

**Preliminary Results of a Statewide
Professional Learning Survey of West
Virginia School Administrators and
Teachers**

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Background

- Survey began on February 28, closed on March 13.
- It included a random sample of principals and teachers, of sufficient size to allow a 95% confidence level in the results.
- We had 699 respondents (out of 1,237 in our sample)--about 57% principals and 43% teachers.

Structure of Survey

Professional Learning Overall

- Preferences, current engagement, and costs of graduate studies
- Views about quality and impacts of formal professional development programs
- Needs for the future

Structure of Survey

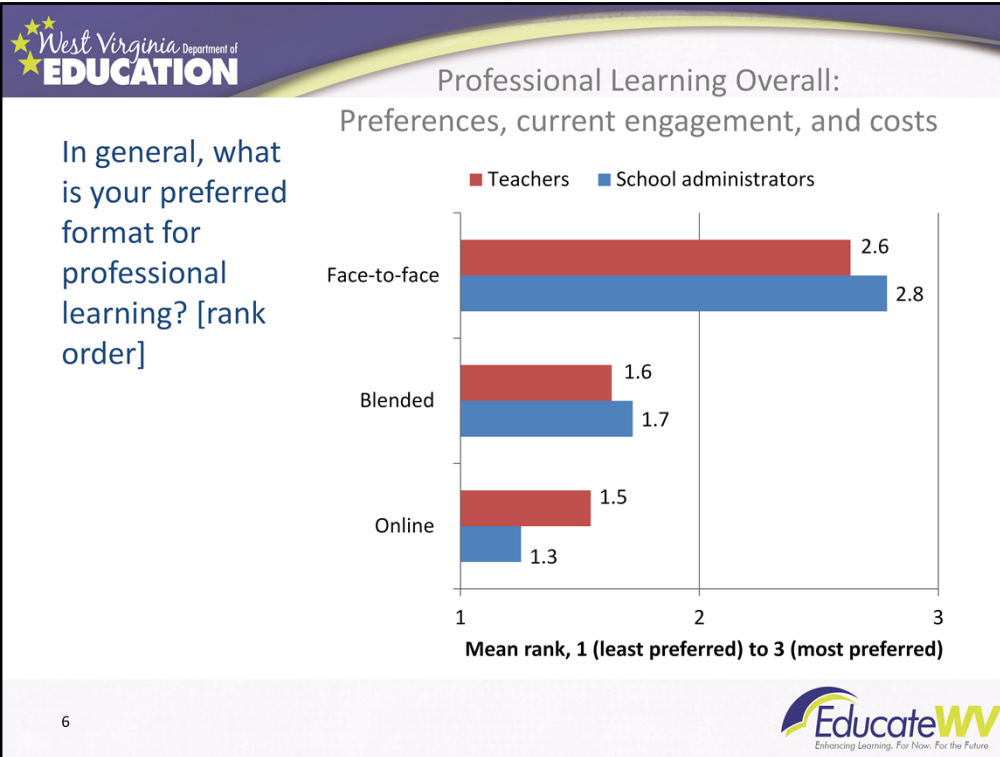
Professional Learning Communities

- Level of participation
- Focus and scheduling
- Leadership and organization
- How time is spent
- Tone, success, and progress as a learning team

