

Appendix D: Post-Implementation Principal Interview Guide

Introduction and Informed Consent

Thank you for taking the time for the interview today. My name is [name] and I work for the Center for Effective School Practices at Rutgers University, which is conducting this study for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory (REL). As I mentioned [*in my email/when we spoke on the phone*], we are in the process of collecting data from teachers and principals in the district regarding the first year of implementation of professional learning communities or PLCs in all schools in the District. The purpose of this interview is to gather information regarding how you have been involved in the implementation of the program and your assessment of this experience. We also want to have your take on how productive the PLC experience has been for teachers in your. We will be interviewing all other principals in the district to gather information on their perspectives as well. The interview will last about 2 hours using a standard set of questions we developed for all principal interviews and will be audio-recorded for the purposes of transcribing and analyzing your responses to our questions. You will have an opportunity to provide additional information or offer relevant insights that are not covered by the questions. Your participation is voluntary and you may terminate the interview at any time and for any reason. If you agree to participate in this interview, the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and we will not identify you or your school by name in the study reports. Information collected for this study comes under the confidentiality and data protection requirements of the Institute of Education Sciences (The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183). Responses to this data collection will be used only for statistical purposes. The reports prepared for the study will summarize findings across the sample and will not associate responses with a specific district, school, or individual. We will not provide information that identifies you, your district or your school to anyone outside the study team, except as permitted by law.

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is xxxx-xxxx. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to average 2 hours per interview, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. The obligation to respond to this collection is voluntary. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., LBJ, Room 2E117, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or send electronically through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov> by selecting the Docket ID number.

Before we can continue with the interview I must obtain your informed consent. Please read carefully the following consent form, and if you choose to participate in this interview, please print your name, sign, and date this form at the bottom of the document.

CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

You are invited to participate in an interview, as a part of the Evaluation of a District-Wide Implementation of the Professional Learning Community Initiative in West Chester Area School District (WCASD) in the 2013-2014 school year. The evaluation of this initiative is conducted by the Rutgers University research team, funded by the Regional Educational Laboratory Mid-Atlantic (REL MA). The purpose of this interview is to gather information about the implementation of PLCs in WCASD activities both in terms of successes and challenges. If you agree to participate in the interview, please print your name, sign, and date this form.

Participation in the study entails audio recording, which may be transcribed and analyzed with regard to the provided information about the post-implementation phase of this initiative. Interview sessions may take approximately 2 hours to complete, and audio-recording may be interrupted at any time, may you choose to not have your voice recorded.

The interview transcription and/or the interviewer field notes, gathered from this interview will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this project by the Rutgers University research team. Your name will not be linked with any reporting of results. Any printed and hand-written data will be stored in a locked file cabinet. All printed and electronic data will be destroyed 7 years after the completion of the project.

The information you provide in this study is confidential. Therefore, any risk or possible discomfort to you due to participation in this study is expected to be minimal. You will not receive a copy of the completed interview transcription and/or hand-written notes, however, the information you provide in this study will enhance our ability to understand the successes and challenges of the implementation of PLCs in WCASD. There is no cost for participants who agree to be involved in this study.

If you do not wish to participate in this study, there is no cost to you. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you have other questions concerning this project, please feel free to contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Cynthia Blitz, or the Rutgers University's Institutional Review Board using the following contact information:

Dr. Cynthia Blitz, Principal Investigator
Rutgers University, Center for Effective School Practices
80 Cottontail Ln, Somerset, NJ 08873
Tel: (732) 564-9100, x 21
Email: cindy.blitz@gse.rutgers.edu

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research & Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 848-932-0150
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

Thank you for your participation.

