

BUILDING EFFECTIVE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COLLABORATIONS TO ADVANCE RURAL EDUCATION

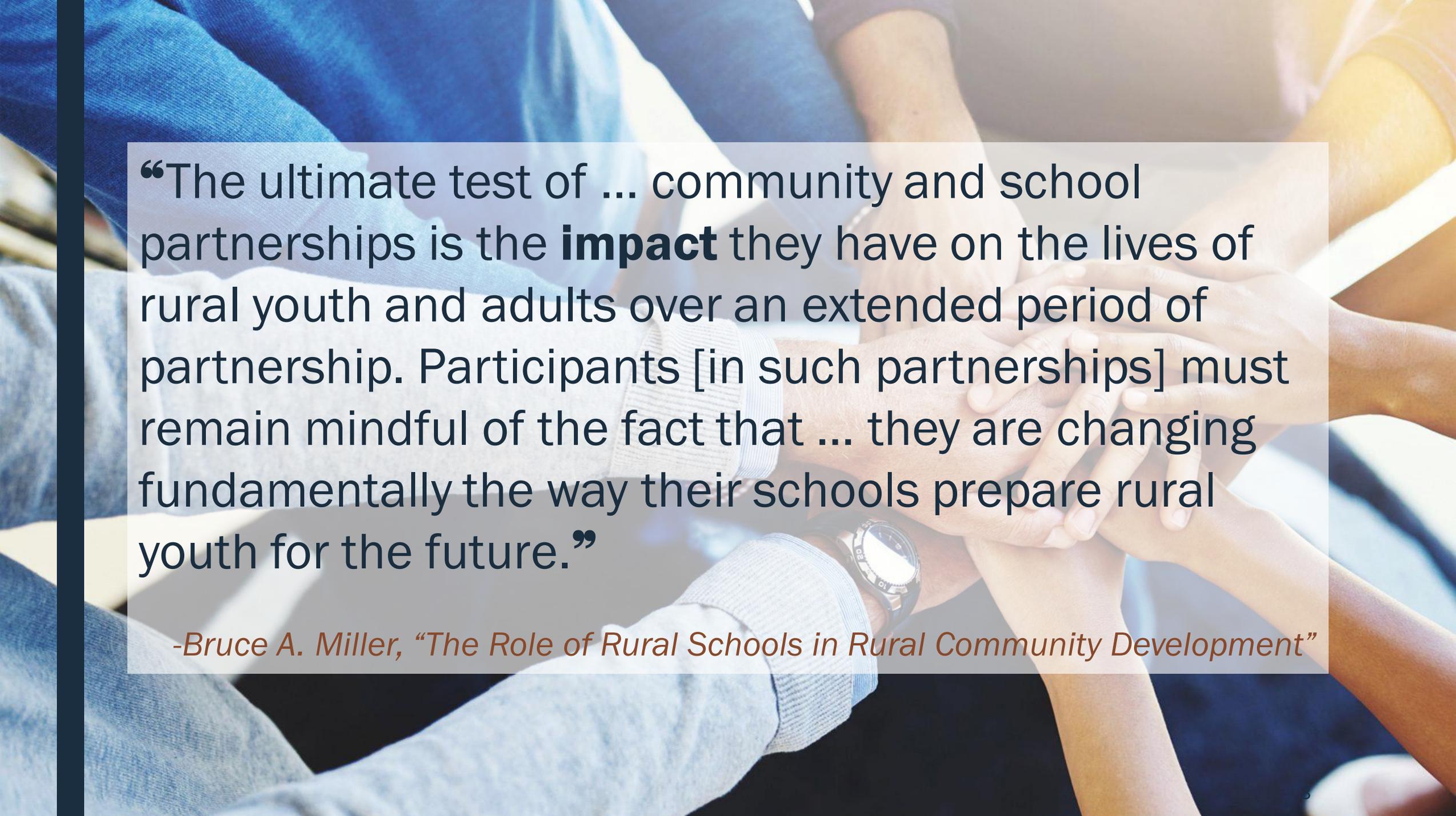
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“For most rural schools in this country, collaboration is not a choice, it is a **necessity.**”

-Battelle for Kids, 2017





“The ultimate test of ... community and school partnerships is the **impact** they have on the lives of rural youth and adults over an extended period of partnership. Participants [in such partnerships] must remain mindful of the fact that ... they are changing fundamentally the way their schools prepare rural youth for the future.”

