

PLC SURVEY RESULTS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

On the High Five PLC Survey, most teachers, regardless of years of experience, viewed PLCs as having a positive impact on their work environment and student learning. Beginning teachers tended to have the highest percentage of agreement. The percentage of teachers agreeing that PLCs were having the desired impact increased between 2007-08 and 2008-09 for both beginning teachers and those with more experience. Thus, trends were in the desired direction.

This brief report analyzes responses to the High 5 PLC survey based on teacher-responders' years of experience. A general goal is to see whether perceptions of PLCs vary based on teachers' years of experience. A more specific goal is to examine beginning teachers' views relative to those of more experienced teachers. The performance goals for both the Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer reflect an emphasis on PLCs as a key strategy to promote effective learning and teaching. The desired goal is an increase over time in the percentage of teachers who see team-based collaboration as having a positive impact on their work environment, particularly among beginning teachers.

Teachers were surveyed about PLC implementation and impact in the winter of 2007-08 and 2008-09. Response rates for both surveys were high at over 80%. In 2008-09, about 11% of the teachers responding to the PLC survey had 1-2 years of experience (see Table 1). The largest percentages of teachers had 5-10 or 11-20 years of experience.



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The author would like to acknowledge the support of E&R staff members Andy Jackl and Aimee Lougee in data collection, analysis, and preparation of charts for this report.

Table 1
2008-09 PLC Survey Response Rates by Experience Level

Level	Experience	n	%
Elementary	1-2 years	399	11.0%
	3-4 years	500	13.8%
	5-10 years	1040	28.8%
	11-20 years	974	26.9%
	More than 20 years	702	19.4%
ES Total		3615	100.0%
Middle	1-2 years	150	10.1%
	3-4 years	186	12.5%
	5-10 years	408	27.5%
	11-20 years	407	27.4%
	More than 20 years	334	22.5%
MS Total		1485	100.0%
High	1-2 years	187	11.1%
	3-4 years	193	11.5%
	5-10 years	474	28.2%
	11-20 years	416	24.8%
	More than 20 years	409	24.4%
HS Total		1679	100.0%
Alternative	1-2 years	3	11.5%
	3-4 years	1	3.8%
	5-10 years	6	23.1%
	11-20 years	12	46.2%
	More than 20 years	4	15.4%
ALT Total		26	100.0%
Grand Total		6805	100.0%

Data Source: WCPSS Data Analysis of High Five 2008-09 PLC Survey

For more information on High Five general survey results, see Jackl (2009).

Is Team-Based Collaboration Having a Positive Impact on Teachers?

We will first address responses on the 2008-09 survey related to the impact of PLCs on beginning teachers (those with less than three years of experience) and other teachers (broken down by years of experience).

At least 60% of the teachers, regardless of experience, agreed with all of the items related to the impact of PLCs. Beginning teachers had the most positive responses for most items (see Table 2). Generally, slightly higher percentages of teachers with 1-2 and 3-4 years of experience see PLCs as having a positive impact on their students' learning than those with more experience.

The highest percentage of teachers with 1-2 years of experience agree that PLCs can provide a supportive environment for teachers (94.9%), with the lowest percentage (73.2%) agreeing that "time spent with my PLC will save me time overall." Over 80% of beginning teachers feel they are better teachers and that their students are learning more because of their work with PLCs. This pattern was also true for the teacher groups with other levels of experience.

Table 2
2008-09 PLC Survey Responses to Impact-Area Questions by Experience Level

Statement	Percent Agree / Strongly Agree By Experience					
	01-02 years	03-04 years	05-10 years	11-20 years	20+ years	All
I am a better teacher because of my work with my PLC.						
Elementary	86.2%	83.2%	79.9%	80.6%	82.8%	81.8%
Middle	84.7%	85.5%	78.7%	71.7%	75.4%	77.5%
High	86.1%	82.9%	75.1%	75.7%	72.6%	76.8%
Total:	85.8%	83.5%	78.4%	77.1%	78.2%	79.5%
My students are learning more because of my work with my PLC.						
Elementary	80.2%	80.8%	78.2%	77.9%	79.8%	79.0%
Middle	80.0%	80.6%	75.7%	66.6%	70.7%	73.1%
High	84.0%	77.2%	69.2%	67.5%	67.5%	70.9%
Total:	81.1%	79.9%	75.4%	72.7%	74.2%	75.6%
PLCs can provide a more supportive environment for teachers.						
Elementary	93.7%	93.8%	91.5%	91.7%	91.9%	92.2%
Middle	96.0%	92.5%	90.7%	89.2%	88.9%	90.6%
High	96.8%	96.4%	89.7%	92.1%	90.0%	91.9%
Total:	94.9%	94.0%	90.9%	91.0%	90.6%	91.7%
Time spent with my PLC will save me time overall.						
Elementary	69.9%	69.2%	64.7%	69.3%	73.9%	68.9%
Middle	77.3%	72.0%	70.3%	66.6%	66.2%	69.3%
High	77.0%	69.9%	62.2%	59.4%	59.9%	63.5%
Total:	73.2%	69.9%	65.2%	66.1%	68.1%	67.5%

