

CCSU PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Additional Information Sheet

WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY (PLC)

Necessary for 2 Graduate Credit Option

The term *professional learning community* describes a collegial group of educators who are committed to improving student learning. They share a common goal, a willingness to work and learn collaboratively, and a desire to play a key role in school improvement work. Working together as a professional learning community keeps teachers from feeling isolated, helps them stay informed of research on best practices for improving student learning, and assists them in staying focused on student achievement in meaningful and relevant ways. Hord (1997b) notes, "As an organizational arrangement, the professional learning community is seen as a powerful staff-development approach and a potent strategy for school change and improvement." *

*Shirley Hord, *Professional Learning Communities*, 1997.

Some Characteristics of Learning Communities:

- Share the collective belief that everyone is a learner
- Meet frequently enough to plan and learn together with regularity
- Develop norms that support the commitment to learning
- Focus on student learning through a continuous cycle of action research: inquiry, reflection, planning, application, and improvement
- Determine team learning needs based on data and supported by research, tools, consultants, and leadership
- Communicate their work to facilitate continuous improvement of systems

For more information about creating a professional learning community for your project, please visit the resources shared at:

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/profdev/resources/proflearn/>.

Possible Uses for the PDI Project Resources Stipend:

Project materials
Field trip funds
Guest speaker fees
Multiple texts to support differentiated learning
Guest experts
Technology aids (thumb drives, wireless tools, etc.)
Project professional coach/consultant
Conference fees
Travel and lodging fees for conferences related to Action Research Project
School visitations by teams

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Suggestion for the 2 Graduate Credit Option - PLC

ASCD publishes the PLC series. Currently they have two PLC series that are aligned with schools' action plans: ***Exploring Differentiated Instruction***, by Cindy Strickland and ***Exploring Formative Assessment*** by Susan M. Brookhart. These resources explain how to set up a PLC and then outline multiple sessions for professional learning that include all materials for the PLC sessions. There are about 9 sessions outlined, which makes this format ideal for a year-long PDI. If you and a team choose this format, either for Differentiated Instruction or for Formative Assessment, the books will be provided for you at no cost. Please note, if your school is already using these series as part of your 2009-2010 PD plan, we would respectfully ask that you choose another alternative for the 2-credit option.

For more information on these series, please visit:

http://www.ascd.org/professional_development/oscb/plc_booklets.aspx .