



Regional School Unit #19

Professional Learning Community

Support System Handbook

State Approved: March 2010

Regional School Unit #19

Professional Learning Community Support System

(PLCSS)

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Regional School Unit #19
Professional Learning Community Support System

Mission Statement

RSU # 19 will provide a supportive professional community for all educators. The Support System will create a collaborative culture in our schools and facilitate on-going professional growth for all teachers that leads to more effective instruction and enhanced student learning.

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The goals of the program are:

1. To support educators as they move through the certification process.
2. To become a community of reflective learners through professional development.
3. To improve and strengthen teaching performance and student achievement.

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Program Guidelines

1. All educators seeking renewal of a Professional Certificate will participate in the RSU #19 Professional Learning Community Support System (PLCSS) Process.
2. Educators will receive certificate renewal through the use of a Renewal Certification Action Plan (RCAP) which will address the Maine Initial Certification Standards. (See appendix)
3. PLCSS Committee representatives will conduct a brief orientation for participants within their own buildings.
4. Renewal Certification Action Plans and all supporting documentation will be kept in a Professional Portfolio.
5. An annual survey will be conducted to ensure program quality, effectiveness, and efficient management.

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The Professional Portfolio

RSU #19 requires a portfolio for all educators who are seeking professional certification renewal. It will be used to determine if you have met the goals of your Renewal Certification Action Plan.

The portfolio is yours. You maintain it. It includes only items you put into it. The following is a list of items your portfolio will need to include when presented to the PLCSS Committee:

- Present certification
- A copy of your RCAP
- Transcripts of college and other course work
- Copies of attendance from workshops specifying hours and content
- A completed Independent Study Log for each independent activity
- A copy of your Portfolio Summary Sheet

Your portfolio may also include these items:

- Resume and present occupational status
- Career history
- Membership in professional associations
- Participation in curriculum development
- Involvement in school related activities
- Professional contributions
- Letters of commendation
- Publications
- Professional awards and recognitions
- Other items you feel are pertinent

Responsibilities

Regional School Unit #19
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***Professional Learning Community Support System
Committee Responsibilities***

1. Maintain confidential files of paperwork for each educator involved in the certification process.
2. Assist educators with the writing of the Renewal Certification Action Plan if needed.
3. Meet with educators and approve RCAPs.
4. Notify staff of professional development opportunities.
5. View professional portfolios in order to verify that the goals of the RCAP were met.
6. Conduct an annual survey to ensure program quality, effectiveness, and efficient management.
7. PLCSS Committee representatives will conduct a brief orientation for participants within their own buildings.

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Professional Certificate Holder Responsibilities

1. Read and familiarize yourself with the Maine Initial Certification Standards. (See appendix)
2. Develop a Renewal Certification Action Plan (RCAP) and present it to the PLCSS Committee.
3. Maintain a professional portfolio documenting all work around the RCAP.
4. Contact the PLCSS Committee when the goals of your RCAP have been met.
5. Present the PLCSS Committee with your professional portfolio.
6. Contact your PLCSS Committee representative with any questions or concerns you may have.

Procedures

Regional School Unit #19 **Professional Learning Community Support System**

Basic Steps of the Certification Process

For **initial** certification, you must send to the Department of Education, Certification Office, 23 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0023 an “Initial Certification Form,” a copy of your *official* transcripts which you request from the University you attended, and a check made out to the Treasurer, State of Maine for the amount specified.

If you have completed all the requirements for certification, you will receive either a Provisional (2 year) certificate or a Professional (5 year) certificate.

Provisional Certificate Holders

- Complete a Professional Certification Action Plan (PCAP) which will include professional goals that address Maine’s Initial Teacher Certification Standards.
- You will need to have three observations by your mentor for each of the two years you are on a provisional certificate (a total of six observations are required during the two year period). Due dates for the observations are November 1, February 1, and April 15 each year.
- Early in the year your certificate expires, you will receive your Application for Certification Renewal from the Department of Education.
- Once all of your observations are completed and the goals of your PCAP have been met, fill out the Application for Certification Renewal.
- Send your Application for Certification Renewal to the Professional Learning Community Support System Committee (PLCSS Committee) for signature by the Support System chair.
- Once signed, it will be sent back to you, keep a copy for yourself, and mail the original and the required fee to the Department of Education.
- Once you get your new certificate, put it in your portfolio. Send a copy to the Superintendent’s Office and a copy to the PLCSS Committee.