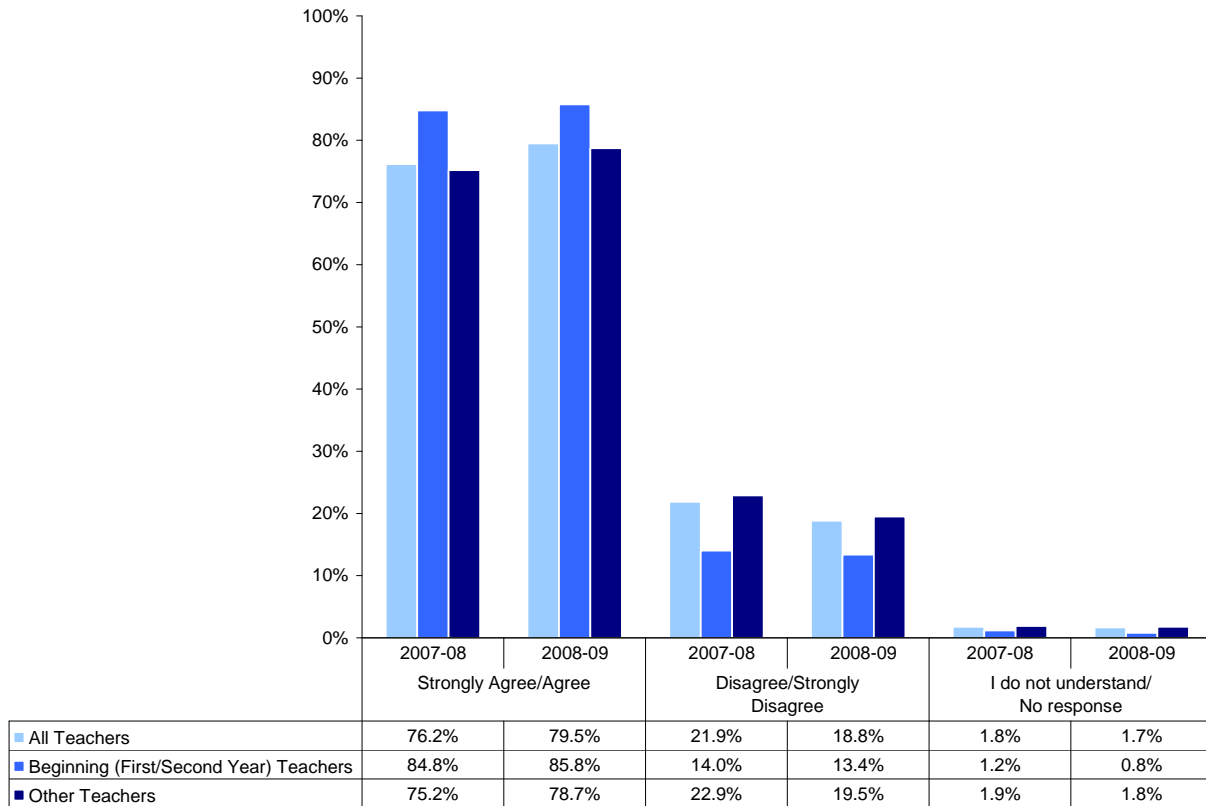
n = Elementary: 3,615; Middle: 1,485; High: 1,679; Total: 6,779

Data Source: WCPSS Data Analysis of High Five 2008-09 PLC Survey

The next graphs compare responses from 2007-08 to 2008-09 for two impact questions. Overall, 76-80% of all teachers agreed to each item, with beginning teachers being the most positive. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate that both beginning teachers and other teachers had small increases in the percentage of teachers who indicated that:

- They were better teachers because of their PLC work.
- Their students were learning more because of their work in PLCs.

