

Timpanogos Middle School began its PLC process six years ago. During that time, it has had periods of moderate effectiveness, but we had also fallen into some “PLC Lite” practices, and our students’ results reflected this. In the fall of 2020, and dealing with the ramifications of a pandemic, we decided to renew our commitment to the PLC process.

### Laying the Foundation

One of our first steps was to create a Guiding Coalition. Using the formula from *Taking Action*, we created our team. For many in our team, this was their first exposure to the work of Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, Thomas Many, and Mike Mattos. With our *Taking Action* and *Learning by Doing* books in hand, we were able to begin the groundwork for the PLC culture shift and to create the necessary collective efficacy. TMS had a mission of "Everyone at TMS will be inspired to achieve at high levels and create a sense of community". One of their first actions was to revisit that mission statement.

This process led to a great conversation about high levels of learning, and we were able to as a faculty define high levels of learning as grade level work or higher. We recognized that if students were not learning at grade level or higher, then our results would always be less than we wanted. We also had great conversations about the difference between a mission and a goal. We changed our goal setting process to look at individual students to set goals vs. random numbers. Our teams looked at end of year results and identified students who were already there, students who could be there with a little help, and then we set our goals based on who we felt should be at grade level work with solid tier 1 and tier 2 instruction. We also created plans for students who were more than a year behind that we will discuss in our intervention section.

In Fall of 2021, the school Guiding Coalition working as the voice of Timpanogos Middle School, established a new Mission and Vision: "All students will achieve at high levels and all students prepared to excel at Wasatch High School". It was important to our team that everything we did moving forward be tied to our Mission: As a team, we collaboratively worked to ensure that all students grow. We focused our work in our collaborative teams on [Questions 1 and 2](#): What do the students need to know and be able to do and how will we know when students have learned it? During pre-planning, collaborative teams established norms, SMART Goals, and learning targets for their first unit of study. We used grade level teams throughout the year for professional learning and feedback on the process. As collaborative teams began working together, the Team Leads and the Admin team sat in collaboratives to help guide them in the process. We made a goal for each collaborative team to develop a common formative assessment based on their first Essential Standard.

### Making the Tight, Tight

We used the books *Learning by Doing* and *Taking Action* as foundational pieces for our learning together. Our value statement became, “We will use the principles associated with the books *Taking Action* and *Learning by Doing* to achieve our Mission.” As a faculty, we also read the

article, *“The Futility of PLC Lite”* by Rick DuFour, and we examined our practices against the five areas of tight laid out by the article. We then used the tight areas to guide our process for creating our collective commitments as a faculty. We talked about what each of the tight areas would look like in our school, and we turned them into if then statements. Finally, we discussed what artifacts would show evidence of tight, and we created an artifact calendar based off those things.

As the year progressed, the Guiding Coalition move on to answer Question 3 of a PLC school. They developed a system wide program to imbed Tier 2 time that guarantees all teams have a dedicated time for Tier 2 instruction. We call this [SHIELD](#) time

Also, in year two, we started working on integrating all four guiding questions of a PLC with a targeted look at firming up our essential standards and working them into common Unit Plans. We utilized the framework from Taking Action. We also established a [Site Intervention Team](#) to begin developing our systems of intervention to support question 3: What will we do when student have not learned it?

Additionally in year 2 we hired a PLC coach to work specifically with teacher teams to create and strengthen unit plans, CFA's, essential targets, etc.

In year three, Guiding Coalition agreed upon a common score board that all teams began to utilize to house their progress and data. We call this our [Climb Form](#). The Climb form has systemized how our school interacts with data.

With our Climb Form we are able to track the effectiveness of Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3. It allows us to get specific and who needs intervention and how well the interventions are working.

Our next steps are wrapping our counseling services and community liaison to build systems to help those students who have barriers regarding home and health.