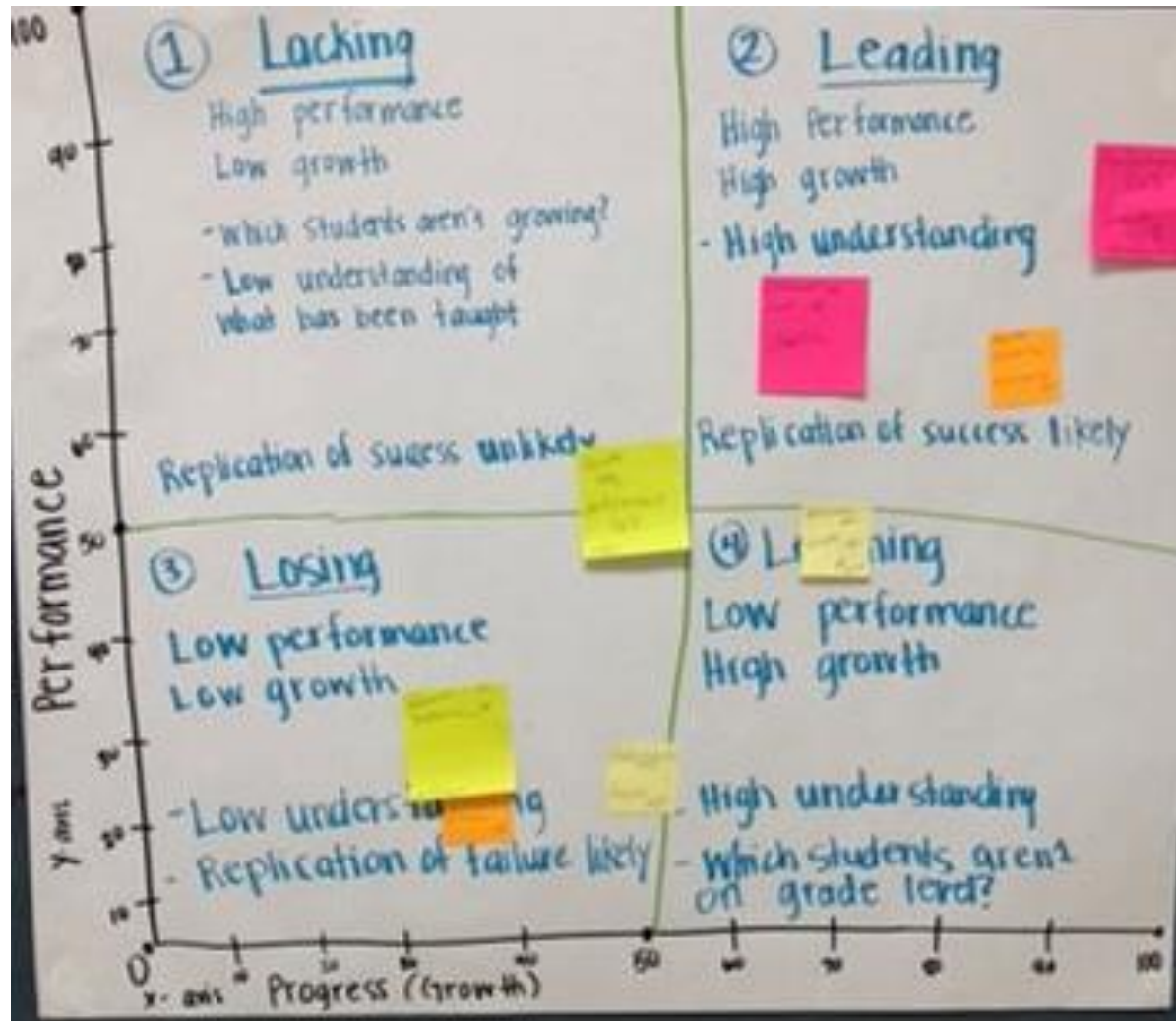


### Data Questions

#### **Progress Monitoring and Interventions:**

- When will we assess student learning? What common formative assessments will we use?
- What common summative assessments will we use?
- What instruction/interventions will we provide for students or groups of students not making growth or performing at advanced levels and what are possible next steps?





What will you do differently to address the students in **U.I.** & **I**? How will you challenge the students **At/Above Benchmark**?

- Small groups
- Centers
- Guided Reading
- One-on-one
- Phonics
- interventionist
- Pair reading
- Chapter books
- Vocabulary
- Centers (leveled)
- Research projects

Now that we have **DATA** **2<sup>nd</sup> Grade**

What research-based instructional strategies will you use? How will this data influence small group instruction?

