

THE JOURNEY OF A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

SUCCESS
ACROSS
ARKANSAS



"If you are not telling your story, someone else will."

Schools, districts, cooperatives, higher education institutions, and education renewal zones began a journey to transform their organization into a system with a focus on learning, a collaborative culture, and a focus on results. The journey is not always easy, it is not always the same, and it is not a straight pathway. I applaud educators for taking the initiative to begin without having it all figured out, knowing it won't be easy. On the following pages, you can read their stories and their why, and get a glimpse into their journey. It is an ongoing process in this continuous cycle of improvement. It is a mindset shift to believing and ensuring all students can learn at high levels, and adults must be lifelong learners. The journey is seeking success for each child and each adult in Arkansas. The destination will change as the faces and needs in front of us change. The passion and determination are noticeable and commendable. Thank you to all for sharing your journey and for your courage to face the change and not give up when it gets hard. We look forward to traveling this journey with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Missy Walley

Director of the Office of Special Projects
Arkansas Department of Education
Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

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History of the Work



The Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is dedicated to fostering and expanding the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at Work® process in Arkansas schools. When implemented with fidelity, this process leads to improved learning outcomes for both students and educators. DESE has partnered with Solution Tree, a prominent provider of professional development, to provide intensive coaching to selected Arkansas schools over a three-year period. These selected schools serve as active laboratories for the PLC at Work® process, conducting action research and sharing best practices with other schools across the state. Since August 2017, 95 schools have been chosen to participate in PLC at Work® training. Beginning in 2019, Higher Education Institutions offering Educator Preparation courses received support to integrate the PLC process for teacher candidates, and in 2022, Educational Service Cooperatives joined district teams in leading PLCs statewide. DESE is unwavering in its commitment to bridging the achievement gap among students, with a focus on learning outcomes and collaboration among all stakeholders, from Early Learning through post-secondary education.

As of September 2023, Arkansas ranks second in the nation in PLC Model schools, boasting 37 schools designated in the state. Model PLC at Work® schools and districts have exhibited a strong dedication to the principles of a professional learning community. Educators have established a shared understanding and commitment to the processes, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. To earn the distinction of a model school, a school must apply and provide evidence of three years of growth in student achievement. This recognition is continuously evolving as more schools strive to achieve this distinction.

Overview

PLC Cohort Project



The PLC Project began in the 2017-2018 school year with Cohort 1. Each cohort receives three years of intensive onsite coaching from Solution Tree Associates. Cohorts 1 through 4 have completed the project. Cohort 4 is the first cohort to receive three years of support without the disruption of data due to COVID-19. Cohort 5 is in year three, and Cohort 6 is in year 2 of the PLC Project.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS & DISTRICTS

Cohort 1

Ballman Elementary
Bragg Elementary
Douglas MacArthur Jr. High
Frank Mitchell Intermediate
Greenbrier Eastside Elementary
Monticello Middle School
Morrilton Intermediate
Prescott School District
Rogers High School
Spradling Elementary

Cohort 2

Blytheville Primary
East Pointe Elementary
Greer Lingle Middle School
Gurdon School District
Hamburg High School
Howard Perrin Elementary
Main St. Visual & Performing
Arts Magnet
Murrell Taylor Elementary
Quitman School District
Rivercrest Elementary

Cohort 3

Buffalo Is. Central School
District
Camden Fairview Intermediate

Darby Middle School
Eureka Springs Elementary
Harrisburg High School
Jacksonville Elementary
Lake Hamilton Intermediate
Lakeside High School
Mabelvale Elementary
Mills Univ. Studies High School
Park Avenue Elementary
Wonderview Elementary

Cohort 4

Bayyari Elementary
Camden Fairview High School
Centerpoint School District
Clinton School District
Crossett High School
Hot Springs Junior Academy
Lake Hamilton Junior High
Northside High School
Rivercrest High School
Valley Springs Elementary
Watson Elementary

Cohort 5

Arkansas High School
Camden Fairview Middle
Carver Elementary
Glenview Elementary

Hellstern Middle School
Howard Elementary
Lake Hamilton Middle School
Magazine School District
Meekins Middle School
Oaklawn STEM Magnet Elem.
Parson Hills Elementary
Searcy County School District
University Heights Elementary
Washington Elementary

Cohort 6

Berryville School District
Cabot Freshman Academy
Carlisle School District
Chicot Elementary
Fairview Elementary
Greenwood Freshman Center
Greenwood High School
Hamburg Middle School
Hot Springs World Class High
Lakeside Junior High
Marion Visual & Performing
Arts Magnet
Marked Tree School District
Mountainburg School District
Oakland Heights Elementary
Smackover-Norphlet District
Sonora Middle School

DEMOGRAPHICS

483 students

- 10% Students with Disabilities
- 63% English Learners
- 90% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 1% Black/African American
- 16.8% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 73.3% Hispanic/Latino
- 8.1% White
- 0.8% Two or more races

4th grade
students
grew in
Math by
11.4%

4th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
16.9%

OUR STORY

Our journey at Bayyari Elementary to become a PLC has been an incredible transformation. It all started with our attendance at a Solution Tree RTI conference, where we grappled with the challenge of managing multi-tiered interventions, particularly for the 80% of students who qualified for tier III. A pivotal moment came when Eric Twadell advised us to apply for a PLC grant, leading to our successful grant acquisition in the summer of 2020.

Our commitment to shared leadership and decision-making has been at the heart of this journey. We collaborated to craft a Mission Statement that drives everything we do as a school. Subsequently, we outlined our Vision Statement and Collective Commitments, mapping our goals and principles.

We formed a Guiding Coalition and RTI Committee to align strategies and initiatives, ensuring effective execution. Our dedication to the "All Means All" principle fueled our resolve to create an inclusive environment catering to every student's needs, kid by kid, skill by skill.

Our recognition for Overcoming the Odds and a School on the Move towards Excellence in 2022 showcased our teachers' hard work. This achievement underscores the positive outcomes of our unwavering commitment to improvement, collaboration, and putting our students' success at the forefront. Our journey exemplifies the potential of embracing the PLC process. It underscores the power of strategic planning, collective engagement, data-driven decisions, and a resolute focus on our students' achievements. We cannot wait to see what lies ahead for Bayyari and our students as we continue to grow our knowledge and do the PLC work.

Cabot Freshman Academy⁹

CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

784 students

- 15% Students with Disabilities
- 3% English Learners
- 46% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.5% American Indian
- 1.5% Asian
- 2.7% Black/African American
- 0.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 7.8% Hispanic/Latino
- 81.7% White
- 5.7% Two or more races

9th grade
students
exceeded the
state average
in **Reading** by
9.9%

OUR STORY

Most in the education business would consider the ranking of “B” on a school report card to be pretty good. However, being a member of Cohort 6 and taking on the challenge of implementing the PLC Process into our school, we know that not only will we increase student achievement, but we can tell parents, students, colleagues, district administrators, etc. that we know what our students have and have not learned. The academic mind shift in our building has been the biggest growth. Our teachers have begun taking a deeper look at their teaching and student learning. Almost all subject areas have identified and unpacked the standards they deem essential for ALL ninth graders. They worked as a team to develop common formative assessments and used that data to drive intervention and enrichment. We also changed our intervention practices. What we once did during our intervention period, we are now doing in the classroom to provide point-in-time intervention. The benefits of providing Tier 1 intervention have allowed us to introduce enrichment to our students. Our master schedule allows team time for weekly meetings. Another growth area is our data dashboard. Although we used data in the past, it has become apparent that it wasn’t quite as telling as what we have gained from the PLC Process. We are tracking student growth and progress and using the data to engage students in intervention. Our teachers and administration have used this tool to discuss student learning and reflect on the essential standards. The benefit of having content coaches and an assessment coach has also made a huge impact on our professional learning and instruction. Our ELA teams have shown growth across the board in reading. Our math team is focused on learning versus a “right or wrong” approach. Our assessment coach taught us to construct assessments and vary the depth of knowledge to the standard. They have also led to more in-depth conversations about grading, assessment construction, and reflection on mastery. For the 23-24 school year, our focus will be improving interventions. We want to create a more efficient, meaningful intervention period that focuses on Tier 2 and 3 interventions. Another goal for the 23-24 school year is to reform our grading practices. We must move from grading for compliance to grading for mastery. Overall, our experience this year has been one of the best learning experiences we have ever had. Teachers have shifted their mindset from teaching to learning. We are forever grateful to the Arkansas Department of Education, Solution Tree, and all of our coaches and supporters.

Carlisle School District



DEMOGRAPHICS

617 students

- 12% Students with Disabilities
- 3% English Learners
- 61% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.5% American Indian
- 0.2% Asian
- 9.4% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 6.2% Hispanic/Latino
- 79.6% White
- 4.1% Two or more races

7th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
20.8%

9th grade
students
grew in
Math by
6.8%

OUR STORY

The Carlisle School District has been on the PLC journey since the summer of 2019 when our former Superintendent and current Wilbur D. Mills Cooperative Director, Brad Horn, brought Dr. Jason Andrews to our Leadership Retreat. Dr. Andrews spent several days with the leadership team teaching us the foundational information to get our PLC journey off the ground. We worked on our mission and vision and created a plan to bring the process to our schools. While this work was great initially, it soon became something we put on the back burner because of Covid. Our focus was now on survival, asynchronous & synchronous learning, virtual academies, masks, and social distancing.

We knew we had a big task given the impact of learning loss and trauma that students incurred. We knew that we needed a systematic process for intervention and enrichment that was timely, diagnostic, directive, and mandatory, removing the student from grade-level instruction as little as possible. The PLC process could guide us in that goal.

We joined the PLC Regional Network. This gave us some support in our PLC Journey, and we are forever thankful for those who came on campus with us. This support allowed us to dig into the work of PLCs, get back on track, and prove that we were committed to becoming a Professional Learning Community. It gave us the jump we needed to apply for the next Cohort of PLC Grant.

After applying for a second time, we were accepted into Cohort 6. We have had one full year of support from our Solution Tree Associates, and it has been the best professional learning experience we have ever had as a district. Has it been hard? Absolutely. It's been like drinking water from a fire hose but also so impactful. We have moved from working as individual teachers to working as a team to achieve goals for our students. We have dug into standards, reflected on our teaching practices, and maybe cried a few tears, but have seen lots of progress in both our ability to teach students and the learning of students. We are forever grateful for this opportunity and aren't taking it for granted.

Centerpoint Elementary

CENTERPOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT

K-5



DEMOGRAPHICS

398 students

- 20% Students with Disabilities
- 15% English Learners
- 76% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.3% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 0.3% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 21.9% Hispanic/Latino
- 75.7% White
- 1.8% Two or more races

3rd grade
students
grew in
Math by
15%

3rd grade
students
grew in
Reading by
13%

OUR STORY

Before joining the PLC project in Arkansas, teachers at Centerpoint Elementary School had written a mission statement, participated in collaborative teams, tried providing targeted interventions to students, and identified some power standards based on the state assessment data. However, none of this work was grounded in student learning or a common goal. Centerpoint School District joined Cohort 4 of the Arkansas PLC project in the 2020-2021 school year, and the learning began. During our first year, we focused on setting a clear purpose for the work we had already begun. As the focus shifted from teaching to learning, the teachers started to realize the importance of the essential standards. The focus for 2021-2022 was on using data from formative assessments to target students in need of additional time and support in IgKnight time. It was through the collaboration of teacher teams that those teachers were able to make the connection between Tier 1 instructional data and IgKnight time. We had an overidentified special education population and had been using a pull-out model in which students with IEPs were pulled out of Tier 1 instruction to receive a modified curriculum with lower levels of learning. We realized we were doing these students an injustice by lowering our expectations for them. This led us to provide training to all teachers, both general and special education, on inclusive practices. Special education teachers started pushing into the general education classrooms to provide support to students with IEPs. Even though it was difficult, the foundation of the PLC process and the focus on student learning as well as a clear mission/vision gave the schoolwide community the ability to work collaboratively to ensure all students were learning at high levels. 2022-2023, our third and final year in the project, has been no different than the other two in that it has provided its own set of obstacles and celebrations. We can celebrate the fact that we are firm in our commitments to collaboration and IgKnight time and in our focus on student learning as a driving force. We now have a Tier 3 time built into our schedule in addition to IgKnight time. The implementation of inclusive practices has helped some of these students not only feel more confident and successful but has also helped them receive rewards for top growth and performance on grade-level assessments. The teachers and staff at Centerpoint Elementary School are thankful for the support provided by the coaches from Solution Tree. We now have the culture, skills, and knowledge necessary to ensure high levels of learning for all students.

DEMOGRAPHICS

309 students

- 16% Students with Disabilities
- 3% English Learners
- 71% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.6% Asian
- 0.6% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 7.1% Hispanic/Latino
- 90.4% White
- 1.3% Two or more races

7th grade
students
grew in
Math by
20.9%

6th grade
students
grew in
English by
20%

OUR STORY

Clinton Junior High School is in a rural district in Arkansas that serves a high-poverty population. 70% of our students are reported as low income, but the entire school is eligible for free lunch through the Community Eligibility Program. Currently, 16% of all families in our school are considered homeless. We were proud of our school and students for achieving above expectations at the state level, but our results had become stagnant, and we wanted more for our students.

The PLC Journey of CJHS began when a small leadership group attended our first PLC at Work Institute. We gained ideas on the cultural shifts needed in our building. The message at the institute was inspirational but often felt focused on traditional teams. This led us to question if this could work for us, a school built on singleton teachers.

A guiding coalition of staff with diverse experiences was established to help guide decisions. We began to revamp our mission and vision statements. We spent the first year gaining insight from teachers, parents, students, and the community to adopt a mission and vision statement that better reflected our purpose and future plans. We started student mentor groups where students learned how to set goals and monitor their progress.

The guiding coalition knew the biggest challenge was to provide meaningful collaborative time. With singleton teachers, the master schedule was not allowing all teams to have time for the PLC process. Our district principals presented to the Board on the importance of Professional Learning Communities in our schools and the idea of a one-hour early release weekly to allow teachers dedicated time to answer the four guiding questions in the PLC process.

After years of working in isolation, collaborative teams struggled in the first year to find common ground. In 2020 our school was fortunate to become a part of the Arkansas Cohort 4. Through our coaches, the most important lesson learned was that not every PLC looks the same. They helped us create a system tailored to our situation, our identified needs, and our vision for the future.

CJHS teachers have changed their focus to include the entire student body, rather than solely focusing on their assigned students. When many say "it cannot be done in a small singleton school," we are a model of how the PLC process can be adapted to improve any school.

East Pointe Elementary

K-4

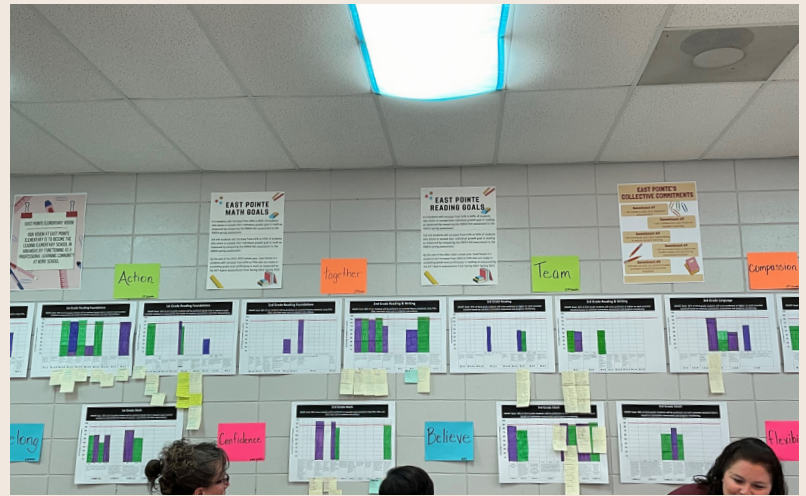
GREENWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

734 students

- 19% Students with Disabilities
- 1% English Learners
- 34% Economically Disadvantaged
- 1% American Indian
- 1.4% Asian
- 0.7% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 7.4% Hispanic/Latino
- 81.3% White
- 8.2% Two or more races



OUR STORY

At East Pointe Elementary, the Professional Learning Community at Work model has become the most effective system to ensure the continuous professional growth of our staff members. We continue to experience improvements and gains in high levels of learning for every student. Gaps in learning are being closed, and achievement scores are greater than or equal to the scores pre-pandemic.

However, one area we continued to struggle with was the shared responsibility of learning among all students, especially those students with an IEP. As a result, this group of students continued to demonstrate low growth and low achievement. As an administrative team, we realized that the only way to change this mindset was to stop segregating these students from grade-alike peers. East Pointe set out to become an inclusive setting for all students. Now, all of our students are placed in grade-level classes and have access to grade-level standards and expectations. Academic growth among this group of students is on the rise. The growth witnessed in these students both socially and emotionally has been worth all the efforts! The collaborative teams at East Pointe are continuously adapting to ensure that all students learn at high levels regardless of their background. Through interdependent collaboration, both general and special educators work together to determine what students must know and be able to do and how to best meet the needs of every learner. During weekly collaborative team time, common assessment data is utilized to measure the effectiveness of our instructional practices and determine the best next steps for instruction. This clear focus on results has contributed to a more effective multi-tiered system of support. We have also built time into the master schedule for students to receive both Tier 2 intervention and extension, and Tier 3 remediation if needed.

3rd grade students exceeded the state average in **Reading** by

17.8%

East Pointe looks a lot different than it did before we began this process. The culture of our school has matured in such a way that it would be impossible to undo the amazing work of our teams and go back to "the way we've always done it." We will always be grateful to the Arkansas Department of Education for providing us with the opportunity to be a part of this impactful work.

Eureka Springs Elementary

K-4

EUREKA SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

199 students

- 12% Students with Disabilities
- 7% English Learners
- 65% Economically Disadvantaged
- 1% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 0% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 6.5% Hispanic/Latino
- 91.5% White
- 1% Two or more races



4th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
22.9%

OUR STORY

At Eureka Springs Elementary School, we began our PLC journey with the primary goal of improving intervention services. We had many students performing below grade level in math and literacy so we believed that the Response to Intervention (RTI) model would be the solution to closing the learning gap for these students. While we were proud of the support for our struggling students, we had not considered the lack of access to grade-level instruction. Our classroom teachers were overwhelmed, often teaching below grade level because so few students were “ready” for grade-level work. Obviously, we were creating a bigger gap for our students.

In 2017, we applied to be a pilot school with the Arkansas PLCs at Work grant. We did not receive the grant that year, but we began building the structures that would prepare us for the future. Our teachers were given collaborative planning blocks weekly, in addition to daily common planning time. We began educating our staff about Tier 2 interventions, and teachers began providing support to students through small-group instruction in their classrooms.

Our journey since we began working with our Solution Tree coaches has had fewer pitfalls but has required a change in mindset and culture in our school. We began unpacking our standards and identifying our essentials. As teams identified essential standards, we began to have a manageable amount of instructional goals.

Establishing our Guiding Coalition (GC) was a key factor in our PLC development. The GC meets weekly to provide input on all school decision-making, address issues, celebrate successes, and share team progress. These leaders communicate directly with their teams, and this gives every team a voice and ensures that important information is shared with all staff. We also began working on our mission, vision, and collective commitments. It was important that we shifted from a “my students” mentality to an OUR students approach.

We are very proud to have gone from the beginning stages of implementation to sustainability in all areas of the PLC continuum. Our students are above the state average on testing, and we continue to move up in our ranking among area schools. We were recognized as a National Model PLC at Work School in 2022 and were identified as an Arkansas School on the Move for improving student academic performance. We are so thankful to DESE and Solution Tree for helping us transform teaching and learning in our school!

OUR STORY

In the year 2020, our district recognized the importance of enhancing professional learning communities within our schools. To jump-start this process, we organized a Portable Events Package for PLC at Work Live. However, we soon realized that a more comprehensive introduction to PLCs was necessary for optimal results. During the 2020-2021 school year, we identified Essential Standards district-wide. Additionally, our district curriculum staff wrote Common Formative Assessments to ensure alignment and consistency across schools.

The following year, Fairview Elementary applied for Cohort 5 of the PLC Project. Although we did not get accepted into the cohort, we did join the PLC Regional Network. This opportunity was valuable as we went through a six-day Leadership Academy that equipped us with the knowledge and skills to become an effective professional learning community. We formed a Guiding Coalition that worked diligently to lead the work and meet the needs of all our students, focusing on grouping them based on skill rather than grade levels for Response to Intervention (RTI). Teachers were taking a more active role in the assessment process, which fostered a sense of ownership and commitment.

