

# Building Structures and Culture for Student Learning

MASC/MASS Joint Conference

November 5-8, 2014

Mary Bourque, Superintendent, Chelsea Public Schools

John Doherty, Superintendent, Reading Public Schools

Russell Johnston, Senior Associate Commissioner, DESE

# Topics Presented

- How to use the Curriculum Framework and PARCC Implementation to change the culture of teaching and learning
- Use of Professional Learning Communities to drive the implementation
- How to go into depth into the implementation using Understanding by Design
- Role that PARCC and other assessments will play in the process

Reading Public Schools

# **REIMAGINING TEACHER COLLABORATION**





*Next steps in moving beyond an era of accountability  
and standardized testing. . .*

# Reimagining Teacher Collaboration

Leveraging PLCs and DDMs as positive  
course corrections for education



# The Challenge

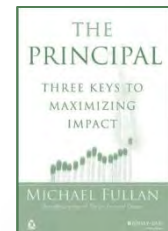
How do we restructure our professional time and resources in an era of increased expectations, multiple initiatives, declining resources, and higher accountability?

How do we shift the culture of teaching and learning so that teachers have more voice and ownership in the process?

# “Standards & Accountability are exceedingly weak strategies for driving reform.”

- “. . . the evolution of standards and accountability as applied to the teaching profession with greater intensity over the years has fundamentally weakened the effectiveness of the profession.”
- “. . . Policymakers are trying to do at the back end with accountability what they should have done at the front end with capacity building.”

