



District 180 News

Summer 2016

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The mission of District 180 is to build sustainable systems that will drive a continuous improvement approach to focus on student learning in each of Kentucky’s Priority Schools, Focus Schools, and Focus Districts. The vision of District 180 is for all students in Kentucky to be College and Career Ready upon graduating from high school. District 180 is committed to providing support and technical assistance to our schools and always welcomes feedback to improve our systems of support.

From District 180 Message to the Reader

The summer months often provide some much-needed time for educators to reflect, collaborate and plan for the next school year. In addition to finishing up numerous end-of-year tasks in District 180, we also have made some changes to the District 180 newsletter. Our goal is to share success stories in Priority and Focus schools and include strategies and resources that directly apply to school improvement. As we shape the newsletter, we will dedicate each issue to a theme relevant to Priority and Focus schools in Kentucky.

This issue is devoted to collaboration. In District 180, we’ve seen the power of teamwork both in our office and in the schools. Because collaboration is so important to school improvement, we have included articles on professional learning communities, team/co-teaching and various collaborative efforts throughout Kentucky schools. We hope these stories, examples, resources and ideas will directly connect to your work in ensuring students are proficient and prepared for success.

Collaborating Our Way to Success Collaborative Partnerships in Teaching

The ability to work well together is an important skill for students to develop. In fact, collaboration is one of P21’s (the Partnership for 21st Century Learning) four C’s of 21st century learning. But teamwork isn’t essential only for students to learn; teachers also find benefits for themselves and for their students when they collaborate. Sometimes collaboration between educators extends into a formal team teaching or co-teaching arrangement. The [KDE Collaborative Teaching Practices for Exceptional Children](#) document distinguishes between co-teaching and team teaching. In team teaching, the classes of two or more general education teachers are combined, resulting in no change in the student-to-teacher ratio. In contrast,

co-teaching usually adds a teacher to a classroom in which several students with disabilities are enrolled, which reduces the student-to-teacher ratio and contributes expertise and a focus on individual student learning needs. In a guest column in the [May 24, 2016 issue of Kentucky Teacher](#), John G. Carlisle Elementary School (Covington Independent) teacher Tiffany Gruen described a teaching partnership with a colleague that began with their work in another collaborative group, the professional learning community. The results were invigorating for both teachers and students. Gruen describes how

“Questions fly across the room from both students and teachers. We engage one another. We accept

Collaboration Partnership continued on page 2



challenges. ... We build on each other's ideas until we've created this beautiful synthesis that can only emerge from deep respect and collaboration. The students are learning and growing. So are we."

In the March 22, 2016 issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, educator Joseph Harris shared his experiences, including successful co-teaching arrangements — and what he learned from the disappointments. Like Gruen, Harris recognized the importance of the relationship between co-teachers, stating that in his most effective partnership,

"We established rapport by recognizing that we each have expertise to bring to the classroom, but also by understanding that our students need to understand that we both are the "real" teachers in that classroom."

Harris also pointed to the significance of risk-taking, observing that co-teachers "must be willing to try new things, open our classroom doors and work together to reach every kid we teach."

Educators who wish to learn more about co-teaching may visit the [Co-Teaching for Gap Closure \(CT4GC\)](#) web page. Resources are

also posted on KDE's [novice reduction website](#), including several video interviews with teachers in Kentucky schools:

- Brandon Cooper (Pulaski County High School) shares how co-teaching helps students connect their learning to real life and contributes to student success.
- Gabriel Burns and Iva Isaac (Letcher Elementary School, Letcher County) explain their co-teaching strategies, including parallel teaching and using data and immediate feedback.
- In a series of four videos, Allie Raymer and Matthew Wilhite (Franklin-Simpson High School, Simpson County) discuss several aspects of co-teaching such as planning, their use of a continuous improvement model and the evolution of their co-teaching partnership.

