

Rochester City School District

2013-2014



Office of Professional Learning

Professional Learning Methods

Collegial Circles

Format for Learning Method



Description



Benefits



Roles



Norms



Implementation



Forms



Outcomes-Impact

Collegial Circles

Description:

A Collegial Circle is a group of teachers (usually 4 to 8) who meet regularly to solve common problems; to share opinions, research, and strategize; and to discuss common needs, questions, and interests. A Collegial Circle provides educators with structured time for collegial support and study as well as an opportunity for reflection on practices. It provides opportunities for sharing expertise, for problem solving through group processes ultimately deepening the knowledge of teaching and learning. Collegial Circles are designed to encourage effective teacher planning and reflection about the process of student learning. The ultimate value of the collegial circle is to gain insight based upon structured group experiences and shared commitment to the group.

Goals of Collegial Circles:

1. To refine teacher practice and enhance instruction.
2. To ultimately increase student achievement.

Benefits of a Collegial Learning Circle:

Teachers have choice, take responsibility for their own growth as professionals, and set their own agenda for studying learning and changing or improving practice. Collegial circles can be powerful as small groups collaborate in support of each another as learners.

As part of a collegial circle you:

- Participate in ongoing professional learning on group selected topics
 - Explore new methods to advance classroom practice followed by discussion and implementation of techniques
 - Share best practices in a collaborative environment
 - Extend the learning from a workshop or conference
-

Norms:

It is important that participants establish norms that are a consistent part of the process. Below is an example of possible norms. The group may decide on their own preferred set of norms. The norms may include being on time, remaining confidential, being prepared, etc.

Example of Possible Norms:

It is extremely important to maintain a positive and honest group dynamic in your Collegial Circle.

1. Practice "Active Listening". Listen, carefully, thoughtfully and openly.
2. Participation is expected, valued, and recognized.
3. Ask thoughtful questions. Recognize and contribute to ideas of others.
4. Maintain a positive attitude.
5. Respect differences; focus on understanding the opinions and ideas expressed by others.
6. Learn from and with one another.
7. Be reflective.

Roles:

Facilitator: The facilitator's primary goal is to support the group's thinking and learning. He or she can listen and use strategic questions and comments to refocus the team's discussion. The facilitator is the person who may suggest protocols for the team to focus the work, to define clear steps to the team. The facilitator leads and ensures there is a thoughtful debriefing process. The role of facilitator may rotate among team members.

Scribe: The scribe is responsible for keeping records regarding the meeting, charts thoughts and ideas contributed, and documents minutes, ideas, action plans, and other information. The scribe also keeps accurate records and fills out the required forms: Attendance/Participation Log, and Outcomes–Impact Report (See Forms A, B, C on pages 5-10).

Time Keeper: The time keeper ensures that the team completes their focus within the allocated time. It is essential that the group starts and ends on time, thus respecting all collegial circle members.

Critical friends: All participants bring meaningful contributions to the discussion. They are collaborative and supportive in their positive/critical feedback.

Implementation:

There are many different ways to implement Collegial Circles. Below is a step-by-step process that you may want to use as a guide.

Participants: To create your Collegial Circle, gather together four to eight colleagues. Select a time and place for your first 60 minute meeting.

Foundation: Get to know one another by introducing yourselves and share reasons or interest in being part of the group.

Discuss the following as a group:

1. The importance of collaborating with others
2. The norms the group wants to create and establish
3. Desired outcomes for your group

Focus: Identify a common area of interest to study. Write goals that align with RCSD's goals including expected outcomes for each goal. Clearly identify an area of study and a group action plan.

Considerations:

1. How will your circle impact your professional practice?
2. How will your circle impact student achievement?
3. Describe what your group will produce?
4. In what format will your work be documented?
5. How will your Collegial Learning Circle assess its work?
6. How will it be shared with other practitioners? (Within your building or the district)

Brainstorming: Once your goal has been identified brainstorm questions, issues, topics etc. Be certain to stay focused on your primary goal. List your questions, issues, topics on chart paper and then prioritize them.

Finding a Focus: Discuss your priorities and focus questions. Once everyone has had an opportunity to share, narrow and draw conclusions.

Consider:

1. What we can learn from our conversation. Prioritize responses. Collect research and gather ideas.
2. List questions that will guide your work.

Action Plan and Dissemination: Clearly identify an area of study and a group action plan based on the research and information gathered. Consider as a group how to move your conversation into action with specific outcomes. Include some of the following examples: research, observations, core curriculum, blogs, classroom strategies, tools, guidelines, coaching, teaming, workshops, training, projects, etc.

Reflection: As your Collegial Circle develops, reflect upon your discussions and actions. Participants may choose to keep a personal journal to reflect ideas, thoughts, feelings and noticings.

Guiding questions:

How has the Collegial Learning Circle impacted your insights into your profession?

How has it affected teacher practice?

How has it enhanced instruction in your classroom?

How has it increased student achievement?

Evaluation of Success: What data will be collected and used to support the impact of the Collegial Circle?

Considerations:

As a result of this Collegial Learning Circle, demonstrate the following:

- Evidence that what you have learned has enhanced instruction and refined your professional practice.
 - Evidence that student learning and achievement has increased
-

Forms: Form A-Collegial Circle Participation Log

Please Note: The following log should be used:

Collegial Circle Participation Log

Participants	Dates and Times of Meetings												PDI Hours
1.													
2.													
3.													
4.													
5.													
6.													
7.													
8.													

Please Note: A log sheet must be filled out by the scribe for each session.

Collegial Circle Meeting Record

Facilitator: _____ **Date:** _____

Sign-In:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Summary of Session:

Next Meeting (agenda items, action items): _____

Resources needed for next meeting:

Please Note: The following Final Report should be handed into the Office of Professional Learning and your School Based Planning Team.

Collegial Circle Outcomes-Impact

Title of Circle: _____

Beginning Date: _____ **End Date:** _____ **Number of Hours:** _____

Please attach copies of the following to this report:

- *Collegial Circle Participation Log*
- *Collegial Circle Meeting Record*
- *Log of Strategies Implemented*
- *Samples of implementation (e.g. strategies or student work samples)*
- *Data to support outcomes*
- *Final Product (e.g. power point, presentation, etc.)*

COLLEGIAL CIRCLE DESCRIPTION: What were the objectives of this Circle?

FINAL OUTCOMES: Were the outcomes/goals of this Collegial Circle met? Explain.

How did the Collegial Circle assess whether the outcome was met?

How did your work within this Collegial Learning Circle impact teaching/learning? Include implementation samples; student work samples, lesson plans, observations, peer reviews, etc.

Collegial Learning Circle

Provide evidence that as a result of this professional learning you have improved/enhanced your practice and more effectively addressed student learning.

Provide evidence that this experience has had an impact on student learning and achievement has increased.

Comments/additional information regarding the Collegial Circle.