Figure 1
“I am a better teacher because of my PLC work.”

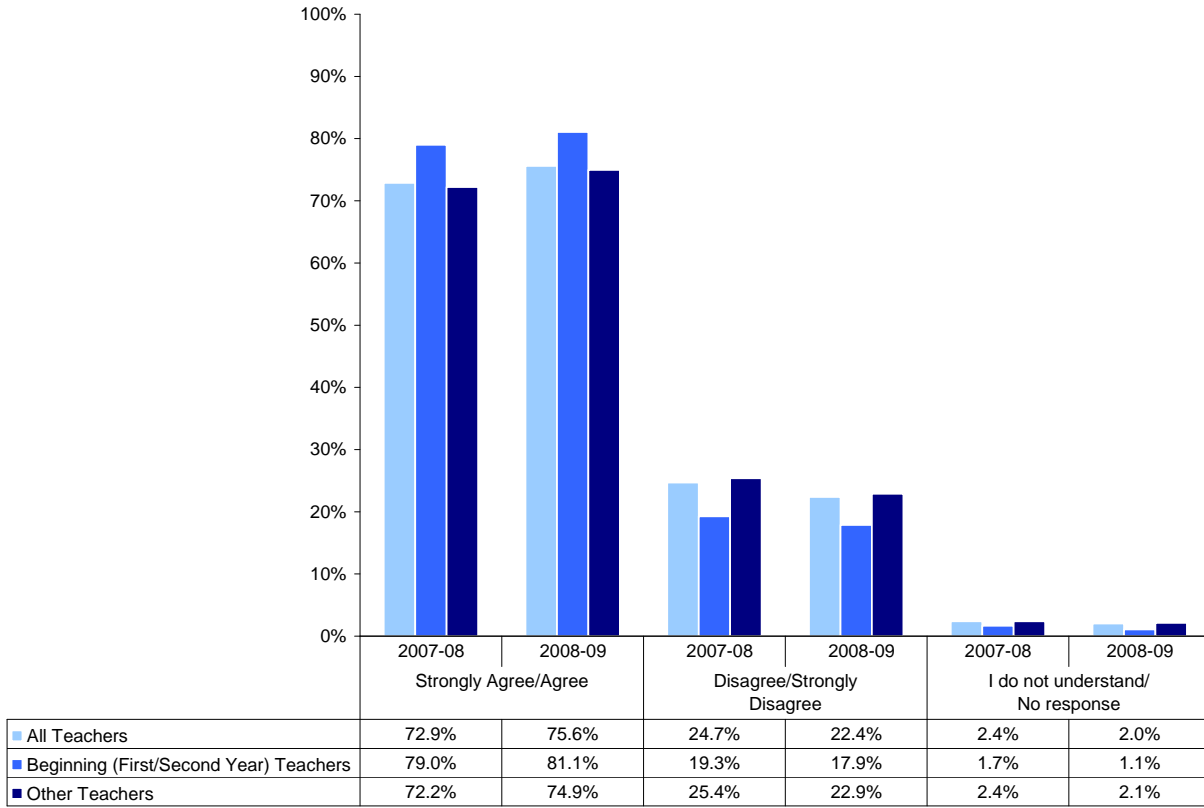


n = 2008 Elementary: 3,507; Middle: 1,507; High: 1,789; Alternative: 55; Total: 6,858.

n = 2009 Elementary: 3,615; Middle: 1,485; High: 1,679; Alternative: 26; Total: 6,805.

Data Source: WCPSS Data Analysis of High Five 2007-08 PLC Survey

Figure 2
“My students are learning more because of my PLC.”



