

# PLC Facilitator's Handbook



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## PD Friday Schedule

Staff Meeting  
8:30 – 10:30

School PLC or Faith Formation  
10:30 – 12:00

Lunch  
12:00 – 1:00

PLCs  
1:00 – 3:00

# 2010-2011 CALENDAR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS

Aug 26	Aug 27	Sept 17	Oct 8	Oct 25	Dec 3	Jan 31	March 18	April 8	May 20	June 30
<p><b>Faith Development Day</b></p> <p>Theme: "Thy Kingdom Come"</p> <p>Opening Mass 8:30 a.m.</p> <p><b>Holy Family</b></p>		<p>Staff Meetings <b>8:30-10:00</b></p>	<p>Staff Meetings 8:30-10:30</p>	<p><b>AISI FOCUS DAY</b> -featuring <b>John Antonetti</b></p> <p><b>Medicine Hat Lodge</b> (Lunch Provided)</p> <p>9:00-3:00</p>	<p>Staff Meetings 8:30-10:00</p>	<p>Staff Meetings 8:30-10:30</p>	<p>Staff Meetings 8:30-9:45</p>	<p>Staff Meetings 8:30-10:30</p>	<p>Staff Meetings 8:30-10:30</p>	
	<p><b>School Start Up Day</b></p>	<p>Division Focus PD Day</p> <p>-featuring Lyle Lorenz</p> <p>(Lunch Provided)</p> <p>10:30-3:00</p>	<p>School PLC/PD 10:30-12:00</p>		<p>School Faith Formation Theme: "Thy Kingdom Come"</p> <p>10:30-12:00</p>	<p>School PLC/PD 10:30-12:00</p>	<p>School Faith Formation Theme: "Thy Kingdom Come"</p> <p>10:30-12:00</p>	<p>School PLC/PD 10:30-12:00</p>	<p>School Faith Formation Theme: "Thy Kingdom Come"</p> <p>10:30-12:00</p>	<p><b>School Closing Day</b></p>
<p>Theme: "Thy Kingdom Come"</p> <p>Service Projects</p> <p>Welcome Back Social</p>			<p>PLC 1:00-3:00</p>		<p>PLC 1:00-3:00</p>	<p>PLC 1:00-3:00</p>	<p>PLC 1:00-3:00</p>	<p>PLC 1:00-3:00</p>	<p>PLC 1:00-3:00</p>	

## Essential Characteristics of PLCs

The InPraxis Group Inc. (2006) list the following essential characteristics of PLCs: **supportive and shared leadership, shared mission, focus and goals, collective learning and application of learning, continuous inquiry and practice, and focus on improvement.** The authors further contend that each of these attributes provides an essential building block for PLCs.

The **first essential element, supportive and shared leadership**, involves colleagues within a school community coming together and sharing leadership responsibilities. This shared leadership is deemed to be necessary to create an environment where leadership capacity can be developed from within the community. Ultimately, this empowers all members of the PLC to make effective decisions (Davies, Herbst-Leudtke & Reynolds, 2008).

It is our belief that school administrators participating in collegial relationships with teachers is a good starting point to demonstrate a willingness to share power and decision-making. Bolman and Deal (2003) suggest a component of their human resource frame recognizes the value of listening and empowering those who work for you. The leader is a facilitator who can motivate and empower (Lambert, 1998). From our experience as leaders in a PLC, this makes sense.

The **second essential element, shared mission, focus and goals**, is to be created by the PLC members and embedded in their daily routines. These goals are required to be centered on the improvement of student achievement and learning. Hord (1997), Senge (2000) and Sergiovanni (1996) state that in a PLC, one's obligations result from a common commitment to shared beliefs and values. These obligations provide the foundation for determining how to collectively impact student achievement.

The **third essential element, collective learning and application of learning**, involves principals and teachers inquiring and through which, together, they will create a community (Hord, 1997). Dufour and Eaker (1998) view the collective action slightly differently. In their view, as collaborative teams work independently, they are able to achieve common goals. This is similar to PLCs structured around subject or grade level

groupings in that the ultimate goal may be to increase student achievement but a language arts PLC will approach this differently than a math PLC.