Our dedication to building a strong PLC paid off when Fairview Elementary successfully applied and was accepted into Cohort 6 of the PLC Project. Our Guiding Coalition recognized the importance of establishing a shared mission, vision, and collective commitments. Teams began meeting daily in collaborative team time or weekly in vertical team time. Throughout this transformative process, the support and guidance of our Solution Tree coaches played a vital role. Overall, our PLC journey has been one of growth and collaboration. By prioritizing the needs of our students, enhancing communication and teamwork, and leveraging the expertise of our dedicated coaches, we have built a strong foundation to sustain the work of our PLC.

DEMOGRAPHICS

233 students

- 12% Students with Disabilities
- 0% English Learners
- 81% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 51.1% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 6% Hispanic/Latino
- 41.2% White
- 1.7% Two or more races

5th grade
students
grew in
English by
15.6%

4th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
13.8%

Glenview Elementary

PK-5

NORTH LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

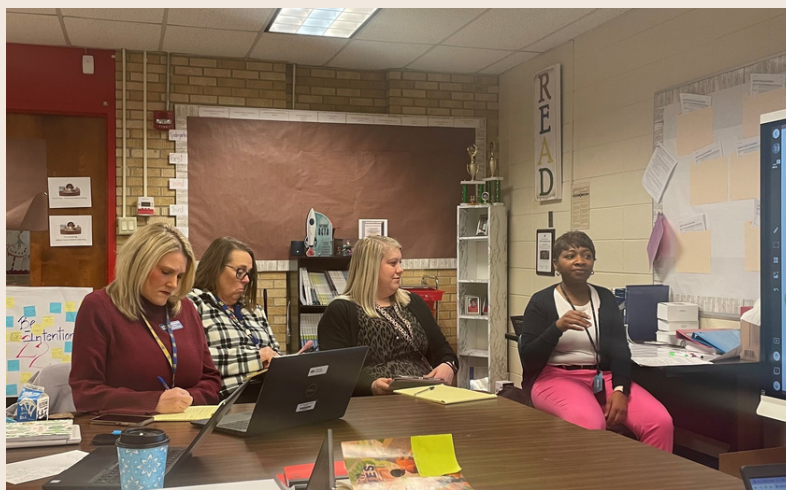
PLC PROJECT SCHOOL



DEMOGRAPHICS

224 students

- 24% Students with Disabilities
- 6% English Learners
- 99% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 81.6% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 10.3% Hispanic/Latino
- 3.6% White
- 4.5% Two or more races



OUR STORY

Glenview Elementary's PLC Journey Glenview Elementary joined the PLC Cohort 2 years ago. We knew that we needed to make changes based on our data and lack of systems. We entered this project with the hope that the PLC project would be the magic key to our success. What we learned was that there is no magic key, and the change is within ourselves working the PLC process. We knew we must do all we could to help our students achieve. We started our process by focusing on Essential Standards and Laying the Foundation. We established our Guiding Coalition to help lead the school with a shared vision and mission. Then, the staff created collective commitments. The challenge we faced in this area was determining what the essential learning was for our students. The focus had to shift from coverage of content to student learning. That consensus led us into year 2 of the PLC cohort. The focus of our professional learning for year two was the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. This process involved taking the knowledge we gained about unit planning, essential standards, learning targets, and data collection and putting it into action. Our RTI coach helped our guiding coalition learn about the three tiers of the RTI process and who should be responsible for intervening at each tier. We determined we were providing Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, but not using a systematic process. We learned that we cannot intervene in all areas and that we must focus on the essential standards for Tier 2 interventions. We started being consistent with common formative assessments, analyzing the data, and providing support to students. The master schedule was a challenge when scheduling intervention time. We have worked on this schedule throughout the year and will start the 2023-2024 school year with a schedule that ensures all tiers are implemented with Tier 3 instruction delivered by the most highly qualified teacher. What is instrumental in moving this work forward is the staff's collective efficacy which transfers to the students and their self-efficacy. The belief that all students can and will learn drives the change, and the systems help ensure this.

50% of
students
moved from
**In Need of
Support** in
English.

Students
scoring
**Ready in
Reading**
increased by
10%

Greenbrier Eastside Elementary

K-5

GREENBRIER SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

437 students

- 12% Students with Disabilities
- 1% English Learners
- 47% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.7% American Indian
- 0.7% Asian
- 3.7% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 3.4% Hispanic/Latino
- 88.5% White
- 3.0% Two or more races



OUR STORY

In 2017, during the first summer professional development after Eastside Elementary School (EES) was notified of its acceptance into the PLC cohort, Superintendent Scott Spainhour addressed the staff. He stated, "In three years from now, Eastside Elementary is going to be the school that other schools want to visit." There could not have been a more true statement. Now serving as a PLC Model School, Eastside Elementary serves as host to educators from across the state and nation in order to share what is working for kids and how EES ensures learning for all. A few highlights include Eastside Elementary's collaborative CFA development, use of success criteria, and an intricate response to intervention system for not only academics but also behavior. Also important to note is the cultural turnaround of this model school. Our school's feel, its sounds, and its appearance are all evidence of the intensely different environment from six years ago. When you walk into Eastside Elementary today, it is obvious that it is a place where both students and adults want to be. Quantitative data also backs this story. For example, fifth graders in 2023 showed significant growth on ACT Aspire as a cohort, increasing the numbers of students Ready in English by 9%, in reading by over 19%, in math by 6%, and in science by nearly 15%, since those students were in 3rd grade. Moving forward, Eastside Elementary School's community acknowledges the work for kids that has been accomplished and is focused on "living the legacy" in years to come.

5th grade
students
exceeded the
state average
in **Reading** by
30.9%

OUR STORY

Hamburg Middle School (HMS) has grown tremendously in becoming a professional learning community in the past year. With the shared vocabulary, clarity of purpose, and creation of common formative assessments, Hamburg Middle School has embraced this opportunity to focus on what really matters, an increase in student learning.

Hamburg Middle School started by creating a mission, vision, and collective commitments. We then established protected common collaboration time for teams on early release Wednesdays. Our new master schedule now has designated Response to Intervention (RTI) time. Our common formative assessments have been created in some teams to assess needs student by student and skill by skill. One of the most rewarding aspects of becoming a Professional Learning Community is the growth of teacher instruction in the classrooms. Our novice teachers have struggled in the years past with understanding how to effectively teach standards and were left as singleton silos. With the PLC process, our novice teachers are supported by working with content area teams on unpacking standards and adjusting instruction to student needs. With teams analyzing pre-assessment data before introducing new concepts, teachers are addressing prerequisite skills needed for mastery of new standards.

We are very grateful for the opportunity that the Arkansas Department of Education has provided us with the three years of support from Solution Tree. To build on the support given, we have contracted another coach to work with singleton teachers in the PLC process. This opportunity will allow us to spread the learning more quickly and embed the PLC process in all Tier 1 instructional planning within our building. We look forward to growing and evolving as a professional learning community at HMS.

DEMOGRAPHICS

388 students

- 11% Students with Disabilities
- 11% English Learners
- 63% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 16.2% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 20.6% Hispanic/Latino
- 61.1% White
- 2.1% Two or more races

8th grade
students
grew in
Math by
10.8%

8th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
10.7%

OUR STORY

Hellstern's PLC journey began when we applied to Cohort 5. As a staff, teachers voted on whether or not to apply. After a tough year of balancing in-person learning and virtual learning, our leadership was unsure of what the result would be. Teachers responded with a strong YES!

The first year was full of intense learning. Teachers attended PLC Institutes and then dedicated their time to identifying essential standards with learning targets and creating common assessments. We formed a guiding coalition and studied the four questions of the PLC process. We clarified our mission, vision, and collective commitments. The work was intense, but teammates were there to support each other and refocus our efforts. We learned to work more collaboratively, with everyone from the Instructional Leadership Team to content teams to interdisciplinary teams.

In the second year, we shifted our focus to RTI for both academics and behavior. An RTI committee was established consisting of teachers, counselors, a social worker, school psychology specialists, and a speech-language therapist. Teachers attended RTI Institutes and worked throughout the year to create systems for addressing student needs in Tiers 1, 2, and 3. For the first time, we started the year with shared behavioral expectations. The mindset of staff has shifted to be more preventative rather than reactive. As we have learned, "If we can predict it, we can prevent it."

The 23-24 school year will be spent learning best practices for assessment. This is a significant growth area for us as we learn about standards-based grading and how to implement it. Teachers increasingly see the need to move in that direction and are willing to make the shift. It takes time for a school to gain clarity and embrace the vision of the PLC process. Three years into the process, HMS is more clear than ever on what we want to accomplish.

DEMOGRAPHICS

781 students

- 9% Students with Disabilities
- 12% English Learners
- 43% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.3% American Indian
- 1.8% Asian
- 3.5% Black/African American
- 4.6% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 28.7% Hispanic/Latino
- 58.4% White
- 2.7% Two or more races

7th grade
students
exceeded the
state average
in **Math** by

21.7%

7th grade
students
grew in
English by

6.8%

Hot Springs Junior Academy⁷⁻⁹

HOT SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT

PLC MODEL SCHOOL



OUR STORY

Hot Springs Junior Academy (HSJA) is a 7-9 school that brings together all 4 elementary schools in the Hot Springs School District, and we have been on our PLC journey for 4 years, with the last three years in the PLC pilot program. Consistently, over 70% of students entering HSJA are below grade level in reading and math with many lacking foundational skills necessary to master grade-level instruction. Before beginning our PLC journey, HSJA teachers primarily worked in isolation with no real connection to a mission and vision. Additionally, all students did not have consistent access to grade-level instruction, as the programmed curriculum only assisted with missing foundational skills.

Hot Springs School District has been a vital support for consistent PLC implementation across all schools. HSJA applied and was accepted as a PLC Cohort 4 school beginning in the 2020-2021 school year. The primary need for HSJA was to ensure a common vision and mission for student learning and success. Our established mission was "to ensure high levels of learning for all students to compete in a global society." We built a Guiding Coalition to guide teams as they focused on the 4 critical questions. Teacher teams determined essential standards and built a viable curriculum to ensure high levels of learning for all students.

As our culture continued to shift, we emphasized a focus on celebration. To maintain this focus, each day began with the mission and vision and a celebration of the work teachers or teams were doing. Teachers collaborated to analyze and increase the rigor and DOK levels of CFA questions. Through this work, teachers recognized success within a PLC is an ongoing process rather than a final destination point.

During the 2022-2023 school year, we have continued to solidify our collaborative culture as a PLC. Our pre-planning for the school year included designing a master schedule that aligned common planning time for each department. We have continued to improve tiered interventions as our teachers consistently embed Tier II interventions in the classroom.

We have experienced significant growth as a team over the past three years. We are proud of the collective work we are doing at Hot Springs Junior Academy and the growth we have achieved these past 3 years.

DEMOGRAPHICS

795 students

- 19% Students with Disabilities
- 17% English Learners
- 86% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.2% American Indian
- 0.7% Asian
- 37.1% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 20.6% Hispanic/Latino
- 30.3% White
- 11% Two or more races

Hot Springs Junior Academy is 1 of 4 schools in the nation with these demographics to become a Model PLC School.

9th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
11.3%

7th grade
students
exceeded the
state average
in **Math** by

10.7%

Hot Springs World Class High School

9-12

HOT SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

739 students

- 15% Students with Disabilities
- 11% English Learners
- 73% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.9% American Indian
- 0.9% Asian
- 34.2% Black/African American
- 0.3% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 23.8% Hispanic/Latino
- 30.9% White
- 8.9% Two or more races

10th grade
students
grew in
Math by
2.1%

10th grade
students
grew in
ELA by
2%

OUR STORY

Every staff member at Hot Springs World Class High School wants every student who comes to our school to find their version of success. The adults in our school are very focused on rooting out the potential in each student and in working to get the best work out of them. We want the best for our students and need to find and implement the best practices to help our students achieve.

Old practices are hard to stop, especially when the rush of the school year is underway. We used an agenda to guide our steps and protect the plan. Teams had to truly depend on one another throughout the process, and that level of trust and vulnerability takes time to develop.

Many barriers that other schools face, we don't. Our teachers have ample time to work collaboratively while still maintaining over the state required minimum for teacher planning. Our barriers weren't systems, it was culture. We didn't change much the first year, but this year, we restructured teams so that we were not led by departments. Instead, we have content leads. This has made a significant difference at the secondary level. This year we will be using RTI Scheduler. We believe this will help more appropriately communicate with students and families about why their child has been placed in a specific intervention group.

We have developed so much as a team unit. There is a true interdependence and building and sharing of ideas and practices with the common goal of student learning in mind. The adult learning on campus has absolutely been profound.

The focus on goals and their relationship to mission and vision has been school-changing. No longer do teachers see the school goals as just words on a page; they understand that what they do in their classrooms directly impacts progress toward goals. The mission and vision guide our work and our decision-making in the building, and we have school norms in our collective commitments. It helps everyone to be on the same page rather than working in isolation.

OUR STORY

We began last year with two professional learning opportunities. Diane Kerr helped our teacher teams tighten up the grade level essential standards and learning targets. We created an instructional protocol that outlined instructional strategies and processes to be tightly monitored. With Bill Ferriter, we learned about a systematic approach for responding when students do not learn.

With a focus on RTI and Tier 1 instruction, we had many opportunities to practice what we were learning. With such a high population of English learners and children living in poverty, we implemented a strategy for sheltered instruction through the use of sentence stems, anchor charts, and "I can" statements. Teachers also created data notebooks to help students monitor their own learning.

Teacher teams and the guiding coalition focused on collective commitments around data. As data analysis became our norm, the RTI team and the guiding coalition created a system of response to intervention focused on reading. During WIN time, a 30 minute block 5 days per week, students were instructed on foundational reading skills, which was our goal for the year. Interventions lasted for 3 weeks before students were re-assessed and placed into new groups. During a 6 week period, we saw over 20 students grow in foundational skills needed to read.

Progressing into the new school year, we are excited about building on the progress we have made. Our Guiding Coalition is revamping the Master Schedule to include RTI Intervention Times for grade K - 5 to begin by the end of August. Our staff gained a better outlook on how grades affect student motivation and efficacy. The administration team began creating a sequence and monitoring protocol to assess the effectiveness of our systems for culture, learning, and results.

Our Solution Tree coaches were instrumental in our success in focusing us on the right work. We are very thankful to the ADE and our coaches for giving us the tools needed to continue to grow and become a successful Professional Learning Community.

DEMOGRAPHICS

243 students

- 12% Students with Disabilities
- 51% English Learners
- 93% Economically Disadvantaged
- 1.2% American Indian
- 0.8% Asian
- 12.8% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 59.3% Hispanic/Latino
- 14.4% White
- 11.5% Two or more races

3rd grade
students
grew in
Reading by
25.2%

5th grade
students
grew in
Math by
16.5%

Howard Perrin Elementary

K-4

BENTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

>>>>>

DEMOGRAPHICS

483 students

- 10% Students with Disabilities
- 4% English Learners
- 31% Economically Disadvantaged
- 1% American Indian
- 1% Asian
- 12% Black/African American
- 0.2% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 7% Hispanic/Latino
- 73% White
- 6% Two or more races



OUR STORY THROUGH THE EYES OF OUR STAFF

"My favorite part is that this is OUR KIDS, and we're all making it work for all learners. When we celebrate learning, it is a huge celebration no matter whose class they are in. But those times I don't meet the learning goal, and it's on the data analysis protocol, it's no longer scary to come to the meeting. Our team talks through it to make us all better."

--Kelsey Ramsey, Kindergarten teacher

"I discovered that I matter. How I teach matters not just for my classroom, but for all students' learning."

--Linnie McCook, veteran first grade teacher

"When we know what our essentials are I feel we can dig into any new curriculum and find what we need to make it work for student learning."

--Kathy Tolbert, veteran second grade teacher

"We are very comfortable being vulnerable and asking the team for advice and feedback because they care as much if my kids get it as I do."

--Amy Baldwin, third grade teacher

"We've always had good intentions but now we are more intentional."

--Mallory Jones, fourth grade teacher

"The most rewarding part of this work for me is watching staff collaborate as true teams for the good of students. For students, it's watching them get excited about their learning as they reach their goals."

--Stacye Shelnut, Principal

2nd grade students grew on NWEA in **Reading** by **39%**

3rd grade students grew on NWEA in **Science** by **57%**

Howard Perrin Elementary was granted PLC Model Status in 2021.

Lake Hamilton Junior High ⁸⁻⁹

LAKE HAMILTON SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

694 students

- 8% Students with Disabilities
- 3% English Learners
- 63% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.3% American Indian
- 0.4% Asian
- 2.7% Black/African American
- 0.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 12.1% Hispanic/Latino
- 77.9% White
- 6.5% Two or more races



OUR STORY

Our selection as part of Cohort 4 in 2019 was the beginning of our transformation into a fully-functional Professional Learning Community. We believe that a journey to greatness begins with a single step: just make sure you are pointed in the right direction! One of our most important steps was to form a guiding coalition made up of key influencers who could lead the work. The guiding coalition began to build shared knowledge around the PLC process and its three big ideas: a focus on a collaborative culture, a focus on student learning, and an intense focus on results! We developed our four pillars founded on our mission: **to ensure high levels of learning and growth for all students and adults within a safe, supportive, and collaborative culture.** Our staff began to shift from a culture of working in isolation to a collaborative culture of teams focused on the four questions. We developed loose and tight expectations to fulfill our collective commitments.

We built daily common planning time in the master schedule for the four core courses and began Late-Start Mondays to allow more time to collaborate around the right work. Teachers began developing norms, SMART goals, and rolling meeting agendas. Teams began unwrapping their essential standards into learning targets, developing proficiency scales, common assessments, data protocols, and essential standard unit maps. The work began to expand quickly, and we needed a way to organize our work from a leadership/guiding coalition view to monitor and support the work of our teams. The PLC process has now prompted us to discuss effective grading practices that reflect student learning and place a more intense focus on learning and interventions. LHJH has moved from a "C" school to a "B" school, awarded Best ELA Growth scores by the Office of Education Policy, and was recognized as a Model PLC School in 2023.

9th grade students exceeded the state average in Reading by **12%**

Lake Hamilton Middle School 6-7

LAKE HAMILTON SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

631 students

- 12% Students with Disabilities
- 5% English Learners
- 65% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.2% American Indian
- 0.6% Asian
- 4.3% Black/African American
- 0.2% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 11.6% Hispanic/Latino
- 78.2% White
- 4.9% Two or more races

6th grade
students
grew in
English by
8.3%

OUR STORY

6th grade
students
exceeded the
state average
in **Reading** by
7.2%

Lake Hamilton Middle started the journey to becoming a PLC in order to improve student achievement and outcomes, address specific challenges or gaps in instructional practices, engage in best practices and data-driven decision-making, and meet the needs of our learners more effectively. Teachers worked together to plan and problem-solve to allow our students to grow. Our students' growth fostered our teams' growth. By focusing on collaborative learning and data-driven decision-making, we improved instruction and started to meet the needs of all our students. One major success we have had was the mindset shift from "my students" to "OUR students." We work together to ensure growth and success for our students as well as each other. Another major success was targeted interventions and support. This allowed us to identify struggling students, implement targeted interventions, and provide individualized support. Support from district administrators has been instrumental in moving the work forward. They value and promote this work as essential. We allocate time for teachers to collaborate and engage in the work with clear goals and accountability. Monitoring progress allows us to sustain the work.

Magazine School District



DEMOGRAPHICS

430 students

- 17% Students with Disabilities
- 1% English Learners
- 73% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.2% American Indian
- 2.8% Asian
- 1.2% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 1.4% Hispanic/Latino
- 93.7% White
- 0.7% Two or more races

8th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
24.8%

4th grade
students
grew in
Math by
22.1%



OUR STORY

At Magazine School District, deciding to participate in the PLC project in the 21-22 school year wasn't even a conversation. We understood that this needed to be a total district transformation. Our students deserve the best no matter if they were in high school or elementary. Now entering into our third year there is buy-in from the staff to the school board who made three fundamental commitments.

1. Learning is our fundamental purpose.
2. We are committed to working together in collaborative teams.
3. We need and should expect results rather than intentions.

These commitments permeated our district and changed the way we hire, examine data, and make decisions. We are laser-focused on improving the skills of each of our students and assisting them to be the best versions of themselves possible. Our guiding coalition is instrumental in making collaborative decisions that are focused on student learning. While this has been some of the hardest work that has faced our district, it has been among the most transformative. Most staff now comment that they will never go back. They enjoy assisting one another and have become even more of a support to any struggling student and staff member. We often call ourselves "Rattler Family" and that has never been more evident as we help each other in our daily struggles. This may include academically but it goes further into essential standards, poor behaviors, and physical and mental health needs. Make no mistake, PLCs are not just about collaboration, they are far more important than conversations and meetings. The focus has become balanced to include more opportunities for all students including the highest achievers. Magazine School District has bold goals and will soon be a leader in the state and nation for our students. We know that being part of the PLC project has put us on the right track for success. We invite everyone to sit back and watch us obtain our goals.