Participant name: _____
Participant signature: _____
Date: _____

Interview Questions

Principal Name:

School:

1. **How have you been involved in the implementation of PLCs in WCASD this school year?**
2. **To what extent have all teachers in your school been involved in PLCs? How does the school compare to other schools in the District in terms of teachers' involvement?**
3. **What, if any, was the charge for these teams? What tasks they were asked to complete? To what extent were these tasks defined by the District PLC protocol?**
4. **Can you describe how PLCs in your school were organized and how they operated?**
 - a. How are they organized: Who belongs to any particular PLC? Who determines who belongs to a particular PLC?
 - b. How do they operate: When and where do they meet? How frequently? Who is calling the meeting? What is on the agenda? Who is leading or facilitating group work? What kinds of resources or tools are used?
5. **What kinds of products or artifacts were generated by PLC teams in the school?**
 - a. Types of artifacts (essential learning targets, core assessments, rubrics)
 - b. Were these generated for each unit in the curriculum or for selected units?
 - c. Did all PLC teams produce artifacts?
 - d. Did they share these artifacts with you? If so, how do you evaluate the quality of these?
6. **To what extent were the artifacts generated by PLC teams used in the assessment of students or for the purposes of modifying instructional practices?**
 - a. Did teachers use these artifacts to assess students?
 - b. Did they collectively analyze assessment data to identify students who are not proficient on essential learning target?
 - c. Were any interventions developed by PLC? If so, what and for whom?
 - d. Was there any change in instruction activities following the work of PLCs?
7. **How did teachers in your school generally feel about the PLC program?**
 - a. Where there any concerns they expressed?
 - b. Where they mostly motivated/enthusiastic or frustrated?
 - c. Did they think this was productive and/or necessary in terms of improving students' outcomes? Did they see benefits in terms of their professional development?
 - d. Did the program meet their initial expectations?
 - e. Was there a group of teachers who were particularly resistant to the program? Why were they resistant?
8. **What kind of assistance and support were you able to provide to PLCs in your school?**
 - a. Were you generally informed about the work done by PLCs?

- b. How did you get involved with PLCs? What was your primary role – motivator, facilitator, supervisor, etc.?
 - c. What were the kinds of issues or situations where you felt that you needed (or were asked) to get involved regarding PLCs? In what areas, if any, did you need to exercise leadership?
- 9. What kinds of resources were provided for supporting PLCs?**
- a. Who provided the assistance and support?
 - b. What available resources were provided?
 - c. Were there issues in terms of accessing or sharing these resources?
 - d. Were there resources that PLC teams needed or requested that were not available? What kinds of work-arounds, if any, were employed to make these resources available in a timely way?
- 10. Overall, did the PLC program meet your expectations? Why or why not? How about the central office's expectations?**
- 11. What was the impact of your school's PLC program on your work and work routine?**
- 12. What do you see as the central office's role this year in ensuring that PLCs take hold, function as the WCASD Protocols describe, and produce the expected results?**
- a. What did the District do to promote and support the program?
 - b. What didn't the District do that was essential to supporting the program?
- 13. Did you detect any soft spots or flaws in the implementation of the PLC program in your school and in the District?**
- a. Where are they?
 - b. When should they have been addressed?
 - c. How could they have been addressed effectively?
- 14. Overall, how do you evaluate the initial impact of the program on teachers?**
- a. What initial impact has the program had in terms of teachers' professional development, job satisfaction, etc.?
 - b. What is the initial impact on their instructional practices?
- 15. Overall, how do you evaluate the initial impact of the PLC program on school culture?**
- a. What may be the initial impact on school climate or school norms?
 - b. What may be the initial impact on current work routines?
- 16. Overall, how do you evaluate the initial impact of the PLC program on students?**
- 17. Finally, what is your overall impression of the PLC program?**
- a. Is it an improvement over old practice?
 - b. It is sustainable in the long-run?
 - c. Will it contribute to the mission of WCASD?
 - d. Does it have the potential to change the way you approach teaching and instruction

in WCASD?

18. Is there anything you'd like to add about PLCs or the District's rollout of the PLC program?

This concludes the interview. Thank you very much for your participation.