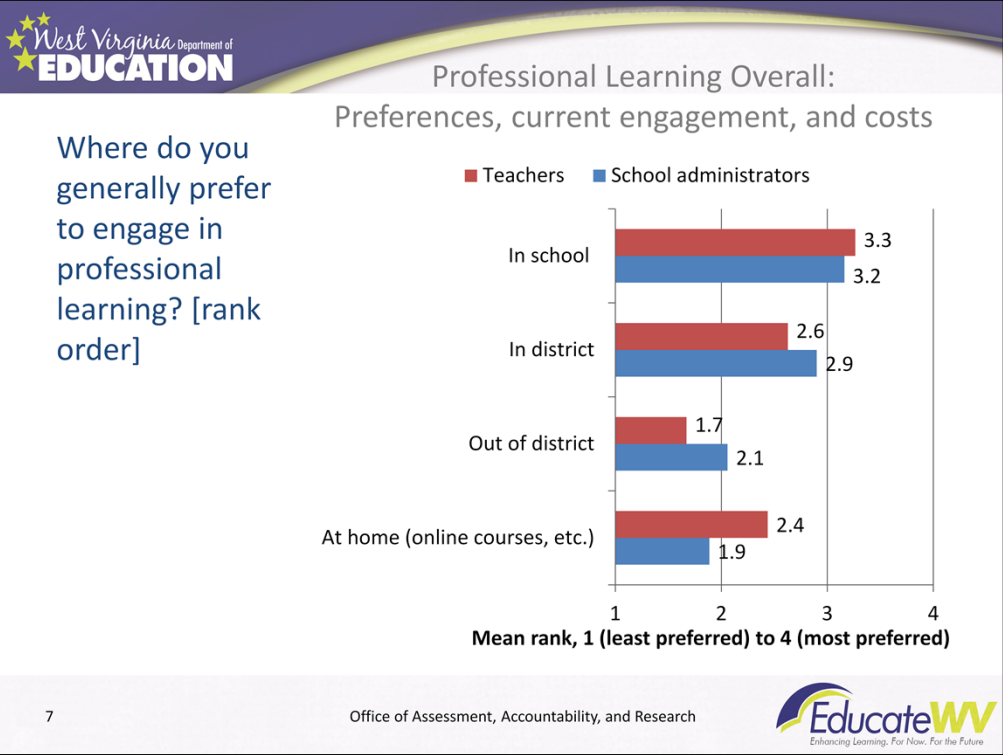
Your Task

Please take notes to share about

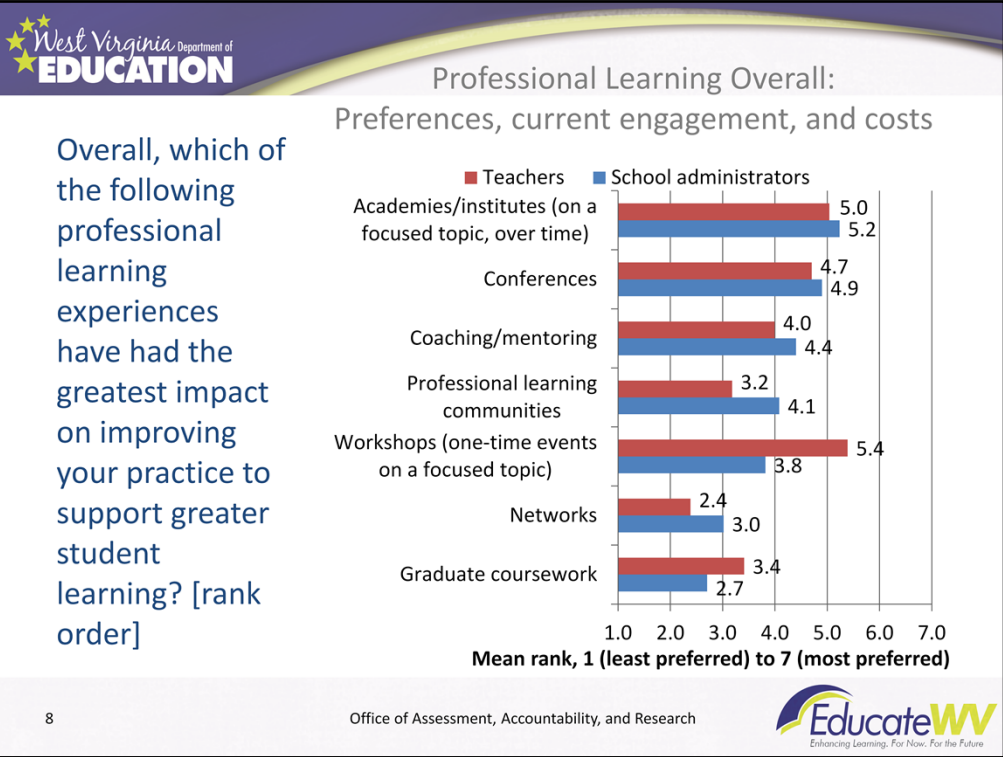
- Opportunities revealed in the data
- Challenges revealed in the data



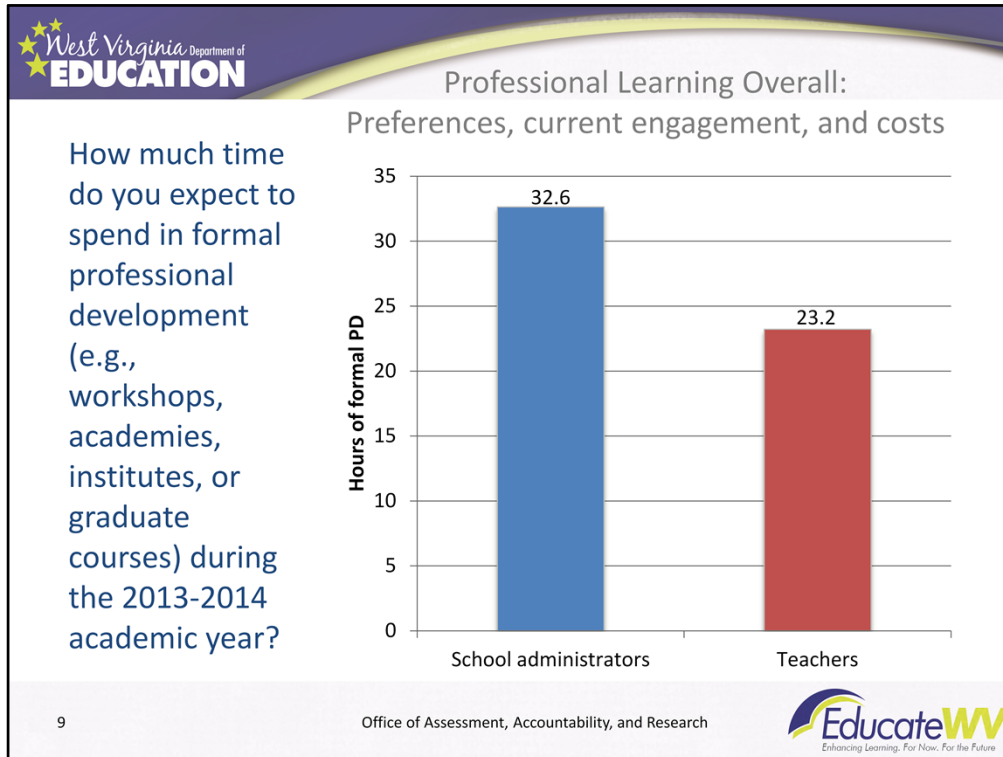
Both teachers and administrators rank face-to-face professional learning higher than either blended or online learning.



Both teachers and school administrators tended to rank "in school" as their preferred location for professional learning, followed by "in district". Teachers tended to give a higher ranking to professional learning at home than did school administrators.



Teachers believed that workshops (one-time events on a focused topic), academies/institutes (on a focused topic over time), and conferences had the greatest impact on improving their instruction to support greater student learning. Professional learning communities ranked just above networks, at the bottom of the list. School administrators also gave high rankings to academies/institutes and conferences. But the middle of the scale for them was occupied by professional learning communities. Networks and graduate coursework occupied the bottom of their rankings. If we want to refocus professional learning in school-based professional learning communities, there is work to do with both groups of educators, but especially with teachers.



