

Using Professional Learning Community Aid to Improve Classroom Instruction

Non-Regulatory Guidance Document

Background: Professional Learning Community (PLC) Aid has been included in the 2017 New Jersey state budget as a new category of general fund aid to schools to support educators' engagement with student assessment results. Specifically, the State is providing \$10 per student per district to support the development of learning communities within and across districts, in order to help teachers and administrators analyze and use the assessment data they collect to improve classroom instruction.

Suggested Uses of PLC Aid: Districts will make decisions about their uses of PLC Aid depending on their local contexts, the work they are already doing to use assessment results to inform decisions about curriculum and instruction, and their level of need to implement and support professional learning communities. Districts may use PLC Aid to supplement or extend current work and to communicate their work to the broader community. PLC Aid can be directed towards analysis of the rich sources of data coming from the annual PARCC assessments as well as the many local measures of student outcomes.

Some suggestions for the uses of PLC Aid to implement professional learning communities and to build assessment-related staff capacities are provided in the charts below. These suggestions represent a sampling of ideas and should not be interpreted as requirements or an exhaustive list.

Please note that those seeking more detailed information about how PLC Aid can be used to support professional learning communities at different stages of development can use the following resource, [Building Professional Learning Communities: Uses of PLC Aid](#), developed by the State Professional Learning Committee.

Actual Uses of PLC Aid: The Office of Professional Development would like to collect examples of how PLC Aid is used by districts. Please email your examples to teachpd@doe.state.nj.us and put *PLC Aid Example* in the subject line. We will then compile and share your examples on our website. Please direct any questions about PLC Aid to the same email address.

1) Using PLC Aid to Implement Professional Learning Communities

Consider Funding:

Information & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops and/or print, online and other media resources on developing and implementing PLCs, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The purpose and functions of a PLC ○ Effective collaboration and teamwork in a PLC ○ Meeting management ○ Implementing effective professional learning designs ○ Research and best practices
Job-Embedded Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of schedules to accommodate PLC time • Coaching on collaboration tools and techniques • Observation of successful PLCs in district or outside of the district • Networking activities and events • “Retreats” for team building • Communicating and celebrating PLC successes
Technology Tools & Other Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors, electronic tablets, software and other technology tools to support collaborative work • Proprietary survey instruments to assess the effectiveness of PLC work • Incentives for PLC work

Additional Resources:

- *Building Professional Learning Communities: Uses of PLC Aid* – Resource showing the developmental stages of a PLC and how PLC Aid funds can be used to support the work appropriate to each stage [www.nj.gov/education/profdev/resources]
- The *Connected Action Roadmap* – A process to support student learning through effective educator practice with a focus on collaboration and the work of PLCs. [www.njpsa.org/car/]
- Blitz, C. and Schulman, R., 2016. *Measurement instruments for assessing the performance of professional learning communities*. U.S. Regional Assistance Laboratory – Mid-Atlantic publication. Compilation of 49 instruments for measuring key performance indicators of PLCs for teachers. [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midatlantic/pdf/REL_2016144.pdf]

2) Using PLC Aid to Build Assessment-Related Staff Capacities

Consider Funding:

Information & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to identify and catalogue existing sources of assessment data • Efforts to organize, publish and distribute assessment results to the staff who need them • Workshops and/or print, online and other media resources on assessment-related topics including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Creating high quality formative and summative assessments ○ Creating common assessments across grade-level teams ○ Understanding student results ○ Analyzing assessment data ○ Using assessment data to inform curricular and instructional decisions ○ PARCC-specific assessments and data ○ NJ Student Learning Standards ○ Curriculum alignment
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<p><i>Job-Embedded Activities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum development sessions • Common assessment development sessions • Cross-curricular and vertical collaborations on curriculum & assessment issues • Opportunities for teams to review and reflect on student work products • Opportunities for teams to analyze student assessment results • Expert coaching for staff on analyzing and using data to inform instruction • Instructional coaching on using formative assessments • Opportunities to collaboratively develop, practice, and evaluate formative assessments
<p><i>Technology Tools and Other Resources</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data management and sharing platforms including data analysis tools • Improved connectivity to online resources • Electronic devices such as tablets to assist staff in managing & manipulating data • Additional staff to help with data gathering and organization • Documentation and dissemination of student results • Incentives for work on data-driven projects
<p>Additional Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NJDOE Office of Assessment website. Contains many resources on assessments and data analysis, including the PARCC Consortium Resources for Educators. [http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/] • <i>Achieving with data: How high-performing school systems use data to improve instruction for elementary students</i>. Publication by the Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation, one of seven Content Centers funded by USED. Provides details of data-driven instructional decision making at the classroom, school, and system levels in two urban school districts and two nonprofit charter management organizations. [to http://www.newschools.org/files/AchievingWithData.pdf] 	