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# DPS Curriculum Connection

## What is a Professional Learning Community?

If it's one thing educators like it's an acronym. NCLB, IEP, SLD, and AYP to name a few that could probably fill up this entire article. What exactly is a PLC? We know it stands for Professional Learning Community, but what does it really mean. The term has been used so ubiquitously that it is in danger of losing all meaning. There are essentially four "big ideas" that represent the core principles of PLC's. The principles guide schools' efforts to sustain the PLC model until it becomes deeply embedded in the culture of the school. Notice I said model not program. This is not something that we bring in to impact student learning and achievement. This is a philosophy—a way "we do business."

**Big Idea #1: Ensuring That Students Learn**—The simple shift comes from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning. There are four basic questions that need to be asked—(1) What do we want all students to know and be able to do? (2) How will we know if students have learned it? (3) How will we respond when a student has not learned it? (4) How will we respond when a student has learned it?

**Big Idea #2: A Culture of Collaboration**—Educators must work together to achieve their collective purpose of learning for all. Structures must be created that promote a collaborative culture. Collaboration does not mean congeniality and camaraderie building. Collaboration occurs when staff members join forces to develop consensus and commitment in analyzing and improving their classroom practices which leads to higher levels of student achievement.

**Big Idea #3: A Focus on Results**—PLC's judge their effectiveness on the basis of results. Working together to improve student achievement becomes the routine (the way we do business) work of everyone in the school. Every team member participates in this ongoing process. This is the heart of data driven decision making.

**Big Idea #4: Hard Work and Commitment to Continuous Improvement**—The professional learning community model is a powerful new way of working together that profoundly affects the practices of schooling. When educators do the hard work necessary, their collective ability to help all students will rise.

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*Created By: Mrs. Margo D. Empen—Assistant Superintendent DPS*

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**Technology in the Classroom**

[www.visualthesaurus.com](http://www.visualthesaurus.com)

Engages students in learning new words and concepts. Once a word is entered it maps the word and gives you alternative words to use. There are free lesson plans from around the world. All you do is type in the key word/concept and related lesson plans come up. You can try a few words free, but then you need to decide if you want the 14 day free trial, or to pay the \$2.95 per month or \$19.95 per year subscription rate.

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## Academic Dates to Remember:

DHS Choir Spring Concert & Cookout-5:30 pm	5/17
Board of Education Meeting	5/19
DHS Awards Assembly DHS Auditorium-6:30	5/20
Washington, Jefferson, & Lincoln Reading Day	5/21
Report Card Day	6/2
Reagan Middle School 8th Grade Promotion	6/4
DHS Graduation at 10:30 a.m.	6/5

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