Teachers are required in code to participate in at least 18 hours of professional development, which is tracked and often offered by districts. The 23 hours they report is in alignment with that requirement. However there is no such annual mandate for principals. After their participation in the New Principals Leadership Academy, provided by CPD (45 hours total), they are required to participate in 45 hours every six years--which amounts to 7.5 hours a year. But new principals make up less than 10% of the total population of school principals, so they alone do not account for this higher level of participation by school administrators in formal PD offerings.

West Virginia Department of **EDUCATION**

Professional Learning Overall:
 Preferences, current engagement, and costs

During the 2013-2014 school year what is the total amount of money you expect to pay for graduate courses or other professional development out of your own pocket without reimbursement?

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS


- A minority of school administrators (46%) reported graduate course costs.
- The median annual cost for those paying for graduate courses was \$500.
- *Projection:* Of 1,100 school administrators statewide, we estimate 528 of them are paying for graduate courses or other PD. If each spent \$500, this is a total of **\$264,000**.

TEACHERS

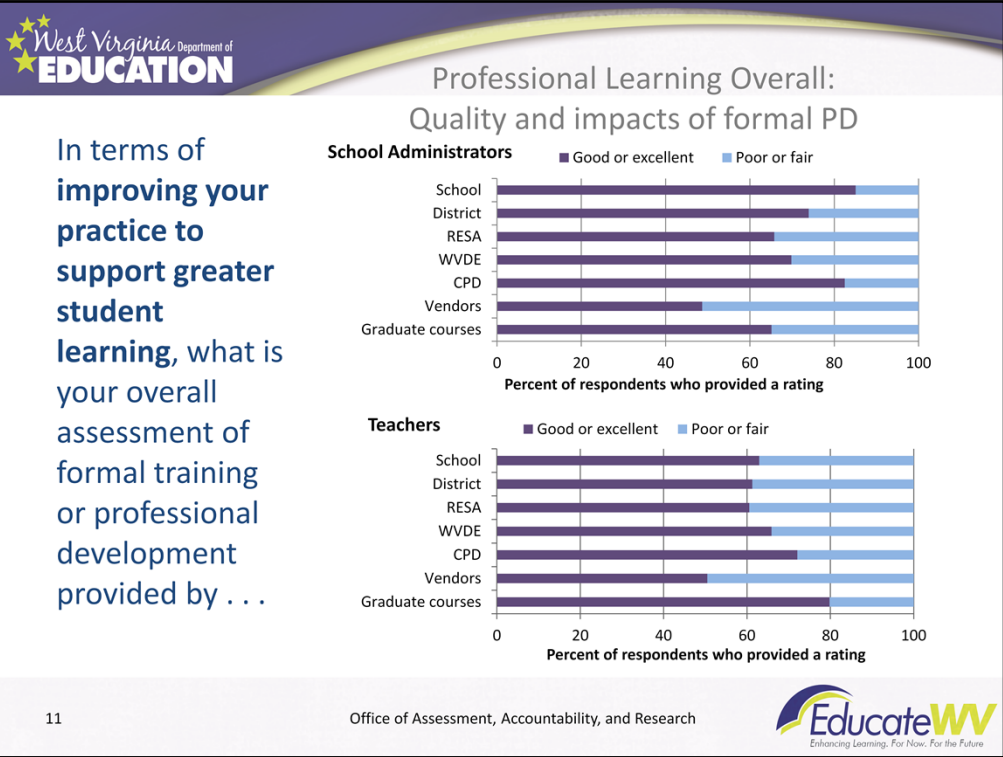
- Most teachers (61%) report they pay for graduate courses.
- The median cost for this group of teachers was \$400.
- *Projection:* Of the 18,800 teachers statewide, we estimate 11,490 of them are paying for graduate courses. If each spent \$400, this is a total of about **\$4.6 million**.

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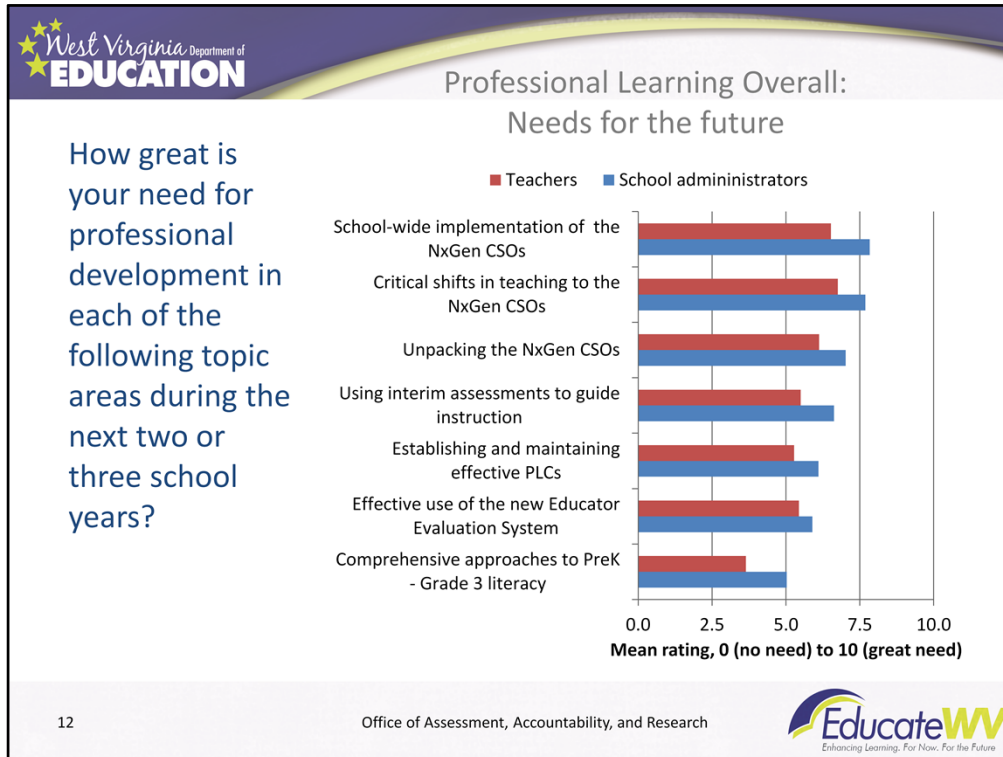
Office of Assessment, Accountability, and Research



