

Teacher Collaboration Time (TCT)

What is PLC and Teacher Collaboration Time?

"A PLC is composed of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all." (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, Learning By Doing)

Lake Braddock adopted the professional learning communities (PLC) model for continuous and productive school improvement as a structure to improve student achievement. While we have incorporated many of the ideas and philosophies into our instructional program, finding the time for teachers to work interdependently has been a challenge. In a recent staff survey, time to work and plan was cited as a concern and request. As you can see, collaboration is a critical component to the success of our PLC model.

Indeed, under the DuFour model collective inquiry and collaboration are cornerstone philosophies to the success of the theory. We have been able to build teacher collaboration into our school week. **Teacher Collaboration Time (TCT)** is scheduled for Wednesday afternoons from 1:55 pm to 2:45 pm.

Why?

Collaboration for teachers is a critical component to enhancing our instructional program and ensuring that each child's needs are recognized and addressed. The ability to analyze student data and make decisions regarding instruction and assessment are the keys to ensuring top quality classroom instruction. Prior to this year, our school has had limited success with building planning time into our master schedule while expecting our teachers to work collaboratively in curricular teams. The unencumbered time on Wednesday afternoons provides all of our teachers the time needed to enhance classroom instruction.

How?

On Wednesday afternoon, the entire school will close at 1:53. Teachers will be involved in curricular and department meetings

starting by 2:00. By restructuring the last fifteen minutes, we have provided our teachers 45 minutes of collaboration time.

Much like the end of a regular day of school, students who drive or walk will be dismissed at 1:53 pm and are free to leave for the day. Students who ride a bus will be able to board buses by 2:05 pm and depart school grounds by 2:15. During the ten minutes between the end of school and the boarding of buses home, students can start homework, get a snack, visit with friends, or just relax after a long day in the downstairs hallways. Supervision of students in these areas of the building will be provided by the Administrative Staff, Security, and other staff.

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions (by Teachers)

- *Will I have to meet with my PLC every Wednesday afternoon?*

Yes as needed. The goals and meeting norms of each PLC will be established by team members, the team leader and the subject administrator. Organizing and managing time is the key to a successful and productive team. Teams will collaboratively decide on meeting times, agenda items, and the division of responsibilities. Team norms will be developed by team members to help build a sense of team cohesiveness.

- *As a team leader, what are my responsibilities?*

First and foremost, you are a facilitator for the group preparing the meeting agenda and guiding the progress of the group. The first task for each PLC will be to establish meeting norms, regular meeting dates, and responsibilities of the group.

Does each PLC team have to do meeting minutes?

Yes. Part of the responsibility of the team leader is to ensure that an agenda is prepared, minutes are kept and posted.

What do I do if I do not have a PLC to meet with?

We have a number of single courses in all of our departments with only one teacher. Involvement in a PLC within the department or with other teachers that teach at that level is recommended. For example, the AP Chemistry Teacher may want to collaborate with the Chemistry team or AP Physics and AP Biology teachers. The AP German teacher may want to collaborate with the AP French, Japanese, and Spanish teachers.

What sort of accountability is in place to ensure that all teams are meeting?

Subject administrators will work with team leaders to establish specific goals and expectations for each PLC. Because of the differences in the teams, it will be important to start the year by establishing clear meeting norms and expectations. Only after the ground rules are set can attainable goals be discussed and established.

What are our goals as a school and as a PLC?

We have three very specific goals for this school year.

1. Design and implement formative assessment practices (using eCart where applicable)
2. Continue to develop and implement common assessments among team teachers
3. Support the implementation of PBS, character education, and service learning

Topics to consider for the coming year include:

- Incorporating technology into the classroom, technology as a tool for learning
- Grading practices that measure student mastery of content knowledge and skill development
- Moving our PLC from a 'sharing' culture to a collaborative culture
- Impact of attendance changes on grading and assessing student knowledge