**Continuous inquiry and practice, the fourth essential element**, involves an inquiry-based model and support processes such as, coaching, mentoring, and collaborative decision-making. Cowan and Capers (2000), Dana and Yendel-Hoppey (2008), and Hord (1997) all support the idea that coaches and co-developers continually stimulate the PLC to allow for continuous inquiry and practice. Having support processes in place allows the group to share personal practice and reflect on best practice.

The **fifth and final essential element focuses on improvement**. Hord (1997) views this improvement as continuous as does Dufour and Eaker (1998). Also Dufour and Eaker focus on results so as to ensure that continuous improvement is evident. InPraxis Group Inc. appears to put this in context.

All school improvement initiatives are centered on the critical goal of improving student learning and achievement and stress the belief that improvement is part of the overall culture of all school beliefs, values and practice. It emphasizes the role of collecting data that establishes a base for decision-making, problem solving and inquiries. (InPraxis Group Inc, 1996, p. 11)

From the research and literature highlighted in this section, we can make the case that there are specific elements that will be evident in successful PLCs. Shared and supportive leadership allows teachers to share leadership responsibilities while creating an opportunity for leadership capacity to be developed. Shared mission, focus, and goals provide an opportunity for a group of teachers to determine how to best influence student achievement. Collective learning and application of learning allows PLC groupings the flexibility to achieve common goals although PLCs may be working independently in the school. Continuous inquiry and practice embraces the idea that coaching and mentoring will allow the sharing of best practices. Another attribute of PLCs is the focus on continuous improvement in student learning. This quality recognizes the role of data collection in decision-making.

## Supportive Conditions and Structures for PLCs

Supportive conditions are necessary in order for a school community to embrace change. Hord (1997), for example, viewed supportive conditions as including structural conditions and collegial relationships. As we understand it, structural conditions may include school size, proximity of the staff to one another, teacher empowerment and the provision of resources, scheduling, structures for two-way communication and, of course, leadership.

Collegial relationships may include positive student-teacher-administrator relationships and a sense of school community. Sparks and Hirsh (Thompson, Gregg and Niska, 2004) describe this process as a change in school culture, whereas Fullan (2000) refers to the school's need to re-culture. Either way this process involves "going from a situation of limited attention to assessment and pedagogy to a situation in which teachers and other routinely focus on these matters and make associated improvements" (p. 3). Fullan adds that existing structures within the school may help or hinder this process but the development of a professional community must become the focal point of the improvement process.

Louis and Kruse (1995) also identify many structural conditions they feel must exist in order to create PLCs. The **first condition is time for teachers to meet and dialogue**. Within the PLC structure is regularly embedded time for teachers to collaborate. This time can be provided within the school day or PLC groups can meet at their discretion. Fogarty & Pete (2007), Hipp & Huffman (2003), Hord (1998), InPraxis Group Inc., (2006), and Leo and Cowan (2000), also recognized an essential need in having designated time.

A second **one of the structural conditions advocated by Louis and Krause relates to the physical proximity of staff to one another**. The ability of teachers to be readily available to their colleagues will help promote professional dialogue. It is important that teachers have common spaces available to them, as this will further encourage collaboration.

A **third condition relates to teachers' teaching roles and responsibilities**. It is important for PLC groupings to consist of teachers with similar teaching responsibilities and goals. Formalized structures allowing teachers to

integrate teaching lessons or engage in team teaching opportunities should be promoted within a school community.

**A fourth condition requires effective communication programs.** Communication between group members must have specific protocols. Communication between PLC groups, school administration, and central office also must have clear channels and protocols. The sharing of ideas between PLC groups is enabled by communication occurring between grade levels, departments and other organizational units.

**A final condition that Louis and Kruse suggest is that PLCs must embrace teacher empowerment.** This condition respects the teachers' ability to make decisions autonomously but these decisions are still guided by the beliefs and norms of the professional community. Teachers must view themselves as guiding their PLCs in cooperation with fellow teachers while being supported by senior administration.