Main Street Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

PK-6

HOT SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT



OUR STORY

For the past six years, Main Street Visual & Performing Arts Magnet (previously Oaklawn) has been engrossed in the PLC process through the Arkansas Department of Education's PLC Pilot Project. At the beginning of this process, the school was underperforming, and there was high teacher turnover. The teachers worked in isolation, and there was no consistency throughout the grade levels or building. Common planning time was only used to discuss logistics and share information. After learning about the PLC process, the school decided to apply for the Arkansas Department of Education's PLC Pilot.

Our application was not accepted, but we knew that this was the right work. We created our first-ever Guiding Coalition. We focused on building culture and getting clear on question one: "What do we want students to know and be able to do?" Our administration team began attending and facilitating collaborative team meetings weekly. After facilitating team meetings for months, the lead teachers began facilitating. We began to see a shift from *me* to *we*.

In 2017, our Guiding Coalition reapplied for the Project, and we were accepted into Cohort 2. We knew that we could continue the work; however, having Solution Tree coaches onsite would help drive the work even further. Our district implemented "Early Out Wednesdays" which gave our collaborative teams an additional hour to meet weekly. During this school year, 29% of newly enrolled Kindergarteners were identified as needing special education services. This created a need for our school to create a system of support for all. This year, our mission, vision, and collective commitments were redesigned to include *ALL* learners.

The PLC process has caused us to reflect on everything at our school. The work of teams has continued to grow. Our Guiding Coalition has been the guiding force to drive change. We have learned that the answer is truly in the room and have transformed into a collaborative culture where student learning drives everything. Main Street staff are proud of the work that we have accomplished and we know that through this process we will continue to improve our practices each and every year.

DEMOGRAPHICS

657 students

- 20% Students with Disabilities
- 8% English Learners
- 92% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.2% Asian
- 40.6% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 17.4% Hispanic/Latino
- 29.5% White
- 12.3% Two or more races

6th grade
students

grew in
Math by

10.5%

6th grade
students

grew in
English by

4.2%

Marion Visual & Performing Arts Magnet

K-6

MARION SCHOOL DISTRICT

>>>>>

DEMOGRAPHICS

723 students

- 12% Students with Disabilities
- 2% English Learners
- 88% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.1% American Indian
- 0.1% Asian
- 68.1% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 4.8% Hispanic/Latino
- 18.8% White
- 8% Two or more races

4th grade
students
grew in
Math by
5.9%

5th grade
students
grew in
English by
21.8%

OUR STORY

Marion Visual and Performing Arts Magnet began our journey to become a PLC after several years of working hard with little noticeable impact. The Professional Learning Community process brought to our campus a renewed sense of enthusiasm and commitment to our mission of "Learning. Growing. Achieving. Setting the Stage for Success!" Our team had become weary after years of declining data, but an intense focus on doing the "right" work allowed us to learn together and move with purpose. The sum of that work has translated into a culture of collaboration that intently focuses on student learning, designing purposeful assessments, and using data as a tool to determine how to best support student learning.

During year one we were forced to confront ailing practices, mindsets, and structures that were impeding our success as a campus as well as the success of our students. We evaluated every facet of our work to ensure each was in alignment with our mission, vision, values, and goals. Not only has this work resulted in positive learning outcomes for our students, but our staff has become more collaborative, engaged, and open to feedback and new learning.

When we began our work we felt as though we would be ready to dive right in and tackle essential standards. A change in our thinking resulted in inquiry; inquiry resulted in further research and new learning; new learning resulted in deeper inquiry. Before we knew it, a process we thought would be represented by a linear ascent became more of a "cha-cha" as we came to understand the consequences of building shared knowledge and what it means to move forward as a true professional learning community. We have worked as a team to determine what students must know and be able to do and what it means to learn at high levels. We have analyzed grade-level standards and collectively built assessments that provide meaningful feedback and inform instruction. Perhaps most importantly we have come to know what it means to be accountable to ourselves, for our work, and our mindset, and what it means to be collectively accountable to the most significant cause we know – our students and their learning.

Marked Tree School District



DEMOGRAPHICS

495 students

- 15% Students with Disabilities
- 2% English Learners
- 73% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.4% Asian
- 31.9% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 4.8% Hispanic/Latino
- 60.3% White
- 2.6% Two or more races

10th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
23%

7th grade
students
grew in
English by
15%

OUR STORY

The growth that has been experienced in the Marked Tree School District over the past year has been nothing short of phenomenal. As a result of partnering with ADE and Solution Tree, we now have an aligned system in which all of the organizational arrows point in the same direction. We have implemented a guaranteed and viable curriculum for our students that was created by the experts in the building - the teachers. We are building an assessment system that gives us the ability to identify individual students' needs and provide immediate Tier 2 intervention during class. In addition, our district has been able to create a social-emotional team that checks in with each kid daily to ensure they are ready to challenge the tasks of the day and not be worried about tackling the challenges that are at home.

As a result of being a part of this network, our teachers have become more skilled in identifying strengths and weaknesses within their Tier I instruction and planning so that our mission, ensuring high levels of learning for all students, can be fulfilled.

If we get this right, the ripples in our community can last for years. In a community that battles generational poverty and economic hardship, this can be a tool in turning the tide for our families.

"Our high school teacher retention was the best it has been in 20 years." -- Superintendent Matt Wright

Mountainburg Elementary

K-4

MOUNTAINBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT

PLC PROJECT SCHOOL

>>>>>

OUR STORY

We have a lot to celebrate at Mountainburg Elementary. The work we have done and are continuing to do with Solution Tree has given us an opportunity to refine and extend where we are in our PLC journey. We continue to thrive in a healthy and positive school culture; we are a school of "Believers." We have institutionalized our practices of common planning, identifying essential standards, short learning cycles, and creating and using common formative and summative assessments. We provide students with planned interventions and extensions based on data from both formative and summative assessments.

Grade-level teams meet weekly for unit planning, data disaggregation, intervention and extension planning, and lesson planning to ensure that students are learning at high levels. During our weekly collaborative time, the teachers work with their grade-level peers, as well as with their vertical teams to maintain a clear focus on our guaranteed viable curriculum and progression across grade levels. Our teachers took advantage of training opportunities to improve their literacy instructional practices with high-impact strategies in Tier 1 instruction, and the data reflects this improvement with an increase in student learning and achievement. From the beginning of the year to the middle, 84% of students showed growth in Literacy on the NWEA map in grades Kindergarten through 4th. We implemented the use of data walls in both literacy and math to monitor student achievement. The data helps teachers reflect on their practices and provide high-impact interventions for struggling students. Teachers have gained confidence in their practices as students become "band jumpers" in the move toward mastery and grade-level readiness. We plan to continue growing and learning in the PLC process with a focus on RTI and numeracy. We know that we are doing the right work to ensure that our students have every opportunity to learn at high levels. As our Mountainburg Elementary Mission states, "All students will learn at high levels in a safe and positive environment, where we connect with each other to build a successful future." It has been a joy to work with our Solution Tree coaches as they guide us in this journey. We are committed to being lifelong learners and "Dragon Strong."

DEMOGRAPHICS

230 students

- 20% Students with Disabilities
- 0% English Learners
- 78% Economically Disadvantaged
- 3% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 1.7% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 1.3% Hispanic/Latino
- 94% White
- 0% Two or more races

4th grade
students
grew in
Math by
25.8%

4th grade
students
grew in
Science by
26.6%

Norphlet Middle School

5-8

SMACKOVER-NORPHLET SCHOOL DISTRICT

>>>>>

OUR STORY

We are going into the 2023 - 2024 school year with high expectations. Due to administrative changes, beginning the PLC process was a huge lift while trying to change the culture of the school. Our staff has put in the work while dealing with changing standards. We feel that this hard work will reflect on student learning as well as state test scores. As a district, there has been so much growth in students as well as teachers. Reflecting on the growth I've seen with our staff this past school year, I am excited about the upcoming year. Teachers are working as collaborative teams instead of just meeting to ask questions. The selection of essential standards was a team effort even for our singletons. They were able to help each other in developing unit plans and prepare more direct meaningful lessons. Along with help from our instructional facilitator, our teachers have developed a dashboard where all documents can be found including essential standards, unit plans, meeting agendas, and other helpful tools.

Our district decided to make the adjustment to the school week by offering short Wednesdays. Teachers will be able to collaborate with each other without having to give up planning time. Along with early dismissal once a week, we have built in a time of the day for intervention. B.U.C.K.S. Time (Building Up Core Knowledge & Skills) is scheduled for 30 minutes 4 days a week. This time will be used to pull students and offer skill-specific help that is related to lessons being taught at that time. Math and Literacy are the main focus, but we also have groups selected to help with homework, missing assignments, and project-based extensions. We are committed to the PLC process, and with the support of the solution tree coaches we expect to see a positive correlation between teacher collaboration and student learning.

DEMOGRAPHICS

338 students

- 10% Students with Disabilities
- 1% English Learners
- 42% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.6% American Indian
- 0.3% Asian
- 13.9% Black/African American
- 0.6% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 3.9% Hispanic/Latino
- 80.1% White
- 0.6% Two or more races

6th grade
students grew
in **every**
tested area
in 2023.

5th grade
students
grew in
English by
9%

Oakland Heights Elementary

K-4

RUSSELLVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT



OUR STORY

Oakland Heights is a high-poverty school with high minority and ELL populations. We were so excited to have made a B during the 2018-2019 school year on the School Report Card. It was our highest report card grade, and we were finally using curriculum and rigor to ensure our students were successful. Then the pandemic hit. Our students began the 2020-2021 school year with more students receiving school virtually than any other elementary school in the district. Our Hispanic population had been hit tragically with Covid, and parents were scared to send their children to school. Soon we had the highest population of failing students in the district. Serving students at school wasn't much easier. We tried to teach reading through masks and massive amounts of absences. By the end of the 2021-2022 school year, I knew we had to have help. Our scores were discouraging and plummeting fast. The cohort grant was suggested to me, and I found that nearly every area of support met our needs precisely. We were awarded the grant, but I really didn't know what support I would be getting. I only knew there were success stories across the state of schools being turned around through the PLC process. The first year of the grant was difficult. Our coach recommended we create a new schedule to allow for more team time. Our staff found the team time invaluable when planning and working as a PLC. Our Guiding Coalition found a passion for leadership and became empowered to lead their grade-level teams. We faced hard realities of how and why we were struggling to engage students in rigorous, effective instruction. Our assessment and data analysis became aligned like never before. After Year 1, our scores on the ACT Aspire made double-digit gains. Our teachers are eager to create an RTI system that ensures every child receives Tier 2 and those who need additional support receive Tier 3. As we enter Year 2 of our work, our staff is focused on ensuring high levels of learning for all, creating assessments that include expectations for every student, and working as a team to provide RTI for every student. We are working closely with our literacy coach to re-align our phonics curriculum to the new standards and to ensure our 3rd and 4th-grade students are reading on grade level. We have a new appreciation for 'All Means All' and are focused on putting that into practice every day for our students and staff.

DEMOGRAPHICS

418 students

- 23% Students with Disabilities
- 34% English Learners
- 70% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.5% Asian
- 9.3% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 44.3% Hispanic/Latino
- 38.8% White
- 7.2% Two or more races

3rd grade
students
grew in
Math by
22.3%

4th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
11.4%

Oaklawn STEM Magnet

PK-6

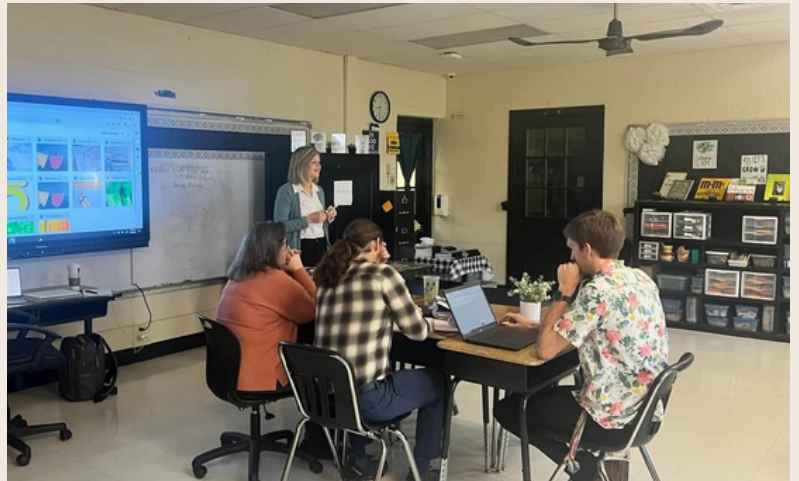
HOT SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

457 students

- 18.8% Students with Disabilities
- 14.7% English Learners
- 89% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 1.1% Asian
- 32.4% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 13.1% Hispanic/Latino
- 41.4% White
- 12% Two or more races



OUR STORY

Oaklawn STEM Magnet is now in the third year of the PLC Cohort 5. We applied to provide our staff with explicit and relevant professional development opportunities that would promote student and staff growth. We knew having support from our district and the Solution Tree Associates would strengthen our understanding of the PLC process to execute and sustain this process successfully. Additionally, their support has helped us clarify questions, truly understand what proficient work looks like, and guide us to best practices for increasing student achievement. We look forward to joining the other two schools in our district as a designated Model PLC school.

4th grade
students
grew in
Math by
15%

4th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
9%

Parson Hills Elementary

SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT

K-5



DEMOGRAPHICS

452 students

- 13% Students with Disabilities
- 66% English Learners
- 95% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.2% Asian
- 1.5% Black/African American
- 31% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 54% Hispanic/Latino
- 12.4% White
- 0.9% Two or more races

4th grade
students
grew in
Math by
27.5%

5th grade
students
grew in
English by
10.2%

OUR STORY

The discrepancy between our continual strong growth and yet such low proficiency on the state assessment is one reason we applied for the PLC grant. Although we are confident great teaching and learning are happening across our building, we must have guaranteed and viable instruction in every classroom every day. We know we must all commit to ensuring every student is achieving at high levels. In order to do so, we continue to foster a culture of collaboration and ongoing professional growth through the PLC model.

We continue to strengthen our collaborative team meetings to analyze student data, identify areas of improvement, and share best practices. Teams are developing stronger common formative and summative assessments. Teams are refining instructional strategies in Tier 1 and developing targeted interventions for students in Tier 2 and 3.

There has also been more vertical collaboration. Because the Guiding Coalition was inundated with tasks unrelated to the 4 PLC questions, we developed a Building Coalition. This additional team leads aspects of our school family such as coordinating our school assemblies, analyzing safety issues and refining practices, building behavior processes, etc.

Our Guiding Coalition started to not only ensure essentials were aligned but also to analyze grade-level CSAs. This ensures rigor is progressing according to the grade-level standards. By investing in building the leadership capacity within the building and quality professional development, we aim to enhance the skills and expertise building-wide at Parson Hills Elementary.

Our coaches through the PLC grant have been instrumental in our collaborative and instructional growth. We highly value all they have taught us and are sincerely grateful for the opportunity provided by the ADE to continue learning this year. We look forward to strengthening our collaborative and instructional skills to support our students at the highest level.

Quitman School District



DEMOGRAPHICS

855 students

- 16% Students with Disabilities
- 1% English Learners
- 53% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.2% Asian
- 1.4% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 1.9% Hispanic/Latino
- 95.2% White
- 1.3% Two or more races

8th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
14%

6th grade
students
grew in
Math by
16%

OUR STORY

For over 150 years, Quitman Public Schools has been the heart of the Quitman Community, and the staff has demonstrated high levels of commitment to the school's mission. Members of this school and community truly care about each other and the overall well-being of the school and its students. These groups of people have been working hard for years, yet their efforts have often not been directed toward the right work. Thanks to Solution Tree and the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process, the laser focus on the right work has drastically changed the impact our teachers are having on our school, students, parents, and community. Teachers have gone from working independently to interdependently in a few short years.

Our master schedules now reflect our commitment to collaboration. Our team meetings are a sacred time centered around the four questions, and teachers are changing their instructional strategies based on the data from common formative assessments and other student data. Our special education department has shifted from resource and pull-out to full inclusion kindergarten through the tenth grade, and our special education teachers no longer work on an island.

Content & grade-level teams have established SMART goals for each content area that guide each team's work, and each goal has a specific timeline. Our teachers are working in teams to improve instruction by sharing instructional strategies, modeling for other teachers, and participating in learning walks across grade levels and content areas including athletics. All teams are now interdependent professional learning communities planning for student learning and success.

Since 2018, Quitman High School Reading scores have grown from 30% to 51% of students reading on grade level.

Rivercrest Elementary

PK-6

RIVERCREST SCHOOL DISTRICT

PLC MODEL SCHOOL



DEMOGRAPHICS

556 students

- 14% Students with Disabilities
- 3% English Learners
- 81% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.2% American Indian
- 0.2% Asian
- 25% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 8.6% Hispanic/Latino
- 60.1% White
- 5.9% Two or more races

4th grade
students
grew in
Math by
23.6%

5th grade
students grew
in
Reading by
26.6%

OUR STORY

In 2017, Rivercrest Elementary began the application process to become part of the Professional Learning Communities Grant through the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. We had begun making changes in the schedule to allow for collaborative time and interventions within our daily schedule. However, the collaborative meetings being held were focused on the day-to-day operations of school and standardized tests. We knew that we wanted to improve our practices to better support student learning, and we felt that the support the grant and Solution Tree provided would be valuable in helping us on that journey.

One of the steps necessary in the application process was to survey the staff to gauge support for the project. Having over 90% of the staff on board to join the PLC cohort helped ensure that we were in a good position culturally to begin the work. In year one we created a guiding coalition with representation from every grade level and department in our school. Having district office support was monumental.

We quickly realized that the grade-level team leads had to have a specific skill set to be able to lead the teams effectively. It became a building focus to build leadership capacity within our team leads. We also felt that in doing so we were creating some sustainability within the project. During our RTI year of the project, we also faced some challenges in providing all three tiers of instruction to all students. We had fine-tuned one intervention time during the day in which both our grade level teachers and highly trained interventionists served each grade level. However, we realized that we were failing to serve students who were assigned a tier 3 intervention with appropriate tier 2 interventions that supported classroom instruction. We learned that while we were working diligently to fill in student gaps, we were failing to provide the real-time interventions they needed as well.

We completed the three-year commitment with the PLC grant in May of 2021. That same year, our team worked to submit the evidence to become a model PLC school and was successful. The work that we completed during those three years has made a lasting impact on the staff at Rivercrest Elementary. This process is not just something that we do at Rivercrest; it has become part of who we are.

Smackover Elementary

K-4

SMACKOVER-NORTHPLET SCHOOL DISTRICT

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DEMOGRAPHICS

430 students

- 13% Students with Disabilities
- 1% English Learners
- 45% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.2% Asian
- 15.6% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 4.2% Hispanic/Latino
- 75.1% White
- 4.9% Two or more races

3rd grade
students
grew in
Math by
9.1%

4th grade
students
grew in
Math by
2.3%

OUR STORY

The focus of year one has been identifying essential standards. We have completed that process in each grade and have moved on to unit planning, identifying learning targets, and creating common formative assessments. In addition to this work, we realized that we must have a different approach to our students who are falling behind. We developed a new system for Response to Intervention to better serve our students.

We developed a schedule to ensure each student has an opportunity daily to receive any necessary interventions. The master schedule now allows for students to receive daily targeted support for 30 minutes to ensure that the interventions and extensions are specific to their learning targets. This will provide the time and focus for a measurable impact on student learning.

We are very thankful for ADE, Solution Tree, and all the coaches who made the visit to Smackover Elementary this year! We are in a great position moving forward with the systems that have already been implemented and are excited for the growth we will experience in the future.

Smackover High School

9-12

SMACKOVER-NORPHLET SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

299 students

- 7% Students with Disabilities
- 0% English Learners
- 33% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.7% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 17.4% Black/African American
- 0.3% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 4% Hispanic/Latino
- 76.6% White
- 1% Two or more races

9th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
6.4%

10th grade
students
grew in
English by
11.2%

OUR STORY

Reflecting on the growth I've seen with our staff this past school year, I am excited about the upcoming year. Our school worked so hard to meet all expectations and goals. The road was bumpy at times, but we never lost sight of the "why." We have grown from having "PLC" meetings to becoming a professional learning community, and I'm so proud of that growth.

Our professional learning focus for year one of the PLC at Work Project was selecting our essential standards, identifying learning targets for content areas, and linking all documents to our Campus Dashboard. We learned that collaborative time was the key to achieving our process goal. With the help of our coaches, we are cultivating a collaborative culture and building high-performing teams. In addition, all elective teachers were assigned to the Action PLC team to ensure every student is connected with a teacher or coach for emotional and behavioral support.