Caution: The survey questionnaire did not provide a response option to indicate respondents did not expect to pay for graduate courses or other PD during the 2013-2014 school year. Consequently, some participants appear to have typed in a zero, while others skipped the question. If one changed the missing data to zeros in cases where the respondent had provided answers before and after this question, the resulting totals would be about 20% lower than those shown here—More like \$214,000 for administrators, and \$3.7 million for teachers.



School administrators rate the professional development that happens at their own schools as being of the most value for improving student learning. Teachers were less likely to characterize it as good or excellent. Teachers, on the other hand, rated graduate courses as being the most beneficial for improving their instruction and student learning. The Center for Professional Develop was the second-highest rated provider for both groups, and vendors were the lowest rated for both groups.



Three topics related to the NxGen CSOs received the highest ratings; however, establishing and maintaining effective PLCs fell within the neutral range, just slightly above 5 for teachers.

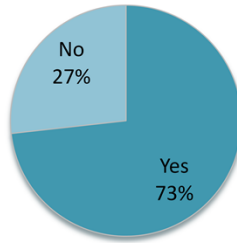
School administrators showed stronger consensus and greater need for these topics, but generally followed the pattern of teachers. PLCs were among the bottom three needed topics, according to school administrators, compared with the bottom two for teachers.

About a quarter of respondents indicated that comprehensive approaches to PreK through Grade 3 literacy did not apply to them. There was also only a very small percentage of respondents who worked at the PreK level.

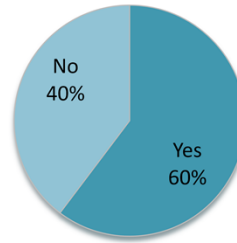
Professional Learning Communities: Level of participation

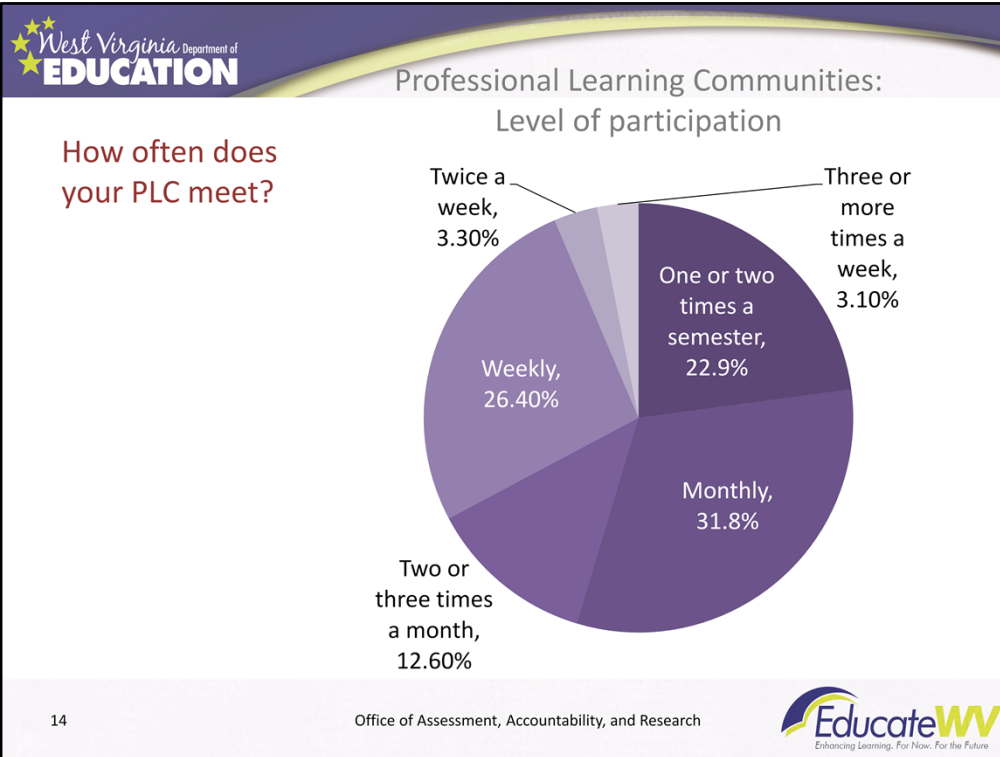
Do you currently participate in a professional learning community (PLC)?

