

Professional Learning Communities



Growing Stronger & Smarter Together

**PLC Initiation Planning - Maryvale School District
October, 2014
Presented by - Juanita Davies**



www.jdaviesandassociates.com

PLC Initiation Planning

Agenda

Introductory Activities

PLC Defined

Where Are We Now?

Overview of Force Field Analysis

Using Force Field Analysis

The Importance of Purpose

Mission Success

Application of Force Field Analysis

Action Planning

J. Davies & Associates

A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

www.jdaviesandassociates.com



What is a Professional Learning Community?

What is a PLC? - Definition Example

A Professional Learning Community is a group of teachers, supported by administrators, working together to identify & utilize best practices in the classroom, so that every student will learn.*

** There is no set definition of a Professional Learning Community.
This example was provided to administrators and teachers at Webster Central School District as a basis for their definition.*

Professional Learning Communities

Four Essential Questions

- 1. What do we want our students to learn?**
(Goals & Expectations)
- 2. How do we know that each student is learning?**
(Assessment)
- 3. How will we respond when some students do not learn?**
(Intervention – RTI)
- 4. How can we extend & enrich learning for students who demonstrate proficiency?**
(Gifted & Enriched)

Adapted from Solution Tree PLC Overview

* For a good resource, see this web page: <http://www.dps61.org/domain/1578>

Force Field Analysis

Force Field Analysis is a strategic analytical tool developed by Kurt Lewin, who is regarded as one of the founders of modern psychology. This technique provides a framework for identifying and examining factors that can influence change.

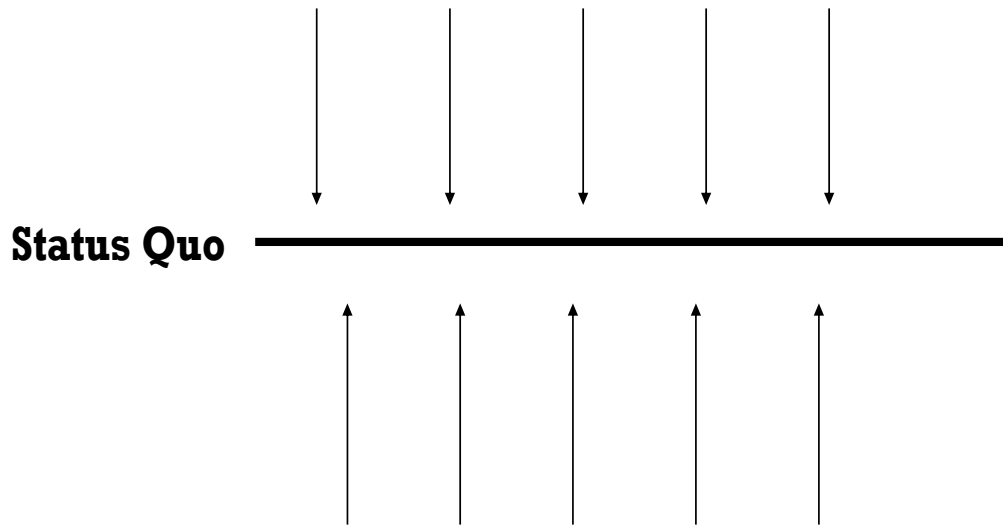
A Force Field Analysis diagrams a situation that exists as a set of forces: those that move toward change (driving forces) and those that inhibit change (restraining forces). As long as the two sets of forces remain equal, there is a state of what Lewin calls “dynamic equilibrium” which means no change can occur. For change to happen there has to be a shift in forces - the driving forces must exceed the restraining forces. This can occur by increasing the driving forces (pushing harder) or reducing the restraining forces.

Use of this technique begins by identifying an area where change is beneficial. The starting point is the current state or status quo. From there, the force field is described and analyzed. A strategy is then developed to shift the balance of forces. The outcome of this exercise is an action plan that can be implemented to bring about the desired change or improvement.