Michael Fullan, *The Principal*, 2014



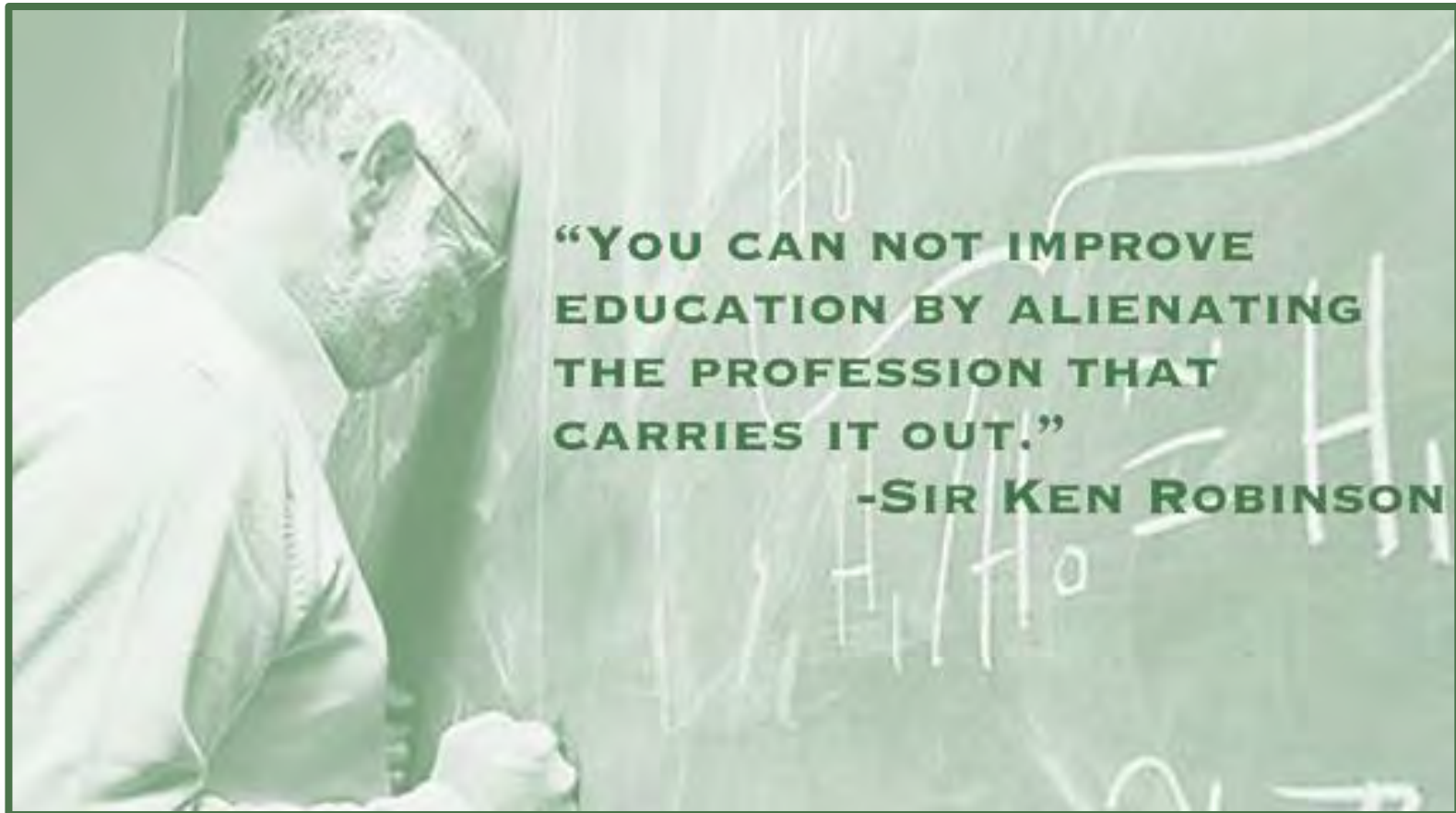
# Accountability

State Test Scores, Educator Evaluation, Impact Ratings

- “Accountability assumes [wrongly] that the most important thing to do is to make sure that a person down below acts in line with directions or criteria passed down by someone higher up.”
- “. . . capacity building is to accountability what finance is to accounting. Finance is about how people organize and invest their assets; if you have only accounting, you are merely keeping careful records while you go out of business! In the same way, there is more to accountability than measuring results; you need also to develop people’s capacity to achieve the results.”
- “Extreme pressure without capacity results in dysfunctional behavior.”



*Educators should be collaboratively driving reform in the best interest of students. Unilateral action by policy makers and legislators are counterproductive.*





# Educator Evaluation Reform

- ❖ Many other states have taken steps that are damaging
- ❖ Creates more problems and resistance to change
- ❖ What *drivers* lead to the results we want?






# What are the best “drivers”?

- “By drivers, I mean the policies and associated strategies—usually set by federal entities, states, or districts—that are intended, well, to ‘drive’ a school or larger system to new levels of success.”
- “Wrong drivers do not always look obviously wrong, and they are not wrong topics to consider, but . . . [they] do not actually produce the desired results.”
- “The wrong drivers can be attractive up-front because they look like quick fixes, can be legislated, and can appeal superficially to the public. In the final analysis, the right drivers guide and integrate the four wrong ones so as to create the maximum benefit.”

# *Drivers for effective change . . .*



Wrong	Right
Accountability	Capacity Building
Individualistic Solutions	Collaborative Effort
Technology	Pedagogy
Fragmented Strategies	Systemness

- “[Wrong drivers] get people off on the wrong foot. Adjacent to each wrong driver listed is a better alternative.”
- *“The four ‘right drivers’ must form the foundation and guiding principles of action and integrate the beneficial aspects of the wrong drivers . . .”*



# Why PLCs?

## *What are the objectives?*

### ✓ **Improve student learning**

- *Foster ongoing student growth by examining outcomes and focusing on results*
- *Determine action steps, share practices, and explore strategies for improvement*

### ✓ **Create a systemic, collaborative culture**

- *Harness the collective expertise of staff*
- *Set core expectations/measures collaboratively and share responsibility collectively for reaching goals*

### ✓ **Establish shared leadership**

- *Share decision making about curriculum priorities, assessment objectives, and helpful professional development*
- *Develop and focus on shared values and vision*

### ✓ **Move beyond a focus on standardized, summative assessments**

- *Empower teachers in determining essential outcomes and the best ways to measure progress*