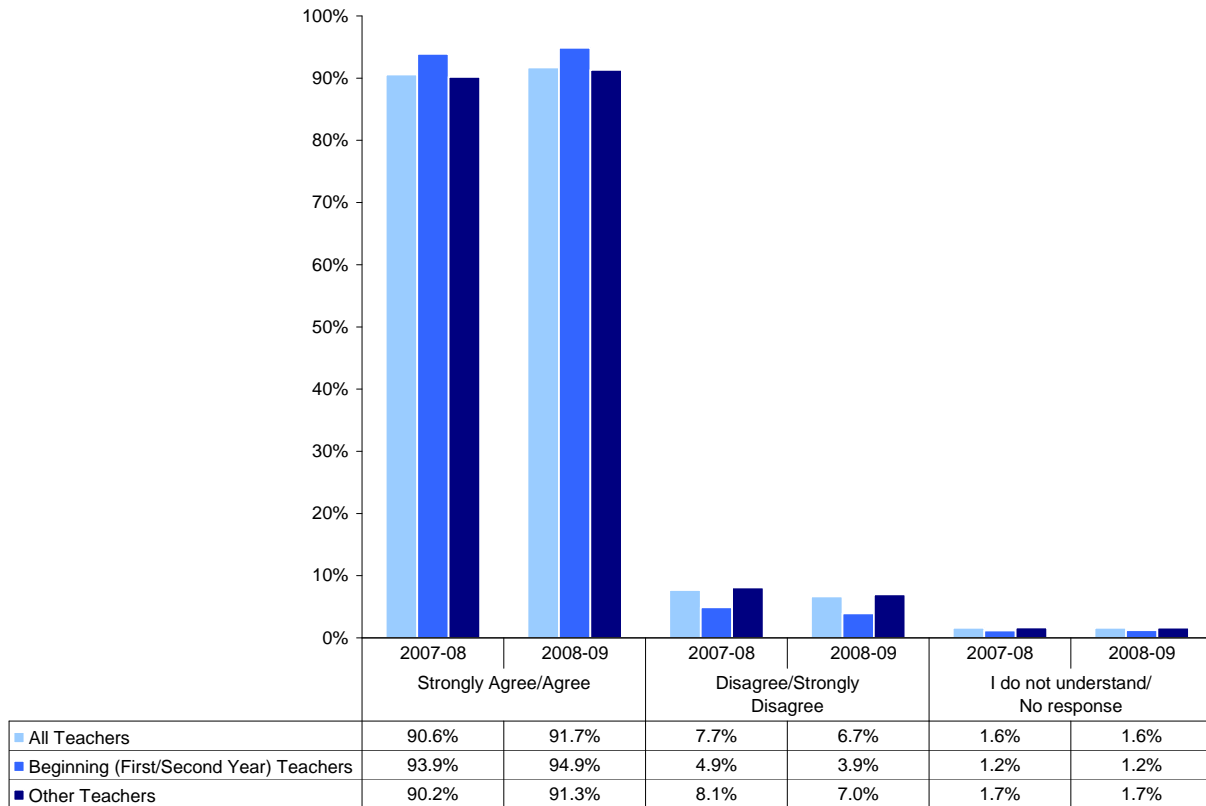
n = 2008 Elementary: 3,507; Middle: 1,507; High: 1,789; Alternative: 55; Total: 6,858.

n = 2009 Elementary: 3,615; Middle: 1,485; High: 1,679; Alternative: 26; Total: 6,805.

Data Source: WCPSS Data Analysis of High Five 2007-08 PLC Survey

Figures 3 and 4 also show increases in the percentage of teachers who believe PLCs provide a more supportive environment for teachers and that time spent on PLCs will save them time overall. This was true for beginning teachers as well as other teachers. The percentage of teachers agreeing that PLCs provide a supportive environment (92%) was much higher than the percentage agreeing that PLCs save them time overall (68%).

Figure 3
“The PLC process provides a more supportive environment for teachers.”