-Bruce A. Miller, “The Role of Rural Schools in Rural Community Development”



AGENDA

I.
Internal Collaboration

II.
External Collaboration

III.
Measurement

INTERNAL COLLABORATION

TURN & SHARE

Turn to a partner and share some of your preferred methods for productive **internal** collaboration.



structures for

INTERNAL COLLABORATION

1 Action
Research

4 Community of
Practice (CoP)

2 Collaborative Analysis
of Student Learning

5 Lesson
Study

3 Collegial
Circle

6 Professional Learning
Community (PLC)

KEY POINTS *for forming and sustaining internal collaborative structures*

- Have a **clear strategic design/structure** and work plan.
- Center the team around a **common interest** or goal – need to have shared values and vision.
- Craft **balanced** teams that take advantage of members' knowledge and experience.
- Provide sufficient **time for effective and intentional collaborative learning**.
- **Supportive leadership** *that is both task- and relationship-oriented, and flexible*; distributed leadership, and solid facilitation are also necessary.
- Positive, supportive, and inclusive school environment that allows for debate, dissection, and robust discussions.
- Use **process tools** to engage team in a meaningful way.
- **Evaluate** what is and isn't working and **measure impact**.

EXAMPLES

of effective structures for internal collaboration

PLRA

Professional Learning Research Alliance

- Established in 2011 as part of REL Mid-Atlantic.
- Collaborative structure:
 - *Facilitated and supported by a research alliance coordinator (based in academic institution)*
 - *Multiple districts, schools, state-level education folks from 4 states.*
 - *Consistent meetings (bi-monthly virtual, one in-person annually) with agenda, goals, sharing and learning involved.*

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

TURN & SHARE

Turn to a partner and share some of your preferred methods for productive **external** collaboration.



structures for

EXTERNAL COLLABORATION

1 Academic Alliance

2 Design Research

3 High School Outreach

4 Networked Improvement Community

5 Professional Learning Network (PLN)

6 Research Alliance

7 Strategic Alliance

8 Study Council

KEY POINTS *for forming and sustaining external collaborative structures*

- Form the partnership around a set of **clear goals** and a common mindset.
- Establish **trust** as a basis for professional interactions.
- Foster strong relationships marked by effective **communication**.
- Have designated **leaders**.
- Ensure that both partners are creating **new value** based on collaboration, rather than just exchanging ideas.

EXAMPLES

***of effective structures for external
collaboration in rural education***

OHIO APPALACHIAN COLLABORATIVE (OAC)

- Established in 2010, the OAC is a partnership of 27 rural school districts focused on improving college and career readiness.
- Collaborative structure:
 - *Districts are grouped into “Pods” to encourage and directly facilitate the exchange of ideas, support, and resources across neighboring school systems.*
 - *Each district has a District Implementation Team (DIT) to serve as its support system.*
 - *Two professional development coordinators (PDCs) are also assigned to each district.*
- The OAC uses a PLC powered by Schoology to collaborate online.

NORTHWEST RURAL INNOVATION AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NW RISE) NETWORK

- NW RISE is a partnership, founded in 2014, comprising state education agencies (SEAs) and rural school districts in Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington; and the Northwest Comprehensive Center (NWCC).
- Collaborative structure:
 - *An 18-member steering committee serves as the governance for the network.*
 - *Teacher members organize into job-alike groups where they have natural affinity, typically around a subject area or grade level.*
- NW RISE convenes the Network twice a year for two-day, face-to-face networking meetings.

MEASUREMENT

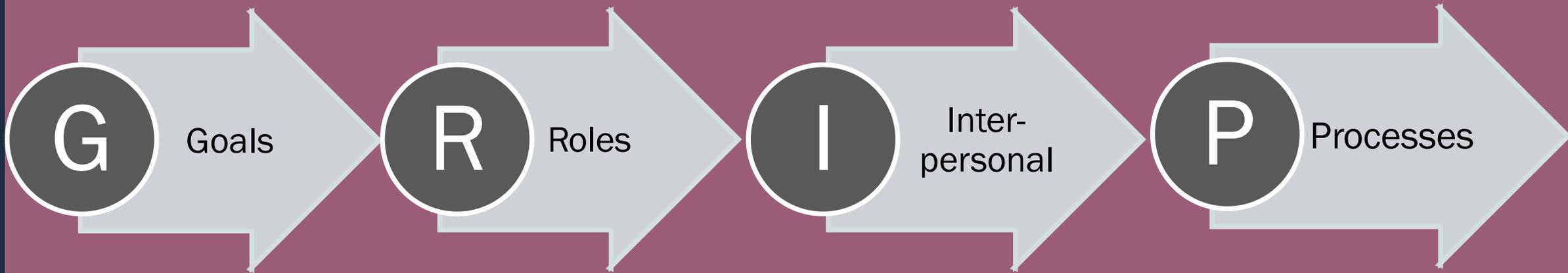
TURN & SHARE

Assessing Collaborative Work

Have you assessed the performance of internal or external collaborations and/or partnerships?
If yes, how?
If not, why?



