

What Can Parents Do & Expect?

- Don't confuse teacher planning time with time devoted specifically for collaborative work. During the 2011–2012 year, collaborative work time for elementary schools is every Wednesday afternoon from 1:45 – 3:00 and every Tuesday morning from 7:45 – 9:00 for grades 7 – 12.
- Ask teachers to share their experiences learning about and participating in the PLC process.
- Look for updated information regarding the PLC implementation process in the C.F.C.S.D. on our website at www.cfschools.org. To learn more about PLCs, go to www.allthingsPLC.com.
- Expect increased student achievement over time.



Cedar Falls Community School District

1002 West First Street
Cedar Falls, IA 50613
319-553-3000
www.cfschools.org

It is the policy of the Cedar Falls Community School District not to illegally discriminate in either: its educational programs on the basis of race, religion, creed, socioeconomic status, color, sex, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability; or its employment practices on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ethnic background, age or disability. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy please contact the District's Equity Coordinator, Dr. Adrian Talbot, Director of Human Resources, James L. Robinson Administrative Center - 1002 West First St. Cedar Falls, Iowa, 50613 - (319) 553-3000.

"We've pretty much maxed out achievement gains under our current form of education. If we want to see gains for all students, we need to change the culture of how we go about the business of teaching and learning. This means having a process in place that allows our educators to systematically work together to continuously improve learning: a Professional Learning Community."

David Stoakes, Superintendent

A Professional Learning Community
What?...Why?... How?



A Professional Learning Community (PLC) is an ongoing process in which educators work together to systematically achieve better results for the students they serve. Much of this improvement process will be done during Tuesday late start (secondary) and Wednesday early release (elementary) times. This gives educators time to work collaboratively within departments, grade levels, and across content areas focusing on student achievement.

We need to have a process whereby improvement is continuous.

Our Schools Are Great So Why Change?

We do have great schools in Cedar Falls and across Iowa, but consider the following statements about education in Iowa.

- 1992 – no state scored higher than Iowa on NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) in 4th grade. By 2009, 13 states scored significantly higher.
- Only 29% of Iowa 8th grade students who took NAEP in 2009 were enrolled in Algebra I or another high level math course. Students in only 3 states recorded lower enrollment.
- When NAEP scores are disaggregated by race and socio-economic standing, Iowa's mean scores for majority white students are below the national average for white students.
- The achievement gap between Iowa students with and without disabilities on the 2009 NAEP is worst in the nation.

3 Big Ideas of a Professional Learning Community (PLC)

PLC = Focused on Learning

The primary purpose of a Professional Learning Community is a commitment to high levels of learning for all students.

- First, we have to know what we want students to learn and then make sure we teach what we should be teaching. The Iowa Core is a starting point in determining what we want students to learn. It tells educators essential skills and concepts for students to learn for each grade level. The Iowa Core also sets standards for effective instruction and testing.
- Changes in how we teach must be based on data. Part of the PLC process is determining how we know if students are learning what we teach.
- It is essential that a plan is in place for students who either haven't learned the skill, and for those who "get it" right away. The plan (additional time, support or enrichment) needs to be supported and owned by everyone, not just the individual teacher.



PLC = Collaboration

It is a uniquely American belief that teachers who are not in front of a classroom teaching are not working. However, in the countries where the greatest educational gains have been made teachers are provided with regularly scheduled time during the day for collaborative work aimed at improving student learning.



PLC = Focused on Results

All the efforts of the PLC process must be evaluated on the basis of results (evidence of student learning) rather than good intentions. To achieve the desired results, teacher led collaborative teams will be focused on four critical questions to guide their work:

- 1). What is it we want our students to learn?
- 2). How will we know if each student has learned?
- 3). How will we respond when some students don't learn?
- 4). How can we extend and enrich the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?