Professional Learning Communities

As per Learning Forward, professional learning communities (PLCs) create a school climate that fosters opportunities for educators to engage in professional learning and to apply their learning to problem solve around teaching and learning issues. PLCs that are self-directed can be highly productive because educators often lead their own learning. The ultimate outcome of professional learning communities is student learning that occurs because educators are expanding, refining and revising their practices. Being a part of a professional learning community can have a positive impact on educators' work lives and their learning and improvement in practice, as well as improvement of the school.

Professional learning communities have been

major contributors toward increasing student achievement throughout the Kentucky education system. The Hub Schools (East Carter, Franklin-Simpson and Pulaski County High Schools) can attest to the positive impact PLC's have afforded in exiting their schools out of Priority status. These Hub Schools have showcased professional learning communities as a best practice approach in supporting continuous improvement:

- [East Carter High School](#) - Focused on continuous improvement of student learning using the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) framework. PLCs at East Carter utilize Assessment Data Analysis Tools and PLC Discussion Guide/Checklist to guide the work. PLCs are facilitated by department chairpersons during weekly

We want to hear from you!

Calling for submissions to the [Best Practice](#) web site. In the next issue, we will list the recently-submitted Best Practices.

Our next issue will be dedicated to continuous improvement. Please send feedback and/or ideas for future articles/stories to Thalia Salgado at thalia.salgado@education.ky.gov.

common planning.

- [Pulaski County High School](#) – Centers on a systems approach to improve learning results. The PLC format follows the PDSA process for continuous improvement as a vehicle to monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction and assessment systematically in response to data from common assessments.
- [Franklin-Simpson High School](#) – Focuses on creating quality instructional units and aligned common assessments and the analysis of student data to inform instruction and develop methods of instruction to address standard mastery of students.

Professional learning communities provide a means by which teachers, administrators and other

Regional Happenings

Pledge to Read This Summer!

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) is collaborating once again with the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA) to encourage students to participate in the state's 2016 Summer Reading Programs. This year's themes center around fitness: "On Your Mark, Get Set ... Read!" (for children) and "Get in the Game: Read!" (for teens). Teachers and parents are encouraged to help children use [Find a Book, KY](#) to build personal reading lists for summer reading and then locate the selections at their school library or local public library. Students, teachers and parents can pledge to read while on the Find a Book, KY website. The pledge feature opened May 1 and will continue through Aug. 31. Kentucky ranked No. 1 nationally in summer reading pledges for 2012, 2014 and 2015.



more projects. For example, most Kentucky districts participate in [Operation Preparation](#), a month-long community-based volunteer advising program for 8th- and 10th-grade students. Many other initiatives are also designed to transition students to life after high school by ensuring they are college and/or career ready, and encourage them to plan ahead. East Carter High School, a [Kentucky Hub School](#), schedules numerous activities throughout the year to keep students and families informed as they begin to make decisions, including:

- Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) representatives host presentations for students and a workshop for parents on college admission and paying for college.
- College Application Week, in which all seniors complete at least one college application.

Professional Learning Communities *continued from page 2*

professionals come together to learn, share, critique and process new information within a supportive, district/school-created community. However, in order to ensure desired results from PLCs, we must align our school culture and structures to the essential characteristics of being a PLC¹. Effective professional learning communities should apply the PLC essential characteristics. Bear in mind, professional learning communities are not to be implemented as a standard or cookie-cutter process where one size fits all. Professional learning communities should be personal to each educational setting.

PLCs essential characteristics are:

- Common mission, vision, values and goals
- Collaborative culture
- Collective Inquiry
- Action orientation
- Continuous improvement
- Focus on results

Professional learning communities are ongoing and require constant revisions and fine tuning. In order to maximize effectiveness, inviting the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA), a systematic approach to continuous improvement, can be used to increase the effectiveness of PLCs. Our Kentucky Hub Schools have excellent resources regarding all aspects of professional learning communities and the PDSA process for continuous improvement. It's always a great idea to visit one of these Hub Schools and observe a live PLC. Keep in mind, although they have excellent PLC resources, the key is to bring those ideas to your educational setting and customize them into your team's own professional learning communities, creating a culture of effective collaboration focused on the desired end results.