Targeted Need/ Conditional Certificate Holders

For initial certification, you must send to the Department of Education an “Initial Certification” form, a copy of your *official* transcripts, which you request from the University you attended, and a check made out to the Treasurer, State of Maine for the amount specified.

- If you are given a Targeted Need or Conditional Certificate, you will receive a letter from the State informing you of what you need to do to complete your requirements for certification. This will include if you need an affidavit sent in from the Superintendent, any course work needed, or any tests that are required.
- Send a copy of this letter and your certificate to the PLCSS Committee.
- With the help of your mentor, complete a PCAP reflecting state recommendations.
- You will need to have three observations by your mentor for each of the first two years until you receive a professional certificate. Due dates for the observations are: November 1, February 1, and April 15.
- Transcripts should be sent to the PLCSS.
- Upon completion of the state requirements, send your Application for Certification Renewal to the PLCSS for signature.
- If you will be on a Targeted Need or Conditional Certificate the following year, contact the superintendent’s office for an Affidavit of Employment.
- Along with your Application for Certification Renewal and the Affidavit, you will need to send to the Department of Education an *official* transcript showing the courses you have completed for this certification period.
- Keep a copy of all the documents you will be sending to the Department of Education.
- Mail the signed Application for Certification Renewal, your *official* transcripts, and the Affidavit of Employment to the Department of Education.
- Once you receive your new certificate (and updated letter if you receive one), send a copy to the PLCSS and to the superintendent’s office. Put the original into your portfolio.

Transitional Certificate Holders

This is when you already have a Professional Certificate in one area and are transferring to another area.

- Complete an “Initial Certification Application” as it is a new endorsement area. This form is available online through the Maine Department of Education.
- Request a Transitional Endorsement from the Superintendent.
- Make a copy and submit the forms to the Department of Education.
- You will receive a letter from the State telling you what course work, etc. is necessary to be fully certified.
- Send a copy of this letter to the PLCSS Committee along with you’re a copy of your certificate.
- Complete a PCAP. (You may or may not need a mentor).
- Once the course work is completed, send transcripts to the PLCSS Committee.
- Early in the year your certificate expires (it will expire each year until you have completed all of the requirements), you will receive your Application for Certification Renewal Form from the Department of Education.
- Upon completion of your state requirements, send your Application for Certification Renewal to the PLCSS Committee for signature.
- Keep a copy of all forms that will be sent to the Department of Education.
- Mail your Application for Certification Renewal Form, the “Transitional Endorsement Affidavit”, and your *official* transcripts showing the course work completed during the year to the Department of Education.
- Once you receive your new certificate (and updated letter if you receive one), send a copy to the PLCSS and to the superintendent’s office. Put the original into your portfolio.

Master Teacher Certification:

A master teacher certificate is a renewable certificate issued to an individual who has achieved additional professional standards. To qualify for a master teacher certificate you must:

- hold a professional certificate in the same certification area in which the MT certificate is being sought
- have at least 5 years of teaching experience with at least 2 in this district

You must submit a letter of intent to the PLCSS Committee no later than 3 years prior to the expiration date of your current certificate. You will receive a copy of the Master Teacher Certification Handbook.

The school year prior to initiating the Master Teacher Certification Process:

- Choose a mentor from the approved list
- Present a Master Teacher Professional Certification Action Plan (MT-PCAP) to the PLCSS for approval and signature by May 31st. The goals must meet the National Board Teacher Certification Standards (5 Core Propositions).

Year One:

- The following school year you will be observed three times by your mentor.
- The Master Teacher Progress Report must be signed and submitted to the PLCSS Committee along with evidence of meeting core propositions by May 15th.

