



# Collaboration in Motion: Professional Learning Communities

September 28, 2016

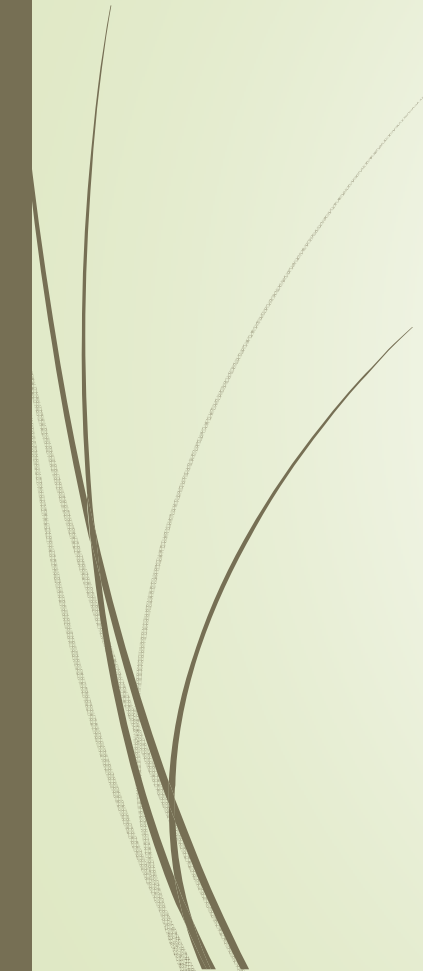


# Where Are We Going? What's the Plan?

- The History of American Public Education (*in 3 minutes or less*)
  - 1640 -
    - Basic reading, writing, and arithmetic
    - Cultivate values to serve society
    - Remained in place for 260 years
  - 1900-1910
    - Added – Nutrition, immunization, and student health
  - 1910-1930
    - Added – PE and organized athletics
    - Practical arts
    - Some transportation

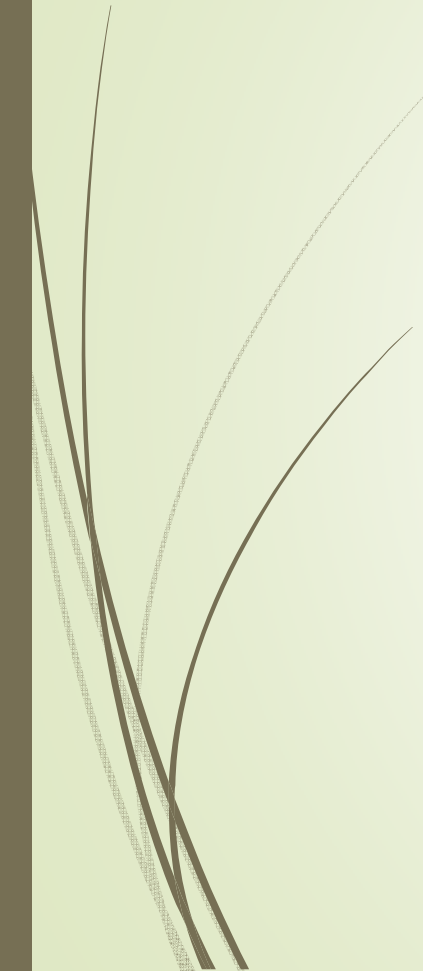


# Where Are We Going? What's the Plan?

- 1950's
    - Added - Expanded science education
    - Driver's education
    - Foreign language
    - Sex education
  - 1960's
    - Added - Advanced placement
    - Head Start
    - Title I
    - Adult education
    - Consumer and career education
- 



# Where Are We Going? What's the Plan?

- 1970's
    - Added – Special education mandates
    - Title IX
    - Drug and alcohol education
    - School breakfast programs
  - 1980's
    - Added – Computer education
    - Multi-cultural education
    - Bilingual education
    - Early childhood education
    - Full-day kindergarten
    - Alternative education programs
    - Child Abuse monitoring/reporting
- 