¹Mattos, M. (2008). *Walk the 'lign: Aligning school practices with essential PLC characteristics*. In *The collaborative administrator: Working together as a professional learning community*. (pp. 13–14). Bloomington, Ind.: Solution Tree.

Working Together

In his April 25, 2016 blog entry, "[Working together for the benefit of students](#)," Kentucky Education Commissioner Stephen Pruitt wrote, "Successfully moving education forward only can be achieved by being informed and working together for our students. ... It takes a village to raise a child, but a commonwealth to educate one." This article will highlight some examples of collaboration and partnerships in Kentucky public schools which are improving education for students.

Collaborative Projects

Sometimes stakeholders work together to accomplish one or

Working Together *continued from page 3*

- College representatives visit classrooms and the cafeteria for informal and small group presentations throughout the year, and the school also organizes two fairs, a college fair for seniors during College Application Week and a college and career fair for underclassmen in the spring.
- A Senior College Board displays the pictures of senior students and the colleges they will be attending.

On KDE's [Best Practice website](#), several schools submitted best practices having to do with collaboration for postsecondary planning and preparations. For example, the Martin County Area Technology Center submitted a best practice in which a career pathway document was created as part of a developing partnership between the ATC and Sheldon Clark High School. The document was used in the high school's advising program and later expanded to assist with parent orientation sessions and scheduling at the middle school.

Long-term Initiatives

Some partnerships between public schools and post-secondary institutions, such as [dual-credit programs](#), remain in place for longer periods of time. These agreements allow students to earn high school and college credit for the same course simultaneously. Students who participate in dual-credit programs are more likely to enter college shortly after high school graduation, be placed in credit-bearing courses in college, complete college in a shorter length of time and earn a higher first-year grade-point

average. (Source: Education Commission of the States, as cited in [Kentucky Teacher](#), January 2015.)

As a [Kentucky Hub School](#), Franklin-Simpson High School takes seriously its role as a laboratory of support and a hub of learning activity for both students and adults. Three years ago Franklin-Simpson began a partnership with Western Kentucky University. Some courses in the teacher education program at WKU were restructured to reflect a clinical model, similar to training programs in hospitals. The WKU program, called CEPT – Clinical Experiences and Practices in Teaching, has teacher candidates spending part of their days in class at WKU and two hours a day teaching under the supervision of a WKU instructor and an English or social studies teacher at the high school. The lab sessions give teacher candidates the opportunity to put pedagogical content into practice. Afterward, they reflect on their learning through discussion with classmates and professors. The experience allows the teacher candidates to learn about state accountability. They work with the high school teachers to analyze student standard mastery through common assessments and then select the appropriate instructional strategies that best fit the learning needs of each of the students. This



experience gives participants hands-on experience before entering the student-teaching phase of the WKU teaching program and the feel for planning differentiated lessons that meet the individual needs of students. The Danielson Framework is introduced to help participants become more familiar with the domains of effective instruction. The Franklin-Simpson teachers also become leaders as they help to shape prospective new teachers entering the field. They learn new teaching strategies and the most current research from the teacher candidates and college professors.

In the Jefferson County school district, two elementary schools are utilizing partnerships with local universities to boost student achievement. At Byck and Roosevelt-Perry elementary schools, teachers and principals are participating in the Bellarmine Literacy Project. This unique collaborative project builds teacher capacity in reading instruction that is aligned with the specific learning and instructional needs of the students. Teachers receive six hours of graduate credit yearly, 90 hours of advanced training on scientifically-based reading instruction, books and materials, job-embedded

Working Together *continued from page 4*

coaching and a network of support. Principals participate in Bellarmine University classes on scientifically-based reading instruction and benefit from the network of support.