Year Two:

- You will be observed three times by your mentor.
- Present your signed Master Teacher Checklist, evidence of meeting core propositions, and portfolio to the PLCSS Committee by April 15th.

In order to be recommended for Master Teacher Certification you must meet these district requirements:

- Have taken the state approved mentor training and are willing to serve as a mentor
- Have attended a conference related to your teaching assignment within the last 5 years
- Have taken a graduate level college course and additional credit hours to meet the Professional renewal requirements within the last 5 years.
- Have done four of the following within the last 5 years
 1. supervised a student teacher
 2. served on a district committee
 3. served as a mentor
 4. published an educational article
 5. supervised a pre-professional experience in conjunction with a college or university
 6. made a presentation at a conference, workshop, or in-service program
 7. served in a leadership role

NBPT Standards: 5 core propositions

- Teachers are committed to students and their learning
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students
- Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning
- Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience
- Teachers are members of learning communities

Master Teacher Mentor Responsibilities:

(A teacher pursuing or renewing a Master Teacher Certificate cannot be a mentor for a teacher pursuing or renewing a Master Teacher Certificate).

- Support the candidate throughout the process
- Keep meeting logs
- Follow the observation schedule (November 1st, February 1st, April 15th of each year)
- Submit the Mentee's year one signed Master Teacher Progress Report to the PLCSS Committee by April 15th.

Master Teacher Certificate Renewal:

Master Teacher Certificates must be renewed every five years. Standards for the renewal are the same as those for initial issuance and must also meet the same Professional requirements of 6 credits or equivalent. The Certification Committee will issue a letter of recommendation which must accompany the initial/renewal form you send to the Department of Education.

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Certification Renewal Using the Renewal Certification Action Plan

Professional Certification Holders

- In the fall after you have received your Professional Certificate you will complete a Renewal Certification Action Plan (RCAP). This will include professional goals developed around the Maine Initial Teacher Certification Standards. It will also describe how the 90 hours of renewal credits or the equivalent thereof will be reached within the areas of approved study. (See Approved Study Activities, appendix A).
- You will present your RCAP to the Professional Learning Community Support System (PLCSS) Committee by December 1st. (**Bring two copies**). If the plan meets the standards of the committee, it will be approved and one copy will be kept by the committee.
- During the next four years, you will work toward meeting the goals of your RCAP. You will keep verification of all work completed in your professional portfolio. ***Without documentation, the committee can not recommend you for recertification.***
- When you have completed your 90 hours, 6 credit hours, or 9 CEU's of approved study (see appendix), complete your Portfolio Summary Sheet and make sure all documentation is included.
- In the fall of the school year that your professional certificate expires you will present your professional portfolio to the PLCSS Committee. You must contact the committee to make an appointment. You may present earlier, if your work is completed. **Bring two copies of the Portfolio Summary Sheet and documentation.**
- If you have met the goal(s) of your RCAP, the committee will sign your Portfolio Summary Sheet and will file a copy of your paperwork.
- If you have not met the goals, the committee may offer guidance to help you complete the work.
- If your portfolio is not accepted or you need more time to reach your goals, you **must** re-present your portfolio to the committee by May 31st.
- When you receive your Application for Certification Renewal form (blue and white form) from the State, submit it to the PLCSS Committee for signature.
- If you have met the goals of your RCAP and presented your portfolio to the PLCSS Committee, your Application for Certification Renewal form will be signed and returned to you.
- Keep a copy for yourself and send the original to the Department of Education with the required fee.
- Once you receive your new certificate (and updated letter if you receive one), send a copy to the PLCSS and to the superintendent's office. Put the original into your portfolio.
- If you have not met the goals of your RCAP **and** presented your portfolio to the PLCSS Committee by May 31st, you must contact the Department of Education to complete your recertification renewal.

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Amending Your Plan

If at any time in the five year process you wish to amend your plan, fill out The RCAP Amendment Form and make an appointment to meet with the committee. Please bring two copies of The Amendment Form to your meeting.

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Committee Recommendations
Renewal/ Nonrenewal

The RSU #19 Professional Learning Community Support System Committee will recommend a candidate for certification based upon the completion of the Renewal Certification Action Plan.