- Saxon
- Odyssey
- Journey's <sup>small groups</sup> Guided Reading
- 1 minute reads (fluency)
- STAR reports
- LETRS
- STAR data
- MAP data
- Odyssey
- Observation

# Preparing for Follow-Through

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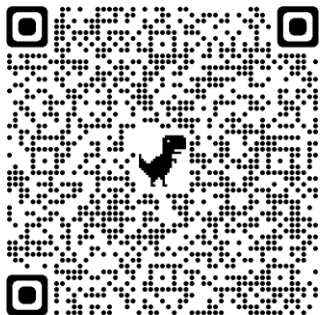
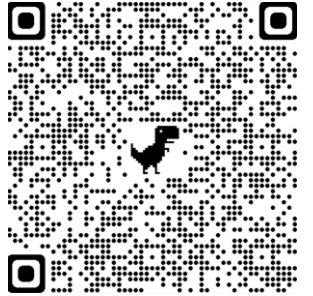


- What PLC roadblocks exist in your building?
- How do you overcome these roadblocks?
- How do you know current PLCs are working?
- What accountability and follow-through is in place?

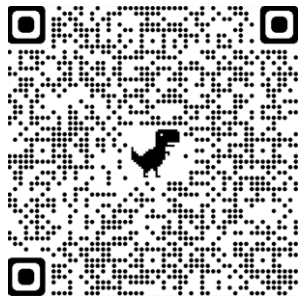


## Principal Walk-Through Checklists:

- [Florida Center for Reading Research](#) (Standards based)
- [Center on Instruction](#) (Grade level specific, focuses on 5 components of reading)



- Pre and post walkthrough checklists
- Checklists specific to each grade level
- Checklists aligned to College and Career Readiness Standards



# School Leader’s Literacy Walkthrough



Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third Grades

Introduction .....	2
Overview of the Tool .....	2
Using the Tool .....	2
Pre-Walkthrough Meeting Guide.....	3
Post-Walkthrough Meeting Guide.....	4

Pre-Walkthrough Meeting Guide

- Completed with the teacher prior to the walkthrough
- Familiarizes administrator with information regarding the lesson

Pre-Walkthrough Meeting Guide

Teacher:	Date/Time:
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Pre-Walkthrough Guiding Questions		Pre-Walkthrough Notes
1. Does the teacher have a copy of the Walkthrough tool and has the school leader provided an overview of it?		
2. Which of the following reading components will be observed during the walkthrough?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Foundational Reading Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Language <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking & Listening	
3. Which standard(s) is this lesson designed to help students attain? What is the lesson's specific learning objective?		
4. What prior knowledge/skill is related to the learning objective of this lesson? Which data were used to determine this (if appropriate)?		
5. Are there any specific instructional strategies that will be implemented? Are any of the instructional strategies aligned with professional learning/instructional coaching?		
6. Which instructional materials will be used?		
7. What format/classroom organization will be used (e.g., whole group, small group)?		
8. How will students be asked to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning objective?		
9. How will the outcomes of this lesson and student learning impact subsequent instruction?		
10. How will instruction be differentiated to meet the needs of all learners?		
11. Does the teacher have any questions?		

The walkthrough will take place:

Date:	Time:
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Grade Level Specific Walkthrough Guides

- Standard based
- Focuses on teacher instruction and student learning

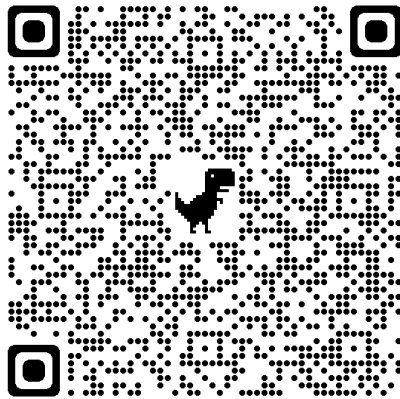
First Grade



School Leader's Literacy Walkthrough

Foundational Reading Skills .....	2
Reading Comprehension.....	3
Writing .....	4
Language .....	5
Speaking and Listening .....	6

- A checklist specific to each grade level (K-3<sup>rd</sup>)
- Addresses the 5 components of reading and expectations