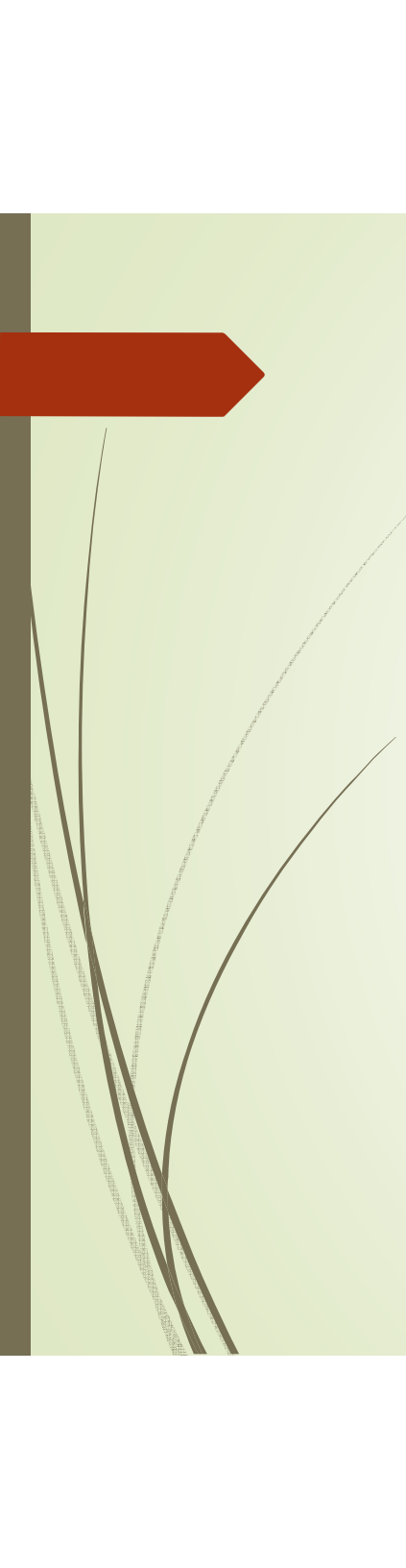
# Where Are We Going? What's the Plan?

- 1990's
  - Added – Conflict resolution/peer mediation
  - HIV/Aides education
  - CPR training
  - Expanded technology education
  - School to work programs
- 2000's
  - Added – High stakes testing and accountability
- AND subtracted virtually nothing
- AND added little to NO extra student contact hours



# The Challenge

- The very structure of our schools has become our largest distractor
- The volume and complexity of tasks in leading a school can easily draw attention away from the most critical aspects of operation
- Schools need a blueprint to stay focused on the right work
- How do schools maintain a focus on learning?



# High Reliability Organizations

## What Are They and How Are They Different?

- Organizations that are continually in pursuit of error free performance
- Implement structures and systems to monitor their operation
- Take immediate action to prevent errors in operation from becoming system-wide failures
- Recognize and plan for the interdependence of everything they do to work towards a common goal

