

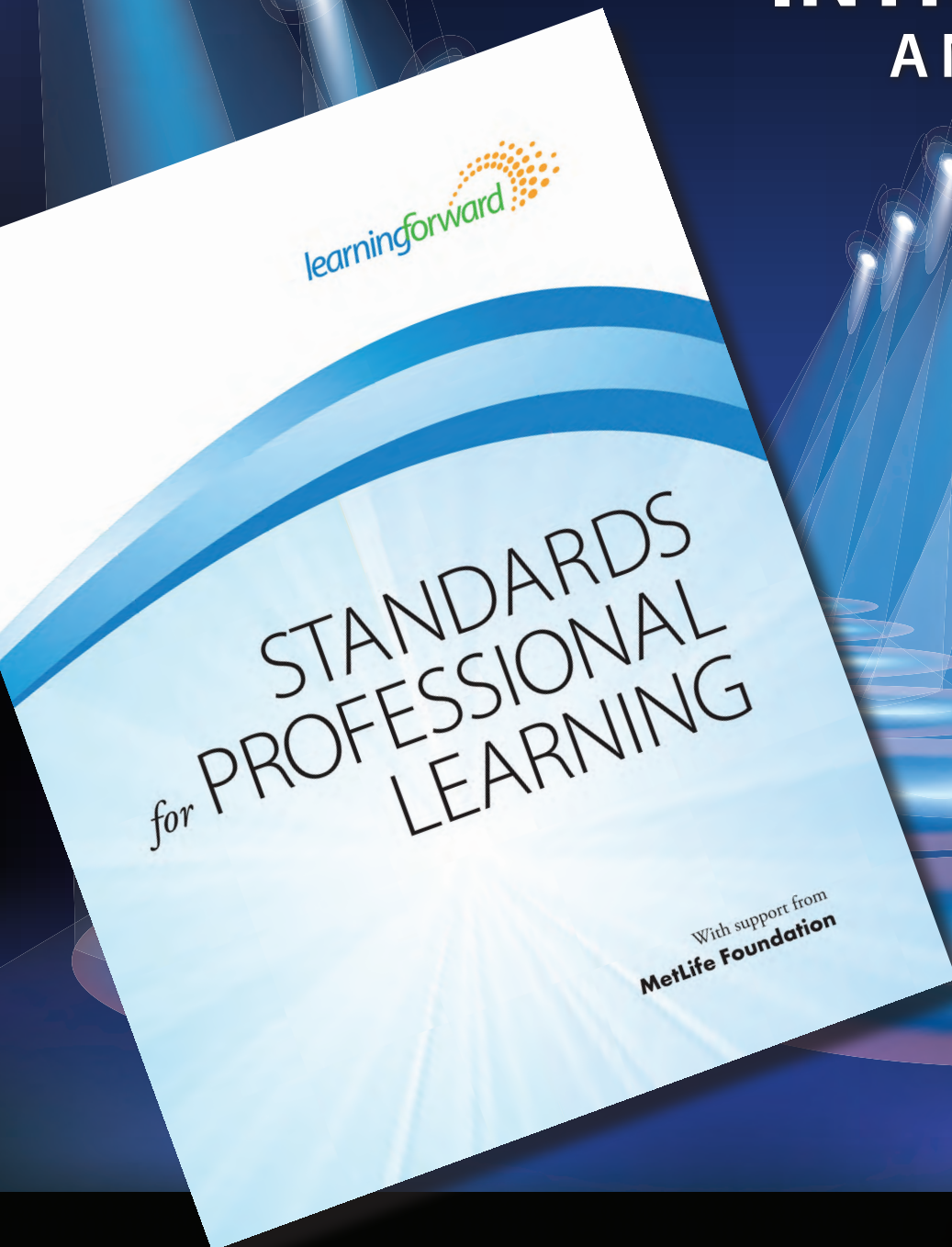
# JSD

LEARNING  
FORWARD'S  
JOURNAL

THE AUTHORITY ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

## INTRODUCING A NEW APPROACH TO STANDARDS THAT CAN TRANSFORM TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SCHOOLS

- DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS
- HOW PRACTITIONERS USE EACH OF THE 7 STANDARDS
- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE BY ARNE DUNCAN





Robert J. Marzano



Tina Boogren



Bev Clemens



Tammy Heflebower



Mitzi Hoback



David Livingston



Margaret McInteer



Phil Warrick



Kenneth Williams

## Fall 2011

### The Highly Engaged Classroom

October 18–19 Tulsa, OK

Featuring Tammy Heflebower, Margaret McInteer, and Kenneth Williams with a keynote from Robert J. Marzano

November 17–18 Cincinnati, OH

Featuring Tina Boogren and Mitzi Hoback

This workshop presents the most useful instructional strategies for engaging students based on the strongest research and theory available. Explore four emblematic questions students ask themselves, the answers to which determine how involved they are in classroom activities. Take home practical applications for your classroom.

