

Guide to Becoming a **Model PLC at Work**[®] School



Internationally Recognized
Professional Learning Community



Guide to Becoming a Model PLC at Work®

All Things PLC National Recognition



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1 | Becoming a Model PLC

Overview

Thank you for your interest in becoming a model Professional Learning Community (PLC) at Work. Your PLC journey is unique, and we're eager to learn more about how PLCs have impacted your school, staff, and student learning and achievement.



We're here to support you in submitting a high quality application. This guide will walk you through the steps to become a Model PLC. In addition, we've added tips along the way to help you develop a successful application.

We've made the application process straightforward, and you can easily complete it in one or two sessions. Review the application steps below.

Application Steps

1. Gather documents such as achievement data, demographics, and awards.
2. Create an online school account.
3. Complete the online application.
4. Receive acceptance and/or feedback from the Evidence of Effectiveness Committee made up of PLC experts and authors.
5. Resubmit revised application if necessary.
6. Receive Model PLC at Work national recognition or continue your school improvement efforts and resubmit your application in the future.

We suggest that you meet as a guiding coalition, and consider the items shown below in the blue box. As a leadership team, consider each item and how you can best demonstrate this for your school or district.

In order to receive the honor of a Model PLC at Work, your school/district must:

- ▶ demonstrate a commitment to PLC concepts;
- ▶ implement those concepts for at least three years;
- ▶ present clear evidence of improved student learning;
- ▶ explain the culture, practices, and structures of the school or district, and submit it for consideration to the PLC Review Committee using our online submission process; and
- ▶ update your school or district information on the site every three years to show your data continues to meet the criteria of the PLC at Work™ process.

Think you have the evidence to demonstrate this? We're here to help you be successful!

Let's move forward!



2 | The Application Process Made Easy

Getting Ready to Apply

Before you begin the application process, we recommend gathering the following information and documents:

- Student demographic data
- Racial/ethnic percentages (if applicable)
- Student achievement data from the past three consecutive years, with a basis of comparison between your school/district and that of your state/province
- Awards and recognition
- Team-produced products that address the “four critical questions”

In order to become recognized as a Model PLC at Work, schools/districts must demonstrate three consecutive years of significant achievement through the PLC at Work process in their setting.

Having these documents in advance will help you complete the application in one or two sessions.

Have the documents and information you need?

Keep reading to learn more to help you be successful!



Before You Begin: Guidelines for Completing a Successful Application

- **Gather Everything you Need.** Since your application is completed online, we suggest that you collect everything that you'll need to easily complete the application. That includes data, demographics, your PLC story, team products or artifacts, and school or district awards.
- **Save Your Work.** Once you begin the application process, you can save your work and come back to it at any time. To access your saved application, sign in to your school account and click "Manage Schools." You'll be able to pick up on the step where you left off.
- **Review the Application.** You will have the opportunity to review the completed application before it is submitted. Be sure to double-check that each required text box is completed in full. For example, include narrative in each text box and explain each segment of the application completely. You'll learn more about telling your PLC story as you follow this guide.



Model PLC Celebrations

Preparing Your Responses

Please note that all word counts below are only suggested; use as many words as necessary to explain your response for each section.

PLC Story

- Tell us how you built shared understanding and commitment to the PLC at Work process. (250-750 words)
- Tell us how you are facilitating a culture of continuous improvement in your school or district. (250-500 words)

PLC Practices

- Under **“Monitoring Student Learning on a Timely Basis”**
 - Describe the process that your school or district uses to create and implement a guaranteed and viable curriculum. (150-500 words)
 - Describe the strategies your school (district) uses to monitor student learning on a timely basis. (150-500 words)
- Under **“Creating Systems of Intervention and Extension to Provide Students with Additional Time and Support for Learning”**
 - Share how you are creating and implementing systems of intervention and extension to provide students with additional time and support for learning. (150-500 words)
- Under **“Building Teacher Capacity to work as members of high-performing collaborative teams that focus efforts on improved learning for all students”**
 - Explain how your high-performing, collaborative teams focus their efforts on improved student learning. (150-500 words)

Quick Tip

Work with your team to prepare responses. Describe your PLC journey—including data and artifacts—in a way that shows the review team how PLCs have impacted your school, staff, instruction, and student learning and achievement.