School Administrators

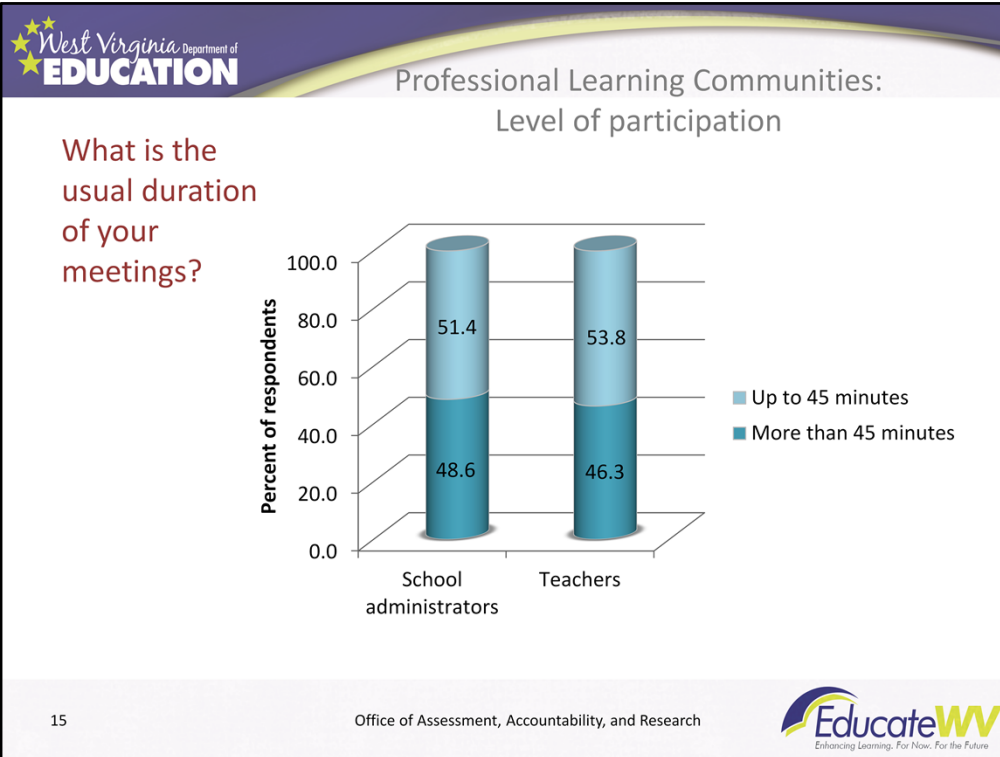


Teachers

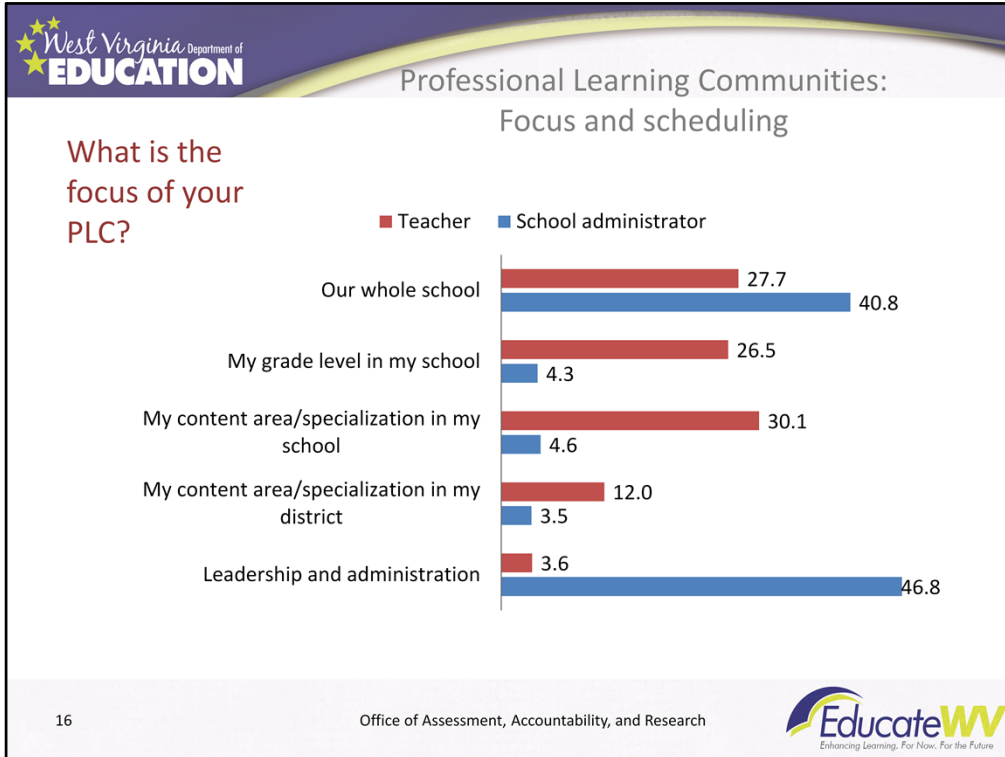




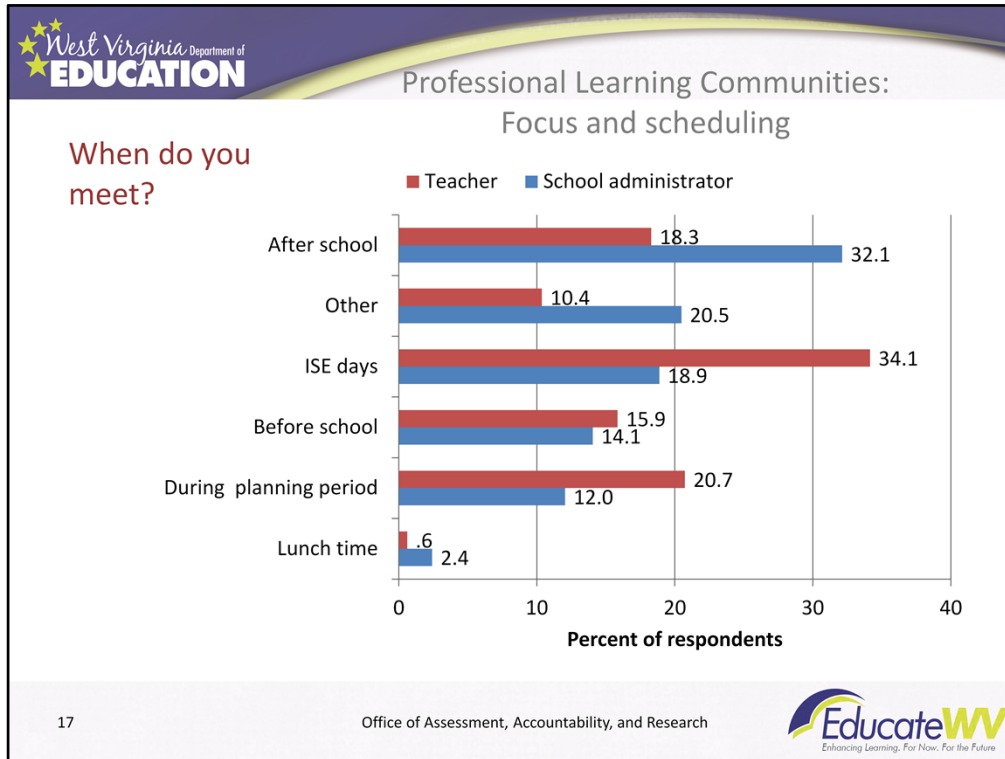
More than half of all respondents indicated that their PLC met only once a month or less. About a third of respondents are meeting at least once a week, however.



School administrators and teachers report similar durations for their PLC meetings, with about half reporting meetings lasting up to 45 minutes and the other half, less than 45 minutes.

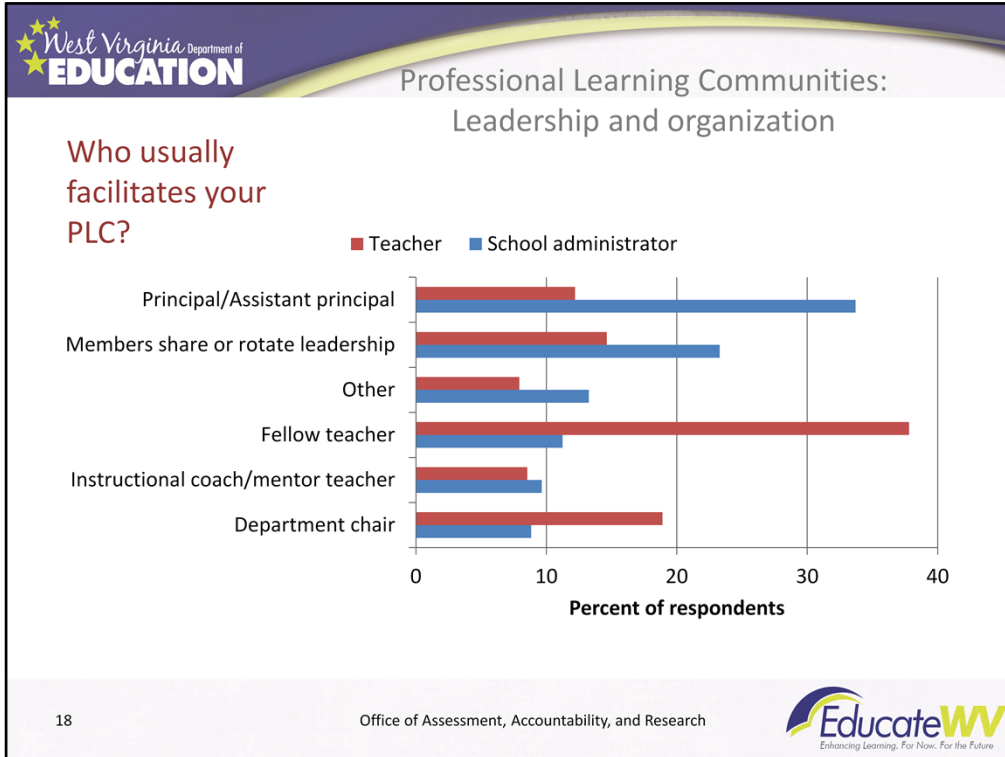


More than two thirds of teachers are involved in PLCs that focus on their grade level, content area, or specialization--as recommended in the research literature. About half of administrators were focused on leadership and administration. Substantial proportions of both groups were involved in whole-school focused PLCs.