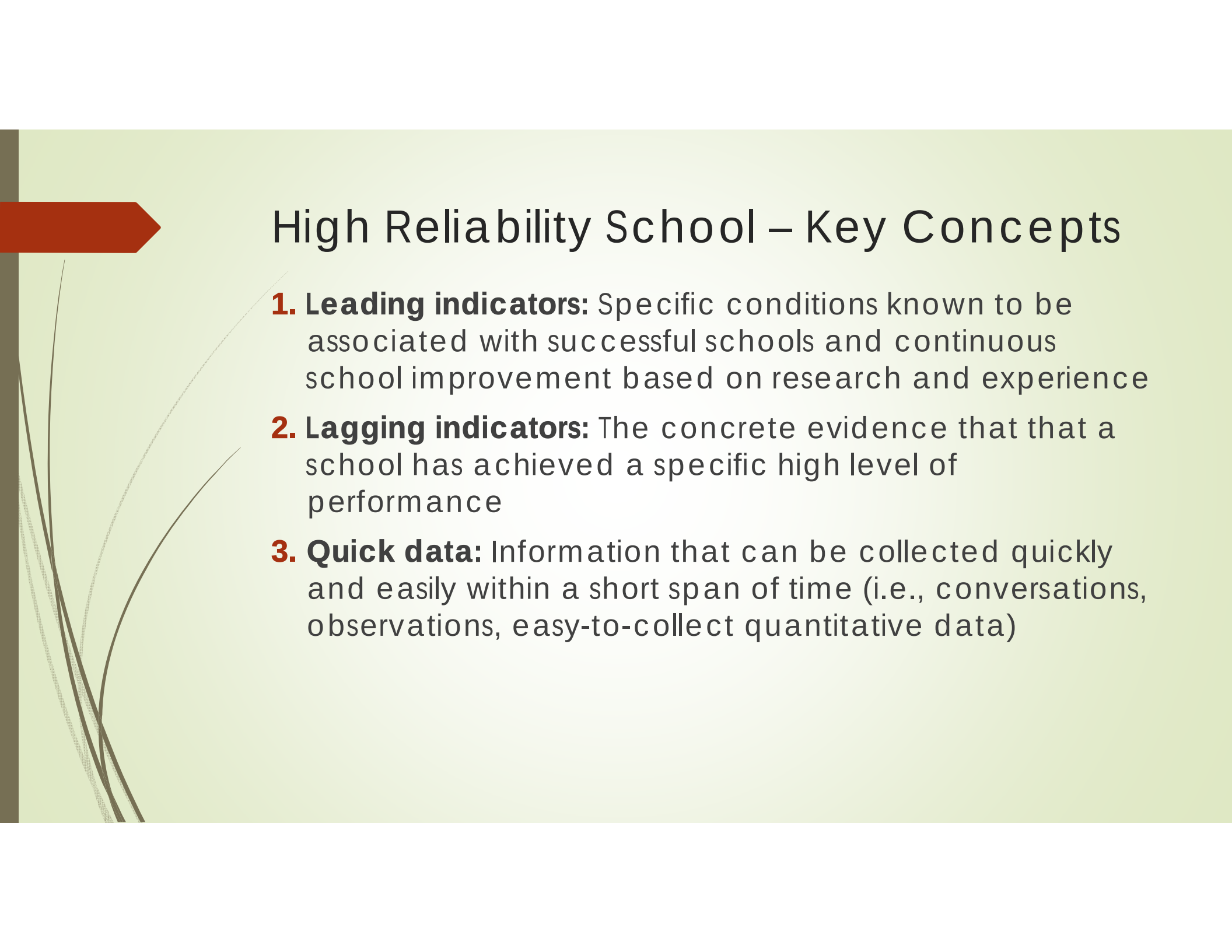
## High Reliability Schools Framework

- Focuses school leadership on the “What” to think about...
- School leaders decide on “How” it occurs in their school...



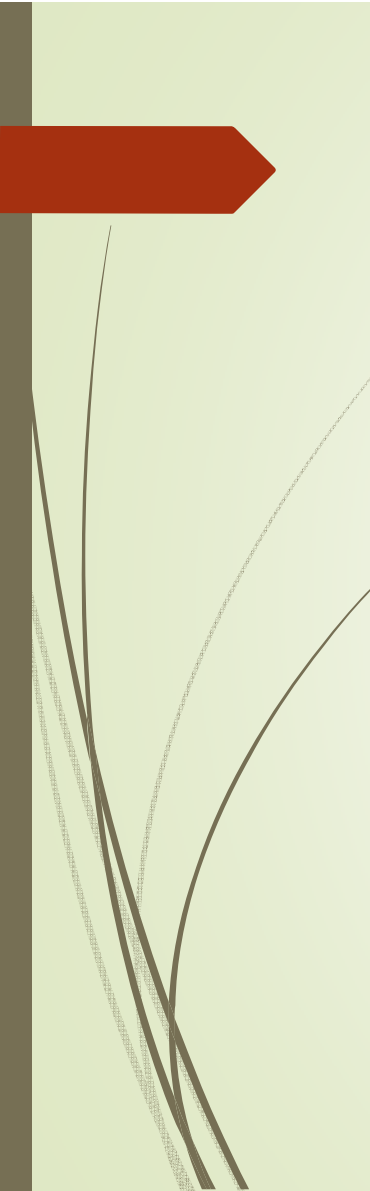
## High Reliability School - Levels

| Level 5 | Competency-Based Education            | ??        |
|---------|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Level 4 | Standards-Referenced Reporting        | ??        |
| Level 3 | Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum      | June 2019 |
| Level 2 | Effective Teaching in Every Classroom | June 2018 |
| Level 1 | Safe and Collaborative Culture        | June 2017 |



# High Reliability School – Key Concepts

- 1. Leading indicators:** Specific conditions known to be associated with successful schools and continuous school improvement based on research and experience
- 2. Lagging indicators:** The concrete evidence that that a school has achieved a specific high level of performance
- 3. Quick data:** Information that can be collected quickly and easily within a short span of time (i.e., conversations, observations, easy-to-collect quantitative data)



# Level 1 – Safe and Collaborative Culture

## LEADING INDICATORS

|     |                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.1 | The faculty and staff perceive the school environment as safe and orderly                                                                                             |
| 1.2 | Students, parents, and the community perceive the school environment as safe and orderly                                                                              |
| 1.3 | Teachers have formal roles in the decision-making process regarding school initiatives                                                                                |
| 1.4 | Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and the achievement of all students |
| 1.5 | Teachers and staff have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school                                                                  |
| 1.6 | Students, parents, and the community have formal ways to provide input regarding the optimal functioning of the school                                                |
| 1.7 | The success of the whole school, as well as individuals within the school, is appropriately acknowledged                                                              |
| 1.8 | The fiscal, operational, and technological resources of the school are managed in a way that directly supports teachers                                               |