*The Highly Engaged Classroom* is included with your registration.

### Formative Assessment and Standards-Based Grading

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Featuring Bev Clemens and Tammy Heflebower with a keynote from Robert J. Marzano

Teachers regularly make important evaluations about student achievement. How do you know if such decisions are based on sound assessment results? Learn research-based practices for using quality formative classroom and district-level assessments aligned to solid grading practices.

*Formative Assessment & Standards-Based Grading* is included with your registration.

### The Art and Science of Teaching

October 25–26 San Diego, CA

Featuring Tammy Heflebower and Tina Boogren

November 15–16 Cincinnati, OH

Featuring Tammy Heflebower and Phil Warrick

One factor that continually surfaces as the single most influential component of an effective school is the individual teachers within that school. Ensure effective teaching in every classroom. This workshop provides tools and resources for immediate use by educators—and those who support them.

*The Art and Science of Teaching* is included with your registration.

### Teacher Supervision and Evaluation Using the Art and Science of Teaching

October 27–28 San Diego, CA

Featuring David Livingston and Phil Warrick

Supervising teaching has one primary purpose: the enhancement of teachers' pedagogical skills, with the ultimate goal of enhancing student achievement. This central responsibility of principals, assistant principals, instructional coaches, and teacher-leaders is the focus of this workshop. The presenters will draw from the research on effective support and supervision as well as their experience as school leaders.

*Effective Supervision* is included with your registration.



"After trying to move people on a really big screen, my team and I are moving schools in a big way. Today, my video crew travels the world capturing examples of exemplary educational success. I'm proud to announce that PD 360 now seamlessly integrates with Common Core methodologies."

— Curtis Linton, VP responsible for PD 360 video content  
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The authority  
on professional  
learning

# JSD

AUGUST 2011, VOLUME 32, NO. 4

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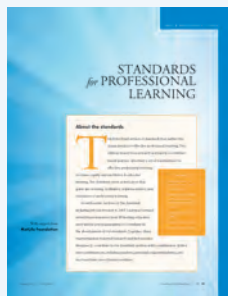
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## Spread the seeds of professional learning far and wide

We released our new Standards for Professional Learning a month ago and are so excited to share them with members and the field. You'll read in these pages about why we published new standards, why now, and what it means for schools, districts, service organizations, and agencies at all levels.



We're taking this opportunity to use *JSD* to not only introduce you to the standards, but to dig deeper into each one. How better to do that than to offer articles from the leading voices in the field, the professional learning gurus who helped to define each concept

through their research and practice. It's an honor to be able to assemble such authoritative educators in one place. The feature articles are springboards to each standard, and much like the elaborations we offer with the standards online and in the book, they include numerous research citations to guide deeper study.

Just as important are the practitioner perspectives we've gathered for this issue. While these standards are new, the concepts within them

•  
**Tracy Crow ([tracy.crow@learningforward.org](mailto:tracy.crow@learningforward.org)) is director of publications for Learning Forward.**

have been critical to our understanding of what makes professional learning effective since the last standards were released in 2001. We turned to educators in schools and districts to share with us how each standard has played an important role in professional learning that leads to results for students.

In the middle of the issue, you'll find a four-page quick reference guide to the standards. Not only does it list the seven standards, but it also provides enough context to give an at-a-glance overview of what educators need to know as they begin their study of the standards.

Studying the standards is the first step in moving them into practice, and we certainly hope to reach as many educators as possible with this information. For that, we ask for your help in dissemination. The standards, full elaborations for each, and selected research citations are available at [www.learningforward.org/standards](http://www.learningforward.org/standards) for all who visit. Share this web address widely — with board members, policymakers, teacher leaders, school leaders, technical assistance providers — all who have a role in planning, implementing, evaluating, and advocating for professional learning.

When we released the standards at our summer conference in Indianapolis, we asked each attendee to fill out a commitment card, promising to take a particular action with the standards.

### Please take our survey

Because this issue of *JSD* is intended to support your study of the new standards, we're asking readers to take a few minutes to respond to an online survey about your use of the magazine. Please visit <http://bit.ly/jdsurvey> to answer several questions. We appreciate your input as we continue to develop tools to support standards implementation.