Our team is so excited about the plans for next year! B.U.C.K.S. Time (Building Up Core Knowledge & Skills) has been built into our master schedule. This intervention period is between the first and second periods for thirty minutes, four days a week. During this time, students will receive additional support from English and math teachers on specific skills or concepts. We are offering Critical Reading and Critical Math courses for students who need Tier 3 intervention. Students will also dismiss early every Wednesday to provide teachers time to do the necessary work to directly impact student achievement and growth. We are committed to the PLC Cohort Project to increase success for all students and look forward to the partnership and consistent support of the ADE, Solution Tree, and our coaches.

Sonora Middle School

6-7

SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT

>>>>>

DEMOGRAPHICS

632 students

- 14% Students with Disabilities
- 39% English Learners
- 85% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 1.4% Asian
- 2.1% Black/African American
- 29.7% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 42.9% Hispanic/Latino
- 22.3% White
- 1.6% Two or more races

6th grade
students
grew in
Math by
11.2%

6th grade
students
grew in
English by
6.4%

OUR STORY

Sonora Middle School has grown significantly in the first year of the PLC Project. We have established a shared mission, vision, collective commitments, and goals to guide our work. We have created a Guiding Coalition to establish purpose and a sense of collective responsibility. We are fostering a culture of celebrations and meaningful traditions that recognize the work of teams and individuals. We have become more clear and precise about what we are teaching and assessing through learning targets and proficiency scales. We are learning to give regular formative assessments for feedback and we are seeing teams analyze assessment data to make decisions about instruction and interventions.

My biggest learning as a principal is the importance of creating visibility of the teaching and learning taking place in my building. We now have a comprehensive PLC Dashboard to understand and support the work taking place in each classroom. Our teams know and share their essential standards, pacing guides, unit plans, common assessments, and student data through the Dashboard. This visibility is resulting in "positive peer pressure" as teachers gain new ideas, align practices, and are motivated to capture their best work.

We are looking forward to continued growth next year. We want to strengthen our Guiding Coalition as a model team who has clear systems for addressing the three big ideas and four critical questions of the PLC process. We are focusing attention on our specialists sharing data, pushing needs, and sharing progress. We hope to create more visibility of our work with students and parents. We are also focused on establishing our essential behavior standards, which will help us in the RTI process and to address skill vs. will needs. We have appreciated being a part of Cohort 6 and the support from the various Solution Tree coaches this year!

University Heights Elementary

K-2

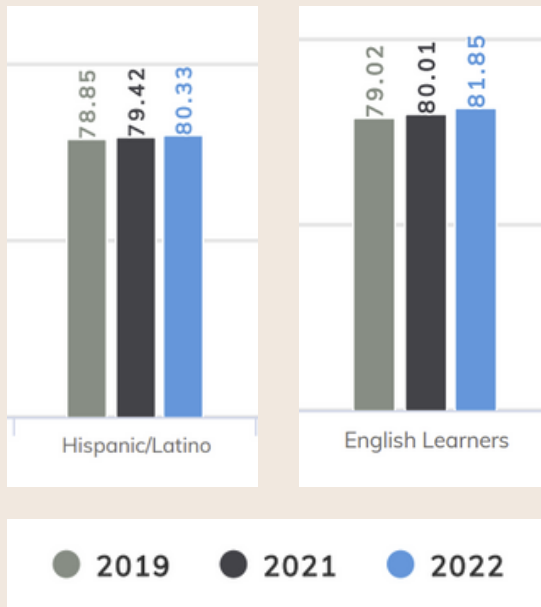
NETTLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

466 students

- 13% Students with Disabilities
- 10% English Learners
- 74% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.4% Asian
- 44% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 14.4% Hispanic/Latino
- 30.9% White
- 10.3% Two or more races



Hispanic/Latino and English Learners exceeded projected growth in 2022.

OUR STORY

University Heights Elementary (UHE) is entering year three of collaboration with Solution Tree. In the previous two years, we have learned enthusiastically about Professional Learning Communities. We are excited about year three and look forward to the ongoing support we have been receiving. In year one, we learned about the four critical questions and determined our why. We found that we were inefficient in many of our procedures and were not using our resources effectively. In year one we saw growth in planning, understanding how to work together to teach all students, and effectively managing resources and time.

In year two, we were able to focus on our Response to Intervention system. We were able to provide individualized support to students who had gaps in their learning. Each grade level also made strides in creating assessments and evaluating data. This allowed us to provide better support for our students at a variety of levels. Teachers were constantly having discussions regarding upcoming assessments, data from past assessments, and instructional strategies that were helping their students succeed. The educators at UHE have seen exponential growth in themselves as well as our students. We are grateful for the support that Solution Tree and ADE have provided and look forward to putting it all together in year three.

In order to continue improving, we will maintain a laser focus on the four critical questions and ensure all of our students learn at high levels.

Valley Springs Elementary

K-4

VALLEY SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

322 students

- 16% Students with Disabilities
- 0% English Learners
- 47% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.6% American Indian
- 0.3% Asian
- 81.6% Black/African American
- 0.3% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 2.2% Hispanic/Latino
- 95.4% White
- 0.9% Two or more races



OUR STORY

Our PLC journey began in August 2020 as Cohort IV of the Arkansas PLC Project. We had been working for several years to build a professional learning community that would ensure high levels of learning for all yet we weren't focusing on the right work. Teachers at Valley Springs Elementary were "getting together" to discuss classroom instruction and student performance, but this did not affect practice in a meaningful way. Our student data showed us that we needed a change.

The first year of our journey was a tough one due to Covid restrictions, navigation of online platforms, and a balance between professional and personal life. Additionally, we were beginning the PLC process, which was a new way of assessing students, reviewing data, and addressing the results. Solution Tree could not have assigned us better coaches. They came in with a list of tasks to be addressed, but also an understanding of the overwhelm we were experiencing.

Our initial focus was to learn the foundation of a professional learning community. The VSES Guiding Coalition led in the creation of a new mission statement: Together, we inspire, grow, and educate; reaching all students to continue the tradition of excellence. We created our vision statement and collective commitments, which became the foundation for future work. It was amazing to see teachers step out of their comfort zones and empower their colleagues to collaborate.

While we worked to build our PLC, we wrestled with the four critical questions and how to answer them. We reviewed our essential standards and learned to create clear learning progressions. We embraced common assessments and developed strategies for monitoring student learning. We reflected on our response when students didn't learn and modified our master schedule to provide targeted support, as well as planned extensions for ready students. Through collaboration and perseverance, we became more intentional with our focus on impacting student achievement.

4th grade
students
grew in
Math by
32%

OUR STORY

In 2018, 4 staff members attended training throughout the year to get an overview of the PLC process. We applied for the Arkansas PLC project offered through the Arkansas Department of Education and were accepted into Cohort 3. We invited Quitman School District to speak to our teachers about their journey. They explained that this wasn't "more added to the plate; this is the plate."

The first several meetings with our coaches were used to assess our current reality. We looked at our achievement data and knew that our students needed foundational reading help badly! There were bits and pieces of curriculum materials that teachers may or may not have had training on. We decided to define our own foundational continuum and created lessons to go with each skill. Teachers assessed where students were in that continuum, and we assigned each student to a small group. Our students became "our" kids, and we all felt responsible for their learning. Then Covid hit, and we didn't come back until August.

We couldn't continue our acceleration groups because we couldn't have students in close proximity. We were paralyzed in the process and reverted back to our old ways. It was time to create a clear and manageable plan for change in the middle of a pandemic! We decided to limit our guaranteed curriculum to five things in math and five things in literacy for each grade. Teachers made a wish list of what they wished kids came to them with. This enabled us to have vertical conversations about our guaranteed curriculum.

In our second year, we were given a blank calendar to document what we taught and when. We added information at the top of the calendars that included the standard, the learning targets, extensions, etc. Teachers created formative assessments to know if students were learning what was taught. We created our unit map dashboard. It was a game-changer to have our work organized and accessible to all.

The next ask was for teachers to collect data that was accessible to everyone. Unit information is listed and assessed targets are rated on results. We discuss what interventions the students are receiving and make plans. There have been no straight lines to any success, but what we have learned has set us up for continuous improvement. Teachers have learned that they are the experts in ensuring our students master our guaranteed curriculum. Our math scores have improved tremendously, and we are GROWING!

DEMOGRAPHICS

219 students

- 17% Students with Disabilities
- 0% English Learners
- 57% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 0.5% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 0.9% Hispanic/Latino
- 91.8% White
- 6.8% Two or more races

4th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
25%

6th grade
students
grew in
Math by
20.9%

Overview PLC Regional Network



The PLC Regional Network began in the 2021-2022 school year as a commitment to build the capacity of educators and support sustainability. The schools and districts participating in the PLC Regional Network are partnered with an Arkansas Practitioner who either participated in the PLC Project or led a school through the PLC processes with evidence of success.

Each year of the project focuses on a specific component of the PLC at Work process. School/district teams are expected to attend these training sessions in order to build shared knowledge so the work can be implemented at their sites. Solution Tree experts facilitate the learning for all of these academies.

- Year One: Laying the Foundation - Building capacity by creating a guiding coalition to lead the work.
- Year Two: Assessment - Utilizing data from rigorous assessments to guide instruction.
- Year Three: Response to Intervention - Creating a system of responding to student learning through intervention and extension.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS & DISTRICTS

Arch Ford

Westside Elementary
Westside High School
Clinton High School
Dwight Elementary
Alma High School
Berryville School District
Guy-Perkins Elementary
Guy-Perkins High School
London Elementary
Indian Hills Elementary

Dawson

Crossett Middle School
Bismarck Middle School
Hope High School
Kilpatrick Elementary
Lake Hamilton High School
Lake Hamilton Primary
Langston Elementary
East End Elementary
East End Intermediate
East End Middle School
Sheridan Elementary
Sheridan High School
Sheridan Intermediate
Sheridan Middle School

Northwest Arkansas

Park Elementary
Cedarville Elementary
Fairview Elementary
Gentry Primary School
Lincoln Elementary
Morrison Elementary
Old Wire Elementary
Siloam Springs Intermediate
Southside High School
T.G. Smith Elementary
Westwood Elementary
Jasper Elementary
Alpena School District

Wilbur D. Mills

Blytheville Elementary
Blytheville Middle School
Blytheville High School
McCrary High School
Brady Elementary
Cabot Junior High South
Stagecoach Elementary
Warren Dupree Elementary
Western Hill Elementary
Clarendon High School
Star City School District

Alma High School

9-12

ALMA SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

990 students

- 13% Students with Disabilities
- 3% English Learners
- 46% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.5% American Indian
- 1.1% Asian
- 1.1% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 8.2% Hispanic/Latino
- 73.4% White
- 16.3% Two or more races

46%
of 10th
graders
scored
Exceeding
in **Reading**

45%
of 9th graders
scored
Exceeding
in **Reading**

OUR STORY

Three years ago when we started the PLC process, our literacy department consisted of a strong group of educators. Throughout the first year, we experienced growing pains resulting in the loss of four of eight literacy teachers, with another teacher leaving in the middle of the following school year. By the beginning of year two, we had a team with half experienced teachers and half new teachers. The work we started had to be restructured entirely due to all of our new faces, including an administrative change.

With new leadership came a passion to revive the literacy team to be the best for Alma High School students. We created new norms, vision, and collective commitments. We learned together what 15-day cycles, essential skills, progression ladders, and common formative assessments look like for our department. We began looking at data and Response to Intervention. We went from a group of existing teachers to a functioning group of educators.

After receiving state assessment scores, we have evidence that the teamwork is helping not only our teachers succeed, but our students as well. The growth is a direct result of the team we built, practices discussed, and assessments created during our 2nd year of the PLC process. We will continue to strive for sustainability and continued growth and learning for our students at Alma High School.

Cabot Junior High South ⁷⁻⁸

CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

688 students

- 17.15% Students with Disabilities
- 2.33% English Learners
- 39.68% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.1% American Indian
- 1.3% Asian
- 4.1% Black/African American
- 0.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 7.1% Hispanic/Latino
- 82.1% White
- 5.1% Two or more races

OUR STORY

As a new principal coming into the third year of the PLC Regional Network, I knew that I would encounter some challenges. However, I quickly learned that the Guiding Coalition had a great handle on the PLC at Work processes. This core group has been instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition. We have been able to address concerns about inconsistent implementation, and they have been instrumental in building the shared knowledge to get collaborative teams refocused on the work. Though we still face some challenges with scheduling, we know this is the right work for our school. The support we are receiving through RTI Academies, Solution Tree Associates, and our Arkansas Practitioner is invaluable as we strive to build a strong system of support to ensure student success.

OUR PROGRESS

7th grade
students
grew in **Math**
by **13.3%**

7th & 8th
grade
students grew
in **every**
tested area
in 2023.

Cedarville Elementary

K-4

CEDARVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

270 students

- 17% Students with Disabilities
- 2% English Learners
- 74% Economically Disadvantaged
- 1.1% American Indian
- 0.7% Asian
- 0% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 3.3% Hispanic/Latino
- 81.2% White
- 13.7% Two or more races



OUR STORY

Cedarville Elementary School is located in Cedarville, Arkansas, a rural community located in Crawford County with approximately 1,400 residents.

Prior to PLC Regional Network, CES was having meetings which were called "PLC meetings". However, these meetings were focused on housekeeping items rather than student learning. Teachers worked independently and many grade levels were not horizontally or vertically aligned. Conversations were grade-level-based rather than school-based. CES is the only school in the district participating in the PLC Regional Network.

The PLC implementation process has been challenging for some. We consistently review the PLC process and explain that it's not more work, it's the right work. The Leadership Team renamed themselves the Guiding Coalition; however, the focus was still that of a leadership team. Through the process, we have learned more about the roles and responsibilities of a Guiding Coalition and we have added a Leadership Team for this school year.

Team meetings began the work of focusing on standards, student learning, and Common Formative Assessments, but some were not sure of the next steps after reviewing assessment data. Some teachers were still a little apprehensive about observations from peers and how to process observation feedback.

CES is still part of the PLC Regional Network and still learning about the PLC process. We agree that our goal is to utilize the PLC process effectively to better serve our students. We have implemented a streamlined MTSS schedule across the building as well as team meetings to allow grade-level teams and interventionists to meet together. Student enrollment has increased from 265 in 2022 to 276 in 2023. Our overall ESSA score increased from 64.15 in 2021 to 69.47 in 2022. Our percentage of students "In Need of Support" in Reading on ACT Aspire has decreased from 48.3% in 202 to 42% in 2022 to 39.25% in 2023.

4th grade
students
grew in **Math**
by **14.3%**

4th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
23.7%

Dwight Elementary

K-4

RUSSELLVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

213 students

- 17% Students with Disabilities
- 21% English Learners
- 62% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 2.3% Asian
- 3.3% Black/African American
- 0.9% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 24.4% Hispanic/Latino
- 63.9% White
- 5.2% Two or more races

Students
scoring
**Ready in
Reading**
increased by

10.3%

Two students receiving special education support in reading became proficient readers and were dismissed from special education services in just one year.

OUR STORY

Dwight Elementary has been a part of the PLC process for some years now; however, there was little understanding. In 2022, there was a common desire from staff to better understand and learn more about PLCs.

For the 2022-2023 school year, Dwight Elementary focused on building a strong foundation and shared knowledge of what it means to be a true professional learning community. Faculty meetings changed to Learning Centers where Tier 1 instructional strategies were studied. A gradual release model was used to help teams learn how to work collaboratively around the four critical questions during team meetings. Each grade-level team facilitated work on essential standards by asking the four critical questions with the support of the principal and instructional facilitator.

Moving forward, Dwight has implemented the model that Janel Keating led in the White River School District by adding a Building Learning Coordinator position that will work side by side with the principal to ensure we remain focused on continuous improvement through the lens of real-time data. Our PLC Network mentor not only supported us in the PLC process, but also taught and modeled effective Tier 1 strategies that our teachers could implement immediately.

Dwight Elementary staff have bought into the PLC process and are excited to take the next steps to ensure full implementation and student success results.

East End Middle School 6-8

SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

424 students

- 15% Students with Disabilities
- 5% English Learners
- 45% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 3.3% Asian
- 2.6% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 10.1% Hispanic/Latino
- 77.6% White
- 6.4% Two or more races

7th grade
students
grew in
English by

15.9%

8th grade
students
exceeded the
state average
in **Reading** by

16.2%

OUR STORY

Collaborative efforts, shared understanding, and collective commitment to the PLC process do not become authentic to the culture of a school by sheer happenstance. Significant work has gone into establishing common expectations, systems, and processes focused on meeting the needs of all students at East End Middle. In 2021-2022, East End Middle joined the PLC Regional Network Cohort. Year One focused on the Foundational Pillars, specifically on the vision, mission, values, and goals, which were essential components to building collective beliefs and commitments of our school moving forward.

At the beginning of the 2022-23 school year, EEM established formal, protected time for collaboration in the master schedule. Protected time for collaboration enhances learning by ensuring ALL students have access to core instruction of essential standards (Tier 1). All teachers collaborate with their content area team as they work through DuFour's four questions, unpack essential standards, identify learning targets, develop proficiency scales, design common formative assessments, and analyze results to impact the next cycle of inquiry.

We completed a Needs Assessment. Based on the results, the three focus areas for adult learning were: Hope & Efficacy, Student Investment, and Learning Culture. As a result, we changed our practices and mindsets to develop a culture that builds hope & efficacy, motivates and encourages students to invest in their learning, and creates a culture focused on education.

Through building shared understanding and commitment to the PLC at Work Process at East End Middle, we are working to develop a culture of continuous improvement through targeted improvement practices, goal setting, celebrations, cycles of inquiry, and RTI structures for meeting student needs. EEM monitors student learning on a frequent and timely basis as a means for teachers to identify students' misconceptions, intervene in essential skills, and enrich student learning through high levels of rigor centered on the essential standards.

The collective efforts of the staff, students, and community of East End Middle resulted in EEM being recognized as a Model PLC School in 2023. We are seeing growth in our students and adults, and we are so thankful for the learning we've obtained through the PLC Cohort Project.

Hackett Elementary

K-6

HACKETT SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

375 students

- 16% Students with Disabilities
- 0% English Learners
- 76% Economically Disadvantaged
- 1.6% American Indian
- 0.5% Asian
- 0.2% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 4.2% Hispanic/Latino
- 86.1% White
- 7.4% Two or more races

3rd grade
students
grew in **Math**
by **17%**

4th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
12%

OUR STORY

A culture of learning with high expectations for ALL students and believing that ALL children can learn at high levels are what drive the focus at Hackett Elementary. Before we began our PLC journey we had already begun to make great improvements to our RTI process. As we began our PLC journey, we realized that we had been focusing solely on intervention. After learning how to identify essential standards, and write and analyze assessment data, we were able to tighten our curriculum.

Our next step in facilitating a culture of continuous improvement was to take a hard look at our special education program. After many discussions with our Guiding Coalition and grade-level teams, we decided to implement inclusive practices. Ensuring access to Tier 1 grade-level instruction has been a game-changer for these students. We truly have an understanding of building a culture of high expectations and learning for all students.

In 2021 we were named a Professional Learning Community at Work Model School! This was such an exciting accomplishment for us as it was most certainly the culmination of three years of hard but worthwhile work! Our students continue to show growth and improvement in every grade level and every subject which is evidenced in our achievement data.

Although we are already a Model School we are so excited to be a part of the PLC Regional Network. Our belief is the "work" is never done. The increased knowledge our team is receiving in assessment and RTI is invaluable to what we do. We are always striving for growth, and the PLC Regional Network is assisting us in accomplishing this goal.

Indian Hills Elementary

K-5

NORTH LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

450 students

- 13% Students with Disabilities
- 6% English Learners
- 47% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.2% American Indian
- 1.9% Asian
- 45% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 8.2% Hispanic/Latino
- 39.2% White
- 5.6% Two or more races



OUR STORY

Indian Hills Elementary in North Little Rock, AR, Pulaski County, serves approximately 450 scholars in grades K-5. Indian Hills Elementary receives Title 1 funds school-wide. The majority of the title funding is utilized for staffing and professional development. The remaining Title funds are utilized to provide technology for scholars, purchase online programs to assist struggling scholars, and provide enrichment for our scholars on grade level or above. Our staff participates in weekly grade-level PLCs, biweekly leadership team meetings, and regularly scheduled meetings and training through the PLC Regional Network. The building administrators and Multi-classroom Leaders facilitate most collaborative meetings. Each year of implementing our PLC process we become more efficient and effective. I believe having an opportunity to collaborate and work closely with a certified PLC at Work Associate from Solution Tree has not only assisted with increasing scholar achievement but has also encouraged staff to collaboratively review lesson plans or assessments used in class and offer critical feedback and recommendations for improvement. I am proud of our accomplishments and know that with the assistance of the Arkansas Department of Education and the Arkansas Regional Network, we will continue to move forward in our quest to excel at the highest possible level.

