



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### 1. What is a Performance Learning Center (PLC)?

The Performance Learning Center is a small, non-traditional high school geared toward students who are not succeeding in a traditional school setting. The PLC creates a businesslike learning environment where students complete assignments using online, computer based curriculum with the assistance of learning facilitators. The PLC also utilizes project based learning, service learning, job shadowing, internships, mentoring, and dual enrollment with technical and four-year colleges. The PLC can be located in off-campus or detached centers, or within an existing school. The PLC is a small school model and generally has 75-150 students.

### 2. Why were the PLCs created?

The PLCs were created to help reduce the dropout rate in North Carolina by reaching those students in the dropout pipeline. Communities In Schools uses its philosophy to build a caring learning environment where students are challenged to meet their social and academic goals within the PLC model. The environment allows students ample opportunity to graduate and emerge with certifiable employment skills.

### **3. Who do the PLCs serve?**

The PLCs serve high school students who are not succeeding in a traditional school setting. Students referred to the PLC typically experience poor academic achievement, are chronically late to or absent from school, and are at high risk of dropping out of school.

### **4. How does a student enroll in a PLC?**

School administrators and parents submit referrals to the PLC student selection committee along with the students' transcripts. The student must successfully complete an interview process, and students and parents must sign a contract detailing their obligations before being admitted.

### **5. What are the benefits of a PLC?**

All students assigned to the PLC have an opportunity to catch up academically or move ahead at their own pace. Students also benefit from technical training, internships, project based learning, service learning and job shadowing experiences. Eligible students can also apply for dual enrollment with technical or four-year colleges.

### **6. Is the PLC part of the regular public school system?**

Yes. The PLCs enroll students who are referred from the regular public school system. Students have the option of graduating with their original high school class if they meet all requirements on time or graduating with the PLC students.

### **7. How long does it take to graduate from a PLC?**

The time it takes to graduate from a PLC depends on the number of credits a student needs. Students are allowed to work at their own pace, first making up classes they've failed before moving on to additional coursework. The PLCs offer credit-deficient students a way to obtain credits without losing additional time.

### **8. Do PLC students adhere to the same academic and graduating requirements expected of all NC high school students?**

Yes. Students must take the same required classes and successfully pass the same end of year course tests in order to graduate.

### **9. What type of online curriculum does the PLC use?**

NovaNET, an online courseware system from Pearson Education Technologies, serves as the PLC's curriculum. The interactive curriculum is aligned to North Carolina's Quality Core Curriculum (QCCs). Online communication tools allow users to have real time conversations with any learner in the NovaNET community.

### **10. How many teachers and administrators does the PLC have?**

The PLCs have a 1 to 15 teacher-student ratio. The five teachers are referred to as "Learning Facilitators", and the principal is referred to as the "Academic Coordinator". Additionally, there is a CIS Services Coordinator who works with parents, handles non-instructional issues facing students, and provides information to the community.

### **11. Does the PLC offer electives and extracurricular activities?**

Because most of the students who attend the PLC are behind in credits, only some electives and extracurricular activities are offered.

**12. Does the PLC incorporate project-based learning and service learning into its curriculum?**

Yes. Students are required to participate in project-based learning and/or service learning. Project-based learning helps students develop research and writing skills, become familiar with technology, and collaborate with peers during presentations. Service learning engages students by enriching their academic skills as they help others and give back to their communities. The project-based learning and service learning projects help students to develop leadership skills.

**13. Why do students participate in job shadowing, internships, and dual enrollment at the PLC?**

Participating in job shadowing, internships, and dual enrollment helps students become productive and successful adults and gain valuable work and college experience.

**14. Why are PLC students required to participate in the morning motivation and complete an Individual Development Plan (IDP)?**

Morning motivation is a daily session designed to establish, maintain and nurture a positive safe environment for PLC students to learn, grow and experience success. Students have the opportunity to lead daily discussions and activities that build applicable presentation and life skills. With the assistance of a staff member, the IDP helps students begin thinking about their career and life goals. Each student develops an individualized plan based on their needs and interests that includes academic, career and personal goals.

**15. Are there opportunities for mentoring at the PLC?**

Yes. Each student needs a mentor from the community. Together they work on career development and other areas of interest.

**16. What type of support does the local school district provide to the PLC?**

The school district provides the PLC with a building, instructors, and some capital.

**17. What type of support does Communities In Schools provide to the PLC?**

Communities In Schools provides additional capital, computers and other equipment, technical support, ongoing training and a services coordinator who helps with non-academic issues that may affect a student's ability to learn.

**18. What is the relationship between Communities In Schools and the PLC?**

The Performance Learning Center is one of Communities In Schools' key programs. The PLC initiative exemplifies the CIS philosophy that every child deserves five basics: a personal, one-on-one relationship with a caring adult; a safe place to learn and grow; a healthy start and a healthy future; a marketable skill to use upon graduation; and a chance to give back to peers and the community.

**19. How is the PLC initiative funded?**

Communities In Schools of North Carolina has applied for a grant, to be disbursed over a five year period, from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for establishing PLCs and expansion throughout North Carolina. The grant requires matching funds, and CISNC continues to seek donors.