TEAM PROCESSES AND EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION



The How To

MEASUREMENT OF COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURES

1

Determine Info Needed & for What Purpose (Planning, Implementation, Evaluation)

4

Identify Key Indicators

2

Logic Model

5

Note Classes of Instruments Most Relevant

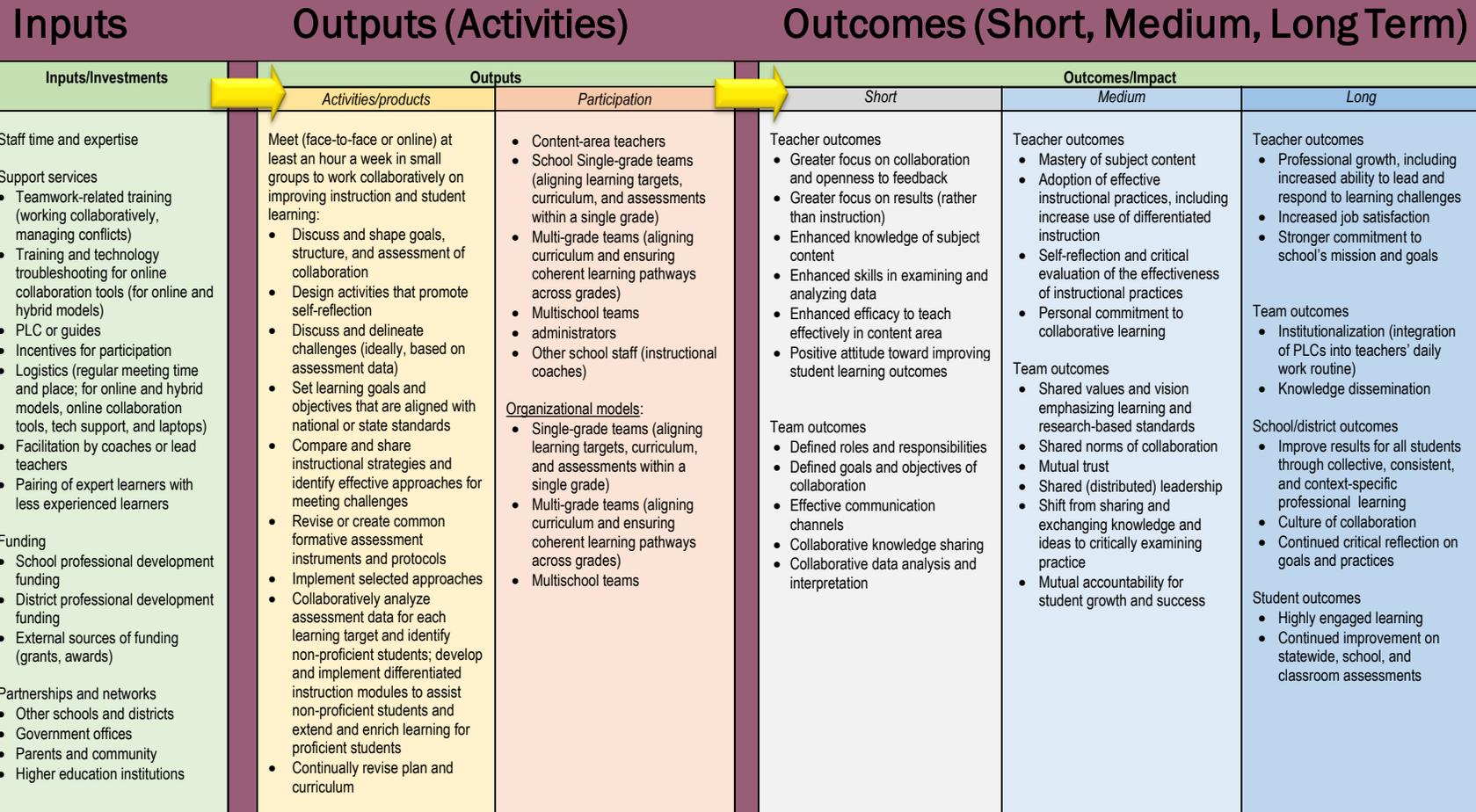
3

Identify Key Tasks

6

Select Instruments

PLC Logic Model



Selecting Instruments



| Key tasks | Key indicators | Relevant class of instruments in appendix D |
|---|---|--|
| Planning | | |
| Assess staff's motivation to engage in PLCs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff beliefs regarding the likely impact of PLCs on them personally • Staff relationship with colleagues, their school, and their students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beliefs about school-based change • Beliefs about school/PLC functioning • Beliefs about group dynamics outcomes • Beliefs about school culture |
| Determine staff's PLC readiness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Prior experience with collaborative work</i> • Trust in colleagues • Perceived collective commitment to collective inquiry and continuous improvement • Self-efficacy to collaborate in PLCs • Sense of empowerment to lead change • Receipt of PLC-relevant training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Beliefs about supportive conditions</i> • Efficacy-related beliefs • Perceived level of empowerment • Beliefs about school/PLC functioning • Beliefs about school culture |
| Explore staff's concerns and perceived barriers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived personal barriers (such as time and commitment) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beliefs about school-based change • Beliefs about school/PLC functioning |