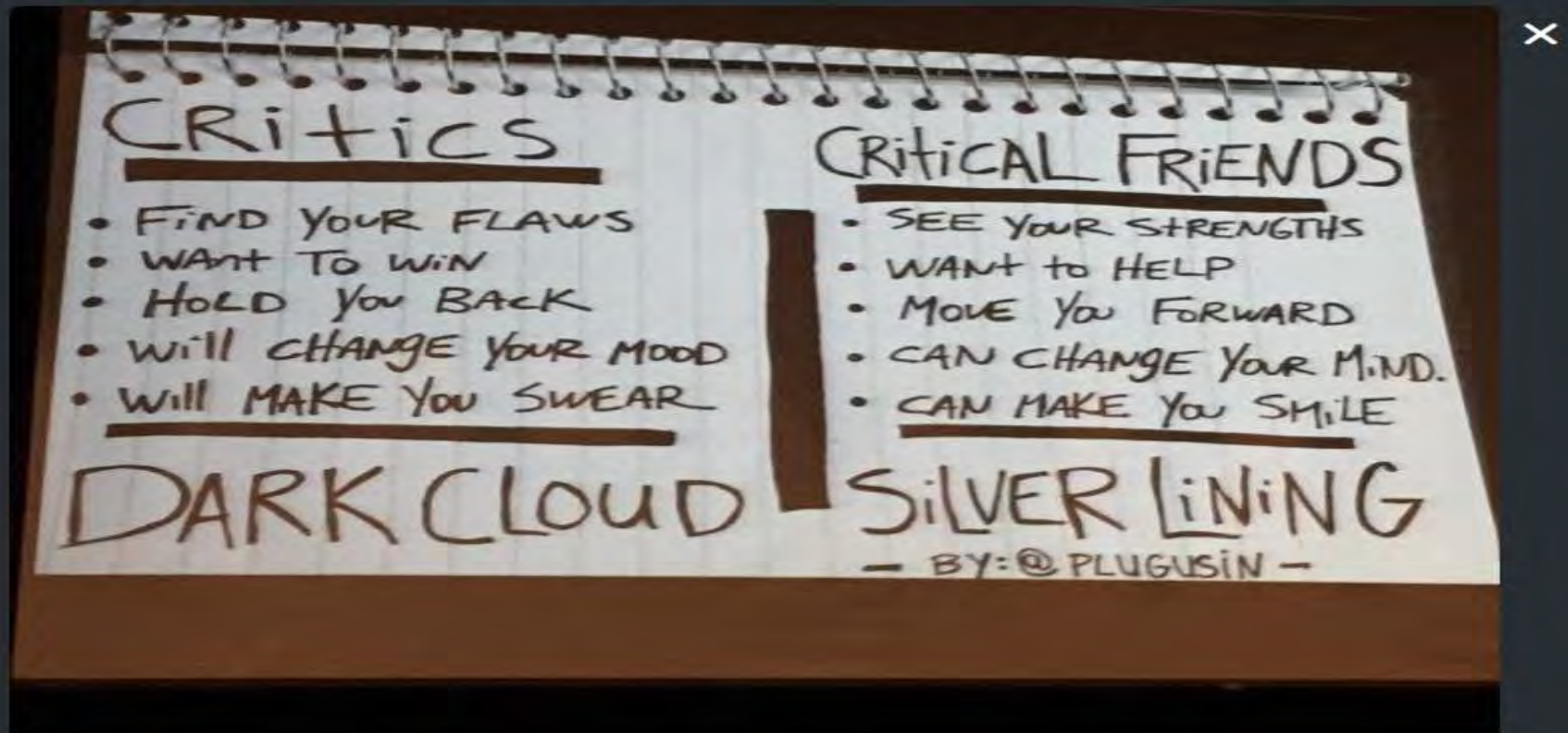
# PLC's 4 Guiding Questions

- 1. What do we want each student to learn?*
- 2. How will we know when each student has learned it?*
- 3. How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?*
- 4. How will we deepen the learning for students who have already mastered essential knowledge and skill?*

# Professional Learning Community

- A **professional learning community**, or **PLC**, is a group of educators that meets regularly, shares expertise, and works collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of students. By focusing on student results and exploring strategies or effective practices collaboratively, a PLC can also provide the opportunity for continuous job-embedded learning and the basis for empowering educators in the process of professional development.
- It is important to note as well that a PLC is the “how” and not the “what.” In other words, it is *not* an *initiative*, a *program*, or a *meeting*—but rather an ongoing **process**, in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research with a focus on achieving better results for the students they serve.

# PLCs are Supported by Critical Friends Not Critics



**Sharon LePage Plante** @iplante · Oct 18

Great thoughts: Critics vs Critical Friends @plugusin shout out by @lynhilt #edscape

← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite



# Collaborative Effort

- Vertical alignment
- Reviewing data from common, formative assessments
- Calibration of expectations
- Examining student work
- Peer observations
- Reflection on practice
- Determining necessary professional development
- One of us does not have all the answers or expertise, but collectively we do



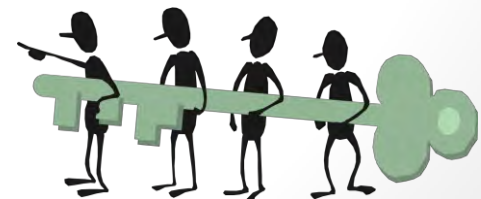
*Truly becoming a “school system”  
... instead of a system of schools*



# Working Together is Working Smarter

- “Educators in [the NCLE] survey reported that their most powerful professional learning experiences come from collaborating with their colleagues.”
- “We now have compelling evidence that when good teachers team up with their colleagues they are able to create a culture of success in schools, leading to teaching improvements and student learning gains.”
- “. . . how much a student learns is a result of both the knowledge and training of the teacher but also how effectively that teacher works with and learns with other educators . . .”
- “Collaboration works because it allows educators to tap the expertise of their colleagues.” It makes all of us better.
- “. . . Michael Fullan identifies ‘collective capacity’ built through planned collaboration as the ‘hidden resource’ that US school systems have neglected to cultivate.”