If the Committee votes not to recommend a candidate for certification, there are two remaining options available to the candidate.

1. Review Procedure

The candidate may request a review of the action at a meeting of the full committee.

2. Appeal Procedure

If the PLCSS Committee adheres to previous recommendations of nonrenewal, the candidate may appeal directly to the Maine Commissioner of Education.

Appendix



Maine's Ten (10) Initial Teacher Certification Standards

STANDARD ONE:

Demonstrates knowledge of the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) s/he teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful to students. Mastery of this standard can be demonstrated by the ability to:

- a. Use multiple representations and explanations of disciplinary concepts that capture key ideas and link them to students' prior learning.
- b. Evaluate teaching resources and curriculum materials for their comprehensiveness, accuracy, usefulness and for representing particular ideas and concepts in clear and meaningful ways.
- c. Engage students in generating knowledge and testing hypotheses according to the methods of inquiry and standards of evidence used in the discipline.
- d. Model the use of the tools of each discipline and creates opportunities for students to practice the use of these tools.
- e. Incorporate knowledge of students' experiences in the planning, execution, and evaluation of learning experiences.
- f. Explain important principles and concepts delineated within their discipline and link them with professional State and unit standards

STANDARD TWO:

Demonstrates the ability to integrate the concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures among the disciplines. Mastery of this standard can be demonstrated by the ability to:

- a. Create learning experiences in which students are required to construct knowledge and test hypotheses using the methods of inquiry and standards of evidence of multiple disciplines.
- b. Encourage students to recognize and respect the interdependence of all knowledge and ideas by combining and integrating knowledge of different disciplines.
- c. Pursue and acquire material and human resources in various disciplines for classroom use.

STANDARD THREE:

Demonstrates knowledge of the diverse ways in which students develop and learn by providing learning opportunities that support students' intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development. Candidate performance demonstrating the following capabilities informs this standard. Mastery of this standard can be demonstrated by the ability to:

- a. Discern individual, student and group differences (e.g., intellectual, cultural, social).
- b. Support individual student's physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and moral development.
- c. Observe how students learn and thus ascertain different learning styles.
- d. Identify when and how to access appropriate services or resources to meet learners' needs.
- e. Identify and design instruction appropriate to students' stages of development, learning styles, strengths, and needs.
- f. Make appropriate provisions and adaptations for individual students who have particular learning differences or needs.
- g. Understand and make connections to students' experiences and backgrounds in planning and implementing curriculum.
- h. Demonstrate understanding of and sensitivity to issues of diversity and equity during the design and assessment of instruction.

STANDARD FOUR:

Plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, and curriculum goals. Mastery of this standard can be demonstrated by the ability to:

- a. Plan for learning opportunities that recognize and address variation in developmental level, learning styles, performance modes, and individual needs.
- b. Develop daily, weekly, and long range lesson plans that are linked to student needs and performance and adapt them to ensure and capitalize on student progress and motivation.
- c. Demonstrate originality in lesson development within the parameters of the existing school curriculum.
- d. Articulate lesson goals and provide educationally and ethically defensible rationales for those goals.
- e. Plan collaboratively with colleagues on curriculum goals and frameworks both for the classroom and for schools

STANDARD FIVE:

Understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies and appropriate technologies. Mastery of this standard can be demonstrated by the ability to:

- a. Choose effective teaching strategies and materials to meet different learning goals and student needs.
- b. Use multiple teaching and learning strategies to engage students in active learning opportunities and to help students take responsibility for their own learning.
- c. Monitor and adjust strategies in response to learner feedback.
- d. Vary her or his role in the instructional process depending on the content, purposes, and student needs.
- e. Develop a variety of clear, accurate presentations and representations of concepts, using alternative explanations to assist students' understanding and providing diverse perspectives to encourage critical thinking.
- f. Employ a wide range of questioning and discussion techniques that elicit responses at a variety of affective and cognitive levels.
- g. Regularly and purposefully integrate technology into pedagogical practice in order to more effectively support teaching and learning for all students.
- h. Provide students with strategies for evaluating the content encountered via technology (e.g., Internet, listservs).