Achievement Data

Model PLC Checklist: COVID-19 Data Statement

- To be recognized as a Model PLC, a school must provide at least three years of evidence that their collaborative efforts are producing significant, sustained improvement in student achievement, including those in traditionally underserved student populations (ELL, Economically Disadvantaged, SPED).
- Typically, schools have used state testing data as their primary source of evidence of sustained improvement in student achievement when applying for Model PLC status. Because standardized testing was cancelled in most states due to the COVID-19 pandemic, providing standardized testing data for the 2019-2020 school year will likely be impossible for schools applying for or looking to extend their Model PLC status.
- **As a result, we have made the following revisions to the achievement data expectations for Model PLC applications:**
 - Applications must include comparable data—state testing results, district or national benchmark results—for at least three consecutive school years.
 - Data shared for the three school years must be disaggregated, showing progress being made by traditionally underserved student populations (ELL, Economically Disadvantaged, SPED).
 - Applications must also include evidence of significant, sustained improvement in student achievement during COVID school years. That evidence might include some or all of the following items listed below.
 - Progress made on benchmarks given throughout the school year.
 - Progress made on common formative assessments developed and delivered by teams.
 - Progress made towards mastery of school wide SMART goals.
 - Evidence shared for the COVID school year does not need a comparison point if it cannot be provided.

Applicants are encouraged to tell their best data story for 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

What does the preponderance of evidence that you regularly monitor throughout the school year tell you about the progress that your students were making before COVID interrupted your school year, and how can you communicate that evidence to the Model PLC review committee?

Applicants are also encouraged to add a narrative element to the achievement data page of their Model PLC applications that explains both the types of evidence collected during 2019-2021 and the conclusions that can be drawn about student achievement from that evidence.

Achievement Data

- Use the attached templates to provide student achievement data. You can modify the templates as needed to display most effectively your school's (district) data.

[K-2 Achievement Data Template](#)

[3-5 Achievement Data Template](#)

[6-8 Achievement Data Template](#)

[9-12 Achievement Data Template](#)

Awards

- List any awards and recognition to your school's (district's) commitment to the PLC process.

Resources

- Include products and artifacts that help to demonstrate your school or district's commitment to the PLC process. For example, these may include information about the school's shared foundation, team-produced products that address the four critical questions, and schedules.

Expert Review

Our panel of expert PLC practitioners will use the information above to assess each school or district. Please consider carefully whether your school or district meets each criterion. To see examples of what you'll need to submit before you get started, visit the "[See the Evidence](#)" page for sample information and data.

After You Apply

- After the committee has reviewed your application, you will receive:
 - an email of approval, or
 - an explanation of needed improvements, or
 - the opportunity to speak with a member of the Evidence of Effectiveness Review Committee to clarify and discuss next steps.
- If your school is approved, you are required to update your school data every three years. We'll remind you in advance, and the process is easy. To upload new data, you'll simply sign in to "Your Profile" on the AllThingsPLC.info website, and then click "Manage Schools." Here you can access your existing application, make the necessary updates, and resubmit the data.
- You can also upload additional contact information at any time. When you sign in to upload your data, we recommend updating your contact information too. To do this, sign in to "Your Profile," click "Manage Schools," and then click "Manage Contacts."
- If your application is not approved, we encourage you to continue your school improvement efforts and resubmit another application in the future.



School leaders and teachers holding their Model PLC flag.