Leadership is also viewed as a supportive condition. Reeves (2006), identifies various forms of leadership, including collaborative leadership. Within this leadership structure, there is "shared decision making and also a willingness to concede one's own agenda" (p. 51). Reeves describes collaborative leadership as having three distinct levels. Level one allows for individual autonomy and discretion. Within the school setting, this would comprise a teacher choosing his or her own teaching practices. Level two decisions are made collaboratively and both teachers and administrators try to find common ground. Senior leadership makes level three decisions unilaterally since this decision may involve issues of security and safety. Empowerment of teachers within PLCs would see a shift wherein level three decision making would move to levels one and two.

Put succinctly, supportive conditions and environments such as scheduling, resources, leadership, and communication allow a school community to embrace change and re-culture. In addition, certain structures must also be in place. Such structures include: embedded time for teachers to collaborate, close physical proximity of teachers within a school or system, teachers in PLCs in common teaching assignments, set communication protocols, leadership and teacher empowerment through decision making. These structures provide a more conducive setting for teachers to dialogue within a PLC.

## PD Terms Defined

- a. **PLC** – a group of teachers who meet on a regular basis and share a common goal or need.
- b. **PLC sub-group** – a smaller grouping of teachers within a grade or subject level. (Although math 6 teachers are part of the middle-school math PLC, they may wish to form their own group specific to the math 6 program).
- c. **PLC facilitator** – the coordinator of a PLC grouping.
- d. **PLC focus** – the main goal/s and strategies that a PLC group would like to address during the school year.
- e. **School-based PLC's** – time provided on a division PD day in which schools address their needs.
- f. **MHC Teachers School PD Rep.** – representatives of the local who assist in PD communications between the division and teachers.
- g. **Division directed PD** –PD directed by Division for all Division teachers to attend as set by professional development calendar. (no form)
- h. **Division PD** – Division PD opportunity not included in the scheduled professional development calendar but falls within the areas of AISI, Faith Formation, Other Division PD and Special Education. (form required)

- i. **TAPI – Teacher Allocated Professional Improvement** funds (contractual PD money). Your current account balance can be found on your statement of earnings under “TAPI”.
  
- j. **ODPD – Other Division Professional Development**.

# FAQ's for PLCs

## **Q. What PLC group do I belong to?**

a. If you are teaching curriculum that is new, then it is mandatory to work with that PLC group. The grade level and/or subjects that you teach will determine the PLC group. If you teach different subjects or grade levels and are not involved in new curriculum, then it will be your decision as to which PLC group you need to work with. (Since you may be on more than one contact list, please let the facilitators know which PLC group you plan on working with)

## **Q. What happens if I'm not contacted by the facilitator of the PLC group I intend on working with?**

a. If you have not been contacted by September 16<sup>th</sup>, contact your administrator.

## **Q. Where does our PLC meet?**

a. Each PLC group decides which school to meet at.

**Q. Who fills in the PLC Focus and PLC form?**

- a. The entire PLC group shares in this responsibility. If the group is working in separate locations, then the facilitator must be informed as to what each person is working on so that a completed form can be sent to Jill. (cut and paste is easiest so please e-mail)

**Q. What happens if a member is late or doesn't attend?**

- a. Sometimes people can be delayed; however if this is an on-going issue, then the group must address the issue with the individual/s. All teachers must follow the ATA professional code of conduct ([www.ata39.org](http://www.ata39.org))

**Q. What do we do if not everyone in our PLC is contributing?**

- a. People can contribute in subtle ways. Be sure to deal with any concerns in a professional manner.

**Q. Can I work with more than one PLC group in the year?**

- a. Absolutely – if you want to stay in touch with two groups, let the facilitators know so they can continue to send you information. If you are teaching in an area with new curriculum, 4 out of 6 days must be with this primary group.

**Q. How many times do we meet as a large PLC group?**

a. Some groups may want to meet every PLC Friday. Others may choose to meet every second PLC Friday. It will be up to your PLC team to decide.

**Q. Are we expected to create a project during every PLC meeting?**

a. No. PLC time can be used for planning, creating and having professional discussions as related to your PLC focus.

**Q. What happens if we complete or want to change activities listed on our PLC Focus Sheet?**

a. Your PLC has the flexibility to modify your focus at any time.