Examples of commitments included:

- “Our district is buying a copy for each central office staff member responsible for professional development and one for each principal.”
- “I intend to use the standards as a planning tool for the learning we're planning this year.”
- “I'm marching straight to our board president and giving him my copy of the standards.”
- “Our new learning communities will read the standards when we get back to school.”
- “I'll share the standards with my principal and ask her to think about what they mean for our school-based professional development.”

What is your commitment? Your commitment is necessary for standards to fulfill their promise. We'd appreciate hearing about it through Facebook, Twitter, or by email. ■

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Over 300 breakout sessions and roundtables will address these important issues for school leaders: advocacy, equity, leadership, technology, teaching quality, fundamentals of professional learning, and examining the link between professional learning and student achievement.

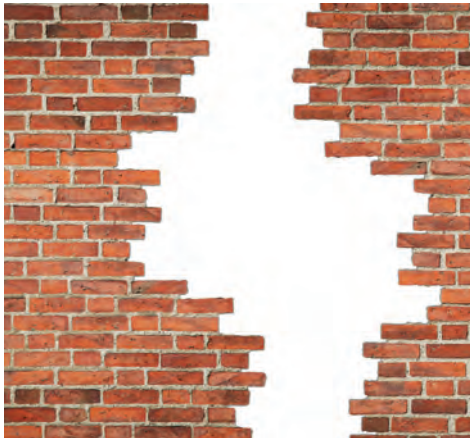
### Capture the Savings

Save \$50 on a three-day or five-day registration when you register by October 15, 2011. To learn more and register, visit [www.learningforward.org/annual11](http://www.learningforward.org/annual11).

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*Capture the magic!*



## SHIFTING ROLES Beyond Classroom Walls: Developing Innovative Work Roles for Teachers

*Center for American Progress,  
April 2011*

A small charter school network in California and a large school district in Virginia serve as case studies for this report on alternative approaches to school staffing that provide more flexible work roles and advancement opportunities for highly effective teachers. The authors interview teachers and staff, review data on results, and discuss the challenges in design, systems, and policy that such changes bring. The report concludes with lessons for national and local leaders.

[www.americanprogress.org/  
issues/2011/04/staffing\\_models.  
html](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/04/staffing_models.html)

## GEN Y TEACHERS Workplaces That Support High-Performing Teaching and Learning: Insights From Generation Y Teachers

*American Federation of Teachers and American Institutes for Research, April 2011*

Generation Y public school teachers — those born between 1977 and 1995 — represent an increasingly large proportion of the teaching workforce. The AFT partnered with the Ford Foundation and American Institutes for Research to conduct a study of the workplace needs of Gen Y teachers. Through an analytic review of 11 existing, nationally representative teacher surveys, seven scenario-based focus groups with Gen Y teachers around the country, and three case studies of local AFT affiliates, researchers identified five key insights that together can transform schools into high-performing workplaces. Among the insights are the importance of supporting peer learning and shared practice and the need to give teachers regular feedback on their effectiveness.

[www.aft.org/pdfs/teachers/genyreport0411.pdf](http://www.aft.org/pdfs/teachers/genyreport0411.pdf)

## HOW THE U.S. STACKS UP Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: An American Agenda for Education Reform

*National Center on Education and  
the Economy, May 2011*

This report ponders what U.S. education policy might look like if it was based on the experiences of higher-

performing countries: Canada, China, Finland, Japan, and Singapore. The author compares strategies driving policy agendas in those countries with the U.S. and finds little common ground. Recommended actions include providing a one-year induction period for new teachers; constructing multiple career pathways; identifying teachers ready for advancement; and exploring ways to increase class size and student performance at the same time.

<http://goo.gl/PRQi1>



## EARLY CHILDHOOD POLICY Forging a New Framework for Professional Development: A Report on the Science of Professional Development in Early Childhood Education: A National Summit

*Georgetown University Center on Health and  
Education, February 2011*

In December 2009, a national summit convened to identify emerging and critical gaps in knowledge and to present research on — and policy opportunities for — effective professional development for early childhood educators. The summit,

which was supported by scientists, practitioners, and policymakers, assessed the current status of professional development research and practice, and set an agenda for future policy initiatives to move this work forward.

[www2.ed.gov/programs/eceducator/forging.pdf](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/eceducator/forging.pdf)





**WATCH AND BE INSPIRED****The Teaching Channel**

The Teaching Channel is a video showcase on the Internet and TV of effective teaching practices in America's schools. The nonprofit's mission is to capture expert teachers' techniques on video so that all teachers have a source for inspiration. The website offers tools to take notes, trade ideas, and build a personal workspace, as well as discussion guidelines and submission policy. Videos are sorted by subjects, grades, and topics; teacher videos are sorted by grades, subjects, and roles.