# Level 1 – Safe and Collaborative Culture

**1.4 Teacher teams and collaborative groups regularly interact to address common issues regarding curriculum, assessment, instruction, and the achievement of students**

## **TEACHER AND STAFF INDICATORS**

A professional learning community (PLC) process is in place in our schools

Our school's PLC collaborative teams have written goals

School leaders regularly examine PLC collaborative teams' progress towards their goals

Our school's PLC collaborative teams create common assessments

Our school's PLC collaborative teams analyze student achievement and growth

Data teams are in place in our schools

Our school's data teams have written goals

School leaders regularly examine data teams' progress towards their goals

School leaders collect and review minutes and notes from PLC collaborative team and data team meetings to ensure that teams are focusing on student achievement

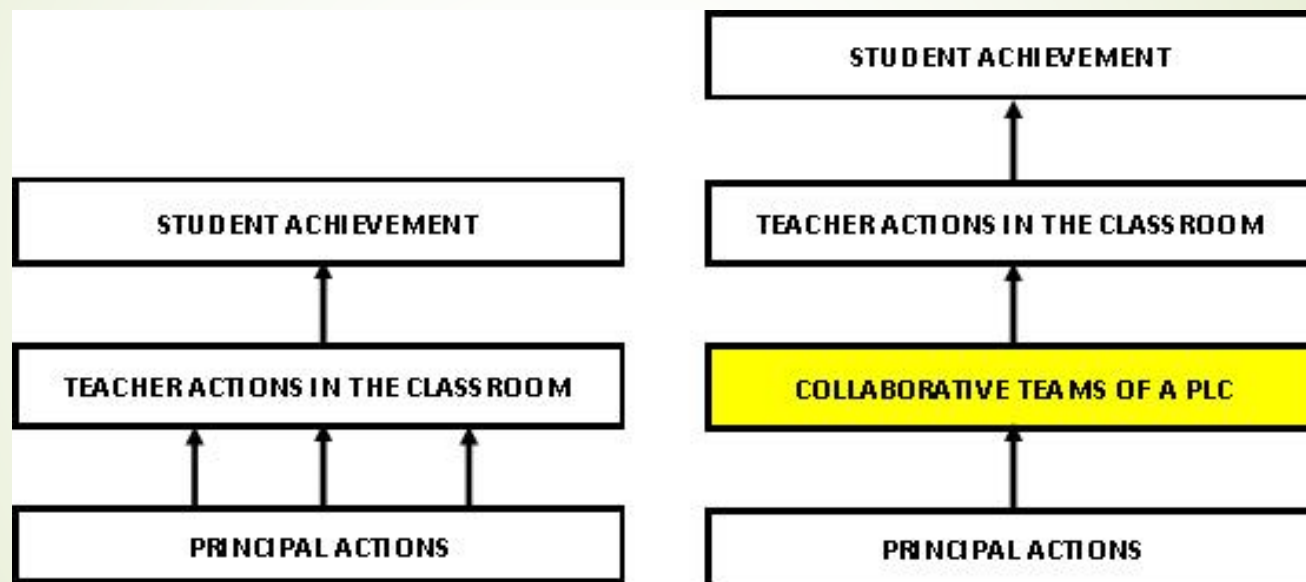
# Data Monitoring – What it Is and Isn't