School administrators typically meet after school, during instructional support and enhancement days or they indicated “other.” I have not yet categorized those data, but a quick scan made me realize that I should have included another category for “dedicated time during the workday.”

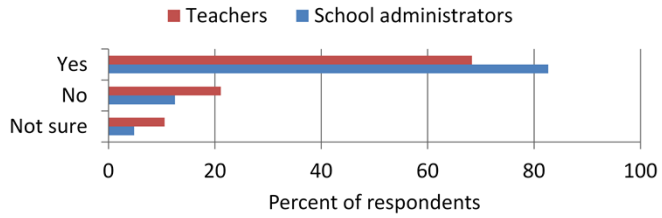
Teachers are meeting primarily on ISE days, during their planning periods, or after school.



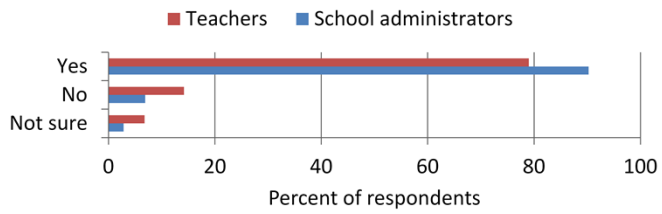
Looking first at principals, it appears that their PLCs are facilitated by peers. The same holds true for teachers, with only a small percent being facilitated by principals.

Professional Learning Communities:
Leadership and organization

Has your PLC established a set of group behavior norms to follow during meetings?

