

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | *PLC AT WORK*® IN ARKANSAS

Driving achievement results through school transformation and innovation

In 2017, the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education partnered with Solution Tree to expand the use of *Professional Learning Communities at Work*® (*PLC at Work*®), a school transformation process that engages educators in collaborative cycles of inquiry. *PLC at Work* in Arkansas represents a significant investment for the state and is an important part of its plan to improve education results. After three years, this investment is already showing positive results for the first cohort of participating schools.

Students in the first cohort of *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. Given this similarity, schools that implement the *PLC at Work* process with fidelity could reasonably expect to see similar results.

KEY FINDING 1

Students in *PLC at Work* Cohort 1 schools showed improved academic achievement and higher levels of engagement.

A study that meets Every Student Succeeds Act Tier 2 evidence requirements shows that participation in *PLC at Work* in Arkansas had a positive impact on achievement growth, particularly in math.

Cohort 1 schools have seen positive changes in student engagement, such as:

- Increased understanding of what assessment scores indicate.
- Increased desire to improve proficiency.
- Improvements in attendance and fewer behavior referrals.
- Fewer special education referrals.



KEY FINDING 2

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

Teachers worked in teams to establish consistent instruction across classrooms and provide individualized support for students who need extra help. **Strategies included:**

Focusing on essential standards, proficiency, assessment, and instruction

Aligning standards across grade levels and content areas

Implementing flexible grouping of students to provide more support and feedback

Creating a schoolwide system of supports

KEY FINDING 3

Educators in *PLC at Work* Cohort 1 schools improved their culture of collaboration and collective responsibility for ensuring all students learn at high levels.

All educators saw growth in communication, trust, collective responsibility, and efficacy for student learning.

Implementation of key elements of *PLC at Work* was associated with larger growth in teacher outcomes:



KEY FINDING 4

All *PLC at Work* Cohort 1 schools received significant, high-quality support from school leaders and Solution Tree associates and were able to fully implement the program.

Customized supports from Solution Tree associates helped schools meet their implementation goals.

Successful implementation of *PLC at Work* required widespread support from colleagues, teacher leaders, and school and district administrators

All schools established the core components of PLC at Work

<i>Set schoolwide goals</i>	<i>Established a mission, vision, and collective commitments</i>	<i>Created collaborative teacher teams and guiding coalitions of teacher leaders</i>	<i>Provided adequate time for collaboration</i>
<i>Identified essential standards</i>	<i>Created common formative assessments</i>	<i>Used data to monitor student progress and inform instruction</i>	<i>Used data to identify students for extensions and interventions for learning</i>