3 | Tips for a Successful Application

Use PLC Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In your application, use the common vocabulary of PLCs. Example: A common vocabulary error is to refer to collaborative teams as PLCs. In the PLC at Work process, the entire school is the professional learning community (PLC). Within the community, staff members work in collaborative teams.
Acronyms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Every school has acronyms that we commonly use and are familiar with. However, when you use an acronym, spell it out first, rather than just using the acronym since the review committee may not be familiar with it. Example: Students participate in “Drop Everything and Read” Time—DEAR Time—each morning for 30 minutes. During this time, each student reads independently from a personally selected book of choice. This ensures that students are building vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension while instilling a love of reading.
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Be sure to include data that shows continued academic growth for three years. Make certain that the charts or graphs that display the data are clear and easy to interpret. In addition, talk about the data. In other words, tell us what story the data tells. Example: At Forest Dale Elementary School, we have experienced continued student academic growth in English Language Arts and Mathematics from 2019-2022. Our grade level teams have worked diligently at implementing focused instruction along with small group instruction aimed at meeting student’s individual needs. All collaborative teams meet at least 45 minutes each week, sometimes twice each week. The focus is on instruction, student learning, and data from formative and summative assessments. Over the past three years, our statewide achievement data in English/Language Arts has increased greater than 12% in grades 3, 4, and 5. Table A and Graph A show the data for each year. In 2018-19, our greatest growth of 18% was achieved at the 5th grade level.
Resources and Artifacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Be sure to reference each resource and artifact included in the text of your application. In other words, connect the narrative to the resources you’ve uploaded. Every resource that is attached should have a clear reference in the text of the application so the review committee understands the significance of why you chose to include it with your application. Example: Collaborative team meetings that are focused on student learning is a priority at Oak Forest High School. Each week, every team meets for a minimum of 50 minutes, and some teams meet an additional 20 minutes. We believe our team meetings have helped us continue to focus on student learning and increase our academic achievement. In the Resource section, “Chart C” shows our collaborative team meeting schedule across grade levels and disciplines.

4 | Criteria for Selection

The Evidence of Effectiveness Committee will review your application and look for evidence in three specific areas: (1) **evidence of a commitment to learning for all students**, (2) **evidence of a collaborative culture**, and (3) **evidence of a focus on results**. Read more details on the next two pages.

Evidence of a Commitment to Learning for All Students

Teachers work in collaborative teams to build shared knowledge regarding national, state, or provincial standards; district curriculum guides; the content and format of high-stakes assessments; and the expectations of teachers at the next level to clarify the essential knowledge and skills all students must acquire to advance.

Collaborative teams of teachers have clarified the specific proficiency standards students must achieve on each essential standard and the criteria they will use in assessing each student's proficiency. They have practiced applying the criteria to ensure consistent, reliable assessment of student learning. They help students understand the criteria, and students use the criteria to monitor their own learning.

The school has a process for carefully monitoring each student's learning on an ongoing basis. This frequent monitoring of student learning includes common assessments created by the collaborative team of teachers responsible for the same group of students.

The school has a process for responding when students experience difficulty in learning (rather than leaving it to the individual classroom teacher to resolve). This coordinated process ensures students receive additional time and support for learning in a way that is timely, directive (rather than invitational), and systematic. Students do not miss new instruction to receive this additional support.

The school has a process for enriching and extending the learning for students who are proficient.

Evidence of a Collaborative Culture

- Teachers are organized into collaborative teams by course or subject area. Members of teams work interdependently to achieve common goals for which they are mutually accountable.
- Teachers are provided with time to collaborate during their contractual day.
- Teachers use their collaborative time to engage in collective inquiry regarding issues directly related to student learning.

Evidence of a Focus on Results

- Each team has identified SMART goals that are aligned with one or more school goals. The SMART goals focus on student learning and require evidence of improved student learning in order to be accomplished.
- Teams regard ongoing analysis of results as a critical element in the teaching and learning process. They gather evidence of student learning from a variety of sources to inform and improve their individual and collective practice as part of a process of continuous improvement.
- Each teacher receives frequent feedback regarding the success of his or her students in achieving a standard, using agreed-upon assessments in comparison to the other students attempting to achieve the same standard. Transparency regarding results helps teachers learn from one another.
- Student achievement in the school is clearly improving across the curriculum. High-performing schools are able to sustain their achievement over time.