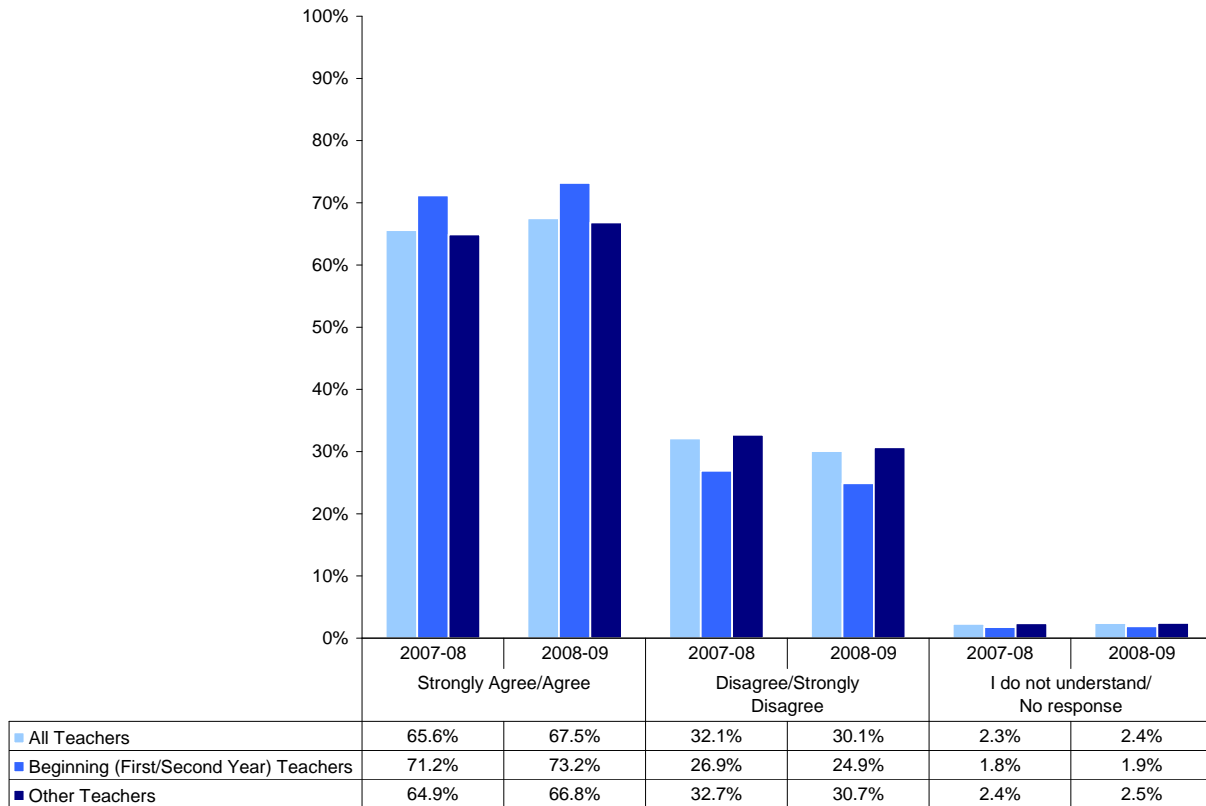


n = 2008 Elementary: 3,507; Middle: 1,507; High: 1,789; Alternative: 55; Total: 6,858.

n = 2009 Elementary: 3,615; Middle: 1,485; High: 1,679; Alternative: 26; Total: 6,805.

Data Source: WCPSS Data Analysis of High Five 2007-08 PLC Survey

Figure 4
“Time spent with my PLC will save me time overall.”



n = 2008 Elementary: 3,507; Middle: 1,507; High: 1,789; Alternative: 55; Total: 6,858.
n = 2009 Elementary: 3,615; Middle: 1,485; High: 1,679; Alternative: 26; Total: 6,805.
Data Source: WCPSS Data Analysis of High Five 2007-08 PLC Survey

Appendix 1 provides results of other questions on the PLC survey for 2008-09 based on years of experience which may be of interest. As reported in Jackl (2009), survey results were generally slightly more positive in 2008-09 than in 2007-08. These items, which relate more to implementation of PLCs than their impact, are organized by theme--collaboration, focus, strategies and interventions, assessment, and support. Some trends are worthy of note.

- Teachers with the most and least experience sometimes had more positive views than those with 5-10 years of experience.
- Generally, results for these more objective items are tighter (less variable) by years of experience or school grade span than for the more subjective impact questions.

While beginning teachers were often more positive than other teachers, patterns varied by theme. When compared to all teachers, beginning teachers were more positive for most items on collaboration, strategies and interventions, and support, but not for most items within the themes of focus and assessment.

- Within the focus theme, the percentage of beginning teachers who agreed that their PLC had adopted SMART goals that they were working to achieve, and that their SMART goals were aligned with school SMART goals, was 3-5% lower than for the other experience levels.
- Within the assessment area, responses to all items for teachers with 1-2 years of experience as a group were slightly less positive than for the other experience groups, but differences were small. The largest difference was 2.2% for the item on whether common formative assessments had been developed using different approaches.