©2014 J. Davies & Associates

Force Field Analysis

Restraining Forces



Driving Forces

Force Field Analysis Process

- 1. I.D. situation to be analyzed – Status Quo**
- 2. Diagram Force Field**
- 3. Identify Restraining Force(s) to be reduced/eliminated**
- 4. Brainstorm ways to accomplish the shift**
- 5. Decide on action(s) to be taken**
- 6. Develop detailed action plan**

©2014 J. Davies & Associates

Overcoming Resistance

The Importance of a Shared Purpose

Someone can be given a task to do and might be able to accomplish it without difficulty.

But, if that person is shown the purpose for the task, & sees its importance, then the task takes on a whole new light and the person finds a reason to invest more than just the minimum of what is required.

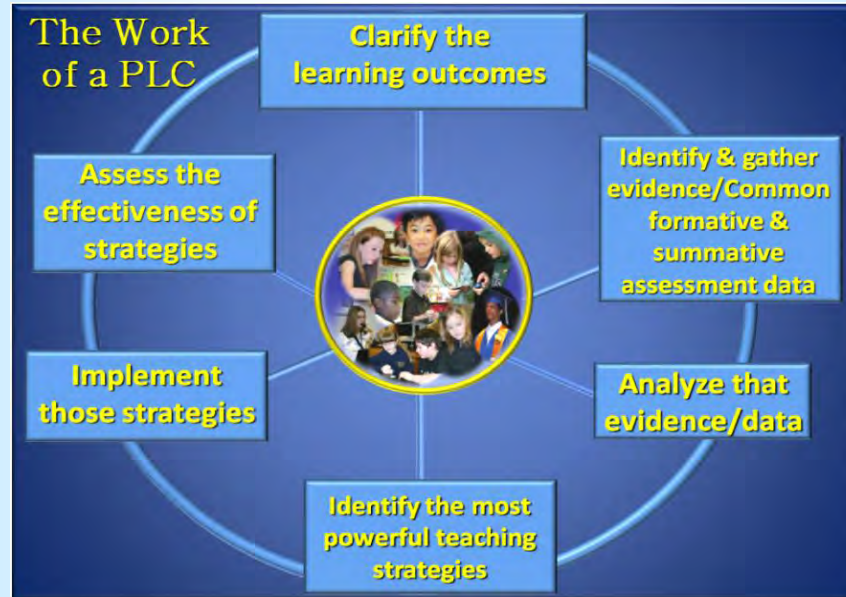
- Randy Chambers, Reflections Day by Day

Vital to PLC Mission Success

1. Objective assessment of current PLC status
2. Open two-way communication
3. Clarity of goal
4. Commitment to purpose
5. Definition of PLC structure & roles
6. Collaborative planning
7. Professional Development to master skill sets
8. Methodology for tracking progress
9. Celebration of Success