Measurement Instruments

Teacher/principal-level variables

Beliefs about supportive conditions

- Omnibus Trust Scale
- Teachers Using Technology Survey (see also *Instructional practices outcomes*)

Efficacy-related beliefs

- Collective Teacher Belief Scale
- Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument
- Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale

Beliefs about school culture

- School Cultural Elements Questionnaire
- School Culture Scale

Beliefs about school/PLC functioning

- Group Development Questionnaire
- Principal Interview—School as a Learning Organization
- Professional Learning Communities Assessment—Revised
- Professional Learning Community Questionnaire
- School Professional Staff as Learning Community Questionnaire

Measuring Team Process and Collaboration

Key Indicators

- Team composition
- Team leadership
- *Team communication*
- *Team conflict management*
- *Team role knowledge*
- *Team knowledge integration*

Measurement Instruments

- Collective team efficacy
- Team effectiveness scale
- Team quality scale
- Team effectiveness scale
- Team climate inventory
- Culture assessment tool
- Aston team performance inventory

Measuring Internal Collaborations/PLCs

Key Indicators

- Collective mission/collaboration (culture of PLCs)
- Organizational commitment to PLCs (leadership)
- *Structural barriers to PLCs (objective constraints)*
- *Individual concerns about PLCs (perceived impact on self)*
- *Perceived expectancies (expectations of the PLC experience)*

Commitment to Collective Inquiry

These survey items measure the degree to which respondents believe that the staff in their school is committed to collective inquiry and shared decision-making

| Survey Items | District A | District B |
|---|------------|------------|
| The staff in our school generally makes decisions by seeking out best practices rather than by sharing opinions. | 53% | 40% |
| The staff in our school collaboratively analyzes student work to improve teaching and learning. | 56% | 56% |
| I believe that members of my PLC will willingly share their knowledge and expertise in regular PLC meetings. | 73% | 85% |
| Teachers who share the same course content and/or students will develop common formative assessments. | 81% | 67% |
| Teachers who share the same course content and/or students will agree on how to determine student proficiency as they assess the quality of student work. | 76% | 70% |
| I believe that my PLC will read and discuss research reports and other descriptions of evidence-based strategies for addressing student needs. | 67% | 48% |
| I believe that my PLC teammates will assess and share results of new instructional approaches they try out in their classrooms. | 73% | 85% |

Commitment to Collective Inquiry

- Overall, based on the average answers provided to all of these questions, teachers in both districts tend to agree that the staff in their school share a commitment to collaborative inquiry (**M=3.8, SD=.48 in District A**, and **M=3.8, SD=.64 in District B**, on a scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree).
- At the same time, fewer teachers agree that the staff in their school engage in shared decision-making (see first two items in the table).
- There were no substantive differences in perceived staff commitment to collective inquiry among teachers from different grade levels. In District A, those who participates in prior supported PLCs were more likely to agree with this assessment than non-participants (M=4 compared to M=3.7, respectively).

SELECTED TOOLS AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

Team Science Toolkit

(<https://www.teamsciencetoolkit.cancer.gov/Public/Home.aspx>)

Collaborative Team Toolkit (especially page 6, rubric examples)

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/AchieveNJ/teams/Toolkit.pdf>

Framework for Assessing Research-Practice Partnerships (Table 1, Page 24)

Henrick et al (2017). *Assessing Research-Practice Partnerships: Five Dimensions of Effectiveness*. New York, NY: William T. Grant Foundation

TRIANGLE- SQUARE-CIRCLE

Take this time to write
down...



3 takeaways from
this presentation



1 thing that squared
with your thinking



1 thing still circling in
your head



FOOD FOR THOUGHT.....

**What methods, strategies and tools are most appropriate to evaluate if and how a collaboration in a rural setting was effective or achieved key elements of success?
(Harmon, 2017)**

THANKS FOR LISTENING AND SHARING!

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“It is possible and necessary to develop strategies that encourage people to remain in or return to rural regions. However, these efforts cannot be prescriptive, rigid or mandated. Instead, successful pathways will be purposeful, collaborative and grounded in place.”

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