3rd grade
students
grew in
Math by
20%

5th grade
students
grew in
English by
11%

London Elementary

K-4
RUSSELLVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

184 students

- 13% Students with Disabilities
- 3% English Learners
- 46% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.5% American Indian
- 1.1% Asian
- 1.1% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 8.2% Hispanic/Latino
- 73.4% White
- 16.3% Two or more races

3rd grade
students
grew in
Math by
27%

3rd grade
students
grew in
English by
11.3%

OUR STORY

London Elementary was accepted into the PLC Regional Network in 2020. Since that time frame, London has continuously developed in the PLC processes through identifying districtwide essential standards, creating pacing guides, and setting dates for common formative assessments. Our teams are reflecting on best practices and using data to guide next steps to improve student learning.

London is constantly evaluating our Tier I practices to ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum is in place for all students. RTI blocks to support our students are targeted to meet each student skill by skill. These actions have proven to have a positive impact on ESSA scores, as well as ACT Aspire. In 2021, London's ESSA score was 65.63 and increased to 66.77 in 2022. This year a solid Tier I foundation and RTI will be the main focus.

Park Elementary

K-5

FORT SMITH SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

366 students

- 14% Students with Disabilities
- 40% English Learners
- 90% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 1.8% Asian
- 16.1% Black/African American
- 0.3% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 48.5% Hispanic/Latino
- 23.8% White
- 9.5% Two or more races

3rd grade
students
grew in **Math**
by **23.3%**

3rd grade
students
grew in **ELA**
by **18%**

OUR STORY

The biggest challenge for Park Elementary as we began the PLC process was staff understanding of the “why.” Most of the staff assumed we were implementing another program that would be the latest and greatest thing that too would pass. Teachers also struggled with thinking of students as “our students.” Teachers were competitive and unwilling to share their students or knowledge at the journey’s beginning.

The first-trained teachers knew that implementation would be a struggle initially. The team slowly began by building relationships and trust in the Guiding Coalition. Grade-level team leaders began building their confidence to transfer knowledge to their grade-level teams. Grade-level teams began analyzing the essential standards and ensuring that each member had the same understanding. This allowed teams to build a viable and rigorous curriculum among grade levels. Because of staff skepticism, teachers became frustrated, but the Guiding Coalition training led to more knowledge within collaborative teams.

During our second year of training, teachers finally understood the “why” for analyzing student data and implementing strategies as a team to ensure student growth. All grade levels had a common Tier 2 intervention time to support students with the appropriate interventions. The teams still struggle with determining which students have mastered the essential skills. This year we are using our art, music, media, and PE teachers to provide interventions and enrichment activities.

The first year we began our journey with the Regional PLC Network, we saw a decrease in our test scores. In the second year, teams focused on student data, teacher collaboration, effective strategies, and sharing students among teachers. Park students increased in three of the four areas on the ACT Aspire. Students showed a 5% increase in reading and a 9% increase in math. Not only did we see an increase in grade-level students, but also more students moving from In Need of Support to Close.

Sheridan Elementary

PK-2

SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

557 students

- 22% Students with Disabilities
- 2% English Learners
- 46% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 3.6% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 4.3% Hispanic/Latino
- 87.1% White
- 5% Two or more races



In February 2023, Kindergarten CFA data showed that 80% of students had mastered letter and sound identification.

OUR STORY

The first and biggest challenge for Sheridan Elementary School in becoming a professional learning community was the notion of giving up “my kids” and giving for “our kids.” While we have a strong culture of family at SES, trust in your colleagues plays an even bigger role in developing a professional learning community.

Our team realized in the beginning that our meetings were just meetings. Our conversations were rarely about whether or not students were learning. We quickly realized that we needed to shift to a focus on student learning and essential standards. The leadership team began leading this work as well as the creation of common formative assessments.

Now that we all have the same vision of helping all learners grow, it's a priority of scheduling to ensure ALL staff members are included in the conversations about students in order to provide appropriate tiered support. All staff members participate in a collaborative team meeting where ALL students are discussed. Each morning ALL students participate in “Jacket Time” where they receive interventions or extensions based on their learning needs discussed during collaborative team meetings. By the end of the semester, we met with six families to reduce their literacy minutes from their IEPs.

The most important part of becoming a professional learning community is that it does not happen overnight. It is a collaborative process that takes the entire team. An instrumental part of moving forward is to make sure everyone has the same vision for what a PLC is and is involved with decision-making.

Sheridan Middle

6-8

SHERIDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

REGIONAL NETWORK SCHOOL



OUR STORY

The PLC Story for Sheridan Middle School is a story of collaboration among all teachers and a focus on student learning. It all started in the 2021-22 school year when the Sheridan School District leadership team decided to implement the professional learning community (PLC) model. Year 1 was focused on changing mindsets from isolated teaching to opening the door to collaboration, developing collective commitments, and collecting usable assessment data. The guiding coalition was established in the first year and helped lead in creating norms, developing an agenda, and modeling the behavior expected of others.

Year 2 (2022-2023) was focused on identifying essential standards, unpacking those standards, developing common assessments, and establishing a common pacing throughout our district. We also examined our Tier 1 instructional strategies in the classroom and realized we needed more support and training for best practices. We adjusted the master schedule to allow collaborative teacher time and student intervention time for unmet learning targets. This allowed teachers the time to discuss data, learning strategies, and student work.

Year 3 (2023-2024) will be focused on refining our system of RTI. We will improve upon our system of responding to student learning needs through intervention and enrichment. PLTs will use data to determine the accurate placement of students that address their learning needs whether for remediation or enrichment.

When our guiding coalition reflected on the current state of our work, one member stated that the PLC process has been great for our kids because we are using our teacher strengths to fill in learning gaps. We truly understand the work is not "my work" but "our work". We are having deeper conversations about how we are helping students grow, as well as holding each other accountable for providing a rigorous education. Through the process, we have witnessed sustained professional development and built-in next steps that reveal themselves through rich conversations.

DEMOGRAPHICS

632 students

- 11% Students with Disabilities
- 1% English Learners
- 43% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.3% Asian
- 2.5% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 5.9% Hispanic/Latino
- 87.5% White
- 2.8% Two or more races

8th grade
students
exceeded the
state average
in **Math** by

8%

6th grade
students
grew in
Reading by

7%

Stagecoach Elementary

K-4

CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

483 students

- 19% Students with Disabilities
- 2% English Learners
- 45% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.8% Asian
- 1.9% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 5.6% Hispanic/Latino
- 83.2% White
- 8.5% Two or more races

2nd grade
students
grew in
Reading by
17%

3rd grade
students
grew in **Math**
by **11%**

OUR STORY

Stagecoach Elementary students and staff have shown tremendous growth in the first two years of our PLC process. In year one we got our feet wet by focusing on our math instruction. We did this by choosing essential standards, unpacking those standards, and creating common formative assessments. Many of our staff struggled to accept changes in planning instruction and utilizing data. However, by our second year, the results were undeniable. Students were experiencing success because of our targeted instruction and teacher collaboration. In year two we focused on doing every part of the process and creating common assessments for every essential. There were certainly some growing pains as we worked together to figure out what worked best for each team, how to stay organized, and how to communicate effectively with all members of the school community. By mid-year, every grade-level team had chosen essential standards for both math and literacy, created and administered common formative assessments in both subjects, and analyzed data to form intervention and enrichment groups. In year three, we are learning that this is truly a never-ending process. We are focusing on honing our skills with the work of our PLC. We want to be efficient in our team meetings and make sure we use every piece of data to inform our teaching. Being a true professional learning community constantly requires us to reevaluate our teaching practices, assessment routines, and RTI strategies. The PLC process requires teachers to be learners. Even though the process requires work, we have found it is making our staff more reflective educators and our students more aware of their own learning. We will continue to do this work because it is the "right work!"

West Side School District



DEMOGRAPHICS

466 students

- 20% Students with Disabilities
- 0% English Learners
- 72% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.2% Asian
- 0.6% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 1.9% Hispanic/Latino
- 96.9% White
- 0.9% Two or more races

OUR GOALS

Moving forward, one of our District goals is to ensure that our processes, practices, and beliefs are aligned District-wide. This requires collaborative conversations vertically from PK- School Board. To ensure that this alignment is becoming clearer and stronger, we have identified some next steps:

1. Provide time for vertical teams to meet
2. Revisiting our vision, mission, and collective commitments often - keep them alive with students and staff
3. Train all new staff and board members in the PLC process and purpose.
4. Establishing a monitoring system for the Work of the PLC process as well as the impacts it is having on learning.
5. All faculty have been trained - PLC Institutes, RTI Institutes, etc.
6. Committing resources (human and fiscal) to student and staff growth.

OUR PROGRESS

10th grade
students grew
in **Math** by
9.9%

4th grade
students grew
in **Math** by
42.6%

Overview Leading PLCs Districtwide



Leading PLCs Districtwide from the Boardroom to the Classroom began in the 2022–2023 school year with 38 districts, 15 Education Service Cooperatives, and Education Renewal Zones. In year two of this project, these districts receive on-site coaching to help them advance the work at the local level. In the 2023–2024 school year, 45 additional districts embarked on this journey to improve student learning.

Dr. Janel Keating shares the transformation the central office administrative team and building principals must undergo to become a learning-focused organization. In traditional districts, departments and schools often operate in silos, paying attention to only the immediate needs of that department or school. In a learning-first district, everyone's priority is improving learning for all students.

This work highlights how district learning meetings focus on support for principals and their teams based on the work layered under the 4 Critical Questions of Learning. It drills deep into the work of the district principal team and the building principal. Districts learn how teams should practice and rehearse the work, anticipate questions, and share learning data from the building leadership and teacher teams.

PARTICIPATING DISTRICTS

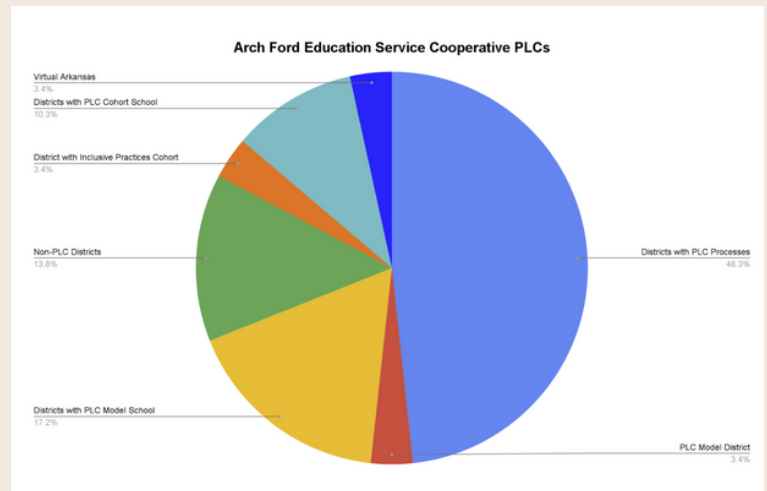
Cohort 1

AR Lighthouse Academy	Lake Hamilton
Arch Ford ESC	Lee County
Arkadelphia	Marked Tree
Arkansas River ESC	Mountain Home
Bald Knob	Mountainburg
Benton	Northcentral ESC
Berryville	Northeast ESC
Bryant	Northwest ESC
Cabot	OCSS
Camden Fairview	Osceola
Carlisle	OUR ESC
Crossett	Pocahontas
Crowley's Ridge ESC	Rogers
Dawson ESC	Russellville
DeQueen–Mena	Searcy
DeWitt	Searcy County
Eureka Springs	Sheridan
Great Rivers ESC	Smackover–Norphlet
Greenbrier	South Central ESC
Greenwood	Southeast ESC
Guy Fenter ESC	Southwest ESC
Hamburg	Springdale
Helena–West Helena	Texarkana
Hot Springs	Two Rivers
Hoxie	West Side
Jacksonville North	Wilbur Mills ESC
Pulaski	Woodlawn
Jasper	

Cohort 2

Batesville	Mount Ida
Beebe	Mountain View
Bentonville	Ouachita
Bismarck	Pea Ridge
Calico Rock	Pine Bluff
Cedar Ridge	Pocahontas
Cutter Morning Star	Prescott
Decatur	Siloam Springs
Dover	Southside Bee Branch
Earle	Star City
Gentry	Strong–Huttig
Greene County Tech	Valley Springs
Guy Perkins	West Memphis
Harrison	Western Yell County
Hazen	Wynne
Highland	
Hillcrest	
Horatio	
Izard Co. Consolidated	
Jackson County	
Lafayette County	
LISA Academy	
Little Rock	
Mammoth Spring	
Marion	
McGehee	
Midland	
Mount Ida	

Arch Ford Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

Arch Ford ESC began its PLC journey in early 2018, not long after the state began its PLC journey with Cohort 1. We were fortunate to have three schools in that first cohort and heard about the ways they were collaborating and focusing on results. For the next two years, Arch Ford contracted with Solution Tree to provide a six-day Leadership Team Development Series to lead them through PLC processes, including the foundations, essential standards, common formative assessments, Response to Intervention, and enrichment. Teams came to a full-day session at Arch Ford and were then tasked with implementing their learning. As our team members learned alongside them, we began providing district support in PLC processes.

As a natural progression of this work, the Arch Ford Professional Development team began to function as a PLC in 2019. We start every school year analyzing state test data from all 28 districts we serve, as well as considering other sources of data to help guide our work. This work allowed us to prioritize our support for schools, build our own RTI system for schools, and track our impact.

When we began our work in Districtwide Leadership: From the Boardroom to the Classroom with Dr. Janel Keating, our Guiding Coalition was able to focus on extending the work we had already been doing with teachers, facilitators, and principals to the district level and our own Board of Directors. Based on this work, we now have monthly data discussions with the Superintendents of our districts, created a PLC Hub to house essential standards for our districts, and have a Data Dashboard showing student growth. We saw the need to dedicate one of our specialists to lead this work. We now have a PLC Support Specialist who oversees the work of our Guiding Coalition and provides direct support to districts in PLCs.

When we reflect on the impact PLC has had on our districts, we see that it has created a common language for our educators not only in the Arch Ford region but across the state. We have deeper conversations about essentials and proficiency scales and provide targeted professional development and onsite support to our schools implementing PLCs. As education grows and changes each year, we have found that the PLC process is the foundation that guides all work. We will continue to utilize PLC processes and will not consider our work finished until EVERY student achieves at high levels in EVERY Arch Ford school.

Arkansas River Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

As the State rolled out the Professional Learning Communities initiative and resources, our role varied from school to school and agency to agency. The bulk of our work was at the school level supporting setting power standards and learning targets, pacing guides, common formative assessments, instructional strategies to support tier one instruction, and RTI scheduling and engagement. Our internal implementation of the PLC work was moving from “light” to ones of greater accountability. Through data analysis, the Board chose literacy as their focus area. ARESC developed two plans to further the work of creating readers in the region. These are listed as Goal #1 and Goal #2.

Goal 1: After one year of Leading District PLCs at Work Districtwide, we began to move both ARESC PLC Plans forward in a more aggressive and focused fashion. In the current year, we will implement, with fidelity, the Professional Learning Community process in every service team: Parents as Teachers, HIPPIY, Preschool, Early Childhood Special Services, Teaching and Learning, Alternative Education Academies, and K-8 Virtual Academy.

Goal 2: In the current year, we have a goal to provide individualized support to each district as they plan and implement professional learning communities with fidelity and to model Professional Learning Communities best practices.

Actions Taken:

- Completed DESE’s Leading PLCs at Work Districtwide and are participating in PLC Dates for ESCs
- Revisited operating principles, collective commitments, and norms for all service teams
- Utilized data to set short-term and long-term SMART goals
- Established a schedule of data-driven meetings for Team Leaders following the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle
- Reviewed policies to support teaching and learning with emphasis on a culture for high levels of learning
- Celebrated improvements and A-HAs
- Created a plan for modeling best practices in ARESC job alike and Governing Board meetings
- Surveyed districts to see what supports their leadership team envisions for continued PLC growth

Action Plan:

- Collaborate with each district to create an individualized plan of support for each district
- Create a detailed plan for modeling PLC best practices.
- Create agendas to focus on literacy, student learning, data, and celebrations
- Implement processes for ARESC Team Leaders to share monthly progress with the Governing Board
- Create a strategic plan for focusing on Tier One Instruction
- Create a plan to support our two unique state-wide school systems
- Intentionally connect other initiatives to the PLC process
- Actively engage with partners to provide high-quality professional learning opportunities

Bald Knob School District



DEMOGRAPHICS

1,066 students

- 15% Students with Disabilities
- 2% English Learners
- 59% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.5% American Indian
- 0.3% Asian
- 2.2% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 5.3% Hispanic/Latino
- 86.7% White
- 86.7% Two or more races

8th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
5.8%

6th grade
students
grew in
Math by
25.3%

OUR STORY

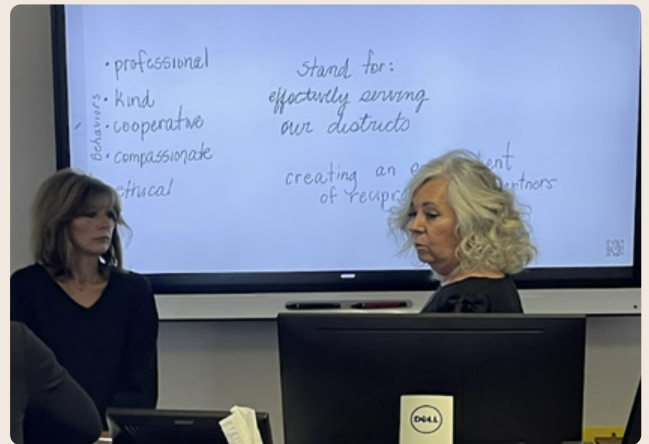
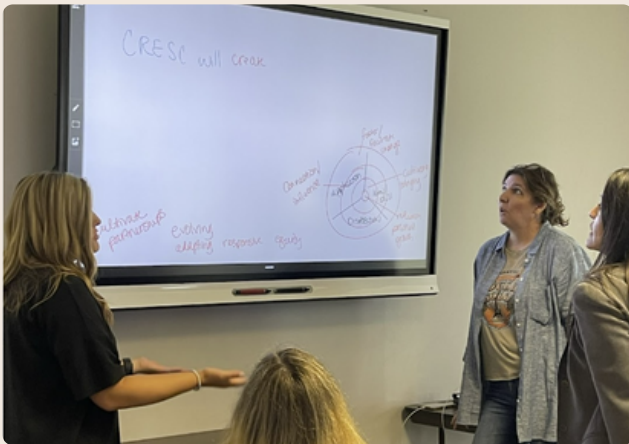
Our PLC journey began in 2021 after virtual attendance to several Solution Tree training opportunities through partnerships with DESE and ERZs. The district formed a guiding coalition to cast a multi-year vision for our district's school improvement efforts. Through this guiding coalition, the faculty and staff of Bald Knob Public Schools (BKPS) revisited the purpose of our school. We agreed that the fundamental purpose of BKPS is to ensure high levels of learning for all students. We collectively derived Bald Knob Public Schools' mission to ensure high levels of learning – Every Minute, Every Student, Every Day.

From 2021 to 2022, our administrators worked tirelessly to implement professional learning communities independently. In our first year, we saw a 3% growth in reading scores districtwide, and BKPS became the first district in Arkansas, and only one of eleven districts in the nation, to be named a Capturing Kids' Hearts National Showcase District.

In the 2022–2023 school year, Bald Knob School District attended Leading PLCs Districtwide: From the Boardroom to the Classroom with Janel Keating. Participation in this training was a game changer. Not only was this an opportunity to train our district leadership, but Janel challenged us with the commitment to have a board member participate as a teammate. The presence and investment of time and heart our school board secretary, Paul Johnston, chose to make was priceless and powerful for our district. Not only did he attend the training with us, but he also went with us to see the PLC process in action in Washington. He became a believer in the process and a strong advocate in our district with the school board and staff.

In May 2023, BKPS gained acceptance into DESE's Systems of Support and District Leadership Coaching. The visible evidence of our ongoing collaborative efforts shines through our districtwide dedication to our mission, vision, collective commitments, and systems to ensure no matter the age of the student the same quality of educational, behavioral, mental, and physical health supports are given at every level for every student living within our zip code.