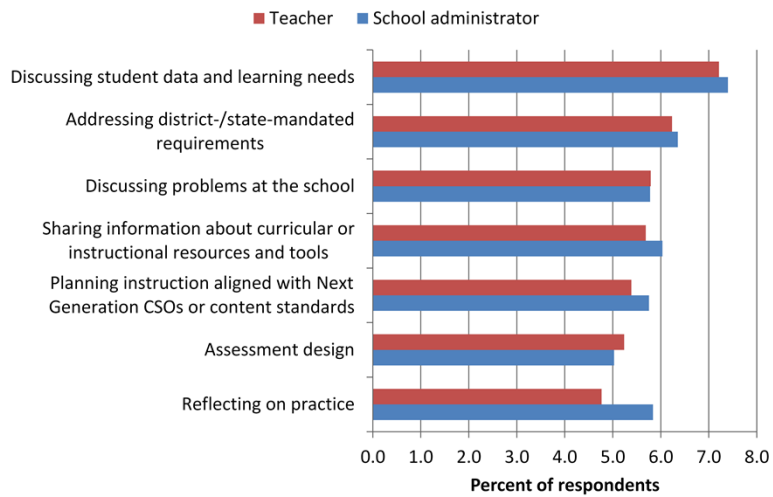


Does your PLC use protocols or agendas to guide its work?



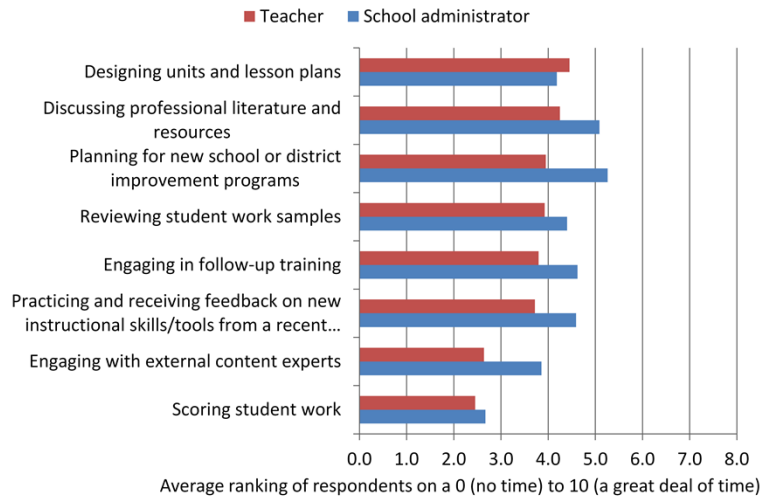
Professional Learning Communities: Use of time

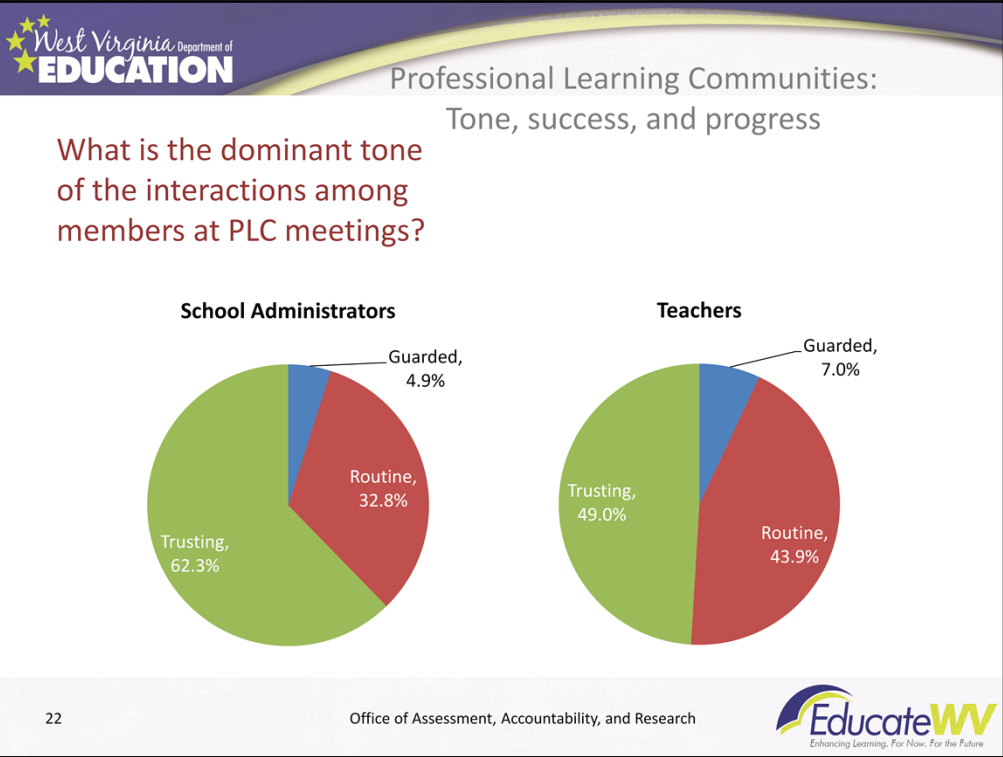
How
much of
its time
does your
PLC
spend in
the
following
activities?
[Top rated]