5 | Completing the Online Application

Where do I start?

- First, go to AllThingsPLC.info.
- Look for **Sign In** (see the green star below).

The screenshot shows the AllThingsPLC website homepage. At the top left is the logo "ALLTHINGSPLC". To the right are links for "RSS" and "Sign up for email updates", and a search bar. Below the logo is a navigation menu with items: "ABOUT", "MODEL SCHOOLS", "ARTICLES & RESEARCH", "TOOLS & RESOURCES", "BLOG", "COMMUNITY", and "APPLICATIONS". On the left side, there is a "SIGN IN" link with a green star icon next to it. Below this is the main heading "All Things PLC, All in One Place" and a paragraph of text: "This site is a collaborative, objective resource for educators and administrators who are committed to enhancing student achievement. We invite you to share your knowledge, ask questions, and get expert insight into the issues educators face each day." To the right of the text is a video player showing a man in a suit speaking, with a "Part 1" overlay and the title "The Origins of Professional Learning Communities". Below the video is a caption: "This new two-part documentary features top education experts, leaders, authors, and researchers discussing the evolution of PLCs."

From here, you can **create an account** to begin the application.

Sign In

Your All Things PLC account allows you to access free resources and more.

I have an account

EMAIL ADDRESS*

PASSWORD*

[SIGN IN](#) [Forgot your password?](#)