Crowley's Ridge Education Cooperative



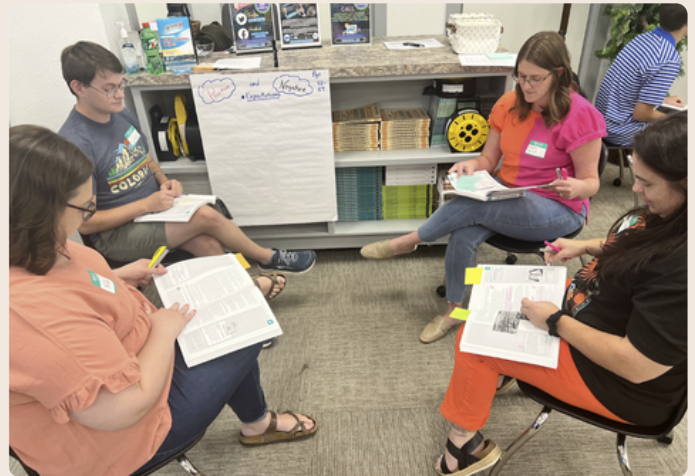
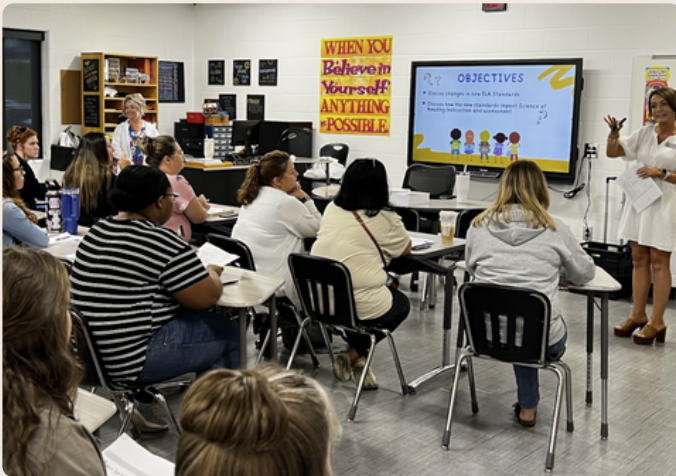
OUR STORY

Crowley's Ridge ESC has one or more districts participating in the PLC Cohort Project since its inaugural 2017-2018 year. While the cooperative was not directly involved in the initial cohort training, we were intentional in providing additional professional development opportunities that merged the concepts of High-Reliability Schools with the principles of PLCs. In partnership with our ASU ERZ, we brought to our schools high-quality training centered on essential standards, proficiency scales, and guaranteed & viable curricula. Our content specialists were able to work side-by-side with attending educators to apply the strategies learned in order to support our teachers.

In 2021, we were fortunate to be able to support two schools in our region that were awarded an Inclusive Practices PLC grant for that academic year. This was an amazing opportunity for teachers to learn how to utilize the PLC process to plan inclusive and effective core instruction and collaborative support for students.

Our own journey with PLCs officially began in 2022-2023 with the "Leading PLCs Districtwide" trainings. While we have always started the year looking at school data, district needs, and regional feedback, we haven't consistently functioned under a specific model or process. Through the training with Dr. Janel Keating last year, our core group explored the PLC process and how that can look and sound within our co-op. We returned to the CRESC staff with a renewed focus on the PLC process and how it can frame our support for all of our schools. As with any restructuring, we needed a firm foundation on which to grow. We devoted our first staff meeting of the 2023-2024 year to reviewing the components of the PLC process, revisiting our Mission statement, developing our Vision statement, and articulating our beliefs and values. We truly believe that this process will help us focus on the most important components of education, and this framework will provide the tools necessary to maintain a consistent focus on those components. As our PLC schools can attest in their own narratives, positive gains can be made when using this model. We want to replicate that within our co-op so that we can help all schools replicate it for their own growth.

Dawson Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

At Dawson our mission is “Serving the Schools, Serving the Students.” In order to achieve our mission our team is dedicated to understanding, implementing and training on the PLC process. Our specialists and team are actively involved in the PLC System of Support network. This involvement ensures our understanding of the process so that we can effectively implement PLC practices on site at Dawson and guide the practices within our schools. We focus our efforts on taking that knowledge to our administrators and schools. Dawson specialists are actively engaged in schools daily and focus their involvement on supporting PLC meetings. We truly believe in the PLC process and have districts that have seen major growth and success from implementing the practices. Within our 22 districts the process is in different phases, and we focus on being a support system to each and every school to provide PLC success. Our “why” is helping schools help students become successful, productive adults. Through focusing on our “why” we can truly make a difference and a positive impact in each student’s educational journey.

DeQueen-Mena Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

DeQueen-Mena ESC is committed to serving and supporting our schools so that ALL students succeed. This has been our privilege for almost 40 years. In that time, a lot has changed in education and we have always embraced the challenge of navigating that wave of change. Our latest change in education for DMESC began in 2021 with our director, Benny Weston, being invited to visit White River School District in Washington with a team from DESE, other directors, and school personnel to see the PLC process in action. What Mr. Weston came back with can only be described as profound optimism for the future of our districts.

DMESC set out to transform how we do business through implementing the PLC process. We are firm believers in modeling what we teach. We knew that we had to begin to utilize the PLC process in our own workplace to be able to support and serve our schools in adopting the PLC process in their buildings. Mr. Weston knew that what he witnessed at White River SD was possible for our cooperative region schools as well. We have used a leadership team approach for several years but we began analyzing data as a team to truly understand where our areas of service and support could be bolstered. We formed a guiding coalition to lead the work in our districts with representatives from pre-k, K-12 content areas, administration, and career and technical education.

Last year was pivotal for DMESC and two of our districts. We collaboratively attended Leading PLCs at Work Districtwide: Boardroom to Classroom training with Janel Keating. We could plan together and set goals for the work moving forward. DMESC conducts all staff meetings, leadership team meetings, board meetings, etc., using the PLC model. Our co-op has plans to dedicate funding to provide a support specialist for our districts to support the PLC work in their buildings. DMESC is committed to serving and supporting our schools in the PLC process.

Education Renewal Zones



OUR STORY

Especially since beginning the training of “Leading PLCs at Work Districtwide”, the ERZ has worked to function as a high-performing PLC. We reviewed and revised our Mission, Vision, and Collective Commitments. We are now using an online agenda that focuses on the four questions. We are currently in the process of designing a dashboard to more easily access and share information. We are also working on a form to guide us in the decision-making for professional development. This will allow us to pre-plan the collection of evidence to ensure an impact on student learning and achievement.

We once judged success by numbers. Now we realize that we must continually ask ourselves before, during, and after decisions are made “What probable impact will this have on improving student achievement?” “What evidence will we gather to determine success?” We know and affirm that student learning is the priority and are working to align our practices and procedures to promote student learning.

This year, for the first time ever, public schools, education service cooperatives, higher education faculty, and the ERZ team will join together to become learning partners in the Arkansas System of Support. We will sit together and learn in the 9 days of Laying the Foundation. We will visit a high-performing PLC school together. Institutions of Higher Education that have chosen to participate in the Systems of Support are striving to ensure that their Teacher Candidates are Day One Ready to take over a classroom as an instructional professional on the first day of employment. If they have an education leadership program, they want aspiring instructional leaders, principals, and superintendents to be ready to lead the school or district to become a fully functioning Professional Learning Community.

Great Rivers Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

Great Rivers ESC has participated in PLCs at Work for multiple years—advocating for the work in districts, participating in trainings ourselves, and supporting the work with teachers. We found ourselves meeting collaboratively and supporting those types of meetings within districts. However, we officially began our PLCs at Work integration at the Cooperative-level during the 2022-2023 school year as formal partners in the work of two districts. One of the biggest impacts that PLCs at Work has had on our effectiveness and impact on student learning in our Cooperative area is that it has fostered an environment that allows for vulnerability in conversation about our practices. This vulnerability allows for data to be looked at in a different manner, looking at individual students in their learning and growth, alongside achievement.

We are currently working to refocus support and collaboration to build strong systems of support for our building-level leaders. As we dive deeper into our work, we are reminded of the importance of the building-level leaders in the PLC work.

Guy Fenter Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

The Guy Fenter Education Service Cooperative (GFESC) has partnered with Solution Tree, a nationally recognized professional development company and educational publisher. GFESC has been committed to PLC work since 2016. GFESC collaborated with Solution Tree to provide training to area educators in three focus areas: Professional Learning Communities, Common Collaborative Assessments, and Response to Intervention. GFESC began training members of area districts with a PLC Institute in 2016, RTI Cohorts in 2016, 2017 & 2018, and Common Collaborative Assessment in 2019, 2020, 2021, & 2022. In addition, in the winter of 2021, GFESC hosted Assessment and Grading with Tim Brown and in the summer of 2021, GFESC hosted Measuring What Matters Most: Using Assessment to Drive Achievement to assist and support leaders with the PLC work. Each of these events was regionally promoted and hosted numerous educators from each of the GFESC area schools.

GFESC Math and Literacy Specialists have supported eight schools in the PLC Inclusive Practices work led by Solution Tree facilitators. GFESC has been a regional host to many state Solution Tree events over the past two years with more than 200 participants invested in this work and we attended the Leading PLCs at Work: District-wide From Boardroom to Classroom led by Solution Tree's Dr. Janel Keating for the past year. Two GFESC districts have done work with the PLC Project. Nine area schools are participating in the PLC Cohort Project, three area schools are participating in the PLC Regional Network, and one district is working with Janel Keating in Leading PLCs Districtwide. The GFESC Mentoring Program has worked with Dr. Tina Boogren and Adrienne Turner on Self-Care for Educators and The Beginning Teacher's Field Guide, among other topics, serving more than 500 novice teachers annually.

GFESC is committed to the PLC work and assisting GFESC schools with the process and will continue to provide information and/or training related to the PLC process to all GFESC schools.

Helena-West Helena School District



DEMOGRAPHICS

918 students

- 14% Students with Disabilities
- 0% English Learners
- 96% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.2% American Indian
- 0.2% Asian
- 93% Black/African American
- 0.1% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 0.9% Hispanic/Latino
- 3.9% White
- 1.7% Two or more races

8th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
20%

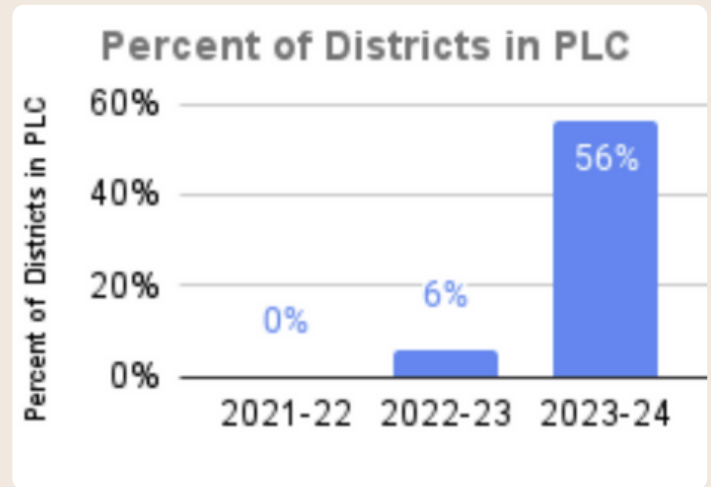
OUR STORY

Helena-West Helena School District is transforming at every level to become a highly effective Professional Learning Community (PLC). Our two new principals, Hiram Sumlin at J.F. Wahl Elementary and Tony Roach at Central High School, are leading this work at the building level while our district is modeling how to function as a PLC under the direction of our superintendent, Dr. Keith McGee. As we embark on this journey, we have partnered with Solution Tree; we currently have a district-level coach as well as a priority schools coach at each of our two campuses who work directly with the principal and guiding coalitions. Additionally, J.F. Wahl is participating in the Inclusive Practices Project with DESE to ensure ALL of our learners have access to grade-level Tier 1 instruction along with appropriate interventions.

Every K-12 teacher meets twice each week as part of a collaborative team. The work of the collaborative teams includes identifying essential standards, unit planning, creation of common formative assessments, data disaggregation, and planning interventions and extensions for students. The alignment of each team's work is providing our students with a guaranteed and viable curriculum. Professional learning is the key to improving student outcomes; not only do our teams look at student data, but our teachers are asked to reflect on their practice as well. The work of all collaborative teams in HWHSD, from the district to the building to the classroom, embodies our three priorities: improving Tier 1 instruction by providing the best for all students, collective teacher efficacy to improve the professional practice of all adults, and ensuring all students learn at grade level.

Northcentral Education Cooperative

>>>>>



OUR STORY

Northcentral Arkansas Education Service Cooperative began a PLC journey through a partnership with the Office of Special Projects, we attended our initial Leading PLCs at Work: District-wide From Boardroom to Classroom meeting with Dr. Janel Keating. Everyone at our coop was working hard with no vision or focus. We had no idea of our effect on districts, teachers, or students. We spent the 2021-22 school year team building and de-siloing all of our programs. In 2022-23 we worked on completing transformational change through the implementation of a PLC system.

We are an educational cooperative; therefore, adapting the PLC model from a district/school model to a cooperative model was necessary. Typically, our work has not been tied to direct student services. Collaborative processes within our teams made all of this work possible.

Everyone working together as a team revealed the need for accountability in every program we offer. Both our visit to the White River School District in Washington and our attendance at the PLCs at Work Institute this past summer were catalysts for us to continue on this path. This brought about a few key elements: a Guiding Coalition, non-negotiable time to collaborate and plan our work, buy-in from 9 of 16 of our districts, and dedicated funding for PLC work for 2 positions unique to education cooperatives.

When we began our journey, there were no districts in the Northcentral region participating in the state PLC project. Because of our passion for this process, we increased the percentage of school districts participating in the PLC process from 0% to 56%. Our renewed vision and focus have ignited a passion within our coop and the majority of our districts. The Capstone we created in May 2022 forced us to appreciate the implemented changes and progress.

All of this work has enabled us to narrow our focus to a few important smart goals. A few of these include teacher retention rates, K-2 reading progress in each of our districts, Early Childhood program and its impact on students, the success of schools using HQIM, and our work in Level 3 schools. We can't wait to see how our focus affects our students.

Northeast Arkansas Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

Between April 2022 and January 2023, the Northeast Arkansas Education Cooperative (NEAEC) saw approximately 40 representatives from the cooperative and eight member districts travel to the White River School District in Washington state. The primary objective of the trips was to observe and understand the PLC process's implementation across all levels of the education system.

The takeaways from the White River visit were substantial and were the catalyst for the subsequent initiatives within the NEAEC. On returning, the cooperative established a PLC Leadership Team. This team, formed with broad representation from NEAEC and its member districts, was tasked with spearheading the PLC initiative and support provided to member schools.

From March to April 2023, focused 'train the trainer' professional development sessions were conducted. These sessions revolved around core educational strategies and tools: determining essential standards, developing learning targets and proficiency scales, and introducing common formative assessments. NEAEC content specialists supported member districts throughout the summer of 2023 in identifying essential standards while analyzing the new state standards.

As the 2023-2024 school year began, NEAEC conducted a needs assessment to determine the next steps in supporting districts in the PLC processes. The results were precise: member districts desired further support aligning their essential standards with High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIMs). Acting on this feedback, NEAEC aligned the scope of work of the Communities of Practice grant directly to this need.

Professional development sessions will begin on October 16th for district and school leaders. The training is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the PLC process's foundational components and how to integrate HQIMs effectively into the classroom setting. Subsequent train-the-trainer HQPL opportunities have been organized, accompanied by follow-up coaching sessions for all 14 participating districts.

NEAEC's goal is for teachers in participating schools to prepare at least 2-3 lessons through the facilitated processes by July 1, 2023, ready for deployment in the first nine weeks of the 2024-2025 academic year. Each lesson aligns with the PLC initiative, integrating essential standards with HQIMs, backed by clearly defined learning targets, proficiency scales, common formative assessments, and tailored instructional strategies.

NEAEC's journey has been one of learning and collaboration with its member districts and one that we are excited to see have a positive impact on student learning.

Northwest Arkansas Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative (NWAESC) has partnered with nationally recognized professional development company, educational publisher Solution Tree and has been committed to the PLC work for more than eight years by providing training to area educators in three critical areas: Professional Learning Communities, Common Collaborative Assessments, and Response to Intervention. NWAESC views these three components as foundational to a strong educational system and, at the request of our districts, provided these three trainings on a rotating basis beginning with the PLC Institute in 2015, followed by RTI Cohorts in 2016 and 2017, and Common Collaborative Assessment in 2017 and 2018 and a second PLC Institute in July 2018. In addition, in the summer of 2020, NWAESC hosted Culture Keepers for Principals to assist and support leaders with the PLC work. Each of these events was nationally promoted and hosted over 700 educators with each event in our area schools.



NWAESC Math and Literacy Specialists have supported four schools in the PLC Inclusive Practices work led by Solution Tree facilitators. NWAESC has been a regional host to many state Solution Tree events over the past two years with more than 200 participants invested in this work and we attended the Leading PLCs at Work: District-wide From Boardroom to Classroom led by Solution Tree's Dr. Janel Keating for the past year. Seven schools have built 1 successful PLCs through work in the PLC Project. Four NWA schools have done work with the PLC Regional Network. Nine area schools are participating in the Systems of Support Network and seven districts are working with Janel Keating in Leading PLCs Districtwide. The NWAESC Mentoring Program has worked with Dr. Tina Boogren for multiple years on Self-Care for Educators and The Beginning Teacher's Field Guide, among other topics, serving more than 800 novice teachers annually. NWAESC is committed to the PLC work and assisting our area schools with this process and will continue to bring this information and process to NWA schools.

Ozark Unlimited Resources Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

When the PLC Project with Solution Tree commenced in the state, staff from the Ozarks Unlimited Resources Education Service Cooperative recognized this work as a key opportunity to support increased student learning in the schools and districts in the cooperative area. To grow our knowledge and become a valuable resource, professional learning opportunities became our focus. Specialists attended the Professional Learning Communities at Work Institute, the RTI at Work Institute, and the Common Collaborative Assessments Workshop to build foundational knowledge and learn examples of implementation in other schools/districts. Our next step included making a concerted effort to provide professional learning, which will further the implementation of the PLC process, in our schools. Sessions hosted have included high-reliability school work focusing on level 1, identification of essential standards, academic and behavior RTI, etc. The importance of continuing this journey in practice gave us the opportunity to provide support in individual districts based on the needs of that district. During the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, we provided support in developing the mission, vision, and collective commitments for the district. We also worked with collaborative teams on identification of essential standards and learning targets and the development of common formative assessments. Our specialists have been involved in the work in the schools/districts chosen to be in the PLC Cohorts. Presently, OUR Cooperative is actively engaged in the Leading PLCs at Work: Districtwide from Boardroom to Classroom session with Dr. Janell Keating as a means to support our districts that were participating as well as further the growth of the co-op operations as a PLC. Because we recognized the importance of birth to PK being included in this process, we elected to include early childhood personnel as part of our team attending these sessions. The early childhood department is currently involved in a book study using What About Us? The PLC at Work Process for Grades PK-2 teams as a resource. This work is now impacting PK-12 which we feel aligns our systems to effectively impact the growth of students in all grade levels. A few more highlights of our PLC journey include: collectively re-establishing our mission and vision statements as a cooperative, developing a Guiding Coalition to include a representation of stakeholders to increase our collaborative effort, and beginning the work of aligning our systems to reflect a high-functioning PLC team. Growth has been at the heart of that work for us.



Rogers School District



DEMOGRAPHICS

15,665 students

- 13% Students with Disabilities
- 28% English Learners
- 51% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.5% American Indian
- 1.4% Asian
- 1.4% Black/African American
- 2.5% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 48.1% Hispanic/Latino
- 42.4% White
- 3.7% Two or more races

8th grade
students
grew in
Reading by
3.5%

4th grade
students
grew in
Math by
7.2%

OUR STORY

Rogers Public Schools commits, through its district mission, to providing an environment of educational excellence where all belong, all learn, and all succeed. With such a large district, it is often difficult to align the work of individual teams across the district to ensure high levels of learning for all students. Although committed to the PLC process, we had to reflect on our ability to ensure “all means all.” Was a student at one elementary learning the same content, at the same time, and at the same level of rigor as they would across town? We had to accept that we needed to move from improving schools one at a time, to aligning the right work from a districtwide perspective.

The district teaching and learning team began the process by establishing a teaching and learning goal where we committed to all students interacting in effective classrooms every day that provide access to grade-appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement, and high expectations that drive results of grade level proficiency. To accomplish this, we set four priorities: establish essential standards, provide training on high-quality instruction, provide model lessons for essential standards, and design benchmark assessments.

We knew our success in this process would start and end with building consensus and clarity. Principals, assistant principals, and academic facilitators rehearsed this work with district administration and content specialists enabling consistency and the ability to anticipate questions or obstacles. Teachers and teams had a voice in essential standards selection, building consensus. This was followed by laying district essentials on top of high-quality instructional materials and establishing pacing by learning cycles. Buildings are diving deeper into new state standards, developing proficiency scales, success criteria, and student-friendly learning targets to gain clarity on district essentials. This clarity is furthered by analysis of the evidence of student learning through district-developed common formative assessments. Actionable intervention plans based on CFA analysis lead to individual student-focused goals, target by target and learning cycle by learning cycle.

Rogers Public Schools is invested in continuing the right work, in the right way, to ensure all really means all.