Teacher _____		Third Grade <b>3</b>
Visit 1	By: _____ Date: ____/____/____ Time: ____:____ WG: ____ SG: ____	
Visit 2	By: _____ Date: ____/____/____ Time: ____:____ WG: ____ SG: ____	
Visit 3	By: _____ Date: ____/____/____ Time: ____:____ WG: ____ SG: ____	
VISITS		
1	2	3
<b>CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT (CE)</b>		
	CE-1	Classroom <b>behavior management system</b> creates a <b>positive learning environment</b> .
	CE-2	Classroom <b>arrangement</b> is conducive to <b>whole-group</b> instruction and <b>reading centers</b> (both teacher-led center and independent student centers).
	CE-3	<b>Daily class schedule</b> is posted with uninterrupted time for reading instruction that includes whole-group instruction, reading centers, and additional time for intensive intervention.
	CE-4	<b>Displays</b> of student work and curriculum material <b>reflect current skills and concepts</b> taught.
	CE-5	<b>Teacher interactions</b> with students reflect warmth, encouragement, and enthusiasm.
<b>INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS (IM)</b>		
	IM-1	Teacher and student <b>program materials</b> (e.g., teacher's guides, big books, puppets, letter-sound cards, decodable books, vocabulary lists, charts, student readers, and sufficient selection of texts) are <b>accessible and organized</b> .
	IM-2	Teacher uses a <b>variety of resources</b> (e.g., wipe-off boards, overhead projectors, computers, listening centers, letter tiles) during reading instruction.
<b>TEACHER INSTRUCTION (TI)</b>		
	TI-1	Teacher provides appropriate and <b>clear instruction for all students</b> , including students at risk, English Language Learners, and students with special needs.
	TI-2	Teacher implements <b>program components with fidelity</b> .
	TI-3	Teacher <b>differentiates instruction</b> according to student needs based on assessment.
	TI-4	Teacher uses <b>explicit instruction</b> during whole-group instruction and at the teacher-led center.
	TI-5	Teacher <b>scaffolds instruction</b> during whole-group instruction and at the teacher-led center.
	TI-6	Teacher provides students with ample <b>practice opportunities, corrective feedback, and positive feedback</b> .
	TI-7	<b>Pacing</b> is appropriate and lively during whole-group instruction and at the teacher-led center.
	TI-8	<b>Transitions</b> between whole-group instruction and reading centers are smooth and quick.
		<b>NOTES &amp; REFLECTION</b>



It is not necessary to use the previous checklists to ensure effective follow-through.

**Select the 3 top priorities from the attended or facilitated PLC and create your own checklist.**

2019-2020 2nd Grade Focus Wall Components Checklist				
Focus Wall Components	Strong Evidence	Observed	Needs Attention	Not Observed
Dates for Module				
Module and Unit Lessons				
Ms CCRSS Number/ Learning Targets				
Essential Question				
Focus Question				
Vocabulary				
Content Framing Question				
Craft Question				
Wrap/Closure				
Deep Dive/Exit Ticket				

2019-2020 Anchor Chart Walk Through Observations				
	Were the anchor charts present	Was the teacher using the chart during instruction?	Comments	Next Steps
Teacher				
Teacher				
Teacher				
Teacher				
Teacher				
Teacher				
Teacher				
Teacher				

Productivity Report

- Assists principal with follow-through on PLC topics



Principal Productivity Report

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

PLC topic: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list Professional Learning Community (PLC) Session Norms:

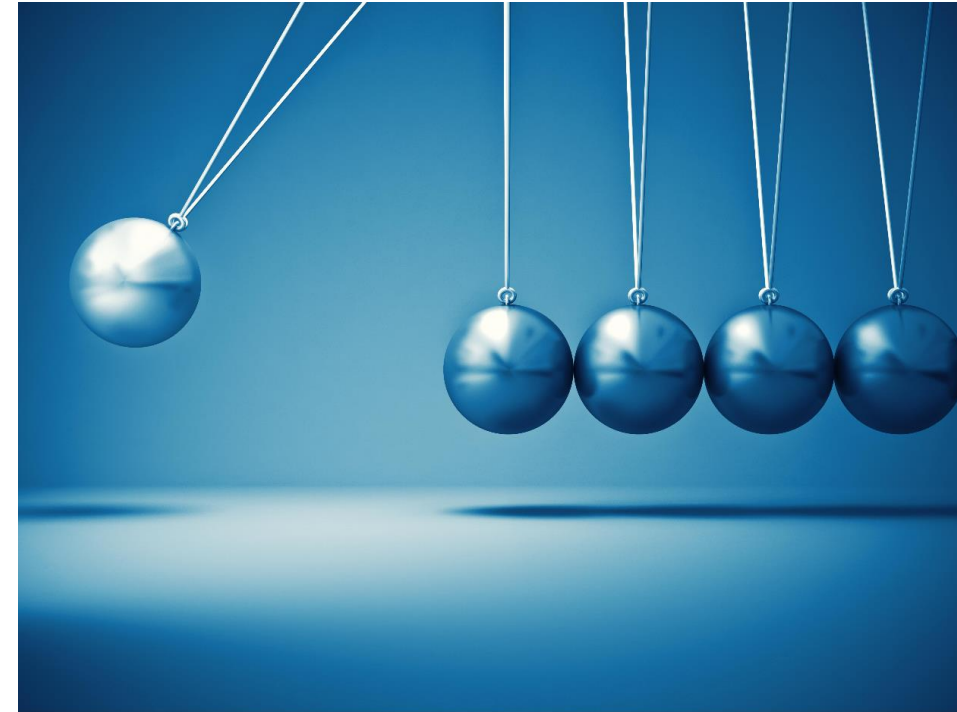
PLC Logistics	Principal Notes:	Principal "Look Fors" in Classrooms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Were teachers on task during the PLC? If not, why?</li><li>Were all PLC agenda topics covered? In not, explain.</li><li>Were PLC Smart Goals created?</li></ul>		<p>What two topics will the principal look for during classroom observations after PLC. (Please list below)</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p>

