

# Community School for Creative Education

## Professional Learning Community

### Overview

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of creating a professional learning community (PLC) at CSCE is to establish a place for regular teacher collaboration and inquiry in the service of improving student learning.

Four key questions guide the work in our PLC based on PLC expert, Rick DuFour's work:

- What is it we want our students to learn?
- How will we know if our students are learning?
- How will our team and our school respond when students don't learn?
- How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?

*There are two other questions important to answer and reflect on:*

- What are the collective commitments we are prepared to make to each other regarding how we will operate as a professional learning community?
- What are the specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound (SMART) goals we are working interdependently to achieve, and for which we hold ourselves mutually accountable?

#### **Inquiry Focus**

This year our inquiry revolves around two questions: 1) *What does it look like to braid together Waldorf literacy strategies with elements of the Open Court Reading;* and 2) *How do we support literacy development as culturally responsive educators given our commitment to equity and to meeting our students where they are in their learning levels?*

We will differentiate our inquiry based on our grade level standards and the core reading sub-skills associated with each grade level.

#### **Timing**

Our PLC will meet twice a month during our Wednesday afternoon meeting time. We will have one monthly meeting focused on *Reading* and one monthly meeting on *Equity/Cultural Responsiveness*.

Each PLC meeting will be 2 hours.

#### **Tools**

There are a variety of tools we will use in our PLC:

- Protocols to help focus our reflection work and critical friendship
- Student work
- Curriculum materials
- Formative assessments (running records, etc.)

## Structure

Here are the five types of activities we will do in our PLC. Some we will do every time we get together and others we will rotate month to month.

Activities	Purpose	Frequency
<p><b>Connect</b></p>	<p>Being in community is essential to a PLC. At every meeting there is time to connect with each other on a personal level and to build community so that we can trust each other enough to share our practice and give and receive feedback as critical friends.</p>	<p>Every Meeting</p>
<p><b>Design Solutions to Address Our Inquiry</b></p>	<p>Inquiry is a fundamental work activity within a PLC. That takes the form of asking questions about student learning challenges and then working to collaboratively design solutions to that challenge. Teachers agree to implement interventions in their classroom to see if they have the desired effect.</p> <p>We are designing interventions that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Systematic:</i> Implemented consistently school-wide</li> <li><i>Practical:</i> Adhere to the blending of our Waldorf techniques and traditional curriculum methods</li> <li><i>Effective:</i> Effective in supporting student learning</li> <li><i>Essential:</i> Are at the core of agreed upon standards and learning outcomes</li> <li><i>Directive:</i> In use due to our own <i>collective mandate</i> in service of equity. No one gets to opt out.</li> </ul>	<p>Periodically</p>
<p><b>Review Our Data</b></p>	<p>The inquiry work in PLCs is grounded in the use of student data to confirm the positive impact of the interventions. The data we use is based on formative assessments that give us “fine grained” information on student’s proficiency with key sub-skills. We use common assessments in order to have a clear and consistent picture of student learning.</p> <p><i>* (“fine grained” data = specific to sub-skills)</i></p>	<p>Periodically</p>
<p><b>Discuss</b></p>	<p>At times in the PLC it is necessary to build our collective knowledge through research or review of our own practice to ensure students are learning at high levels. Some times that takes the form of reading articles together, having reflective conversations based on our design work, or reviewing findings based on what we’ve learned from our interventions.</p>	<p>Periodically</p>
<p><b>Collaborate</b></p>	<p>A core principle of a PLC is “learning by doing.” Living this principle requires opportunities for collaboration, from designing common assessments, coordinating lessons as a grade level team, or creating something together.</p>	<p>Every Meeting</p>
<p><b>Celebration</b></p>	<p>Celebration is a powerful tool for communicating what is valued and for building community. It allows for the expression of both appreciation and admiration to counter-balance the sometimes necessary focus on what is not working.</p>	<p>Every Meeting</p>