©2014 J. Davies & Associates

Defining the work of a PLC

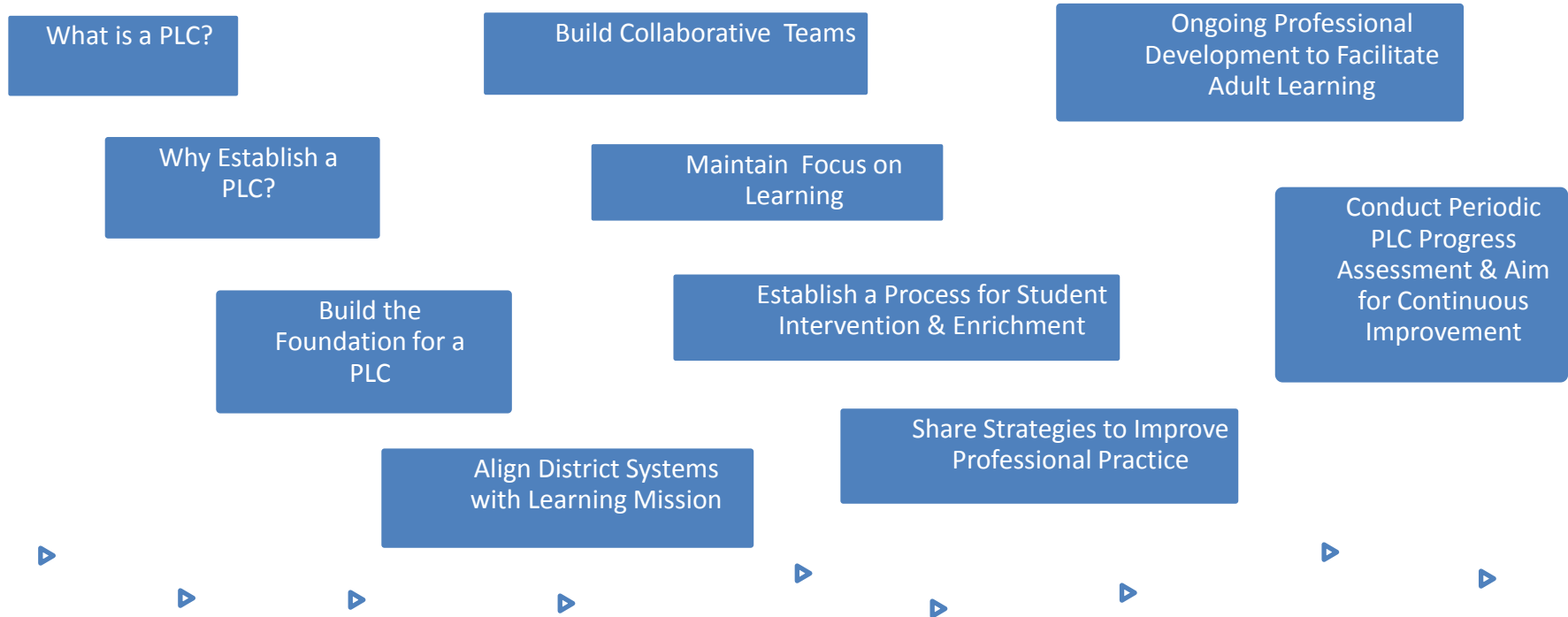


Developed with Webster Central School District

3

Where Are We Now? – The PLC Journey

Adapted from Solution Tree Journey to Becoming a PLC



J. Davies & Associates

A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

www.jdaviesandassociates.com



Reach Higher

Force Field Analysis Action Plan

Identify Restraining Force to be reduced/eliminated:

Action Step	Target Date	Who's Responsible?	Follow-up

If you have any questions or comments,
please contact me at:

Juanita Davies
J. Davies & Associates

Phone: 732-389-1986

Email: jdaviesassoc@aol.com

PLC Focus Group Process
Maryvale School District - October, 2014

The overall goal of the PLC initiative is to strengthen the collaborative process of teachers working together to improve student learning.

The purpose of the focus groups is to obtain input from a cross-section of stakeholders to identify what kind of collaborative teams currently exist and evaluate their effectiveness.

We will take a look at the current existing teams such as Data Driven Instruction, PBIS, etc to see what we currently have in place, determine our strengths (what are we doing that works well) and identify areas for improvement (what can we do better). We will also discuss the concept of what it means to be a Professional Learning Community and get input as to the best way to move the district forward in that process.

In general, these are the kinds of things we will be looking at:

What teams do we currently have in place?
Is this the best structure for teachers to collaborate?
Do we have the right combination of people on these teams?

Are all teachers involved in some kind of collaborative team? (Should they be?)
Are the teams functioning effectively? What works, what needs improvement?
What are some suggestions for establishing a district wide process for teachers to collaborate to improve student learning?

What would this look like?
How can we capitalize on what we already have in place?

How well are we using data to improve student learning?
Do all teachers understand how to use data effectively?
What kind of data is being utilized?
Are we using that data to engage in best practices for teaching?

How effective are the current meetings? Are they focused?
Do you (participants) feel you've been productive at the end of a meeting?
What kind of measurable results are you seeing as a result of these team meetings?

What kind of training would be helpful for teacher-leaders to help them lead team meetings more effectively? Act in a leadership role?
What is the role of building administrators on the teams?

How do you feel about the idea of teachers working together to improve student learning? Is this something that occurs on a natural, everyday basis?

What do you believe are the benefits to teacher collaboration? What are the drawbacks/concerns?
How well do administrators work with teachers to collaborate?
How would you rate the communication flow between administrators, teams, teacher-leaders and non teacher leaders?

What do you perceive to be some obstacles that currently exist that might hinder a successful PLC?
What are some factors that will move the organization forward toward becoming an effective PLC?