Create an account

EMAIL*

FIRST NAME*

LAST NAME*


TITLE*

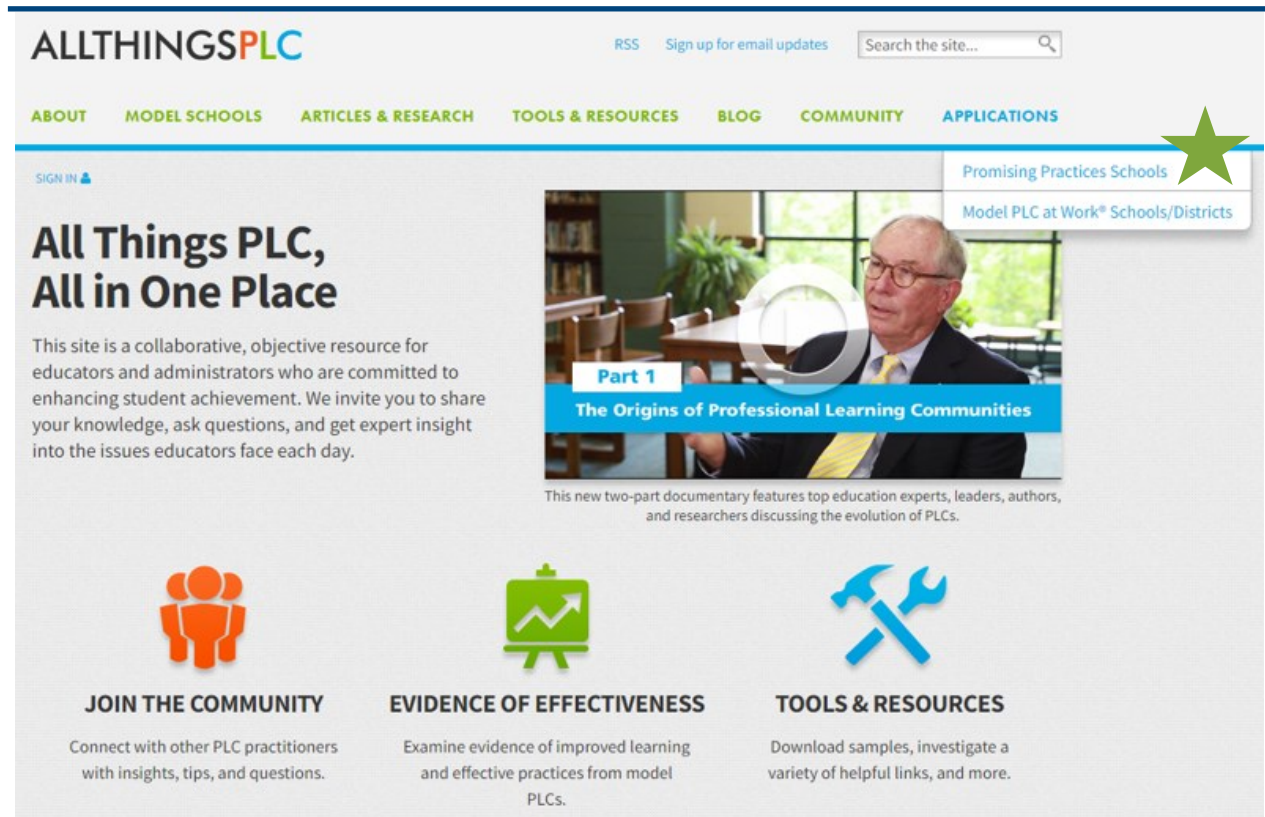
PASSWORD*

CONFIRM PASSWORD*

[SUBMIT](#)

Next...

- After you create an account, hover on the **Applications** tab at the top right of the page (see below).
- Select which application you will complete. 
- **Applications** for both Model PLC at Work and Promising Practices are the same.
- **Answers will vary** based on where you are in your PLC journey and the amount of student achievement data you have.
- **Promising Practices applications** include 1-2 years of data.
- **Model PLC at Work applications** include 3 consecutive years of data.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the ALLTHINGSPLC website. At the top, the logo "ALLTHINGSPLC" is on the left, and "RSS" and "Sign up for email updates" are on the right. A search bar is also present. Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for "ABOUT", "MODEL SCHOOLS", "ARTICLES & RESEARCH", "TOOLS & RESOURCES", "BLOG", "COMMUNITY", and "APPLICATIONS". The "APPLICATIONS" link is highlighted with a green star. Below the navigation menu, there is a "SIGN IN" link. The main content area features a large heading "All Things PLC, All in One Place" and a paragraph describing the site as a collaborative resource for educators and administrators. To the right of this text is a video player showing a man speaking, with a "Part 1" label and the title "The Origins of Professional Learning Communities". Below the video player is a caption: "This new two-part documentary features top education experts, leaders, authors, and researchers discussing the evolution of PLCs." At the bottom of the page, there are three columns of content, each with an icon and a heading: "JOIN THE COMMUNITY" (with a group of people icon), "EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS" (with a graph icon), and "TOOLS & RESOURCES" (with a hammer and wrench icon). Each column has a short description of the content.

What do I do next?

Step 1

Complete your **School Information** — then click **save and continue** (see the green star) each time you add information for each step.

Step 1: School Information


SCHOOL OR DISTRICT NAME *

LEVEL *

SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME (IF APPLICABLE)

COUNTRY *

STATE / PROVINCE / TERRITORY *

ADDRESS * 

Step 2

Next, complete the **School Contact Information**.

Step 2: School Contact Information

You can add additional contacts after submitting your application.

PHONE *

FAX

PRINCIPAL *

EMAIL *

Step 3

Complete your school or district's **demographics**.

Step 3: Demographics

You can attach images and PDFs in Step 8.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS *	<input type="text"/>
PERCENT ELIGIBLE FOR FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH *	<input type="text" value="0"/> %
PERCENT OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT *	<input type="text" value="0"/> %
PERCENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION *	<input type="text" value="0"/> %
ETHNIC DATA COLLECTED	<input type="text" value="Yes"/>

Racial/Ethnic Percentages

Step 4

Next, **share your PLC story in narrative form**. Be sure to review page 7 for important tips to support you as you develop this section.

Step 4: Share your PLC story

Tell us how you built shared understanding and commitment to the PLC at Work® process, and how you are facilitating a culture of continuous improvement in your school (district).

You can attach images and PDFs in Step 8.

LET US KNOW HOW YOU BUILT A SUCCESSFUL
PLC.
(RECOMMENDED WORD COUNT IS 250-750.)