South Central Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

The South Central Service Cooperative has facilitated access to state grants that have empowered schools and districts in their pursuit of educational excellence. The Smackover Norphlet School District, Camden Fairview Intermediate School, Camden Fairview High School, and Camden Fairview Middle School were among the fortunate recipients of these grants, enabling them to implement innovative strategies and programs to benefit their students. As the years passed, the schools in South Central Arkansas continued to collaborate, share best practices, and make strides in student achievement. Their commitment to PLCs and the support of organizations like the South Central Service Cooperative ensured that every student in the region had access to a high-quality education.

In the educational landscape of South Central Arkansas, two districts, Smackover-Norphlet and Camden Fairview, embarked on a transformative journey in the 2022-2023 academic year. They were determined to enhance their teaching practices, improve student outcomes, and create a vibrant learning community. Guided by the experienced hand of Dr. Janel Keating, whose expertise spanned from the boardroom to the classroom, they eagerly participated in Leading PLCs Districtwide. In the 2023-2024 academic year, Strong-Huttig, under the direction of a new superintendent and inspired by the progress of its neighboring districts, eagerly joined the journey toward professional learning communities. Lastly, the Bearden School District has been awarded an Inclusive Practices Grant through the state to begin the PLC process.

South Central Service Cooperative Director, Karen Kay McMahan, had the opportunity to visit the White River School District in Buckley, Washington to observe a PLC Model School District led by Janel Keating. From this trip, Mrs. McMahan was able to share insights with our co-op team and our districts.

The PLC story in South Central Arkansas, marked by dedication, collaboration, and the support of passionate educators and leaders, is a shining example of how a commitment to excellence can transform the educational landscape for the better.

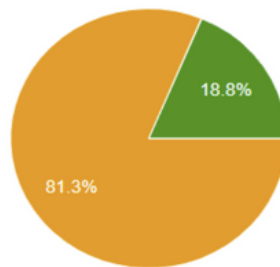


Southeast Education Cooperative



Which best described your district's status with PLC processes using these descriptors

16 responses



- "flirting" - interested in the possibilities/ observing others
- "dating" - dabbling in the work, curious but leaving options open to be able to 'break up' if it doesn't feel right or som...
- "engaged" - commitment to engage fully and striving to get better at it
- "married" - the way of life chosen; PLC process is deeply embedded in the culture of each school

OUR STORY

Southeast ESC, currently going through a leadership transition, re-established a focus on supporting the work of our schools and districts with PLC processes as well as PLC processes within the cooperative and with our board in the summer of 2023. Leadership Team members are participating in the Districtwide Leadership: From the Boardroom to the Classroom with Janel Keating.

The mission, vision, and collective commitments of the Specialists' Team were revisited. Specialists reflected on their knowledge of PLC processes and determined if a PGP goal was needed in order to build their capacity as we re-established focus on supporting our schools and districts without provider support and/or in need of support.

A data segment is included in each specialist meeting and ESC Board meeting. During the September Board meeting, each superintendent was provided with 3 years of ACT Aspire Trend data and a brainstorming session was held on questions that came to mind when reviewing the data with encouragement to use the questions for data conversations in their districts.

Southeast currently has 2 districts participating in the Districtwide Leadership: From the Boardroom to the Classroom, and a member of the ESC leadership team is attending with them and supporting their work.

We are working toward helping districts and schools connect the dots between the various initiatives such as HQIM, HQPL, Mentoring/Coaching, and PLC processes.

A needs assessment was completed by each district's leadership team so that we know where districts are in their implementation of PLC processes and what their support needs are. Our districts are in different places with their implementation, but all districts are on a PLC journey. A small sampling of responses from the needs assessment are provided.

Southwest Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

Building the Foundation

The journey began with a dedicated team of cooperative leaders and specialists attending "PLCs Districtwide: From the Boardroom to the Classroom" with Dr. Janel Keating. Before diving into PLCs, SWAEC laid a strong foundation. Data meetings and professional learning sessions on the ESSA School Index equipped our schools with the tools they needed to measure progress effectively.

Empowering Superintendents and Sharing Knowledge

In the fall of 2022, SWAEC took the next step by implementing the PLC model with our superintendents during regular monthly board meetings. This dynamic approach brought data to the forefront. SWAEC's director played a pivotal role by sharing updates from the PLCs Districtwide sessions and highlighting cooperative initiatives, fostering a culture of continuous learning.

Vision, Mission, and Values Revival

Following the winter break, SWAEC embarked on a mission to revisit and revamp its vision, mission, and values. The renewed vision, mission, and values serve as beacons guiding SWAEC's work in member districts. These principles were not only shared with stakeholders but also embodied through rebranding efforts, featuring a fresh logo and prominently displaying the vision and mission of our building. They serve as daily reminders of our unwavering commitment to our schools.

Meeting New Standards Head-On

The state introduced new math and ELA standards that will shape the upcoming ATLAS state assessment. SWAEC's teacher teams engaged in learning about essential standards, proficiency scales, and the intricacies of the new assessment during the summer of 2023. Schools are actively identifying these essentials at each grade level, aligning their curriculum with the evolving educational landscape.

Empowering Leadership

Recognizing the critical role of leadership, SWAEC invested in its district and building leaders. The transformation began with activities from "Leading PLCs Districtwide," focusing on evolving traditional district office administrative teams into learning-focused district leadership teams. The journey continued with a day of learning led by John Wink on "Leading a Learning-Focused Building" and participation from five districts in the Solution Tree's "Daunting But Doable: The Role of the Principal" with Brandon Jones.

The Power of Guiding Coalitions

Currently, our SWAEC Guiding Coalition is participating in a transformative book study, exploring "Powerful Guiding Coalitions: How to Build and Sustain the Leadership Team in Your PLC." Monthly meetings have shifted their focus towards data, and our work is more intentional than ever before. This dedicated team supports our schools on their PLC journey, reinforcing SWAEC's commitment to change all nine of our districts into learning-focused buildings and districts.

SWAEC's journey to becoming a thriving PLC exemplifies the power of collaboration, continuous learning, and adaptability. We are proud of the strides we have made and are excited about the future. As we embrace change and learning, our commitment to providing the best educational experience for our students remains unwavering.

Wilbur D. Mills Education Cooperative



OUR STORY

In a move aimed at enhancing student growth and educational outcomes, the Wilbur D. Mills Education Service Cooperative (WDMESC) initiated its Professional Learning Community (PLC) journey in 2022. This move is to assist school districts within the cooperative in using essential standards, data collection and analysis, and the effective implementation of PLCs (Professional Learning Communities). WDMESC made a commitment to the PLC model to elevate educational standards and foster continuous improvement. This educational cooperative has begun with the use of PLC meetings, making it a central pillar of their approach. During these meetings, educators, administrators, and staff will come together to discuss essential standards, analyze student data, and serve as models of the PLC process. One of the key focal points of this endeavor has been the intentional use of essential standards. Content specialists have worked with districts in identifying and emphasizing these core elements of the curriculum. Educators within WDMESC should be able to streamline their teaching methods and ensure that students receive a consistent and high-quality education. This, in turn, creates a solid foundation for student growth and achievement. Data collection and analysis will play a role in WDMESC's PLC journey. Through the systematic gathering and examination of student performance data, educators can identify areas where improvement is needed and make data-informed decisions to drive positive change in the classroom. Through the PLC model, WDMESC hopes to provide a platform for educators to share insights and best practices, support one another, and be a catalyst for innovation and professional growth.

Overview System of Support Network



In the 2023–2024 school year, the Arkansas Department of Education initiated a significant expansion of the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) project. This expansion involved the creation of a network of regional and state support sessions involving a total of 43 schools and/or districts, 15 Educational Service Cooperatives, 6 Education Renewal Zones, and 9 Higher Education Institutions. The primary goal of this expansion was to encourage these educational organizations to examine their internal services and structures critically. The objective was to encourage transformation within these institutions so that they could provide more effective and timely support to educators and students. This transformation is to be based on evidence of its positive impact on student learning outcomes. In essence, the Arkansas Department of Education sought to foster collaboration and alignment among a diverse group of educational entities, with the ultimate aim of enhancing the quality of education and support provided to students throughout the state, moving the work from an initiative to an expectation.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS & DISTRICTS

Bald Knob High School
Bald Knob Middle School
Batesville School District
Cabot Middle School South
Central Elementary (Cabot)
Conner Middle School
Cutter Morning Star School District
Davis Elementary
Eastside Elementary (Cabot)
Elmdale Elementary
Fairview Elementary (Camden Fairview)
George Elementary
Goza Middle School
Harmony Leadership Academy
Hazen High School
Hillcrest School District
H.B. Lubker Elementary
Izard Co. Consolidated School District
Jackson Co. School District
Kilpatrick Elementary
Lafayette Co. School District
Lake Hamilton Elementary

Magness Creek Elementary
McDermott Elementary
McGehee High School
Midland School District
Monitor Elementary
Mountain Springs Elementary
Mountain View School District
Old Wire Elementary
Ouachita Elementary
Park Magnet IB World School
Peake Elementary
Russellville High School
Siloam Springs Middle School
Star City School District
T.G. Smith Elementary
Trice Elementary
Turnbow Elementary
Two Rivers School District
Ward Central Elementary
Weaver Elementary
Westside Elementary (Rogers)
Westwood Elementary (Springdale)
Wynne School District

Arkansas State University



OUR WHY

Progress is realized when educators identify the current level of achievement, set goals and work together to achieve goals, and have evidence of student progress and learning—continual improvement and successful achievement for our students. Arkansas State University College of Education and Behavioral Science faculty were happy to participate in the System of Support Network at the Northeast Education Cooperative in Walnut Ridge on September 12–13. Focusing on Professional Learning Communities is a major part of our work and the curriculum for our candidates pursuing to be teachers. In the words of Rick DuFour, “When a school or district functions as a PLC, educators within the organization embrace high levels of learning for all students as both the reason the organization exists and the fundamental responsibility of those who work within it.” Our purpose for attending was to gain knowledge about ways to weave collaboration, group skills, and academic performance in a continuous cycle of team and individual improvement. It was exciting to learn ideas and strategies that help us form relationships that support the changes necessary to help improve. In the words of Albert Einstein, “If you always do what you always did, you will always get what you always got.” With commitment, knowledge, and persistence, educators can make a difference in what we “get” to have continual improvement for all learners.



Arkansas State University Mountain Home



OUR WHY

Arkansas State University Mountain Home (ASUMH), a two-year educational institute, has a compelling "why" for participating in the System of Support initiative, a partnership that seeks to transform education across the state. ASUMH's mission has always been deeply rooted in serving its community. Our participation is about the profound impact it can have on our students and the broader community.

1. Empowering Student Success: ASUMH recognizes that the success of its students is intrinsically linked to the quality of education they receive. By participating in the System of Support initiative, ASUMH is committing to continuous improvement in its educational practices. Our goal is to empower students with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in an ever-changing world.

2. Community Enrichment: ASUMH understands that the health and prosperity of the local community and region are intimately connected to the success of its graduates. When students leave ASUMH, they become active, engaged citizens who contribute to the local workforce, economy, and community. Ensuring our graduates are well-prepared to make meaningful contributions to their community is our responsibility.

3. A Catalyst for Transformation: ASUMH believes in the transformative power of education. It recognizes that by participating in the System of Support initiative, we can become a catalyst for change not only within our own institution but also within the broader educational landscape of Arkansas.

4. Commitment to Excellence: ASUMH has a deep commitment to excellence in education. We view our participation as a way to uphold and enhance our reputation for providing high-quality education. Our academic goal is to continually strive for excellence and set a benchmark for other educational institutions across the state.

5. Building Strong Partnerships: ASUMH recognizes that meaningful change in education cannot happen in isolation. By participating, ASUMH seeks to build strong partnerships with the Arkansas Department of Education, Pre-K-12 schools, and other higher education institutions. We strive to collaborate and learn from others to collectively advance education in the state.

ASUMH believes that by actively engaging in this initiative, we can contribute to a brighter future for our students, our community, and the entire state of Arkansas. Through our participation, ASUMH aims to inspire, lead students by example, and prepare our graduates to be at the cutting edge of education.

Central Elementary_{PK-4}

CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

360 students

- 20% Students with Disabilities
- 2% English Learners
- 63% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0.3% Asian
- 6.7% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 7.5% Hispanic/Latino
- 74.1% White
- 11.4% Two or more races

OUR WHY

Central Elementary is a neighborhood school nestled in Cabot, AR. This year we are preparing to dive deep into the PLC Journey. Last year when we applied to be part of the upcoming support system, 100% of our returning staff were on board with jumping into this process. We were ecstatic when we were accepted. As we enter into the System of Support, we are honored to learn together and make a difference in our students' learning. This summer we have learned about what "all" means. It is our vow as we enter into this school year to ensure learning for all students. We strategically selected essential standards at the grade, school, and district levels.

We know there is important work ahead but we believe that through this process our students will learn at high levels. We will leave no student behind. We look forward to the learning opportunities ahead and appreciate Solution Tree and DESE for giving us just what we need to move our school to the next level.

Eastside Elementary K-4

CABOT SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

544 students

- 12% Students with Disabilities
- 5% English Learners
- 39% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 1.1% Asian
- 2.2% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 6.8% Hispanic/Latino
- 79.6% White
- 10.3% Two or more races

OUR WHY

The staff at Eastside Elementary are fully committed to implementing the PLCs at Work process. We chose to embark on the journey to become a professional learning community to not only improve student learning, but teacher learning as well. After surveying our staff, we learned that many did not feel comfortable with the PLC “lite” process we were currently employing. Other staff members also admitted to struggling with the “why” behind the process. With this feedback, it became clear that the administrative leadership team was lacking the tools, resources, and knowledge to lead and implement the full PLC process with fidelity. We strongly desired to move from the PLC “lite” version under which we were performing, to a deeper level of understanding that focuses on the four questions: creating common formative assessments based on essential standards, analyzing data to improve learning for students and staff, and creating specific interventions/extensions that lead to measurable improvements in student performance. We needed a change and felt that a partnership with the Cohort Project would give us the support we were lacking at Eastside. As Richard DuFour states, “The fundamental purpose of school is learning, not teaching.” At Eastside, we want to ensure that our students and staff are lifelong learners. We know that the PLC process is ongoing and that the key to improving learning for students is continual learning for educators. It is a districtwide effort, and Eastside is thankful for the support of our superintendent and the district administrative team. Moving forward, we anticipate the benefits for our staff to hear the success that the Cohort has experienced with full implementation of the PLC process. With professional guidance and coaching, we know that Eastside will show growth for our students and educators as we continue along our PLC journey.

George Elementary

K-5

SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT

SYSTEM OF SUPPORT



DEMOGRAPHICS

604 students

- 11% Students with Disabilities
- 59% English Learners
- 87% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.5% American Indian
- 1.7% Asian
- 2.2% Black/African American
- 14.4% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 63.0% Hispanic/Latino
- 15.7% White
- 2.5% Two or more races



OUR WHY

The work of PLCs has helped sharpen the focus on quality Tier 1 instruction at Gene George Elementary in Springdale Schools. Although we have done this work in some form in the past, through the support of the Office of Special Projects at DESE and the Office of ERZ, we have been able to sharpen our focus on essential standards, common assessments, and the subsequent interventions needed to grow students. We quickly began seeing results on mastery of essential standards as evidenced by an increase in students needing extension on our essential standards. Our work with the Office of ERZ is part of what led to GES being accredited as a Highly Effective School last year!

As we move into the Systems of Support (SOS), we look forward to growing in our understanding of essential standards and the learning progressions needed to improve them, sharpening our instructional skills through best practices and collaboration, and becoming more effective and efficient with our intervention and extension systems. As we start the 2023-24 school year, we are anticipating further growth in student achievement and teacher efficacy that the SOS can help us attain! We are so thankful for the opportunities provided for us through SOS.

Henderson State University



OUR WHY

In 2018, the EPP faculty of Henderson State University attended PLC three-day training opportunities alongside K-12 school districts. Many instructors were also part of a P-20 Collaborative. This is a collaborative effort between public school districts and The Education Program, Henderson. The P-20 collaborative utilized Solution Tree's Global PD as a mechanism for improving teacher education and student learning. From that point, the faculty took the concepts learned and integrated them into their education coursework. This important work spanned the year 2020. Despite the onset of the global pandemic, Henderson faculty continued to attend virtual updates and training. The faculty of Curriculum and Instruction integrated concepts and vocabulary pertaining to Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) into early coursework within The Teacher Education Program that progressed to participation in a PLC during internship (as made available according to which partner school the intern is placed). On the graduate level, the MAT students are taught concepts in some of their courses, namely the Classroom Management course, in which students focus on the 4 Essential Questions and hold a Socratic Seminar discussing how they address the questions in their current setting with their school's PLCs. The Educational Leadership and Teacher Leadership students do PLC audits of their schools and districts and make charts and presentations concerning what the PLC footprint is and what could be next steps. The PLC language is used throughout the leadership coursework. The next steps for Henderson State University Teacher Education Program are to utilize the newly created pre-training and post-training surveys to obtain clarity of success and to turn the leadership team into a true guiding coalition.

Hillcrest School District



OUR WHY

We are beginning the first year of our PLC journey here at Hillcrest School District, and we could not be more excited. The Hillcrest School District made a commitment to this journey as we started taking a closer look at individual student learning. Both Hillcrest Elementary and Hillcrest High School have consistently had high test scores when compared to other schools in our county, cooperative, and the state. The elementary school was even recognized by the state for growth in math scores during the Covid pandemic. However, we were noticing struggles with “loss of learning” in the lower grades, especially in reading. When we started looking at students in “Need of Support” on state-mandated tests and the percentage of students not reading at grade level across the district, we knew we had to do more.

As a district, we currently have 29% of our students classified as “Need Support” in literacy on state assessments. On the 2021-2022 Act Aspire assessment, the “Reading at Grade Level” score was 45.6% for Hillcrest High School and even lower in Hillcrest Elementary. When we began putting individual faces and names to these numbers, we knew we had to do more for “all” students. Our journey has already had some struggles. We are a small district with two separate campuses consisting of K-6 and 7-12. The two campuses have demographic struggles as they are separated by 5 miles. We knew we had to find a way to connect the two schools. The journey started with a district leadership team that began meeting weekly. The leadership team attended professional development days provided by the Northeast Educational Cooperative and Solution Tree. The district team knew that building a positive school culture that emphasized collaboration across both campuses was essential. The district set up an overnight PLC Retreat where information was shared from the PLC Institute. Many summer professional development days have allowed vertical teams to focus on student learning, collaboration, and the importance of results-oriented action plans. These teams have begun identifying essential standards, deconstructing standards into ‘I can’ statements, digging deeper into HQIM, and creating formative assessments. Administrators have built schedules to allow time for weekly PLC meetings as well as “SOAR” periods for school-wide extended learning opportunities. We know we have just touched the surface of the four essential questions when it comes to a true PLC, but as a district, we are committed to the process and the impact it will have on student learning. The district knows the importance of telling our story to the community. We have a school board member that has committed to attending monthly Guided Coalition meetings. A schedule has been created to allow leaders, teachers, and/or students to share updates on student progress and growth during regular school board meetings. Even though we have only just begun this journey as a district we have already seen GROWTH. We have seen growth in our leadership teams through weekly meetings and collaboration between both schools. We have seen professional growth within our staff and faculty teams as we have shared learning received from our local cooperative, State System of Support, and Solution Tree. We have seen personal growth across both campuses as all members have begun working together to take personal ownership of student learning. Our ultimate goal is for our GROWTH to carry over into great STUDENT achievement, whether that is academically, socially, or emotionally. Growth and learning for ALL are required at Hillcrest School District!

DEMOGRAPHICS

386 students

- 19% Students with Disabilities
- 0% English Learners
- 72% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 0% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 2.3% Hispanic/Latino
- 96.9% White
- 0.8% Two or more races

Lafayette County School District



DEMOGRAPHICS

501 students

- 15% Students with Disabilities
- 0% English Learners
- 84% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 60.9% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 5.0% Hispanic/Latino
- 29.9% White
- 4.2% Two or more races

OUR WHY

The 2023-2024 school year will be our first year to join the System of Support. Lafayette County School District is a high poverty school district faced with challenges of low student achievement, learning gaps, absenteeism, teacher turnover, lack of parental support, and student dropouts. Our District offers numerous courses above the state standards and numerous extra-curricular programs and organizations are available to provide students a well-rounded educational experience. Unfortunately, our schools are labeled as under-performing according to our student's academic performance on state assessments. As a result, our ultimate goal in this PLC journey is to improve student achievement and staff performance, so that we can be ranked as an achieving school district. Our school community is made up of the following towns: Buckner, Stamps, Lewisville, and Garland. All are impoverished communities. Industry is very limited in these 4 towns. Lewisville has two main industries: a small lumber mill that employs about 30 people and Messer, an industrial gas company that employs less than 10 people onsite. The school is the largest employer. The majority of our working families have to drive at least 30-40 miles one way to work. Several of our students live in single parent homes, or are being raised by a grandparent. There are very few community activities for students to engage in after school hours. With these challenges, the Lafayette County School District strives hard to provide all students a safe learning environment that is conducive to learning. Lafayette County School District and staff recognize the need to implement professional learning communities with fidelity to drive student achievement and to work collaboratively to achieve better results for our students.