MARYVALE

Cheektowaga-Maryvale Union Free School District

James M Maloney
Assistant Superintendent

Dear Colleagues,

In keeping with our theme of “Growing Smarter and Stronger Together” our district is looking at ways to maximize our collaborative work to improve student learning. We would like to see our district engaged in a strategic, cohesive process that will create an enduring collaborative learning system that results in maximized learning for all students.

Maryvale already has teams and initiatives in place that are moving our district in this direction. There is a Strategic Planning Committee and a PBIS Team. We have School Improvement Teams and Child Study Teams. We are looking at Data Driven Instruction, 21st Century Skills and Common Core Standards to utilize best practices in the classroom.

What we don't have is a coordinated, overarching structure that encompasses all of these components in an organized approach. One way to bring all of these pieces together is to think of the Maryvale School District as a **Professional Learning Community**. Simply defined, a Professional Learning Community is a group of teachers, supported by administrators, working together to identify and utilize best practices in the classroom, so that every student will learn.

We would like to consider how to move our school district from utilizing separate, perhaps at times disjointed initiatives, to forming a community that engages all teachers and administrators in a unified, organized approach to improve learning for every student.

We are working with a consultant, Juanita Davies, who will be with us on October 8th and 9th to help us in this process. Juanita is a professional development specialist with more than 20 years experience in helping school districts and corporations throughout the United States to maximize their effectiveness. She recently spoke at the New York State Department of Education Conference about the process she used with the Webster Central School District to help them achieve national recognition as a high performing Professional Learning Community.

Juanita will be meeting with a cross section of stakeholders from our district to help us determine where we are currently in terms of working together effectively as a Professional Learning Community and how we can strengthen our collaborative efforts. She will talk with administrators, principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders and other teachers to obtain input on ways that we can grow stronger and smarter together.

Sincerely yours

James Maloney
Assistant Superintendent



Maryvale Staff Development Day
November 4, 2014
Middle School Cafeteria
AGENDA

- 7:30-7:55 Registration and Refreshments
Program will begin promptly at 8:00
- 8:00-9:05 Welcome and Overview of Maryvale Schools Strategic Plan
Debbie Ziolkowski, Superintendent
- 9:15-10:20 Professional Learning Communities –
Framework for Student Achievement
PLC Initiation Report
Juanita Davies, J. Davies & Assocs.
Facilitated Breakouts – **Design Team Members**
- 10:20-10:30 Break
- 10:30-11:30 Where Effective PLCs Begin: Data Inquiry Talk
Jose Flores, Erie1 BOCES consultant
- 11:30-12:30 Lunch On Your Own – Lloyd’s Food Truck from Elmwood Ave!!!
Available outside of the Middle School
- 12:30-1:35 Team Building Activity- Lunar Excursion
Facilitated by Juanita Davies and **Design Team Members**
- 1:35-1:45 Break and Move to Small Group Breakouts
- 1:45-3:15 Building-Based Small Group Breakouts
Primary - Intermediate Cafeteria; INT – Rooms 147 & 149; MS – MS
Library; & HS -MS Cafeteria
- 3:15-3:30 Wrap-up and Closing Thoughts in MS Cafeteria

STLE 3 Design Team Members: Heather Carlson, Colleen Jantzi, Lisa Loomis, Denise Nietopski, Donna Hafner, Elisa Kirby, Erica Rodriguez, Lisa Spencer, Melissa Renshaw, Joanne Schoenle, Kathy Wild, Cheri Pula, Kurt Hansen, Ellen Svenson, Scott Root, Jaime Dimitri, April Rudnicki, Kitty Voos, Sheri Stuart, Jeff Ross, Adam Smith, Jennifer Aumer

Maryvale School District
Breakout Group Information
for
Teacher Leaders &
Building Administrators
on
Nov. 4, 2014

**Maryvale School District
Breakout Group Information
for
November 4, 2014**

Contents

Timed Agenda	Page 2
PLC Initiation Report Activity	Page 3
Lunar Excursion Activity Overview	Page 4
Lunar Excursion Observer Instructions	Page 5
Building Breakout Groups	Page 6
Action Plan Template	Page 7

