

PLCs: Successes & Challenges

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PLC Success Stories

In 2022, Mount Holyoke wrote a grant which supported four PLCs. The PLCs had four different strands: Language Arts/Humanities, Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM), Black and Brown Educators and Allies, and Teacher Wellness. The PLCs were chosen based on an interest survey given to educators in the region. They were run virtually with a lead facilitator and a mentor assigned to each strand. Most of the facilitators and mentors were nationally recognized educators. Educators from around the region voluntarily signed up to be a part of the PLC of their choice. The PLCs meet once a month as a whole group to highlight resources and understand the landscape of their strand of interest. Then they meet with their mentors in small groups once a month to discuss other problems of practice.

The PLCs are still in progress, but at the end of the school year, there will be a celebration to recognize the learning that has taken place this year. School admin and policymakers will be invited to celebrate educators in a banquet. Another element of what seems to be turning out to be a successful PLC is the provision of a stipend for educators. While the stipend is not steep, it is a small token of recognition for educators who have elected to advance their learning voluntarily. Thus far, educators report that the experience has been immensely fulfilling and rewarding.

PLC Challenges

A challenge faced in PLCs is finding the best facilitators to assist with the PLC, if it is facilitator-led. PLCs can absolutely be teacher-led, and in some cases, that's best. However, there are cases in which a facilitator that specifically focuses on the needs and desires of the PLC joins and leads the group. When this is the case, it is important that the facilitator(s) and the teachers they are paired with are a good match. It is important for the facilitator to have content expertise, instructional practices expertise, and experience with adult learners.