*Report by the National Center for Literacy Education  
Published by the National Council of Teachers of English © 2013*



# Capacity Building

## *How to Collaborate Effectively*

### FRAMEWORK FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

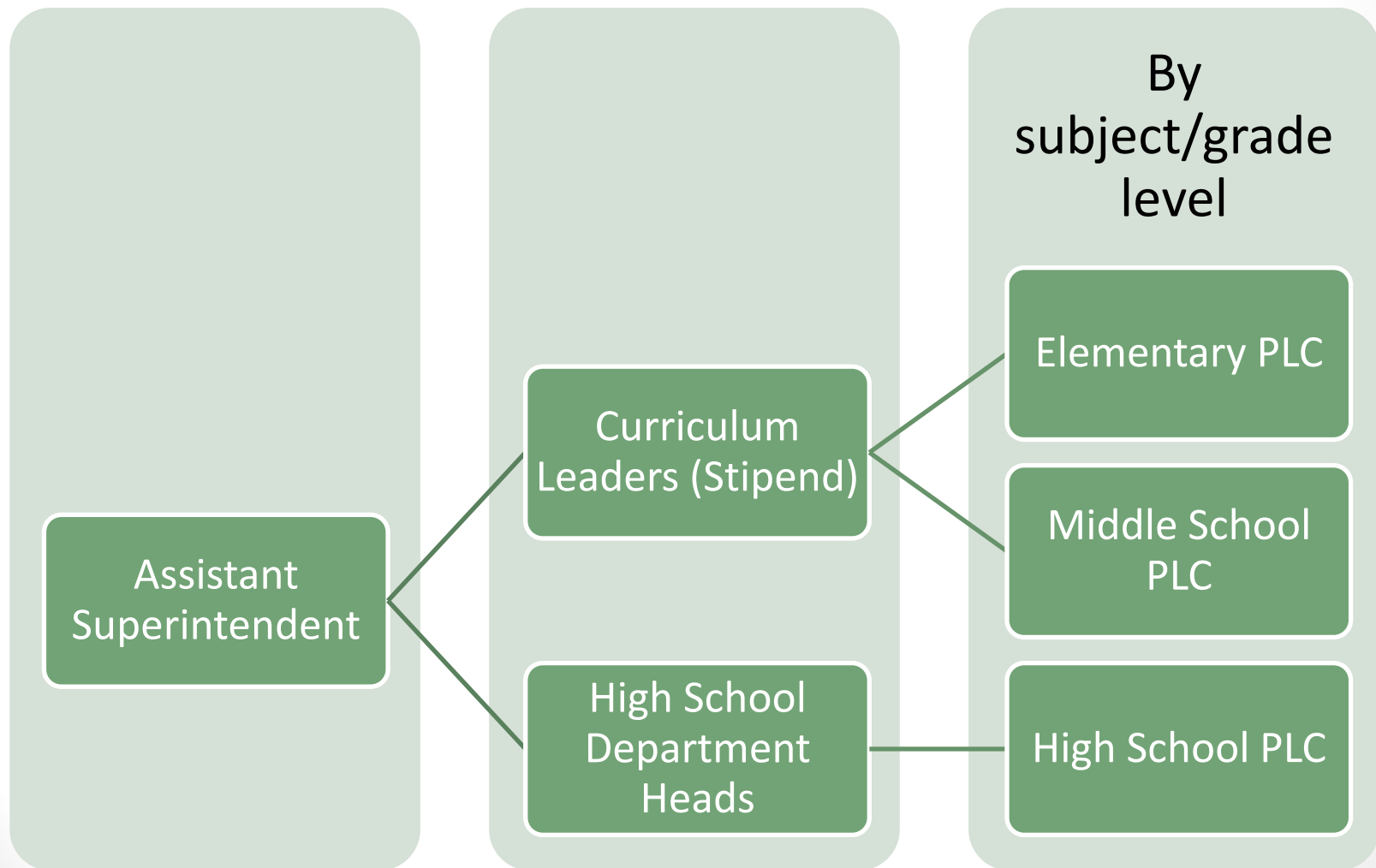
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- *Successes and failures are shared safely and without judgment.*
  - *Time for collaboration is used productively and with purpose.*
  - *Participants share the leadership and own the process and outcomes.*
  - *Collaboration focuses on the core issues of student learning.*
  - *Student outcomes are clearly defined, and progress monitored.*
  - *Professional development is sought when needed*
  - *All share in the accountability for student learning.*
  - *Adult learning is a shared responsibility.*
  - *Learning that occurs through collaboration is captured and shared with others.*
  - *Collaboration is grounded in evidence of student learning.*
  - *Multiple sources of evidence are available.*
  - *Student work is examined and discussed regularly with others.*

# But schools aren't structured to facilitate educators working together

- “Most US schools are not structured to support the kinds of professional collaboration that educators report are so important in strengthening their practice.
- “US classroom teachers practice their craft in isolation, compared both to how other professionals function and to the working conditions of teachers in other developed nations.”
- “Compared to other nations that outperform the United States on international assessments, American teachers spend much more time teaching students and have significantly less time to plan and learn together.”