Some Jefferson County schools are also utilizing partnerships with university students to enhance student well-being and learning. At Roosevelt-Perry, the University of Louisville Graduate School of Psychology and Social Work is partnering to help meet the social and emotional needs of students. Every school day, students receive social skills classes and one-on-one counseling from graduate students and faculty. The partnership provides mental health services to students and provides UofL students with practical training. At Byck Elementary, practicum students from Indiana University Southeast are placed in classrooms to observe, research and help learn about instruction. The partnership has been beneficial to the school and its students.

Persistence to Graduation Summit

Many sessions at the June 16 Persistence to Graduation Summit in Lexington centered on collaboration. Following are descriptions of some of the types of partnerships schools around Kentucky presented at the conference:

- To reduce 9th-grade retentions, the freshman academy at Waggener High School (Jefferson County) has implemented school-wide supports such as advisory and extended school day programs as well as academy-specific interventions, including a freshman summer bridge program and family meetings.
- Breathitt County High School and YouthBuild Jackson developed a partnership that allows participating students to get their high school diplomas while also earning Home Builders Institute certification, all while earning a paycheck and a scholarship for post-secondary education.
- PartnerCorps, an AmeriCorps program through Partners for Education at Berea College, has placed a cohort of AmeriCorps members who support improved student outcomes through mentoring and case management systems in three southeastern Kentucky high schools (formerly Priority Schools): Knox Central, Leslie County, and Perry County Central high schools.

Data Tips

Guiding Questions for PLCs

For review of instructional issues/curriculum (adapted from the DuFours)

- What do the students need to learn or be able to do? (curriculum)
 - How will they learn it? (instruction)
 - How will we know they know it? (assessment)
- What will we do if they do not learn it? (safety nets, intervention)
 - What will we do if they already know it? (enrichment)

CIITS Data

KDE provides CIITS usage data that includes the number of assessments and lesson plans created and the number of KPIs (Kentucky Performance Indicators) viewed. Find out about CIITS usage in your Priority/Focus School or Focus District on the [CIITS Metrics and Reports](#) page.

Professional Learning

KASA Leadership Institute

The Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) Annual Leadership Institute and Expo will be July 20-22. Join more than 1,200 of your colleagues from across the state for three full days of powerful networking, thought-provoking education sessions, and innovative business solutions.

For more information visit:

http://server.kasa.org/kasa/KASAMember/Leadership_Development/Annual_Leadership_Institute.aspx

Continuous Improvement Summit

The 2016 Continuous Improvement Summit, hosted by AdvancEd and the Kentucky Department of Education, will be Sept. 19-20 at the Lexington Convention Center. More information will be forthcoming.

NOTE: Inclusion of the items from outside KDE found below does not indicate endorsement by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE).

KAAC Offers Training for New DACs

The Kentucky Association of Assessment Coordinators' (KAAC) sponsored training for new district assessment coordinators (DACs) will be July 27 at the Indiana Wesleyan University Louisville Education and Conference Center, 1500 Aliant Ave., Louisville. The targeted audience is new DACs; however, relatively inexperienced DACs may also register for the training. The meeting will be from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. ET. Click [here](#) to register.

Kentucky Science Teachers Association Accepting Proposals for Fall Conference

The Kentucky Science Teachers Association (KSTA) is accepting proposals for presentations at its 2016 conference on science education. The session proposal form and further information about the conference can be found on the [KSTA website](#) under the conference tab on the home page. Please consider making your contribution to the advancement of science education in Kentucky by sharing ideas, expertise and materials.

Quote of the Day

"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team." - Phil Jackson

Regulations Related to District 180

(Priority Schools, Focus Schools and Focus Districts)

703 KAR 5:260 Implementation of Intervention options in priority schools and districts

703 KAR 5:190 Assistance to Low Achieving Schools

703 KAR 5:225 School and district accountability, recognition, support, and consequences

KRS 160.346 Persistently Low-Achieving Schools and School Intervention



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