

# PLCs: Successes & Challenges

## Megan Olivia Hall

Dr. Megan Olivia Hall, NBCT, is the 2013 Minnesota Teacher of the Year. Megan teaches science and agriculture classes, serves on the Leadership Team, and runs the social emotional learning program at Open World Learning Community in St. Paul Public Schools. Megan leads a PLC focused on social emotional learning in STEM classrooms for Professional and Graduate Education at Mount Holyoke College. Her four books include *Awesome Kitchen Science Experiments* and *Adventure Girls! STEM Crafts*.

## PLC Success Stories

Collaboration focused on student success is, to me, the gold standard for PLCs. In my school district, PLCs address 4 questions:

- What is that we want our students to know & be able to do? How will we
- know if each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when some students don't learn it?
- How will we extend the learning for students who have developed proficiency?

My best PLCs have included teachers who work with the same students and can share ideas for improving student learning through innovative curriculum development; fair, meaningful, and accurate assessments; student-centered interventions; and exciting enrichment opportunities.

## PLC Challenges

Because teacher workloads are unreasonable, it can be challenging to keep PLCs well-attended and productive. Strategies to keep PLCs effective include scaffolding structures: my favorite is a yearlong graphic organizer with monthly goals and deadlines. Having clear instructions and an easy-to-follow plan for reporting progress can keep tired PLC members focused and increase the success and satisfaction experienced in PLC.