# Learning and Teaching Structure *in Reading*



# Current PLC

*Each PLC has a Curriculum Leader and Administrative Liaison*

## Elementary/Middle

- Art (PreK-8)
- ELA/Literacy (PreK-2)
- ELA/Literacy (3-5)
- ELA/Literacy (6-8)
- Foreign Language (7-8)
- Health/Wellness (PreK-5)
- Health/Wellness (6-8)
- Math (PreK-2)
- Math (3-5)
- Math (6-8)
- Music (PreK-8)
- PreSchool
- Reading (K-8)
- Science (PreK-5)
- Science (6-8)
- SEL (PreK-5)
- SEL (6-8)
- Social Studies (PreK-5)
- Social Studies (6-8)
- SPED/High Needs (PreK-5)
- SPED/High Needs (6-8)

## High School

- Business
- ELA/Literacy (9-12)
- Fine Arts (9-12)
- Foreign Language (9-12)
- Health/Wellness (9-12)
- Library Media (K-12)
- Math (9-12)
- Nurses (PreK-12)
- OT/PT
- Science (9-12)
- SEL/Guidance (9-12)
- Social Studies (9-12)
- SPED/High Needs (9-12)
- Speech and Language (PreK-12)
- Technology Integration (PreK-12)
- ELL (K-12)

# We have made a shift...

## 2011-2014

- 2 after school meetings per month
- One size fits all PD
- Building Based Staff Meeting Time
- Minimal Joint Labor Management Collaboration on PD

## Present

- 3 after school meetings per month (at least 2 are PLC)
- District PLC Structure by grade level and department
- PD driven by PLC need
- District Wide PD Committee of teachers
- Feedback loop established

# Rethinking Faculty Meeting Time

“One day a teacher leader in our building asked a simple question:

*Why is it if I miss the hour-long meeting on Monday I can make it up in three minutes on Tuesday morning?”*

“Implementation of Common Core State Standards, new teacher evaluation instruments, student learning objectives, and personalized learning environments have created a climate of constant change. School leaders have an obligation to help their teachers face those changes . . . “

“ . . . one of the most important goals of every faculty meeting should be for all teachers to walk out more excited about teaching and more effective tomorrow than they were today.”





# By using time vacated by faculty meetings, there can be more . . .

- ❖ Time for staff members to share and discuss content standards and curriculum
- ❖ Time to meet as departments to collaborate on instruction, assessment, and data review
- ❖ Time to collaborate with colleagues on vertical alignment of curriculum
- ❖ Time to review and discuss student work



*... staff satisfaction related to professional learning has increased to 99%*



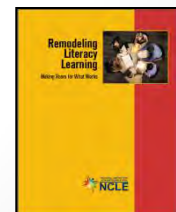
# Remodeling our Schools

“With new standards in place, attention is now turning to how states, districts, and schools are organized to implement them. Given the changes that all schools will need to make, hearing directly from teachers at the grassroots level about how they are learning and working together to make the standards a reality in their classrooms is more important than ever before.”

*“NCLE conducted a nationally representative survey of educators of all roles, grade levels, and subject areas to find out where we stand as a nation . . .”*

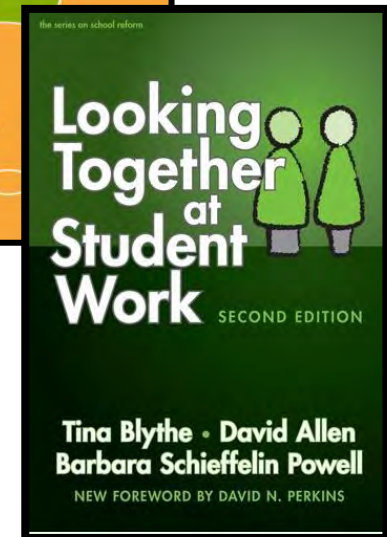
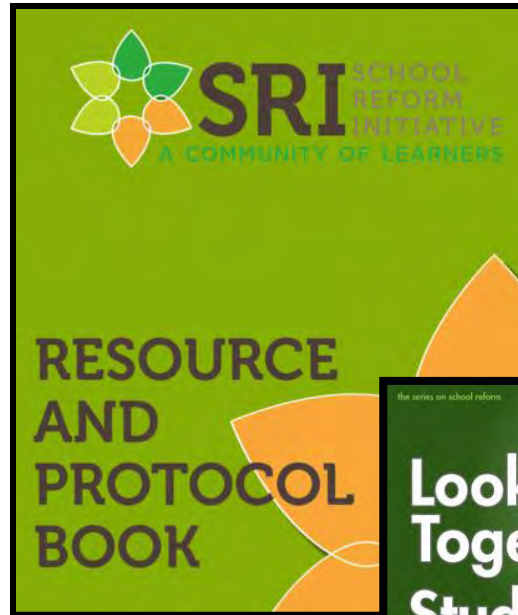
*Report by the National Center for Literacy Education*

