

PLC at Work® in Arkansas

March 1, 2021

Wow Statement

After only two years of implementation, PLC at Work® in Arkansas is already showing positive growth in ACT ASPIRE student test scores, particularly within math. These findings are important because the *PLC at Work* model focuses on schoolwide transformation and is based on a simple proposition: Improved teacher collaboration, trust, and collective responsibility will lead to improved instruction, which will lead to improved student engagement and, ultimately, to increased student achievement. After only two years of implementation, this is exactly what appears to be happening in Cohort 1 schools.

Elevator Speech

PLC at Work® is a powerful school transformation model based on the groundbreaking concept that an entire school system should function as a single, unified professional learning community focused on one goal: all students learning at a high level. Schools and districts that implement *PLC at Work* must make a significant commitment. In turn, they receive many hours of professional development and support that can supercharge the entire school culture, leading to educators that are more deeply engaged and excited about their profession and students that are more engaged in learning.

Arkansas has made a significant investment in *PLC at Work*, choosing the model for statewide implementation for schools in need of improvement, beginning in the 2017-18 school year. This investment is already paying off for the first cohort of participating schools. An outside evaluation conducted by Education Northwest revealed several important findings after only two years of implementation.

PLC at Work has already led to meaningful improvements in student achievement, particularly in math

Students in the first cohort schools showed a statistically significant impact on ACT ASPIRE math student test scores. This impact translates to moving a student who would have scored at the 50th percentile (better than half of students who took the test) to the 53rd percentile in math. Significant growth is rarely seen in such a short period of implementation.

PLC at Work is resulting in students who are more engaged in learning

Passionate and engaged teachers lead to passionate and engaged learners. *PLC at Work* sets this in motion by activating teachers' own desire to learn and to collaborate with their colleagues. This is having a direct impact on student ownership of learning, as well as indicators of student engagement such as increased attendance and fewer behavioral referrals.

PLC at Work is driving improvements in teacher collaboration and trust, leading to positive changes in instructional programs and improved learning opportunities for students

Based on teacher surveys and focus groups, educators in *PLC at Work* Cohort 1 schools significantly improved their culture of collaboration and collective responsibility for ensuring all students learn at high

levels. In addition, all *PLC at Work* Cohort 1 schools reported positive changes in instructional practices, which led to improved learning opportunities for students.

***PLC at Work* shows strong evidence of potential scalability across Arkansas schools**

Teachers within *PLC at Work* Cohort 1 schools reported receiving substantial support from school leaders and Solution Tree associates and were able to fully implement the program. School transformation is never easy, and many improvement models that look good on paper fail to deliver in the real world, often due to poor implementation.

This finding is particularly exciting because students attending *PLC at Work* in Arkansas schools were, on average, similar to other public school students in Arkansas, based on demographics and academic achievement prior to participating in the program. These schools are not outliers and their findings are not limited to any specific group of students. This means that other schools in Arkansas that implement the *PLC at Work* process with fidelity can reasonably expect to see similar results. That is good news for Arkansas.

For more information about the independent evaluation of *PLC at Work* in Arkansas, please contact: Kathryn Torres, Ph.D., Principal Investigator at Kathryn.Torres@educationnorthwest.org or Jennifer Esswein, Ph.D. at Jennifer.Esswein@educationnorthwest.org.