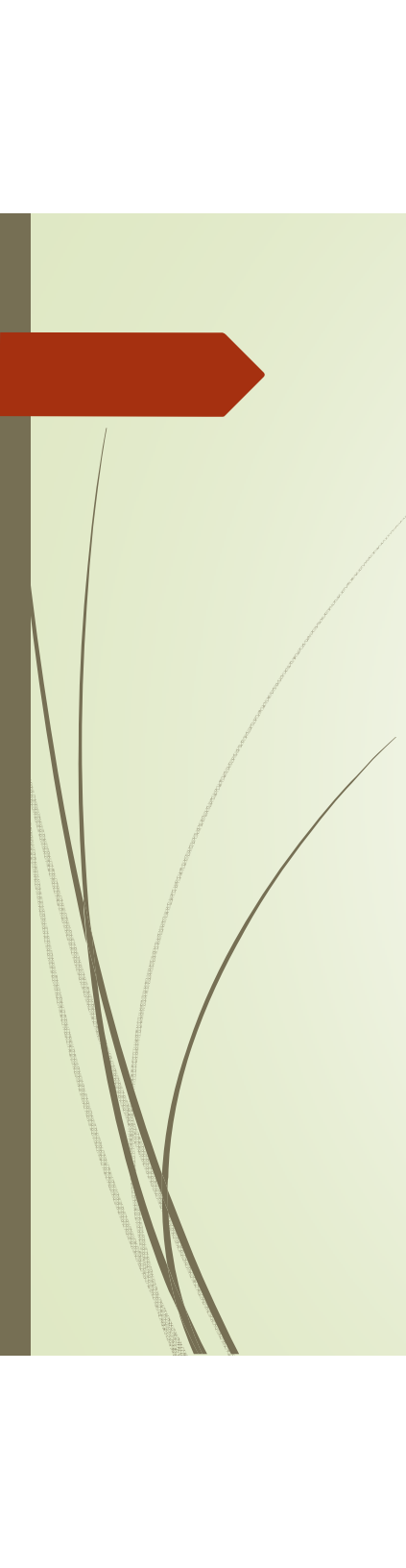
- Taking the “temperature” periodically to make sure that the organization is “healthy”
- Can include anyone in the organization
- Responsibility belongs to everyone

**THE TRAP – Assuming that something is working and being implemented as intended simply because it was at one time.**



# Relationship Between Principal Behavior and Student Achievement with PLCs





“The isolation of teachers is so ingrained in the traditional culture of schools that invitations to collaborate are insufficient. To build professional learning communities, meaningful collaboration must be systemically embedded into the daily life of the school.” (DuFour & Eaker, 1998)

## The Stories We Tell Ourselves (James, 1996)

- **We're OK, but they're not OK.** "We have a wonderful faculty, but we cannot be expected to get results because the people in this community do not value education."
- **We care too much to worry about learning.** "The kids here are so needy that we must focus on their emotional needs. For our kids, academic concerns are a secondary consideration."
- **If it ain't broke, don't fix it.** "Our test results are good, and the community seems satisfied. We are doing a good job so it would be foolish to rock the boat. We just need to maintain what is working."
- **Nobody know the troubles we've seen.** "No one outside of education can appreciate just how impossible it is to teach today. How can we be expected to teach in light of the deterioration of traditional values and overwhelming problems of society?"
- **They don't make em' like they used to.** "Kids today just are not as well behaved or as willing to work as the kids of the past. How do they expect us to keep the attention of the Nintendo generation?"
- **John Donne was wrong: I can be an island.** "There is no need to concern ourselves with issues outside of our classrooms. When the bell rings, each of us can close our classroom doors and serve as the rulers of our respective kingdoms."
- **The solution is out there.** "School improvement depends on increased state or federal support for education (or decreased state and federal involvement in education). We must wait for others to take the action that will improve our schools."
- **Been there, done that.** "School reform efforts run in a predictable cycle and merely represent the fad *du jour*. There is nothing new under the sun. This too shall pass."
- **Social Darwinism.** "Kids are limited by their innate ability and the environments in which they are raised. These are the factors that determine student achievement, and these factors are beyond our control."



# Building PLC Teams that Make a Difference

## Team Structure

- ▀ Subject matter teams
- ▀ Grade level teams
- ▀ Instructional strategy teams

## Establishing and Maintaining Collaborative Teams

- ▀ Group Norms
- ▀ Expect all teachers to contribute to the team
- ▀ Handle problems when they are still small
- ▀ Recognize effort, not just results
- ▀ Listen carefully with the intention of understanding
- ▀ Give everyone a chance to contribute
- ▀ Support the decisions of the group even if it was not our first choice
- ▀ Respect the privacy of the team members by asking before you share beyond the team
- ▀ Have courageous conversations



## The Six Key PLC Questions and their Emphases

| KEY QUESTIONS                                                               | AREA OF EMPHASIS    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| What is it we want our students to know?                                    | Curriculum          |
| How will we know if our students are learning?                              | Assessment          |
| How will we respond when students do not learn?                             | Instruction         |
| How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient? | Instruction         |
| How will we increase our instructional competence?                          | Teacher Development |
| How will we coordinate our efforts as a school?                             | Leadership          |

## PHASES OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD TEACHING





## Next Steps

- Review and/or develop group norms (develop a Google folder and document to be shared)
- Review priority standards/learning targets. Any adjustments?
- Begin to formulate team SMART goals (at least one)
  - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-Based
  - Be prepared to submit SMART goal(s) by October 26 (next PLC day)
- Common assessments
  - K-5 – 3 unit assessments each semester
  - 6-12 – semester exams (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semester)
- Discuss six key PLC questions