

4 **Enhancing the 3 R's of Resilience, Retention, and Reform through Middle School Faculty Professional Learning Communities**

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ABSTRACT

This study describes the influences that one professional learning community had on teacher resilience, teacher retention, and school reform initiatives. Teachers at a low performing, urban middle school in the Southeastern United States implemented professional learning communities as a reform initiative to assist with staff development. This case chronicled the implementation, interaction, and effects of the sixth grade language arts professional learning community situated within the context of the school. Data sources include multiple interviews with the sixth grade language arts teachers and a representative sample of their students, the researcher's participant observer field notes from planning meetings, class observations, group generated artifacts, emails, informal discussions with the participants, and reading assessments of their students. Positive outcomes included stronger professional relationships, effective collaborative planning and problem solving, increased confidence and collegial support, enhanced resilience, and effective implementation of curriculum reforms. Student reading scores increased slightly, ending a downward trend.