Collaboration item results are encouraging in that at least three fourths of the teachers in every experience bracket indicated they were using collaborative processes such as team norms and structured decision-making processes. High percentages of teachers also reported PLC members were open and honest about strengths and weaknesses (91%) and had ways to resolve conflict (81%). Finally, over 80% of teachers indicated they monitored progress with an eye towards improvement and gathered evidence on the effectiveness of instructional strategies. By years of experience, it is interesting to note that high school teachers with 1-2 years of experience had slightly lower levels of agreement than other teachers on collaboration items related to norms and decision making.

Within the strategies and interventions area, beginning teachers (especially middle school teachers) were less likely to agree (by 2.4%) that they require students in need to participate in other learning opportunities. This is particularly important because overall agreement levels on this item were among the lowest on the survey at 72.9%.

In the focus area, beginning teachers were less positive than others on the item related to whether the team's SMART goals aligned with the school's SMART goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Increasing the consistency of support for PLCs and their PLC effectiveness seems likely with special attention to two areas:

- Exploring why beginning teachers as a group are less positive compared to teachers with more experience about focus items related to SMART goals, formative assessment, and requiring participation in other learning opportunities for struggling students.
- Watching for teachers with 5-20 years of experience who may have less positive views towards PLCs, and encouraging their participation through leadership opportunities, staff development, or other venues.

While responses were positive overall, the implementation of dedicated time for PLCs systemwide this coming year increases the importance of the effective use of PLCs. Providing clear expectations and support for implementation are critical. Using time in such a way that it saves teachers' time overall seems more likely with weekly meetings. Ultimately, an increase in learning is the goal. Implementation will be monitored and this survey will be repeated in the 2009-10 school year.

References

Jackl, A. (2009). [*Professional learning community \(PLC\) implementation: WCPSS 2008-09 high five PLC survey results*](#). Raleigh, NC: Wake County Public School System, Evaluation and Research Department.

Appendix 1

2008-09 PLC Survey Responses to Collaboration-Area Questions by Experience Level

Statement	Percent Agree / Strongly Agree By Experience					
	01-02 years	03-04 years	05-10 years	11-20 years	20+ years	All
We have established norms to clarify how we will work as a team.						
Elementary	94.2%	95.8%	94.0%	95.8%	95.6%	95.1%
Middle	93.3%	91.4%	93.1%	93.9%	95.5%	93.7%
High	87.7%	94.8%	90.9%	89.9%	91.9%	91.0%
Total	92.3%	94.7%	93.0%	94.0%	94.5%	93.7%
We abide by the explicit team norms we developed.						
Elementary	90.7%	90.8%	89.8%	93.1%	91.0%	91.2%
Middle	91.3%	90.9%	88.7%	91.4%	89.5%	90.2%
High	85.0%	90.7%	88.0%	82.7%	91.2%	87.4%
Total	89.3%	90.8%	89.1%	90.3%	90.7%	90.0%
We use sound, structured decision-making processes.						
Elementary	94.2%	92.0%	90.9%	94.6%	94.0%	93.0%
Middle	94.7%	90.3%	91.7%	90.2%	93.4%	91.8%
High	89.3%	94.8%	94.7%	90.4%	93.9%	92.9%
Total	93.0%	95.3%	92.0%	92.6%	93.8%	92.7%
We are open and honest about strengths and weaknesses.						
Elementary	92.0%	90.2%	88.6%	90.8%	91.0%	90.2%
Middle	94.0%	88.2%	89.0%	89.9%	92.5%	90.4%
High	91.4%	94.8%	91.6%	88.9%	93.6%	91.8%
Total	92.2%	90.8%	89.4%	90.2%	92.1%	90.7%
We have a process to effectively resolve conflict.						
Elementary	83.0%	80.8%	77.3%	81.5%	82.1%	80.5%
Middle	84.0%	82.3%	80.1%	79.4%	82.3%	81.1%
High	81.3%	85.0%	80.4%	77.2%	85.6%	81.5%
Total	82.7%	82.0%	78.6%	80.0%	83.1%	80.8%
We document and monitor our processes so that we can improve.						
Elementary	88.7%	88.8%	86.2%	89.6%	91.0%	88.7%
Middle	88.7%	88.7%	85.3%	87.2%	92.5%	88.2%
High	88.2%	92.2%	88.2%	85.6%	91.0%	88.7%
Total	88.5%	89.4%	86.5%	88.2%	91.3%	88.6%
We systematically gather evidence concerning instructional strategies.						
Elementary	87.7%	87.2%	83.2%	88.7%	88.5%	86.7%
Middle	82.7%	82.3%	79.7%	78.1%	88.0%	81.8%
High	83.4%	82.9%	81.4%	77.9%	86.8%	82.3%
Total	85.5%	85.2%	82.0%	83.6%	87.9%	84.5%