*Published by the National Council of Teachers of English © 2013*



# PLCs and Facilitative Leadership

“The School Reform Initiative supports educators as they learn from and with each other to build schools that are committed to educational equity and excellence. Our core approaches . . . are based on important research that connects schoolwide professional communities to improvements in pedagogy to gains in student learning.”



# How we have implemented our structures

- Created Curriculum Leader Positions (Stipend) and Curriculum Facilitator Positions (Stipend)
  - High School: Department Chairs
  - Middle School and Elementary: Grade Level/Department
- Summer SRI Training
- Principals oversee level subject areas

# Our District Leadership Team has also become a PLC

- Improved our weekly meetings (Using Meeting Wise Model)
- SRI Training in October
  - Looking at Data as a District PLC
  - Having difficult conversations about data
- Text Based Discussions on how to successfully implement PLC (Fullan)

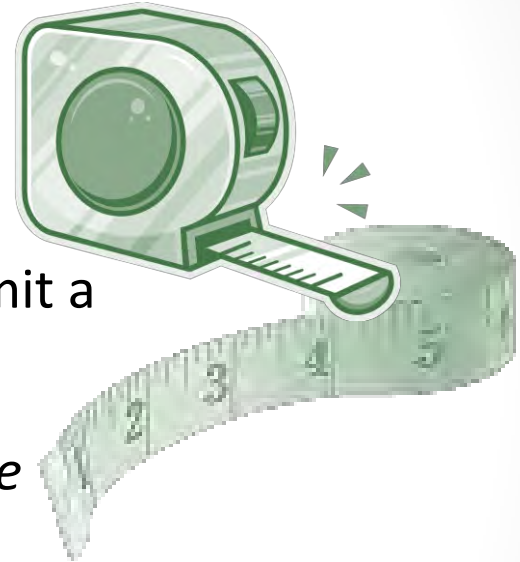
# District-Determined Measures

## What are they?

A district-wide set of student performance measures for each grade and subject that permit a comparison of student learning gains

*“...These measures may include, but shall not be limited to: portfolios, approved commercial assessments and district-developed pre and post unit and course assessments, and capstone projects.”*

- Regulations (CMR 35.02)





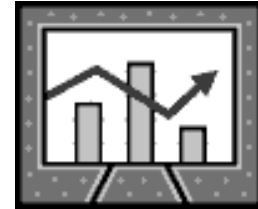
# The Role of DDMs

- ✓ Selecting DDMs gives districts a long-sought opportunity to broaden the range of what knowledge and skills they assess and how they assess learning. Districts will be identifying or developing measures for assessing student learning for educators in all grades and subject areas, the results of which will lead to opportunities for robust conversations about student achievement, and ultimately improved educator practice and student learning.
- ✓ The new evaluation system requires all educators to receive two separate ratings: a Summative Performance Rating and a Student Impact Rating. These two ratings reflect the nexus between professional practice and student achievement. DDMs play a critical role in the determination of an educator's Student Impact Rating of high, moderate, or low according to trends and patterns in student learning, growth, and achievement.
  - *Trends* refer to results over time of at least two years
  - *Patterns* refer to results on at least two different measures of student learning, growth and achievement

# Some DDM Components ...

## Multiple Measures

- Every educator will need data from at least two state or district-wide measures in order for trends and patterns to be identified. Statewide growth measures (Student Growth Percentiles) must be used as one measure "where available"



## All Educators and All Content Areas

- Since MCAS SGPs are available to fewer than 20 percent of educators throughout the Commonwealth, districts will need to identify or develop additional credible measures of growth, DDMs, for most grades and subjects



## Growth vs. Achievement

- A student can achieve at a low level but demonstrate high growth, or achieve at a high level but demonstrate low growth



# Guiding Questions for DDMs

DDMs provide an opportunity to engage teams and departments in collaborative and collegial work to identify together . . .

