

THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES
IN CHANGING HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATOR BEHAVIORS
AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of professional learning communities (PLC's) on administrator and teacher behaviors and student outcomes in a high school setting. Three schools were randomly selected from the list of schools received from the nine Regional Professional Development Centers and are considered to be highly effective professional learning communities. All three schools were on the western side of the state as the one school that was on the east side of the state declined participation in the student interview portion of the research. At each of the three schools the researcher interviewed the principal and 2 focus groups, one of teachers and one of students 18 years of age or older. Data were collected using audio-recorded interviews, observations of PLC activities, and review of school documents and test data. Three themes emerged from the data: 1) "We are not alone," 2) "Learning with rigor," and 3) "Sense of Urgency." Implications of the study could serve to assist schools in the establishment of Professional Learning Communities for sustaining school improvement and impacting student outcomes.