n = Elementary: 3,615; Middle: 1,485; High: 1,679; Total: 6,779

Data Source: WCPSS Data Analysis of High Five 2008-09 PLC Survey

2008-09 PLC Survey Responses to Focus-Area Questions by Experience Level

Statement	Percent Agree / Strongly Agree By Experience					
	01-02 years	03-04 years	05-10 years	11-20 years	20+ years	All
We have identified essential learning outcomes.						
Elementary	94.0%	95.4%	92.1%	93.4%	94.6%	93.6%
Middle	94.7%	91.9%	90.2%	91.9%	92.5%	91.9%
High	90.9%	93.8%	94.7%	93.3%	97.1%	94.4%
Total	93.2%	94.3%	92.4%	93.0%	94.8%	93.4%
We believe our students can master these outcomes.						
Elementary	89.7%	89.0%	86.9%	87.7%	91.2%	88.5%
Middle	92.0%	81.7%	84.1%	82.3%	86.5%	84.6%
High	80.7%	79.3%	76.2%	75.7%	81.2%	78.1%
Total	87.8%	85.3%	83.7%	83.6%	87.1%	85.1%
We use team-adopted standards to assess learning.						
Elementary	89.0%	90.4%	87.3%	89.3%	91.0%	89.2%
Middle	80.7%	85.5%	81.9%	78.4%	86.8%	82.4%
High	80.2%	91.2%	83.1%	81.3%	87.5%	84.3%
Total	85.0%	89.4%	85.2%	84.8%	89.0%	86.4%
We have adopted SMART goals that we are working to achieve.						
Elementary	85.2%	88.2%	87.3%	89.9%	90.6%	88.5%
Middle	81.3%	83.3%	75.7%	81.1%	88.6%	81.6%
High	82.9%	86.0%	87.6%	81.0%	90.2%	85.9%
Total	83.8%	86.6%	85.0%	85.6%	90.0%	86.3%
Our SMART goals are aligned with the school's SMART goals.						
Elementary	80.5%	86.4%	85.7%	88.2%	90.5%	86.8%
Middle	76.0%	79.0%	72.8%	79.6%	85.0%	78.5%
High	79.7%	85.0%	85.2%	80.3%	87.0%	83.8%
Total	79.3%	84.4%	82.9%	84.1%	88.2%	84.2%

n = Elementary: 3,615; Middle: 1,485; High: 1,679; Total: 6,779

Data Source: WCPSS Data Analysis of High Five 2008-09 PLC Survey

**2008-09 PLC Survey Responses to Strategies-and-Interventions-Area
Questions by Experience Level**

Statement	Percent Agree / Strongly Agree By Experience					
	01-02 years	03-04 years	05-10 years	11-20 years	20+ years	All
We have worked to align our instruction with learning outcomes.						
Elementary	94.2%	95.8%	92.0%	94.4%	96.6%	94.3%
Middle	90.7%	89.2%	89.2%	92.6%	96.1%	91.9%
High	93.6%	91.2%	92.6%	90.6%	95.8%	92.9%
Total	93.2%	93.4%	91.6%	92.9%	96.2%	93.3%
We are identifying more effective instructional strategies.						
Elementary	91.7%	92.6%	90.0%	92.4%	93.4%	91.9%
Middle	90.7%	89.2%	86.0%	90.4%	93.7%	89.8%
High	92.5%	89.6%	91.1%	91.1%	92.2%	91.4%
Total	91.6%	91.3%	89.4%	91.4%	93.1%	91.2%
We utilize increasingly more effective instructional strategies.						
Elementary	90.0%	91.2%	87.6%	90.8%	91.0%	89.9%
Middle	90.0%	84.9%	84.1%	86.5%	90.4%	86.9%
High	89.8%	89.6%	88.6%	88.7%	90.5%	89.3%
Total	89.9%	89.5%	87.1%	89.2%	90.7%	89.0%
We utilize the schoolwide pyramid of interventions.						
Elementary	86.5%	85.4%	80.9%	82.9%	85.9%	83.6%
Middle	82.0%	68.8%	66.2%	74.2%	78.1%	73.0%
High	80.2%	75.6%	77.4%	76.7%	83.4%	78.8%
Total	83.9%	79.8%	76.9%	79.5%	83.2%	80.1%
We require students in need to participate in other learning opportunities.						
Elementary	74.4%	79.0%	76.1%	79.1%	78.3%	77.5%
Middle	60.0%	65.6%	65.7%	66.8%	69.8%	66.3%
High	70.6%	71.0%	69.0%	62.3%	74.1%	69.0%
Total	70.5%	74.3%	72.2%	72.2%	75.0%	72.9%

