



National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
Your Environment. Your Health.

Building a Professional Learning Community **At-a-Glance**

Building a *Professional Learning Community* (PLC) among teachers, community members, and NIEHS scientists involves connecting a group of people who actively participating in the learning/teaching process and contribute to the shared goals of improving teaching practices and student learning outcomes. NIEHS scientists have been actively involved in the PLC of local schools, collaborating with schoolteachers, and facilitating programs to promote students' interest and enthusiasm in learning science. This effort not only fosters students' scientific literacy, but also inspires and prepares them to pursue careers in environmental health sciences.

A recent example of NIEHS involvement in PLC is the collaboration of our scientists with teachers from the Wake Early College of Information and Biotechnologies (WECIB). WECIB students in the Research Methodology course participated in a special project initiated by the National Institute for Innovation in Manufacturing Biopharmaceuticals (NIIMBL) bioLOGIC, which challenged students to identify a real-world healthcare problem and conceptualize a solution to treat and prevent the problem. After receiving a request for support from the teacher, OSEO identified NIEHS staffers who had the expertise and were interested in being part of a PLC. A plan was established with clear guidelines and expectations to ensure a structured and productive semester-long collaboration between teachers and NIEHS staffers. As the WECIB teachers become more familiar with this special project, our volunteers can reduce involvement at WECIB and establish a PLC with teachers at other schools who are also interested in having this innovative learning experience.

For NIEHS staffers: Teachers send requests to OSEO to support their teaching projects on regular basis, and we need volunteers who are interested in providing expertise to teachers and students – and learning at the same time! If this inspires you, please contact:

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