**Maryvale School District
Professional Development Day
Nov. 4, 2014**

Timed Agenda

8:00-8:05	Intro by Superintendent
8:05-9:05	Maryvale's Strategic Plan (Deb Ziolkowski)
9:05-10:20	Professional Learning Community Overview (Juanita Davies) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background• Definition & PLC Graphic• Report Review• Facilitated Breakouts
10:20-10:30	Break
10:30-11:30	Data Talk with Jose (Jose Flores)
11:30-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:45	Team Building Activity Lunar Excursion Exercise Decision Making by Consensus
1:45-3:15	Building Breakout Groups
3:15-3:30	Closing (all buildings return to full group)

Activity #1
PLC Initiation Report

Facilitated Breakout

1. Juanita will present the report to the district.
2. She will give the entire group about 5 minutes to silently read the report
3. She will then ask participants to discuss the report at their tables
 - Table groups will have been randomly formed, as everyone enters, with colors on handout packages
 - Building administrators and teacher leaders will be spread out among the table groups
 - Juanita will have already introduced the DESIGN team teachers
4. Juanita will ask teachers and administrators seated at each table to discuss the report using the same questions that were used for the ACM & Design Team meetings
5. Teacher-leaders and/or building administrators will facilitate the conversation at their tables
6. **This will be a BRIEF discussion. Teachers can discuss further with teacher-leaders and/or building administrators after the day's meetings**

Breakout Group Questions:

- What jumps out at you?
- Where do YOU see common themes?
- Are there any surprises?
- What GOOD things do you see?
- What ideas can we build on to move forward this year?
- What can we do to sustain forward movement in the coming years?

Activity #2
Lunar Excursion Activity

Observer Role

When the teachers gather in small groups to use consensus to determine answers to the Lunar Excursion exercise, building administrators and teacher-leaders will be needed to serve as “observers.”

The groups will be informed of the observer role before the activity starts.

An observer is not part of a group and sits just outside the group so participants do not feel as though they should include that individual in the discussion.

You can jot down some notes. If we have time, Juanita will ask the observers to share their observations with their small groups.

The observer role is on the following page

Please help Juanita to keep the group on track time-wise by not jumping ahead or falling behind her instructions.

Lunar Excursion -Team Challenge Observer Instructions

As an observer, please look for the following

1. How does the group organize to accomplish the task?
2. Is there a team strategy to attacking the problem?
3. To what degree does information sharing influence the decision-making?
4. How many people are actively engaged in the discussion?
5. At some point, do certain people dominate and others become quiet? **(See note below.)**
6. How does that impact the dynamics?
7. What is the level of frustration?
8. Is there a turning point at which the group begins to cooperate? If so, when and why?

Here are the consensus guidelines everyone has and the process the team should be following:

1. Avoid arguing for your own individual judgments. Approach the task on the basis of logic and information sharing.
2. Avoid changing your mind just to reach agreement or avoid conflict. Support solutions with which you are able to agree somewhat, at least.
3. Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as majority vote, averaging or trading in reaching your decision.
4. View differences of opinion as natural & helpful rather than as a hindrance in decision making. See this as a signal for further exploration and discussion.
5. Recognize that each person has a right to influence the decision and may have something of value to offer. Work together to make sure everyone has an opportunity to influence the decision.
6. Use of media (cell phones, iPads, etc.) to research answers is not permitted.

Important note: If you see that a couple of people are dominating the discussion and others have dropped out, please let e Juanita now. Thanks ☺

Activity #3
Building Breakout Groups

Facilitated Breakout
1:45-3:15

1. Teachers and administrators will break out into building groups from 1:45-3:15
2. Two buildings will stay in the large meeting room and two buildings will use the adjacent rooms for the breakout activity
3. Building groups will be asked to discuss the following:
 - Share strategic goals
 - How can this work be distributed in the buildings?
 - Short Term (now till June)
 - Long Term (beyond June)

** Each building, with the guidance of the building administrator, will select the goal they will discuss. Some will focus on data; others will focus on other goals.*