- ❖ *What is most important for our students to learn?*
- ❖ *How can we best assess this?*
- ❖ *What do the results tell us about our curriculum and instruction?*

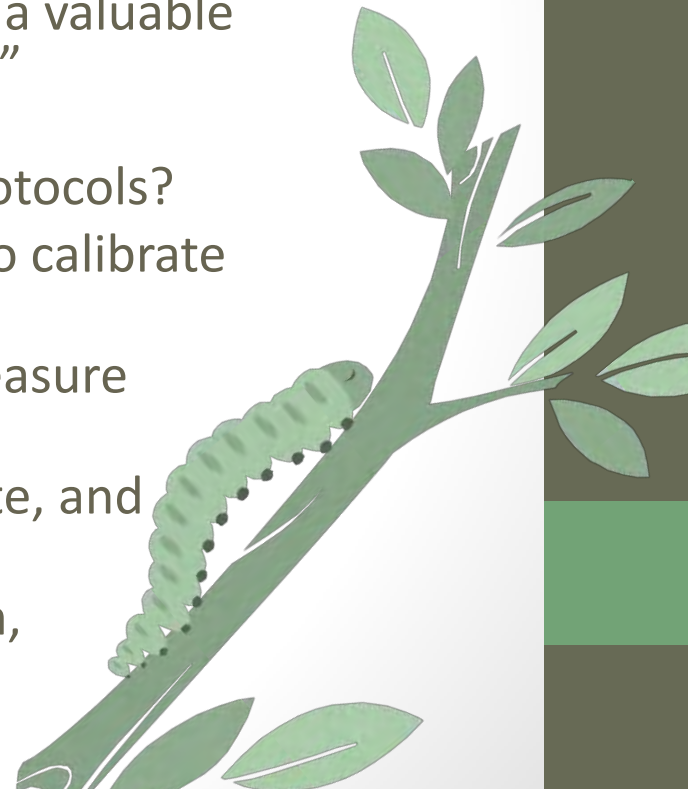




# Important Considerations for DDMs

*DDMs provide an opportunity to engage teams and departments in collaborative and collegial work to determine ...*

- ✓ What skills , understandings, or dispositions are most important for our students to attain?
- ✓ What is the best way to assess if students are achieving these skills or understandings?
- ✓ Is the DDM embedded within the curriculum as a valuable assessment of valued growth (and not an “extra” assessment)?
- ✓ What should be our common administration protocols?
- ✓ What is the best scoring process? Do we need to calibrate our expectations?
- ✓ Do we have the means in place necessary to measure “growth” and not achievement?
- ✓ On this measure, what constitutes low, moderate, and high growth?
- ✓ What do the results tell us about our curriculum, instruction, or practice?



# Alignment of Goals



# Alignment of Goals

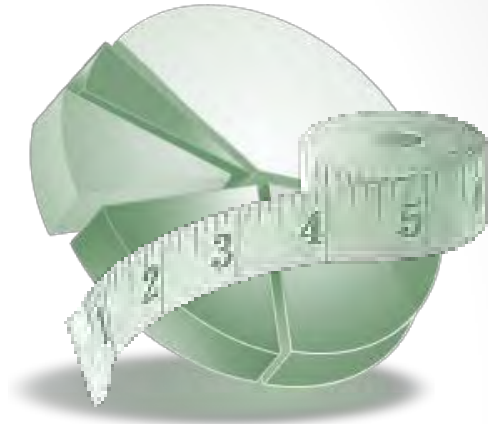


District Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks</li> <li>• Implement the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support</li> <li>• Improve the Reading Educator Evaluation Process and Other Evaluation Systems</li> <li>• Improve the use of professional time, communication, and resources to support staff</li> <li>• Develop and implement a long range plan for expanding early childhood education</li> </ul>
School Improvement Plan Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks</li> <li>• Implement the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support</li> <li>• Others that match the needs of the school</li> </ul>
Administrator Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks</li> <li>• Implement the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support</li> <li>• Improve the use of professional time, communication, and resources to support staff</li> </ul>
Teacher Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks</li> <li>• Implement the Massachusetts Tiered System of Support</li> </ul>
Measures to Achieve Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Assessments (Median SGP)</li> <li>• Formative Assessments</li> <li>• Decreases in Achievement Gap</li> <li>• Indirect Measures (Absenteeism/Tardiness, Number of Students in Honors/AP Classes, Referrals, Discipline)</li> <li>• Increased Collaboration</li> <li>• Increased Coherence</li> </ul>
Four Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is it we want our students to learn? What knowledge, skills, and dispositions do we expect them to acquire as a result of this course, this grade level, and this unit of instruction?</li> <li>• How will we know if each student is learning each of the skills, concepts, and dispositions we have deemed most essential?</li> <li>• How will we respond when some of our students do not learn? What process will we put in place to ensure students receive additional time and support for learning in a way that is timely, precise, diagnostic, directive, and systematic?</li> <li>• How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are already proficient?</li> </ul>

# DDMs, PLCs, and Standardized Testing...

District-Determined Measures and systemic PLCs provide an opportunity for us as educators to facilitate a move beyond standardized tests as the sole measures—and to instead provide a variety of curriculum-embedded measures that are determined by teachers as valuable, authentic, and formative common assessments—not only by which to measure success, but also to provide the means for meaningful collaboration, examining student work, and sharing practices.