Recommended word count is 250-750 words. Use as many words as needed to tell your story. |

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Step 5

Compare the **student achievement data** and compare to your state, province, or territory. Be sure to use the data templates provided or include your own.

Step 5: Outline Comparison Data

Share your student achievement data — with a basis of comparison to your state, province, or territory — from the past three consecutive years.

Download the relevant Achievement Data Template(s), add your student achievement data, and upload the file to continue.

 [K-2 Achievement Data Template](#)

 [3-5 Achievement Data Template](#)

 [6-8 Achievement Data Template](#)

 [9-12 Achievement Data Template](#)

 [District Achievement Data Template](#)

Achievement Data Files *

UPLOAD ACHIEVEMENT DATA FILES

SELECT A FILE

EXISTING FILE ATTACHMENTS

[3-Sevidenceofeffectivenessdatatemplate-1326.xlsx](#)



Step 6

Next, **elaborate on strategies** you have found to be effective in the following areas shown below. See examples below.

Step 6: Please elaborate on strategies you have found to be effective in the following areas:

Monitoring Student Learning on a Timely Basis

MONITORING STUDENT LEARNING ON A TIMELY BASIS *

DESCRIBE THE PROCESS THAT YOUR SCHOOL (DISTRICT) USES TO CREATE AND IMPLEMENT A GUARANTEED AND VIABLE CURRICULUM, AND THE STRATEGIES YOUR SCHOOL (DISTRICT) USES TO MONITOR STUDENT LEARNING ON A TIMELY BASIS.

Creating Systems of Intervention to Provide Students with Additional Time and Support

CREATING SYSTEMS OF INTERVENTION TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL TIME AND SUPPORT FOR LEARNING *

SHAPE HOW YOU ARE CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING SYSTEMS OF INTERVENTION AND EXTENSION TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL TIME AND SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

Building high performing, collaborative teams to focus efforts on student learning.

BUILDING TEACHER CAPACITY TO WORK AS MEMBERS OF HIGH-PERFORMING COLLABORATIVE TEAMS THAT FOCUS EFFORTS ON IMPROVED LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS *

EXPLAIN HOW YOUR HIGH-PERFORMING, COLLABORATIVE TEAMS FOCUS THEIR EFFORTS ON

Step 7

List your school or district **awards and recognitions**.

Step 7: Awards

List any awards and recognition for your school's (district's) commitment to the PLC process.

LIST AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Step 8

Add any **supporting documents and additional documentation** you'd like to include. Be sure to read page 7 for tips and make certain you refer to your uploaded documents in the narrative. In other words, don't upload eight documents that you have not mentioned in your PLC story.

Step 8: Additional Documentation

Upload supporting documents, data, or other information that demonstrates your school's (district's) commitment to the PLC process (i.e., shared foundation, team-produced products that address the Four Critical Questions, schedules, etc.).

Images

(Examples: Charts, Graphs, Diagrams)

UPLOAD IMAGES

EXISTING IMAGES

Additional Files

(Examples: Word, Excel, PDF Documents)

UPLOAD ADDITIONAL FILES



Step 9

Finally, **review and submit** for approval.

You may want to reread pages 8 and 9 as a reminder of what the committee is looking for in your application.

Step 9: Review and Submit for Approval

Please review your application before submitting. Once your application is submitted, it will be locked until reviewed by the All Things PLC Evidence of Effectiveness Review Committee. If changes are needed, your application will be unlocked, and you can edit your application by clicking Manage Schools inside your account. You will receive a separate email upon approval.

[Preview your Evidence of Effectiveness page](#)

[GO BACK](#)

[SUBMIT FOR APPROVAL](#)

6 | Frequently Asked Questions

Can I preview my files before submitting?

Yes, simply click on the “Preview your Evidence of Effectiveness.”

YOU HAVE COMPLETED 8 OF 9 STEPS.

* Required field.

For questions, contact allthingsplc@solutiontree.com.

