Solution Tree

PLC
AT WORK™

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

Seneca High School
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

In just two years, Seneca High School rose to the 42nd percentile of all schools in the state after being in the bottom 5th percentile.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 97 Champions (teachers)
- 1,475 Scholars (students)
- 74% Free and reduced lunch
- 7% Limited English proficient
- 17% English learners
- 13% Special education
- 43% African American
- 42% White
- 11% Hispanic
- 2% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 2% Other

Seneca High School is one of 21 comprehensive high schools in Jefferson County Schools.

CHALLENGE

For years, Seneca High School boasted top Advanced Placement exam pass rates and famous alumni. Its traditionally successful reputation triggered surprise in the community when Seneca was designated a "Persistently Low-Achieving" school by the Kentucky Department of Education in December 2010. A lack of clearly defined systems and appropriate adult response to changes in enrollment, plus increasingly diverse student needs, led to declines in achievement. In February 2011, new Principal Michelle Dillard was brought in to turn the school around. Seneca's goal was to transform the school's culture and significantly reverse negative trends within three years.

> **We've learned how to focus our conversations on the four critical questions of a PLC, develop effective RTI programs, and transform the school culture into a healthier, more student-centered place of learning."**
>
> —Principal Michelle Dillard

IMPLEMENTATION

Seneca's turnaround team completed professional development provided by the Kentucky Department of Education in the summer of 2011. These school administrators and teacher leaders were active contributors to the plan for improvement, and they took ownership in the progress of the school.

With assistance of the state department-appointed staff, the team crafted a plan to address deficiencies and include research-based reform strategies organized under three "big rocks" or priorities: increasing academic performance, transforming school culture, and making data-informed decisions. Goals, strategies, and monitoring systems were developed for each priority. The federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) was written to fund plan strategies.

Principal Dillard discussed the plan in depth at a summer leadership retreat and at Seneca's first summer faculty retreat. Teachers provided feedback and received introductory trainings on strategies. The Professional Learning Communities at Work™ process is the structure the Seneca staff used to tackle the three priorities. Consultants from Solution Tree continue to provide relevant, ongoing, and embedded professional development and to inform continuous improvement efforts.

" Our first experience with Solution Tree was at a PLC at Work™ Institute. I took the leadership team to hear from the experts! We were then able to come back to school and introduce the concept to our staff. Over the last three years, we deepened our professional development and PLC implementation through on-site trainings with knowledgeable and dynamic consultants. These consultants, along with personalized customer service and plentiful resources, were crucial to the focused turnaround work we have done at Seneca High School."

—Principal Michelle Dillard

RESULTS

The Kentucky Department of Education conducted its leadership assessment of priority schools in 2013 and awarded Seneca with the only "Powerful Practice" commendation: "Educators at Seneca High School are to be commended for their efforts to create instructionally based professional learning communities in support of teaching and learning throughout the school." The implementation of the PLC at Work™ process at Seneca has positively impacted student achievement.
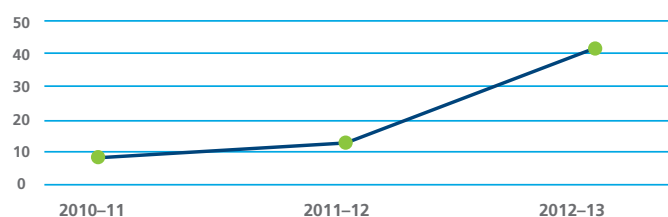
For example, in 2012–13, Seneca surpassed its annual college and career readiness goal! In addition, Seneca:

- Increased the number of college-ready students by 28.8% since the start of school

- Increased the number of college-ready African American students by 21.77% since the start of school

- Increased the number of English as a second language (ESL) college-ready students by 19.2% since the start of school
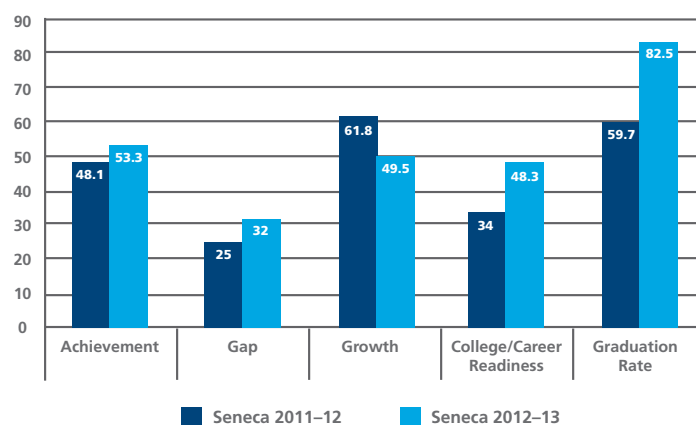
More students are becoming college- and career-ready, and the graduation rate is also increasing. The rate at which incoming freshmen graduate within four years has improved from 59.7% in 2012 to 84.2% in 2013! On the 2011–12 state assessment, Seneca ranked in the top 8 among the 21 district high schools in PLAN to ACT growth. Seneca scholars outperformed both the district and state averages in this category.

Seneca also increased performance on the state accountability measure (K-PREP) in four of five categories.

Seneca HS Percentile Change

Seneca HS K-PREP Trend Data

	Seneca 2011–12	Seneca 2012–13
Achievement	48.1	53.3
Gap	25	32
Growth	61.8	49.5
College/Career Readiness	34	48.3
Graduation Rate	59.7	82.5

Reach new heights of student learning

You're dedicated to helping your students succeed. At Solution Tree, our experts are committed to equipping you with solutions that directly impact student achievement. We invite you to explore the best of content-rich, research-based professional development and discover just how rewarding the journey can be.

Here are just a few ways we can work together:

Customized Workshops

Bring an expert to your school! Plan a dynamic one-day session or a series of trainings. Just tell us your goals, and we'll customize an experience for you and your team.

Standard Workshops

Ever attended one of our workshops and wished you could bring it back to the rest of your team? Now you can! Let our experts come to you.

Keynotes

Bring a keynote speaker into your school, and inspire your team to take the next steps on your professional learning journey! Keynotes typically include a slide presentation and a general question-and-answer segment.

Interactive Web and Video Conferencing

Get top-notch PD from the comfort of your office or classroom! Discover personalized, research-based support from our experts on more than 100 topics, including Common Core, RTI, and 21st century skills.

Long-Term Sustainable Plans

Let us put you on the path to long-term success. We'll partner with you to develop a comprehensive and sustainable professional development plan based on your most critical challenges.

Hybrid Events

Experience a PLC at Work™ Institute from the comfort of your own school! Live streaming video will deliver dynamic and engaging keynotes, breakouts, and panel discussions to your entire team.

Find your rep!
SolutionTree.com/Director

Solution Tree

SolutionTree.com   800.733.6786