



Pat Roy is co-author of *Moving NSDC's Staff Development Standards Into Practice: Innovation Configurations* (NSDC, 2003).

Establish connection between professional development and student learning

Each of NSDC's 12 Standards for Staff Development begins with the same phrase: **Staff development that improves the learning of all students**... Those words were selected judiciously to communicate an underlying assumption about effective professional development — that teachers' quality of instruction, content knowledge, and assessment practices result in better academic learning for all students and that effective professional development enhances teachers' knowledge and skills.

In order to provide evidence of an impact on both teachers and their students, the principal **evaluates school-based staff development programs using a variety of data** that includes the collection of evidence throughout the process (Roy & Hord, 2003, p. 79). First, the principal **collects information on participant satisfaction for each professional development** experience whether that is participation in a learning team or attendance at a training session. The principal also **identifies the changes in teacher knowledge and skills that resulted from participation in staff development experiences**. The principal will want to determine whether staff members feel more competent to address the deep content knowledge embedded in student learning standards and whether their lesson plans reflect that deepening knowledge base.

The principal also **assesses the extent to which school culture and organizational structures, policies, and processes have changed** to support and reinforce new practices or programs. Guskey (2000) reports that "many improvement efforts in education fail simply because they are unclear or misleading about the kind of organi-

zational support required for change. As a result, educators end up trying to implement an innovation that they do not fully understand in organizations that do not fully support their efforts" (p. 149). The principal also is skillful in **arranging for teacher surveys, interviews, and observations to identify changes in classroom practices**. This kind of evidence determines the quantity and quality of implementation of new practices or curriculum materials. One of the tools that can be useful in determining the quality of implementation is an Innovation Configuration map (Hord, Rutherford, Huling, & Hall, 2004).

The principal also **arranges for the collection of student data (test scores, student surveys, and interviews) and classroom observations to determine changes in student learning and behaviors**. While there is a national focus on student achievement scores, most communities still want schools to promote positive student behav-

iors, lifelong learning, and citizenship skills. A variety of data can be collected to indicate whether positive student behaviors as well as student learning are occurring.

These tasks occur throughout the professional learning process and include both formative as well as summative evaluation data. The formative data assist principals to fine-tune their school's professional development, and the summative data establish the connection between professional development and improved student learning.

Evaluation:

Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.

Learn more about NSDC's standards:
www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm

REFERENCES

- Guskey, T. (2000).** *Evaluating professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
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