Step 9: Review and Submit for Approval

Please review your application before submitting. Once your application is submitted, it will be locked until reviewed by the All Things PLC Evidence of Effectiveness Review Committee. If changes are needed, your application will be unlocked, and you can edit your application by clicking Manage Schools inside your account.

[Preview your Evidence of Effectiveness page](#)



GO BACK

SUBMIT FOR APPROVAL

Can I save my work and return at a later date?

Yes, when you select “save and continue” at the bottom of each page, your work will be saved and you can return later to edit.

B I “ [Rich text editor icons]

GO BACK

SAVE AND CONTINUE

How do I return to my work?

- Go to AllThingsPLC.info
- Sign in using the school or district account you previously created.
- Once signed in, click on “Manage Schools” in the blue menu to the right of the screen (see green star below).

ALLTHINGSPLC RSS Sign up for email updates Search the site...

ABOUT MODEL SCHOOLS ARTICLES & RESEARCH TOOLS & RESOURCES BLOG COMMUNITY APPLICATIONS

WELCOME, JENNIFER YOUR PROFILE SIGN OUT

Member Dashboard

From the Forum

- Connecting with Singletons in PLCs at Work**
matthew colley
30 replies
- Home Care Services**
Caring Hands
1 replies
- PET manufacturers**
Tidhajjd5 Tidhajjd5
0 replies

[Browse forum](#)

Latest Resources

- Middle School Pyramid of Interventions Example** [Download PDF](#)
- High Performing Teams Continuum Examples & Survey Debriefing Protocol** [Download PDF](#)

Newest Model PLC

- Member Dashboard
- Forum
- Community Resources
- My Resources
- Manage Schools
- Email Subscriptions
- Edit Your Profile
- View Your Public Profile

7 | Final Review Checklist Before Submitting

Before hitting “submit application,” we suggest completing a final review of your application. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but will help the application and review process go more smoothly. Areas for review are below.



School Contact Information.

- Be sure someone is listed as a **contact** with a correct email and phone number.
- We encourage you to **additional contact people** to your application. These people will be CC'd in communication regarding your application or data update.
- Please add AllThingsPLC@SolutionTree.com as a **safe recipient** to ensure you receive emails regarding your application or data update. **Note: emails saved on the AllThingsPLC.info website are not shared with Solution Tree's marketing lists.*



PLC Story. Review your PLC story narrative. Be certain to use PLC at Work language when telling your story. Be sure to provide narrative around how you built a shared understanding and commitment to the PLC at Work process and how you are facilitating a culture of continuous improvement in your school or district.



Student Achievement Data.

- Review page 6 of this booklet for a reminder of what to include along with the Covid-19 changes to the data requirement. Remember, you can use your data tables/charts or the ones linked on the website and on page 7 in this booklet.
- Do *not include* additional data charts/tables that you do not refer to in the narrative in your application.
- Please remember we need **three consecutive years of data** before we can consider an application. Any COVID data gaps will prevent the review of your application or data update. *Submit local assessments for any gaps in state assessment data.*
- Please keep in mind that all approved applications are published on the AllThingsPLC.info website. *Remove or blackout any student names or photos on your application.*



Award and Resources. You may include awards or additional artifacts that support your application. However, be sure to connect the narrative to the resources you've uploaded. *Do not* upload lots of attachments that aren't explained in your application.



Criteria for Selection. The criteria for selection is explained on pages 10 and 11. You may want to review these criteria and be certain you've provided evidence for each within your narrative.



Reach out for Support. If you have any questions or want a second pair of eyes on your application before submitting, email the contact person on page 23 of this booklet. We want you to be successful and we're happy to help!

8 | Contact Us for Support

Need Support?

You're a busy educator, and we understand that. Sometimes applications can be confusing.

If you need support or answers to questions at any time, feel free to reach out. We're happy to respond to your specific questions.

Email the PLC Model Schools Program manager at jennifer.buckley@solutiontree.com.



Tweet from the Arkansas Department of Education congratulating Arkansas Model PLC Schools.