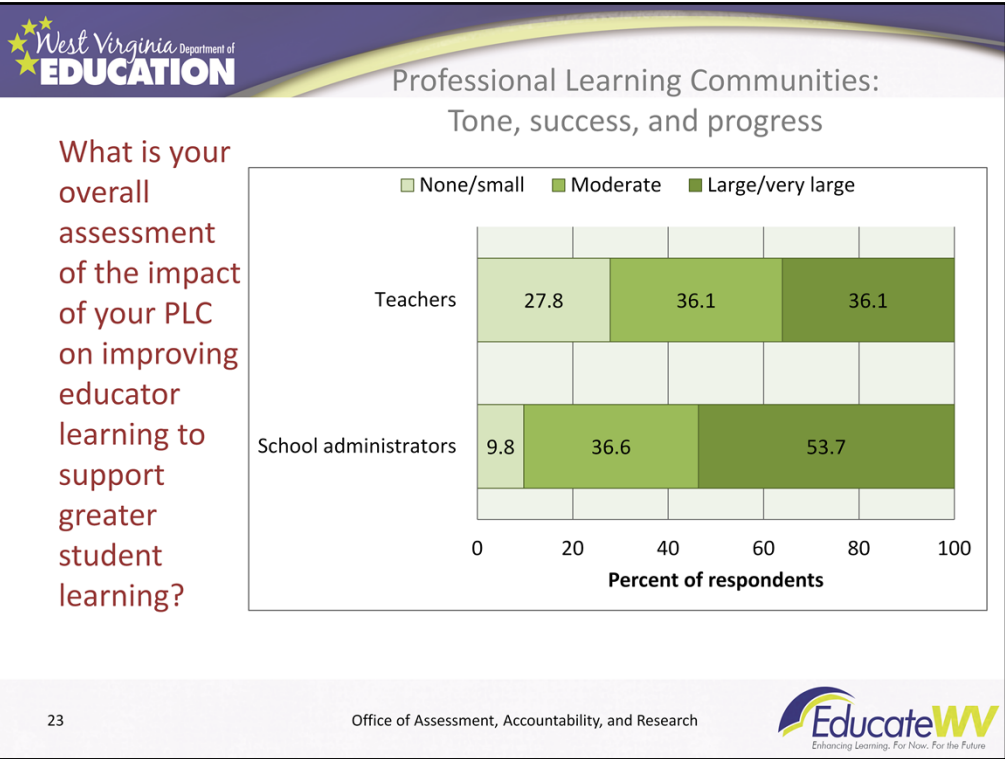
Professional Learning Communities:
Use of time

How much of its time does your PLC spend in the following activities?
[Bottom rated]

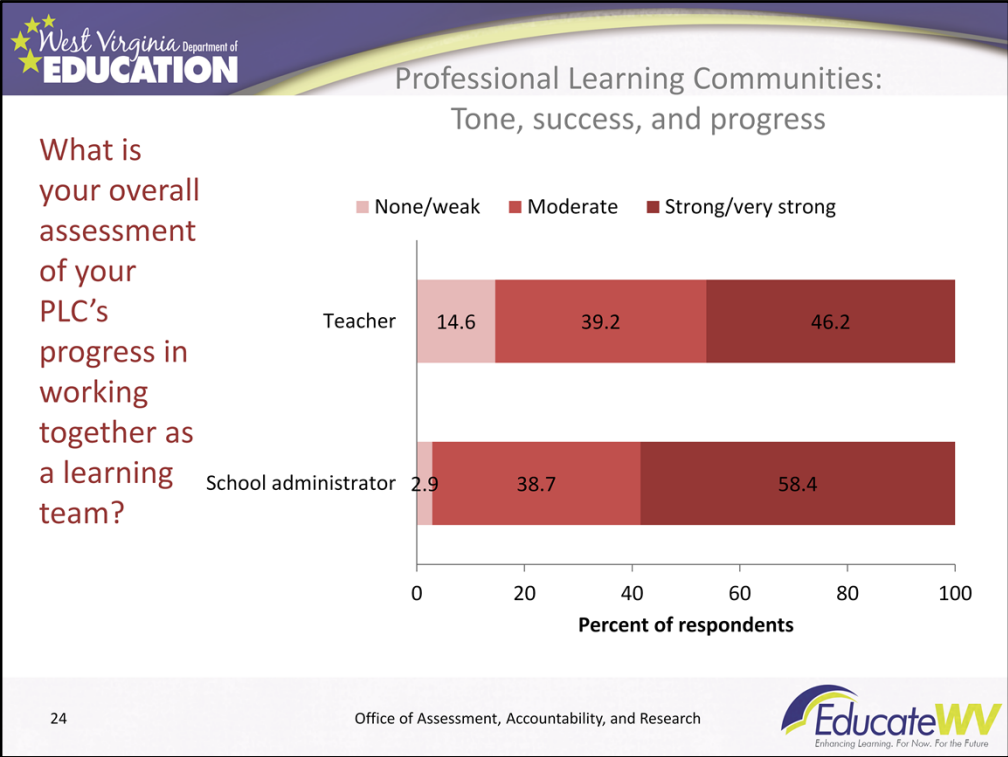




Nearly two thirds of principals characterize the tone of their meetings as Trusting, compared with a little less than half of teachers. Very few of either group characterized the tone of their meetings as Guarded, while large segments of both groups characterized the tone as routine. This metric is subject to interpretation, but I was trying to get a sense of the climate of the PLCs across the state, because one of the findings of the literature review I recently completed suggested that an important factor in the success of a PLC is the willingness of members to deprivatize their practice and have open discussions about issues they are struggling with. On the other hand, PLCs should not get too bogged down in routine management issues.



More than half of administrators reported a large or very large impact for their PLCs on their learning, and in turn, student learning. More than another third thought the impact was at a moderate level. Teachers did not give such high ratings for impacts. About three times more teachers thought the PLC they participated in had a no impact or a small one (about 28%). The remaining teachers divided evenly between moderate impacts and large/very large impacts.



Principals estimate their PLC's progress more positively than teachers, although teachers, too, believe their PLCs are making at least moderate progress.

Discussion

- Opportunities noted?
- Challenges noted?