PLC Smart Goals:

Phonological Awareness	Phonics	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Fluency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pacing of lesson (no more than 15 minutes total) _____</li> <li>• Hand gestures _____</li> <li>• Pronunciation of sounds _____</li> <li>• Participation of students (engagement) _____</li> <li>• Saying of the sounds and not the letters _____</li> <li>• No printed letters should be presented during P.A. _____</li> <li>• The correct hand directions of teachers (they should mirror the students' left to right movement) _____</li> <li>• Do not skip skills _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of an explicit routine _____</li> <li>• State the goal and purpose of the lesson _____</li> <li>• Pacing _____</li> <li>• Use of anchor charts _____</li> <li>• Use of decodable or connected text _____</li> <li>• Interactive activities (phoneme grapheme mapping, word read, word chaining) _____</li> <li>• Dictation of new skill _____</li> <li>• Fluency practice of previous taught skills _____</li> <li>• Sounds (phonemes) and Letters (graphemes) correlations _____</li> <li>• I do (model), We do (guided practice), You do (independent practice) _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit instruction of new words _____</li> <li>• NOT copying from the dictionary/glossary _____</li> <li>• Use and update Word Wall _____</li> <li>• Frontload new vocabulary using a routine _____</li> <li>• Students have ownership of new words _____</li> <li>• Teach strategies to practice new words _____</li> <li>• Daily Tier II/III-word instruction _____</li> <li>• Use in all content areas _____</li> <li>• Words are connected to text _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set the purpose of the lesson using both content and interactive anchor charts _____</li> <li>• Preview the text to build background knowledge _____</li> <li>• Make predictions _____</li> <li>• Prepare text dependent questions prior to lesson _____</li> <li>• Include questions that relate to the standard _____</li> <li>• Students should have a copy of the text _____</li> <li>• Explicitly teach the focus standard _____</li> <li>• Use engagement strategies to allow students to discuss the text _____</li> <li>• Be sure that the lesson/text match the standard _____</li> <li>• Use before, during, and after reading strategies _____</li> <li>• Use graphic organizers _____</li> <li>• Lesson closure is evident _____</li> <li>• Digital material _____</li> <li>• Use of academic language throughout the lesson _____</li> <li>• Absent of round robin/popcorn reading _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus is not just speed _____</li> <li>• Model for the <u>students</u> what expression and rate with accuracy sound like _____</li> <li>• 1-minute fluency drills _____</li> <li>• Focus of fluency – accuracy, rate, expression and/or punctuation _____</li> <li>• Use a fluency checklist _____</li> <li>• Use a routine that include strategies such as repeated reading, echo reading, partner reading, choral reading etc. _____</li> <li>• Allow students to self-evaluate to support purpose and accountability _____</li> <li>• Reading should not sound robotic _____</li> <li>• Connect to meaning by asking questions _____</li> <li>• Should occur daily _____</li> </ul>

### Maintaining the Momentum:

- Make the PLC work collaborative
- Conduct constant check-ups
- Help communities/teams find resources
- Organize the providing of incentives to community/team members



- How will you use PLCs to build teacher capacity (content), analyze progress monitoring (data), and plan data driven instruction (lesson planning)?
- Do you have any concerns regarding follow through of PLCs?
- How can we assist in administration and application of the information we have discussed today?



- Improving Instruction Through Professional Learning Communities:  
[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/infographics/pdf/REL\\_SE\\_Improving\\_Instruction\\_through\\_Professional\\_Learning\\_Communities.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/infographics/pdf/REL_SE_Improving_Instruction_through_Professional_Learning_Communities.pdf)
- Indicators of Effective Schools: A Monitoring Tool for PLCs:  
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