STANDARD SIX:

Creates and maintains a classroom environment which supports and encourages learning. Mastery of this standard can be demonstrated by the ability to:

- a. Create a comfortable, well-organized physical environment.
- b. Establish a classroom climate of openness, mutual respect, support, and inquiry.
- c. Work with students to manage their own behaviors and assume responsibility for their own learning.
- d. Use principles of effective classroom organization.
- e. Use a variety of strategies to address individual learners' needs in order to increase student performance.
- f. Create an environment in which students work both cooperatively and independently.

STANDARD SEVEN:

Demonstrates the ability to support students' learning and well-being by engaging students, home, school, colleagues, and community. Mastery of this standard can be demonstrated by the ability to:

- a. Advocate for students while respecting their privacy and rights to confidentiality.
- b. Identify strategies to link school, home, and community to enhance student performance and well-being.
- c. Describe ways to develop partnerships with parents and guardians in support of students' learning and well-being.

STANDARD EIGHT:

Understands and uses a variety of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and support the development of the learner. Mastery of this standard can be demonstrated by the ability to:

- a. Describe the purposes of assessment.
- b. Use a variety of formal and informal strategies to assess student outcomes
- c. Match assessment strategies and instruments to Learning Results and program objectives.
- d. Use concepts of reliability, validity, and generalizability to design and improve high quality assessments
- e. Employ a variety of assessment techniques to collect knowledge of learners, student learning progress, and program effectiveness
- f. Use assessments and evaluation to modify teaching and learning strategies and for diagnostic purposes.
- g. Communicate responsibly and knowledgeably to students, parents, communities, and agencies about student achievement and program outcomes.
- h. Involve learners in self-assessment and goal setting for learning.

STANDARD NINE:

Demonstrates an awareness of and commitment to ethical and legal responsibilities of a teacher. Mastery of this standard can be demonstrated by the ability to:

- a. Treat others with respect, and honor the dignity of all people.
- b. Maintain confidentiality, as legally and ethically appropriate concerning all dealings with students, parents, teachers, and school personnel.
- c. Adhere to a code of ethics that demonstrates an understanding of students' and teachers' rights and responsibilities.
- d. Demonstrate knowledge of legal responsibility...
- e. Comply with all school policies including health and safety issues, such as administration of medication and reporting concerns of physical and sexual abuse.
- f. Adhere to affirmative action policies pertaining to school and classroom settings; interact with all students in an equitable manner. He/she does not discriminate in employment, housing, or access to public accommodations on account of race, color, sex, physical or mental disability, religion, sexual orientation, ancestry or national origin; and, in employment, does not discriminate on account of age or because of the previous assertion of a claim or right under former Title 39 or Title 39-A; and, in education, does not discriminate on account of sex, or physical or mental disability.
- g. Understand how beliefs, values, traditions and requirements of various religious groups interact with school life (e.g., dietary restrictions, fasting, mandatory observance or non-observance of holidays, activities which are forbidden, expectations regarding gender relations, issues of deference); take religious and cultural diversity into account when planning and implementing lessons and activities.
- h. Understand the meaning of sexual harassment and how it impacts students and staff, and assist students in understanding the meaning of sexual harassment, how to avoid harassing others, and what to do if they feel harassed.
- i. Document incidents which may have legal or ethical implications.
- j. Understand the processes to obtain and maintain professional certification/licensure.
- k. Recognize and demonstrate appropriate use of language in the classroom (i.e., avoids profanity, name-calling, racial slurs, etc.)

STANDARD TEN:

Demonstrates a strong professional ethic and a desire to contribute to the education profession. Mastery of this standard can be demonstrated by the ability to:

- a. Be an active, contributing member of work teams and committees.
- b. Participate in staff development opportunities and training sessions and apply information and strategies gained as a result of those experiences to his/her own teaching.
- c. Utilize information gained from reading professional journals.
- d. Apply information gathered during attendance at professional conferences.
- e. Develop associations with organizations dedicated to learning.
- f. Reflect upon and strengthen his/her teaching by evaluating (alone and with colleagues) lessons taught and making appropriate improvements.
- g. Stay abreast of and employ new teaching strategies and technologies.
- h. Develop and implement a personal development plan to enhance his/her professional growth.
- i. Maintain a professional demeanor and recognize the teacher's role as a model for students.
- j. Work with colleagues to achieve school and district goals and to address problems in the school.