**Q. What do I do if I will be away on a PD day?**

a. A PD day is a Division day and is counted as part of the school year. If you are sick, attending another PD function or are using a personal day, then you need to let your facilitator know. Personal days taken on PD days involve sub costs to the teacher even though no sub was required. (Remember that this must be recorded in ESS and you must also notify your administrator)

# Teacher Grade/Subject Lists 2010-2011

Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
<b>*Jennilynne Fedor</b>	<b>*Kathleen Rose</b>	<b>*Natalie Bueckert</b>
Andrea Krauss	Joan McKinley	Maria Sehn
Amie Baker	Carla Weinheimer	Alexa Gossard (split)
Talaina Wilson	Corrie Zelantini	Donna Crush
Barb Mackay	Dawn Forbes	Dawn Blackmer
Anne-Marie Thomas	Lynnell Bowles	Michelle Neitz
Bev Fune	Rhonda Gregus (split)	Rhonda Gregus (split)
Tanya Scherer (split)	Tanya Scherer (split)	Anita Leahy
Sandi Grass	Nicola Dobek	Kathleen Beierbach
	Sophie Lavoie	Lisa Buchko (split)
	Denise Reinheller (split)	Denise Reinheller (split)
	Melissa Scory	Joey Syverson
	Maria Mackenzie (split)	Maria Mackenzie (split)
	Ashly Dorval	Patty Crews McMorran
	Ashley White	Staci Schori (split)

Grade 3

Grade 4

Grade 5

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**\*Geralyn Rath**

Carol Kimenius

Mel Deydey

Catherine Brown

Kim Rae

Courtney Helmer

Alexa Gossard (split)

Leah Van Ham (split)

Lisa Buchko (split)

Tara Ensz (split)

Staci Schori (split)

Juanita Wingenbach(split)

Sara Block

Chila Laturus (split)

**\*Lenore Kowalchuk**

Ray Hoger

Maureen Woelfle

David Beaulieu (split)

Greg Martin

Tara Ference

Michelle Haaf

Leah Van Ham (split)

Melissa Kozachenko

Kathy Glasgo

Patty Jo Folliott

Juanita Wingenbach(split) Terry Kennedy (split)

Laura Hoffman(split)

Chila Laturus (split)

**\*Sandra Lerner**

**\*Laura Hoffman(split)**

Annette Graf (split)

David Beaulieu (split)

Mata Pudwell

Terry Kennedy (split)

Kitty Cross (split)

Trish Sotropa

Lois Gagley

Barb Babyn

Mata Pudwell

Drew Leohndorf

Tara Ensz (split)

Nick Morrison (split)

**\*Alan Matisz**

**\*Grainne Concagh**

**\*Annette Graf (split)**

Melissa Kozachenko

Dana Wirachowsky

Corbie Dorner

Angel Jackle

Helen Snortland

Brian Stonehouse

Patricia Swan

Kitty Cross (split)

Terry Kennedy (split)

Nick Morrison (split)

Chad Gans

LAP

Rob Aberle

**\*Tammy Rozdeba**

Jodi Aberle

Karen Webster

Corbie Dorner

Sharon Martin

Rob McDonnell

Monica Braat

Nicole Merrick

## Middle School Subject Specific

Language Arts

Social Studies

Math

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**\*Guy Lanigan**

**\*Patrick Lawrence**

**\*Ron Pisoni**

Joan Quigley

Greg Penney

Lon Bosch

Megan Gruber

Jim Schmid

Jim Schmid

Michelle Miller

Michelle Miller

Mark Hanna

Dara Dudas

Margo Merkyl

Sheldon Coderre

Margo Merkyl

Mark Hanna

Andy Stroh

Helen Snortland

Scott Duchscherer

Don Holyk

Wayne Deis

Curt Moll

Rochelle Howes

Lynette Sloan

Brendan Lutz

Dwayne Unreiner

Nicole Merrick

Krista Johnston

Heather Irvine

Nicole Shupe

Nicole Shupe

Boyd Block

Evan Mueller

Callie Sheppard (leave)