n = Elementary: 3,615; Middle: 1,485; High: 1,679; Total: 6,779
Data Source: WCPSS Data Analysis of High Five 2008-09 PLC Survey

2008-09 PLC Survey Responses to Assessments-Area Questions by Experience Level

Statement	Percent Agree / Strongly Agree By Experience					
	01-02 years	03-04 years	05-10 years	11-20 years	20+ years	All
We have developed common formative assessments using different approaches.						
Elementary	80.5%	87.0%	81.4%	83.4%	85.2%	83.3%
Middle	79.3%	77.4%	81.4%	80.1%	85.3%	81.2%
High	81.3%	86.5%	82.5%	80.5%	87.8%	83.6%
Total	80.4%	84.9%	81.6%	81.7%	85.9%	82.8%
We aligned our common formative assessments to learning outcomes.						
Elementary	87.7%	89.0%	85.3%	87.5%	87.3%	87.1%
Middle	82.7%	83.3%	81.4%	81.6%	86.8%	83.0%
High	84.0%	87.0%	85.2%	83.9%	90.5%	86.2%
Total	85.7%	87.4%	84.3%	85.0%	88.1%	85.8%
We examine results to identify students who need additional support.						
Elementary	81.5%	87.0%	82.7%	86.0%	86.9%	84.9%
Middle	74.0%	74.7%	74.0%	72.7%	81.4%	75.4%
High	78.1%	77.7%	75.1%	71.6%	80.9%	76.3%
Total	79.0%	82.4%	78.9%	79.4%	83.9%	80.6%
We examine results to evaluate our instructional practices.						
Elementary	78.7%	82.4%	76.6%	82.4%	82.6%	80.4%
Middle	70.0%	75.3%	72.1%	70.5%	80.8%	73.8%
High	79.1%	76.7%	74.9%	71.4%	81.4%	76.3%
Total	77.0%	79.7%	75.2%	76.9%	81.8%	77.8%

n = Elementary: 3,615; Middle: 1,485; High: 1,679; Total: 6,779
 Data Source: WCPSS Data Analysis of High Five 2008-09 PLC Survey

2008-09 PLC Survey Responses to Support-Area Questions by Experience Level

Statement	Percent Agree / Strongly Agree By Experience					
	01-02 years	03-04 years	05-10 years	11-20 years	20+ years	All
We receive feedback and support from leadership.						
Elementary	79.2%	76.2%	76.3%	80.6%	87.3%	79.9%
Middle	79.3%	65.1%	71.6%	68.1%	72.8%	70.8%
High	71.7%	70.5%	69.4%	70.9%	75.8%	71.7%
Total	77.4%	72.5%	73.6%	75.4%	80.7%	75.9%
My school celebrates team progress toward implementing our PLCs.						
Elementary	75.4%	71.2%	68.7%	71.6%	76.4%	72.0%
Middle	77.3%	65.6%	63.0%	63.4%	61.1%	64.4%
High	75.4%	74.6%	70.5%	63.9%	73.6%	70.6%
Total	75.9%	70.8%	67.9%	67.8%	72.0%	70.0%
My school celebrates team progress toward SMART goals.						
Elementary	71.2%	69.0%	67.7%	69.6%	74.6%	70.1%
Middle	67.3%	59.7%	58.3%	57.2%	62.9%	60.1%
High	74.3%	74.1%	67.3%	57.9%	70.2%	67.2%
Total	71.3%	68.1%	65.6%	63.9%	70.7%	67.2%

n = Elementary: 3,615; Middle: 1,485; High: 1,679; Total: 6,779
 Data Source: WCPSS Data Analysis of High Five 2008-09 PLC Survey