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Approved Study Activities for Professional Recertification Renewal

These are professional development and learning activities designed to improve performance of the educator in the field for which he/she holds an endorsement or in a related subject area. You may use any combination of these activities to meet the goal(s) of your RCAP. **All activities must reflect those goals.** These may include, but are not limited to:

1. Courses- credit hours or CEU's from an accredited institute of higher learning. You must keep a copy of official transcripts for courses taken in your portfolio.
2. Workshops- an activity that is sponsored by a recognized institution or group of professionals. You must keep a copy of all workshop certificates in your portfolio.
3. Independent study activities- an educator may design his/her own individual activity. Examples may include, but are not limited to: professional readings, professional study groups, professional writing, committee work, etc. You will need to complete an Independent Study Log for each activity you do. Keep copies of each Independent Study Log in your portfolio.

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Hours Conversion Chart

In order to satisfy the State requirement for recertification of a Professional Certificate you will need to complete an equivalent of 90 Contact Hours of Approved Study. All work must reflect the goal(s) of your RCAP. These hours may be in the form of college credits, CEU's, contact hours, or any combination of the three. Below is a conversion chart to help you total your hours.

Credits	CEU's	Contact Hours
3	4.5	45
2	3	30
1.5	2.25	22.5
1	1.5	15
.75	1.125	11.25
.50	.75	7.5
.25	.375	3.75

Templates

Regional School Unit #19
Renewal Certification Action Plan
For Maine Professional Recertification

Name _____

Position/Subject Area _____

School _____

Type/ Expiration Date of Current Certificate _____

RCAP Approval by PCLSS Committee _____ Date _____

Maine's Teacher Certification Standards

1. Subject Knowledge 2. Discipline Integration 3. Differentiating for the Learner 4. Planning of Instruction
5. Instructional Strategies 6. Positive Classroom Environment 7. Communication/Engagement with Community
8. Assessment/Evaluation 9. Legal/Ethical Responsibilities 10. Professional Development

Maine Standard/ Performance Indicator	Goal	Activities/Strategies	How will these activities impact your skills as an educator?

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Portfolio Summary Sheet

Candidate Name: _____ **Certificate Expiration:** _____

Courses:

Course Title	Name of Institution	Beginning Date	Ending Date	Number of credits

Total Number of Course Credits: _____ (attach copy of transcripts)

Workshops:

Total Number of Workshop CEU's or hours: _____ **(attach certificates of attendance)**

Independent Studies:

Total Number of Hours from Independent Studies: _____ (attach independent study logs)

Total Number of Hours (course, workshops, independent studies): _____ (90 minimum)

Candidate signature
Date

PLCSS Committee signature

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Independent Study Log

This must log must be completed for each independent study activity.

Name _____

Description of Independent Study

Total hours earned from this independent study: _____
How did this independent study activity impact your skills as an educator? _____

Regional School Unit #19
RCAP Amendment Form

Use this form if you have an approved RCAP to which you want to add or delete a goal. You must make an appointment with the PLCSS Committee and present this form.

Name _____ **Date** _____
Current Certification Expiration _____

Goal(s) you would like to add to your approved RCAP:

Activities/ Strategies you may use to help you reach this goal:

How will these activities impact your skills as an educator:

Candidate Signature _____ **Date** _____
PLCSS Signature _____ **Date** _____

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PLCSS Survey

Please rate the PLCSS Process using the following scale:

1= unsatisfactory 2= satisfactory 3= excellent

1. How helpful was the handbook? _____

2. How user-friendly were the templates? _____

3. Evaluate your experience of presenting your plan to the committee. _____

What can we do to make this process better for you?
