



PLC AT WORK[®]

Success Story

Woodlawn Middle School LONG GROVE, ILLINOIS

Woodlawn Middle School has used the professional learning community process to foster collaboration and ensure high levels of learning for more than 15 years.



Woodlawn Middle School

LONG GROVE, ILLINOIS



► DEMOGRAPHICS

- **648** Students
- **8%** Special education
- **3.4%** English language learners
- **13%** Hispanic
- **2.3%** African American
- **55.5%** Caucasian
- **4.1%** Multiracial
- **25.6%** Asian

Woodlawn Middle School, part of Kildeer Countryside School District 96, is located in Long Grove, Illinois, a community of approximately 8,000 residents.



► CHALLENGE

Woodlawn Middle School's PLC journey began more than 15 years ago, when it sought to develop common formative and benchmark assessments in order to increase student learning. At that point, standardized tests were the only primary sources driving instruction or increasing student achievement at the school.

Principal Greg Grana, who has served Woodlawn for more than a decade, knew a professional learning community could simultaneously prepare students to reach local testing benchmarks and foster a more collaborative staff, even if some teachers weren't immediately on board with the PLC framework.

"The biggest challenges we faced were getting past the 'why,'" Grana said. "'Why do we have to do this?' It took a while, but you hit a certain point, and the questions go from 'why' to 'how.' And that's huge. That's a monumental shift in thinking ... When you start hearing talk like that among your staff, that's how you know you're in good shape."

► IMPLEMENTATION

Kildeer Countryside School District 96 started the PLC journey for Woodlawn, as the entire district adapted the framework at once. Woodlawn set off by evaluating its student achievement data and focusing on the best practices needed to improve student performance.



MODEL PLC
SCHOOL



THE
DUFOR
AWARD

2018 WINNER





“We talk to people from around the world, the country, Canada, Australia—they come and witness what we do and how we do it, and they’re blown away by how everyone speaks the language ... The system works so unbelievably well.”

—Greg Grana, principal, Woodlawn Middle School, Illinois

► IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

Grana said the teachers collectively made a commitment to own responsibility for student successes, and to hold the same rigorous expectations for every child in the school system.

As the PLC began to develop, practice quickly moved into action. Woodlawn’s staff shifted into a growth mindset, as knowledge shared among its professionals

allowed the PLC’s principles to drive the school’s daily functioning. District content teams worked to develop a common set of targets for each grade and subject. Teams also met regularly to review data to design effective differentiated instruction. In short, focusing on the four critical questions of a PLC ensured a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all of Woodlawn’s students.

► RESULTS

In addition to winning the coveted DuFour Award, Woodlawn was also twice named a United States Department of Education “Blue Ribbon School” in recognition for its students’ strong achievement after embracing the PLC framework.

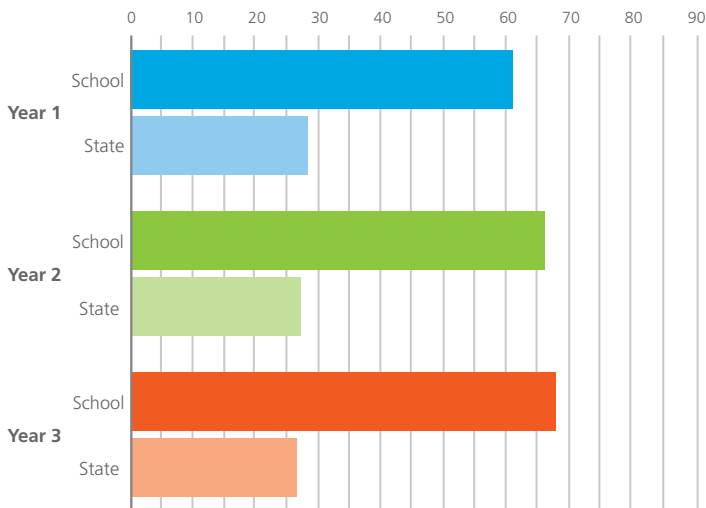
Grana said Woodlawn has enjoyed “incredibly high” standardized test scores and that the interdependence between content and grade team members has grown exponentially.

Students and families are also provided feedback through a standards-based reporting system, allowing all parties

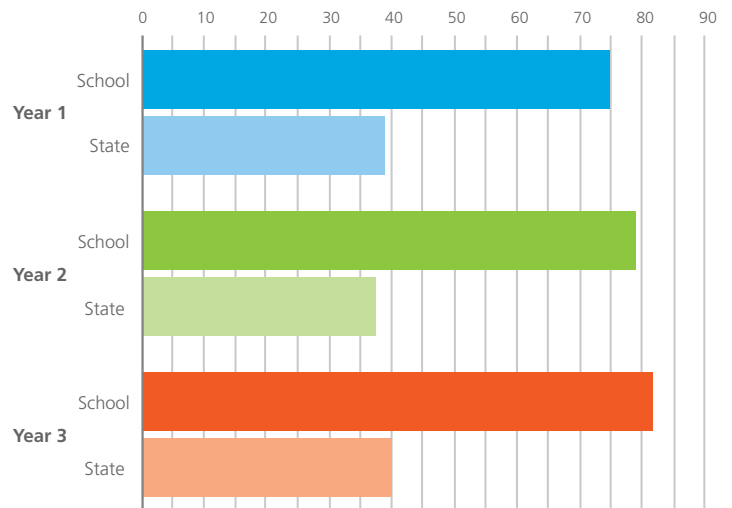
to monitor a learner’s classroom progress. Also, students are able to seek help from Woodlawn’s most skilled professionals during an established “flex” period, ensuring that learners with the greatest areas of need can receive individualized teaching or coaching.

“We have been a fully immersed professional learning community,” Grana said. “That means everything that we do, we do under the PLC umbrella. Through the years as a professional learning community, what it has done is that it’s focused on the path we’ve taken—we always refer back to what we do and why we do it.”

Percentage of Seventh Graders Passing PARCC Math



Percentage of Seventh Graders Passing PARCC Reading





Start Your Success Story

You have a vision for change and improvement in your school or district. You want to see results in the classroom for the lifelong betterment of your students. Like many educators, you may be doing more with less, and you are always looking for ways to improve.

At Solution Tree, we share your vision to transform education to ensure learning for all, and we can help you make this vision a reality.

OUR PROMISE: No other professional learning company provides our unique blend of research-based, results-driven services that improve learning outcomes for students.

► Start your school's PLC at Work® journey at SolutionTree.com/AboutST or call 800.733.6786 ext. 440