4. Building administrators will guide their teachers regarding how small group discussions will take place.
5. Teacher-leaders and administrators will facilitate the small group discussions
6. Each group will be responsible for developing an ACTION PLAN at the end of their discussion. This will insure that something is accomplished when everyone returns to their buildings and goes back to their regular schedule and work.
7. An Action Plan template is included on the following page.
8. There will probably be several sub-groups in each building. It is the building administrators' responsibility to ask each group for an Action Plan and to collect it at the end of the activity.
9. The Action Plans will be submitted to one of the meeting leaders (Deb, Jim, Peg, Betsy or Juanita) when the group comes back together at the closing of the general meeting.
10. Re-convening as a large group will be new behavior for everyone but it is an important part of having a cohesive message delivered to the entire district.
11. It is very important for the building administrators to set the tone by making sure everyone knows what the groups are responsible for and to make sure their building group is back to the large meeting room by 3:15 so that we can end on time.

Strategic Goal Action Plan

Goal

Building/Group

Action Step	Target Date	Who's Responsible?	Follow-up

Maryvale Professional Learning Community



Growing Stronger & Smarter Together

**Staff Development Day - Maryvale School District
November 4, 2014
Presented by - Juanita Davies**



www.jdaviesandassociates.com

Maryvale Professional Learning Community

Staff Development Day – Nov. 4, 2014

Agenda

Strategic Plan Overview

(Presented by Debbie Ziolkowski, Superintendent)

Who is the Maryvale Professional Learning Community?

Why are collaborative teams valuable?

The Voice of Maryvale - Stakeholder Feedback

How do we grow together as a Professional Learning Community?

Where Effective PLCs Begin: Data Inquiry Talk

(Presented by Jose Flores)

LUNCH

Consensus Decision-making

Building Breakout Groups

Wrap-up & Closing Thought

J. Davies & Associates

A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

www.jdaviesandassociates.com



Who is the Maryvale Professional Learning Community?

A Professional Learning Community is a group of Maryvale teachers, administrators and staff who collaborate to utilize data driven best practices that improve instruction so that every student will learn.

** Definition created by teacher leaders & adopted by district and school leadership*

The Importance of Purpose

Someone can be given a task to do and might be able to accomplish it without difficulty.

But, if that person is shown the purpose for the task, & sees its importance, then the task takes on a whole new light and the person finds a reason to invest more than just the minimum of what is required.

- Randy Chambers, Reflections Day by Day

Vital to PLC Mission Success

1. Commitment to improved learning for each student
2. Definition of PLC structure & roles
3. A unified district-wide approach to collaborative teams
4. Development of clear common goals
5. Collaborative planning
6. Effective use of data-gathering and interpretation
7. Data driven best practices that improve instruction
8. Professional Development to master skill sets
9. Openness to learning from each other
10. Methodology for tracking progress
11. Celebration of Success

©2014 J. Davies & Associates

Teacher-Leader Design Team

(2-5 teachers from each school)

A STLE 3 Grant Teacher Leader participates as a member of the School & Teacher Leaders Team, (known as the “**Design Team**”), to promote key strategic planning initiatives including Common Core Curriculum Alignment, Data Driven Instruction, Positive Behavior Intervention Systems, and 21st Century Skills.

Action Plan Sample Template

Goal

Team

Action Step	Target Date	Who's Responsible?	Follow-up



J. Davies & Associates



Reach Higher

A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

www.jdaviesandassociates.com

If you have any questions or comments about today's work, you can speak with your teacher-leader representative or your building administrator.

I can be reached at:

**Juanita Davies
J. Davies & Associates**

Phone: 732-389-1986

Email: jdaviesassoc@aol.com

Thank you for your participation!

Ticket Out the Door

Maryvale Staff Development Day – Nov. 4, 2014

1. What do you see as key components of a successful Professional Learning Community?
2. How do you see Maryvale's PLC in relationship to the Strategic Plan?
3. What do you see as a key benefit of collaborating teams? What is a concern?
4. What do you see as the relationship between Data and a PLC?
5. What is one specific action you will take as a result of today's session?
6. What is one topic you would like to see included in future professional development for your district to further the work of the Maryvale Professional Learning Community?
7. Do you have a question or suggestion **about today's work?** **Any other comments?**

Your input is greatly appreciated.
Please leave completed forms on your table.
Thank you!