Perhaps, in the future, such a system can be so embedded in our work that the reliance on standardized testing can be reduced to maybe once in elementary, once in middle, and once in high school—redirecting then millions of dollars to other educational initiatives and recapturing many days of instructional time in a child's education.



# Example of Agenda

Grade 3-5 Math PLC:

Date: Wednesday, November 6, 2014

Location and Time: Room 202 Wood End School

3:15 – 4:15

Facilitator: C. Ellen Commito

To prepare for this meeting, please:

- bring materials for DDM discussions/ creation
- if you have one... Math in focus pacing guide distributed last year

## Agenda/Schedule

Time	Minutes	Activity
3:15-3:17	2	Review group norms
3:17- 3:27	10	Relaying information from meeting with Mr. Martin and Ms. Leonard
3:27 – 4:05	38	Whole group discussion about DDM commonalities  Break out grade level groups looking at DDMs using DDM handout as a reference
4:05 – 4:15	10	Debrief. Next Steps. Pacing Guide work?

Notes/Summary of Discussion:

Next steps: (Indicate specific actions and people who will be following up)

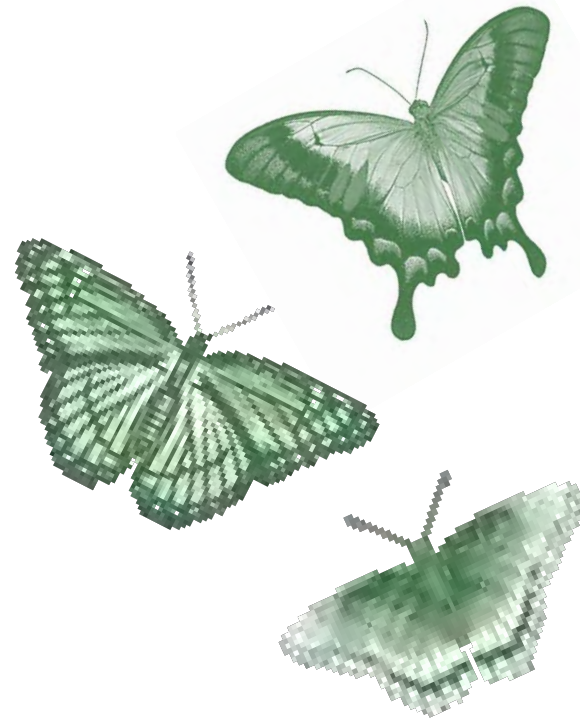
Please send to all PLC Members, PLC Administrator Liaisons, and Craig Martin at the conclusion of the meeting.



# Opportunity for Transformational Change

“Teacher leadership is the only thing that’s going to save the education system. Period. While there are great folks who are putting their heart and soul into education reform, they don’t have all the answers and they aren’t going to be successful if teachers aren’t co-collaborators.”

Maddie Fennell (former Nebraska Teacher of the Year),  
as guest blogger for the Rick Hess Column in *Ed Week*, Feb. 9, 2014



Chelsea Public Schools

**CHELSEA WAY**

# CHELSEA WAY

**Structure**

**Culture**

**Instruction**



# **OVERARCHING PRIORITIES**

*2012-2013 and 2013-2014*

*Capacity and*



## **Structure**

- **Understanding By Design**
- Common Framework and Language: Stages 1, 2, 3.



## **Culture**

- **Professional Learning Communities**
- Shared Learning—Support for teachers and administrators



## **Instruction**

- **Educator Evaluation**
- Accountability, Support, and Growth Mindset

# OVERARCHING PRIORITIES

2014-2015

## *Cycle of Improvement and Depth of Quality*



### Structure

- Understanding By Design
- Stage 3—daily lessons aligned to Stage 1 and Stage 2 for rigor and task demand.



### Culture

- Professional Learning Communities
- *The Chelsea Way: The shift that needs to happen.*



### Instruction

- Educator Evaluation
- Accountability, Support, and Growth Mindset

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

## ROLE OF PARCC