Lake Hamilton Elementary

2-3

LAKE HAMILTON SCHOOL DISTRICT



OUR WHY

Lake Hamilton Elementary School (LHES) began building the foundation of a Professional Learning Community (PLC) seven years ago. Members of our leadership team have attended conferences hosted by Solution Tree. We began the PLC process during the 2016-17 school year after a district-wide training/introduction by a Solution Tree consultant. In August 2018, we participated in a Solution Tree Hybrid Event district-wide. Since 2018, LHES has taken many steps to focus on ALL students learning at high levels. A building guiding coalition team has been created along with teacher teams. Essential standards and proficiency scales have been created, and we use a standards-based reporting system instead of traditional grading. We have created common formative assessments and regularly look at data to provide interventions. We have created structures to protect team meeting times. The culture of our building has become more collaborative and data-driven.

The staff at LHES is committed to providing students with a guaranteed and viable curriculum. This is much more difficult than providing a pacing guide and resources to teachers. Students need teachers that understand the material, implement the best practices, communicate clear learning targets, and provide a sufficient amount of time to master the essential skills. In addition, students need multiple opportunities to master essential standards and provide intervention, extension, or enrichment based on individual needs. In order to address those needs, LHES staff have identified essential standards, created proficiency scales, created common assessments, collect and analyze data, and provide intervention. While we have made strides, teachers still need support in developing the pathway from initially determining student needs to mastery of the skill.

Moving forward, we must review our current reality, deepen our understanding, and continue the journey of becoming a highly effective collaborative culture. A few goals we have identified include: Revise the master schedule for more effective intervention times and other services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, and special education pull-out services.

The LHES staff has taken ownership and bought into the PLC process and is ready to take the next steps to ensure full implementation and sustainability.

DEMOGRAPHICS

578 students

- 15% Students with Disabilities
- 9% English Learners
- 69% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.5% American Indian
- 1.2% Asian
- 3.3% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 14.2% Hispanic/Latino
- 74.7% White
- 6.1% Two or more races

Ouachita Baptist University



OUR WHY

As I walked across our campus plaza in July of 2016 to join the Huckabee School of Education faculty as their interim dean, I was not surprised to find highly qualified professional educators who were devoted to their fields of study and their students. I wasn't surprised that they were encouraging and pleasant. I had been an administrator and faculty member at Ouachita Baptist University for 25 years, so I knew them at least from a distance.

What surprised me was the extraordinary way in which they worked together. They talked daily about individual students who needed additional attention, about what was working (or wasn't working) in their classes, about curricular issues, and about what they were learning from alumni and other connections in public and private schools. They were individuals, each with her own teaching style, and yet they were as cohesive and joyful as any group I had seen. They were truly, in every sense of the word, a team.

About a year after the term "interim" was dropped from my title, I discovered there was a term for what I was experiencing with the teacher education faculty. They were a Professional Learning Community. We learned about PLCs at a national Solution Tree Institute in Salt Lake City, and we returned to Arkansas describing it as one of the most impactful conferences we had ever attended. We were ready to learn more.

PLC training has been a part of our education curriculum for a number of years now, but the learning and growth continue. We were pleased to be asked to join the PLC System of Support in partnership with local districts, Dawson Education Service Cooperative, and our across-the-street neighbors, Henderson State University. While rivals in athletics, the education departments at HSU and OBU always have worked together with the common goal of preparing effective teachers. We cherish these relationships and hope to enhance them as we enter this new partnership and renew our PLC work with Solution Tree and the Arkansas Department of Education.

Jeffrey R. Root, Ed.D.

Dean, Michael D. Huckabee School of Education and School of Humanities

Ouachita Elementary

K-6

OUACHITA SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

279 students

- 13% Students with Disabilities
- 1% English Learners
- 53% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 1.1% Asian
- 0.7% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 1.8% Hispanic/Latino
- 95.7% White
- 0.7% Two or more races

OUR WHY

Ouachita Elementary School PLC Journey Ouachita Elementary School is excited to begin this journey. For the past two years, OES has received money for being in the top 6-10% performance on the state assessment. We are extremely proud of this; however, we were not and are not satisfied that only 50% of our students are at grade level reading and large numbers of our students are in some type of Tier 3 instruction. Our catalyst for change is recognizing it is our responsibility to do everything in our power to have all students on grade level. Our desire to become a professional learning community is simple. We want to have a positive impact on every student that walks through our door. We know every part of the journey will not be easy. We know that some parts will be easy to embrace and others will be difficult. As to which will be which, the journey will point that out, and we are committed to the journey. Along the way, we hope to grow our collaborative culture. Members of our administration and faculty attended PLC at Work in Little Rock in the summer of 2022. For the past two years, we have operated in a "team" mindset. We formed grade-level and content-level teams and had weekly meetings with norms, collective commitments, agenda, and minutes. We even had the four critical questions that drive an effective PLC on our template. You could characterize our school as operating under the "PLC lite" model as Rick DuFour called it. Honestly, we have just been sharing ideas. We admit we have stopped short and have not used data to drive instructional decisions or next steps. We enter this journey with a new desire for continuous improvement, support in research-based effective teaching strategies, and the expectation to share responsibility and support each other's growth.

Park Magnet PK-6

HOT SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

399 students

- 7% Students with Disabilities
- 9% English Learners
- 57% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0.5% American Indian
- 2.3% Asian
- 18% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 19.8% Hispanic/Latino
- 46.4% White
- 13% Two or more races



OUR WHY

Park Magnet, an IB World School, is extremely grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the PLC System of Support! After attending a PLC Institute in 2018, we began working toward becoming a true Professional Learning Community. Hearing from the experts, seeing Model PLC School principals, and witnessing the evidence of its success, we were ready to put in the work.

Our district, the Hot Springs School District, invested in ongoing professional development for all six of our campuses so that we could whole-heartedly lean into this process by contracting PLC at Work Solution Tree coaches. As a school, we were experiencing higher teacher turnover and changing demographics and knew our practices needed to change. This had to start with our staff. We immediately convened a Guiding Coalition and began PLC "lite." It has taken years to get to where we are, but we have grown.

Two of our district campuses, Main Street Visual and Performing Arts Magnet School and Hot Springs Junior Academy, have been designated as Model PLC schools. They are seeing gains in student achievement, while we are experiencing steady declines.

We are ready to do the work, put students first, and commit to being a team. Our school, community, and district leaders support us and know this is just what we need to see students achieve at high levels!

Siloam Springs Middle School

7-8

SILOAM SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

693 students

- 15% Students with Disabilities
- 15% English Learners
- 56% Economically Disadvantaged
- 5.5% American Indian
- 4% Asian
- 1.6% Black/African American
- 0.9% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 32% Hispanic/Latino
- 50.4% White
- 5.6% Two or more races

A LETTER TO OUR STAFF

Dear Staff,

I wanted to expand on why we pursued a partnership with the System of Support Network. As a leader, I had to reassess my own capabilities. I have participated in institutes, attended various training sessions, and visited with some of the experts in this field, such as Rick DuFour and Mike Mattos. However, to properly take this process to scale, building-wide, I was not feeling competent. It was not easy to admit that as your principal, I had come to the limits of my capabilities to most effectively implement the Professional Learning Community process. I needed help in order to ensure each of you and we, as a whole, were getting the support and guidance needed to implement the PLC process with fidelity.

Becoming a PLC is one of the three pillars we, as a district, are focused on. This experience will grow us, challenge us, and shift our thinking in the right direction. However, it is not asking you to do anything more than what we have been working on. I just ask one thing of you: Trust the process. This process will make us better at getting better. Please know I want you to share your thoughts and concerns with me and the administration team as we go through this process.

Finally, I want each of you to feel proud of the fact that we have this opportunity. We were entrusted with this experience and were identified as having the potential of meeting the goals and outcomes of this experience. I agree. You are an excellent staff. I have no doubt you will enhance what we are doing to ensure we have great student success. Let's have a great year. STRONG. Learning. Everyday. #SSMSBetterTogether

Yours in education,

Jacob Hayward, Ph.D

Southern Arkansas University



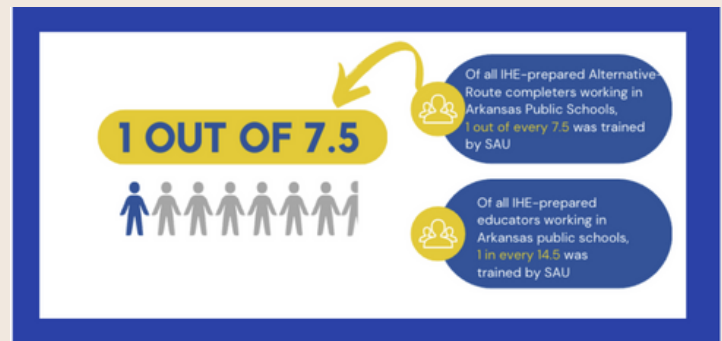
OUR WHY

Southern Arkansas University (SAU) began its Professional Learning Community (PLC) journey by sending a group of lead faculty members to a PLC conference in the fall of 2018. Those faculty were immediately convinced of the positive impacts of collaborative practices. The team relayed the importance of the PLC process to all faculty members to ensure all candidates are prepared to teach all students. The following year, the SAU Education Renewal Zone hosted a series of professional developments to help engage all faculty members in better understanding the goals of the PLC process and how PLCs can positively impact candidate and student learning.

Since the early training, the SAU faculty has transformed into two active professional learning communities (one for advanced and one for initial) that focus on answering the big four questions and preparing day one ready teachers or professionals. The transformation to true PLCs began with selecting and aligning power standards. Faculty then developed common assessments for initial and advanced programs. The timeliness of data review moved from a post-completion annual review to real-time data reviews with a “fail fast, fix fast” approach. Faculty review data weekly on current candidates and with partner districts during quarterly governance meetings. Where assessment data reveals concerns, professional seminars create a space for candidates to receive additional instruction and improve. Candidates are assessed over time to ensure growth.

Along with the SAU team implementing PLC strategies into their own work, candidates are also provided multiple opportunities to engage in the PLC process. Candidates are enrolled in courses with embedded PLC processes throughout their program of study. SAU also ensures that candidates are placed in partner schools with strong PLCs. This approach allows candidates to learn about and practice PLC strategies in their SAU coursework while also getting first-hand experience in a PLC within their placement schools.

SAU is committed to ensuring that every candidate comes with an education goal and leaves as a day-one-ready professional.



University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville



OUR STORY

The two-year college is the unique American contribution to higher education, and the University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville has played an important part in this movement by providing access to education for the people of north central Arkansas since 1991, when it was reorganized as Gateway Technical College. In October 1997, Gateway Technical College merged with the University of Arkansas System and with the passage of a county sales tax became the University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville in March 1998. UACCB is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. UACCB's service area was defined by the State Board of Higher Education to include Independence and Cleburne Counties; UACCB shares Stone and Sharp Counties with Ozarka College.

UACCB endeavors to provide quality Technical Certificate and Associate of Applied Science degree programs in occupational technical areas, a college parallel transfer curriculum including Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees, courses for high school students through our Secondary Career Center and concurrent course offerings, customized training for business and industry, continuing education programs for life-long learning and personal enrichment, and adult education.

UACCB is excited to partner with our area target school districts and other higher education partners to increase students moving through the teacher education pipeline. The success of our community is directly tied to the strength of our education systems, and our involvement in this aligns directly into our institutional mission, vision, and values. UACCB has chosen to participate in the PLC Process to ensure that we are better able to prepare our education students to enter the classroom once they finish their bachelor's or master's degree at their continuing institution. We want to give the initial foundation they need to continue toward their teaching licensure, as many of our students will return to teach in the districts from which they graduated. We are "growing our own."

University of Arkansas Fort Smith



OUR WHY

As an Educator Preparation Program, we are committed to preparing teacher candidates to be "Day One Ready!" Part of our commitment is to prepare candidates in as many areas as possible, including state initiatives. Arkansas has made significant statewide investments to transform public schools into effective professional learning communities (PLCs). In order to prepare candidates to work collaboratively for student success, we want to teach them the PLC process as part of their education in our program.

We began our journey to transform our faculty to work as a PLC by creating a *Learning by Doing* book study. Faculty learned the foundational information regarding the PLC process through the lens of higher education. We then worked as a team to develop our new mission, vision, and collective commitments. These components were discussed and voted on by faculty and replaced our previous longstanding mission and vision statements. Since the book study, we have worked hard to function as a PLC in order to model the process for our teacher candidates. If they see PLCs in action on a daily basis, then they will begin to see the importance of PLCs in schools.

As educators ourselves, we understand the importance of a positive culture and climate and the importance of collaboration to support student success. Teacher candidates are not just one professor's students, but rather they are "our students". We made intentional decisions to work collaboratively, and not in silos, as we developed authentic assignments for candidates throughout the program. As assignments were developed, our mission, vision, and collective commitments were the litmus test to determine if they prepared teacher candidates to be "Day One Ready". We have implemented the PLC model in our program through our HUB of courses with our candidates. Teacher candidates use Learning By Doing as a Practicum text throughout the program, and are able to make connections with their field placements and with the program itself.

We are committed to continuous improvement and to learning how we can model the PLC process for our teacher candidates. We want our candidates to understand how to focus on learning in a way that ensures all students are achieving at a high level. We want our candidates to know the importance of collaborating effectively, especially learning how to take collective responsibility and to utilize evidence to prove student success. Our PLC may have a higher education lens, but our process has the same result, which is student success. We will continue learning and collaborating in order to prepare our teacher candidates to be "Day One Ready"!

Wynne High School

9-12

WYNNE SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

784 students

- 17% Students with Disabilities
- 1% English Learners
- 53% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 1.4% Asian
- 27.3% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 2.9% Hispanic/Latino
- 67% White
- 1.4% Two or more races

OUR WHY

We are currently in the beginning stages of implementing a true PLC model. In the last two years, we have met sporadically with our teams. Last year, we restructured our Building Leadership Team into a true Guided Coalition and scheduled monthly meetings with our Guided Coalition, ELA, and Math teachers to focus on community and research-based strategies. The challenges we encounter are like most; we do not have enough time to meet effectively. Another challenge has been teaching the staff what a true PLC is and is not. We decided to embark on this journey because we knew we had to change the status quo and did not want to be mediocre. We know this is best practice, and if we want to get to where we need to be and truly be the "Diamond of the Delta," we need to invest in the PLC process. Our greatest success was sending a team to the RTI at Work Institute in May. It was eye-opening for those who were on the fence or not on board with the process. Conversely, it confirmed the beliefs of those who were already bought into the process. Our team members were excited about the process and encouraged about growing and moving our school forward. After the tornado devastation, this was a victory that created excitement at a time in which we needed inspiration. In order to implement our plan and remove barriers, we scheduled time for monthly team meetings with early dismissals, continued our monthly meetings with our Guided Coalition, ELA, and Math departments, and chose essential standards based on the blueprint of the new ATLAS exam. We encourage our team members to attend Solution Tree RTI at Work training, and this year we are focused on our Instructional Model and effective teaching strategies in every classroom.

Allbritton Elementary

3-5

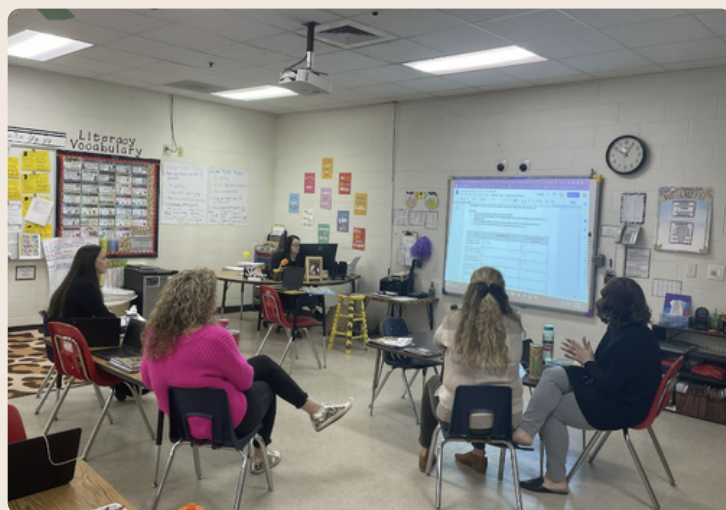
HAMBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

270 students

- 11% Students with Disabilities
- 10% English Learners
- 61% Economically Disadvantaged
- 0% American Indian
- 0% Asian
- 17.4% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 18.1% Hispanic/Latino
- 62.3% White
- 2.2% Two or more races



OUR STORY

Our journey began as an observer of other buildings in our district and their journey as part of a PLC Cohort with ADE. We were able to reflect on observations and lessons learned from the other buildings and organically design our own PLC journey. This was a journey that was carefully planned on the roll out within the building by working on the culture intentionally before bringing in the coaches to support the work of teams tightening up our Tier 1 instruction. The leadership of the new principal, Blake Higginbotham, in advancing the work was supported by book studies, attending events held in Arkansas by ADE, and also coaching from leaders.

Allbritton Elementary School Guiding Coalition also began examining roles and responsibilities in order to determine how to maximize student support. Systems began taking form and communication lines were more transparent and timely with important information. One of the best forms of communication for teams became creating common formative assessments in order to make data driven decisions. From this data, student interventions took form in being more individualized and also looking at how to front load Tier 1 instruction. With the knowledge within the building craving for more understanding, professional development requests became more aligned with district and building goals. Allbritton Elementary School began interviewing vendors of professional development with specific questions to target who would be more intentional and provide ongoing support. This sparked the building wanting to revamp the district interview questions to seek a more PLC mindset in future teachers that will support the work along with setting expectations for Teachers on Special Assignments (TOSAs) to support literacy and math teams.

The district's early release Wednesdays are used to support teams in protected collaboration time in order to plan for RTI. If you are able to visit our campus, that time is spent on discussion with data and evaluating student by student; skill by skill. By implementing this organic cohort in 2021, Allbritton has seen an increase in achievement, growth, and SQSS for the last 2 years and have moved up a letter grade. We were able to even highlight how we have been able to close 3 years of gaps in reading in less than 6 months at the State Board meeting in January 2023. Allbritton Elementary School firmly believes that the success we are experiencing is because of our investment in our people and that we truly believe ALL students can learn.

Raymond F. Orr Elementary

PK-5

FORT SMITH SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEMOGRAPHICS

284 students

- 17% Students with Disabilities
- 12% English Learners
- 77% Economically Disadvantaged
- 1.4% American Indian
- 5.3% Asian
- 9.9% Black/African American
- 0% Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- 14.8% Hispanic/Latino
- 51.3% White
- 17.3% Two or more races

60%

*of 3rd grade students with
IEPs scored Proficient in
Math on the 2023 ACT
Aspire Assessment.*

*Reading scores
increased by*

3.5%

OUR STORY

Our school was selected as a pilot school for the Inclusive Practices PLC Project for the 2020-2021 school year. This pilot was a one-year project. We completely changed how we operated as a PLC through the project. We had a one to fifteen self-contained mild to moderate special education class with 17 students who spent 100% of their time separated from their peers. These students were expected to take the same state test as their peers, but they were never taught or expected to perform at grade level. During the project, we started shifting our services so that students were with their peers 80% of the time or more. We also changed our master schedule to ensure that all students received uninterrupted core instruction. We have high expectations for our IEP-entitled students to learn on grade level with their peers. We have students from 5 other schools in our district who come to our school to receive the support they need through our inclusive practices model. Our special education teachers work with our general education teachers to provide the accommodations and support that our students need to be successful. Our teachers plan together during collaborative team time each week. Our students receive core instruction with their peers and additional support to help them meet their unique needs. Our students become more confident in their abilities and strengths, and that is followed by increasing their academic achievement. Our work with inclusive practices has spread well beyond our school. We have hosted 18 different district and school teams from across the state to see our practices firsthand. Our principal has Zoomed with the North West Arkansas LEAs, principals and LEAs from the South Central Coop., New Administrators from the Guy Fenter Coop., AAEP Beginning Administrators, and AAESP Aspiring Principals to share our journey to implementing inclusive practices, as well as presenting at state and national conferences. Our teachers have created videos to share about our work for use on the Arkansas All In Inclusive Practices website. Three of our teachers were accepted in the Arkansas High-Reliability Teacher Cohort 3, and they have all three received High-Reliability Teacher Level 1 by achieving certification in Course 1 and Course 2. We have also earned High-Reliability Schools Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 Certification through the development of our Professional Learning Community!



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