Sandra Vangen

Doug Grimm

Smart notebook

Phys-ed

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**\*Bob Buday**

Open to all teachers – must e-mail Bob

Shannon English

French Immersion

Diane Cartier

Sandra Graham

Fine Arts

**\*Jessica Bjornson (until Nov)**

**\*Doreen Judge (Nov – June)**

Jim Schmid

Nicole Shupe

**\*Curt Moll**

Jodi Aberle

Lynette Sloan

Doug Grimm

Boyd Block

Greg Penney

Steve Russell

Rochelle Howes

Brendan Lutz

## High School Subject Specific

ELA

Social Studies

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**\* Wanda Simmons**

**\*Ray West**

Dara Dudas

**\*Deanna Burzminski**

Gail Grisonich

Paul Schlosser

Cheryl Albers

BJ Melle

Math

Science

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**\*Rob Burzminski**

**\*Michelle Christensen**

Donna Mae Melle

Warren Immel

Andy Stroh

Glen Barth

Lynette Pancoast

Shauna Pahl

Doug Hendricks

Nathan Bechtold

Bernie Kinch

Garrett Flaig

CTS

P.E.

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**\*Laura McAnulty (Cos.)**

**Janice Laing**

Roy Graf (IA)

BJ Melle

Bernie Kinch – technology

Deanna Burzminski

Jill Rebbeck (Home-Ec)

Anne Tomcala (Home-Ec)

---

Faith

Fine Arts

---

**Sean Kelly**

**Lorraine Stotz**

Sandra Richard

Alissa McLester

Amanda Crowley

Dana Bruins

Wanda Simmons

## Facilitator Role

- E-mail members on your contact list of details for upcoming meeting.
- Remind teachers to bring any necessary materials to share.
- Create a simplified agenda to keep the meeting focused.
- Encourage participants to share.
- Encourage teachers to provide their colleagues with constructive and thoughtful feedback.
- E-mail completed PLC reporting form to Jill. (Complete as a group in the last few minutes of the meeting)

## Sample Agenda for October 8<sup>th</sup> PLC

1:00 – 2:00

### 1. Prayer

### 2. Introductions

- Group members – teaching assignments

### 3. Discuss expectations

- What makes a group successful?
- What drives you crazy about meetings?
- It's okay to \_\_\_\_\_ It's not okay to \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Agree on guidelines

- Timeliness
- Participation
- Preparation
- Focused
- Respect

### 5. Choosing a PLC Focus - Remember that your larger group may split into smaller groups depending on the priority. New curriculum is mandatory; however the focus within new curriculum PLC groups are teacher driven.

- What do we want to improve?
- What is the priority for the group? (may split into sub groups)
- How will this affect my classroom practice?
- Does this align with district/school goals?
- What 's the plan to achieve our goal?

### 6. Each PLC group and sub group must complete the PLC Focus page (e-mail to Jill)

\*No PLC reporting form sent in September but is required for every other PLC month.

### 7. Goals for next meeting

## How to Choose a Focus

- What do I/we want to improve?
- What need holds the greatest priority?
- How will this affect my classroom practice?
- How does this align with our division's achievement?
- What am I/we planning to do about it?
  
- **\*We recommend that teachers involved with new curriculum implementation or training direct their PLC time to this new curricular area/ Program/ Assessment.**

## PLC Focus

**Team Members**

**What is the focus for the year? (General statement – one sentence)**

### Alignment:

**Division Goals**

**Catholicity**

**Student Learning**

**School Goals**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**List of activities that the group will use to achieve your goal**

(May include timeline if you choose)

1.

2.

3.

**Please forward a copy of your PLC Focus form to Jill Wilkinson**

## Sample Agenda for remaining PLC days

- 1 minute concern: Each teacher gets 1 min to share concerns
- Activity 1: Overview of today's purpose (5-10 minutes)
- Activity 2: Share, discuss and work on goal for the afternoon.
- Activity 3: PLC team will set agenda for the next PLC meeting.
- Activity 4: Fill in **PLC Reporting Sheet** together.

**Medicine Hat Catholic Teachers**

**PLC Reporting Form**

Date:	Location:
PLC Group:	
Members Present:	
What did you cover in your meeting?	
Goals for Next Meeting (agenda)	
Next Scheduled Meeting as a PLC group	
Please forward your completed form to Jill Wilkinson electronically	

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