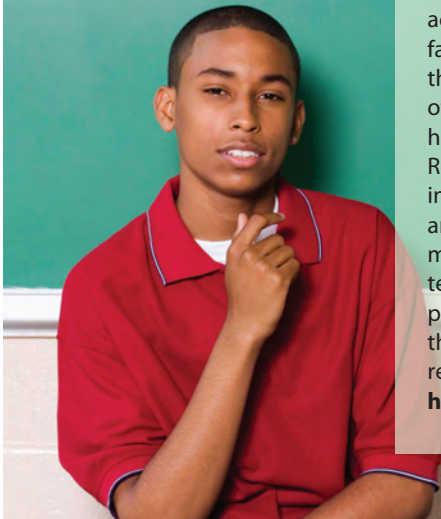
[www.teachingchannel.org](http://www.teachingchannel.org)

**MINORITY MALE ACHIEVEMENT****The Educational Experience of Young Men of Color**

*College Board Advocacy & Policy Center, 2011*

This report synthesizes the available literature, data, and case studies relating to minority male achievement in order to identify factors that contribute either to the persistence or to the attrition of young men of color from high school to higher education. Recommended actions include increasing community, business, and school partnerships to provide mentoring and support, improving teacher education programs, and providing professional development that includes cultural- and gender-responsiveness training.

<http://bit.ly/lzTFRW>

**TECHNOLOGY'S IMPACT****The Changing Face of Professional Development**

*Phi Delta Kappa International, May/June 2011*

Learning Forward Deputy Executive Director Joellen Killion weighs technology's effects on professional learning in this *EDge* magazine report available to PDK members only. While technology has potential to produce significant results, Killion stresses it must be designed appropriately, meet stringent standards for effective professional learning, and meet the identified needs of learners, with a focus on changing practice and improving student achievement.

[www.pdkmembers.org/members\\_online/members/orders.asp?action=view\\_item&pg=21&%20t=A&%20name\\_1=schmoker&id=83770&af=PDK](http://www.pdkmembers.org/members_online/members/orders.asp?action=view_item&pg=21&%20t=A&%20name_1=schmoker&id=83770&af=PDK)



Killion

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**HOW TO GET IN TOUCH**

*JSD* is published six times a year to promote improvement in the quality of professional learning as a means to improve student learning in K-12 schools. Contributions from members and nonmembers of Learning Forward are welcome.

**Manuscripts:** Manuscripts and editorial mail should be sent to Christy Colclasure ([christy.colclasure@learningforward.org](mailto:christy.colclasure@learningforward.org)). Learning Forward prefers to receive manuscripts by e-mail. Notes to assist authors in preparing a manuscript are provided at [www.learningforward.org/news/jsd/guidelines.cfm](http://www.learningforward.org/news/jsd/guidelines.cfm). Themes for upcoming issues of *JSD* are available in each issue and also at [www.learningforward.org/news/jsd/themes.cfm](http://www.learningforward.org/news/jsd/themes.cfm).

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**CHANGING THE RULES**

*The most obvious challenge that learning communities face is that they embrace a set of norms and rules that are often in direct conflict with those of the schools in which they are located.*

**Read more in "Learning communities: The starting point for professional learning is in schools and classrooms," on p. 16.**

**FEEDBACK**

How are you using this issue of *JSD*?

Our intention is that this magazine be a useful resource for supporting your knowledge about the Standards for Professional Learning. We would appreciate your time to answer a few questions on an online survey specifically about this issue.

Please visit <http://bit.ly/jsdsurvey> after you've had the opportunity to read through this issue.

**Explore *JSD* with your learning team**

Support your use of this issue of *JSD* as a team learning resource with the online learning guide created specifically to dig deep into the topics covered in each article. The learning guide includes protocols and discussion questions and is available free online. Visit *JSD* online to download the PDF and access the online version of this magazine.

[www.learningforward.org/news/jsd/](http://www.learningforward.org/news/jsd/)

**FAQs ABOUT THE NEW STANDARDS**

**What can I find online about the standards?**

Visit [www.learningforward.org/standards](http://www.learningforward.org/standards) to watch an overview video featuring Learning Forward Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh, and find separate pages for each standard with the complete elaboration, references, and related resources. These pages will be updated monthly. Look for more short videos that highlight practitioners and experts and their real-world perspectives on the standards.

**Will there be new Innovation Configuration maps for the new standards?**

During 2011-12, the IC maps will be revised to align directly with the new Standards for Professional Learning. Look for the first volume towards the end of this year. Until then, those responsible for professional learning can continue to use the existing IC maps by using the crosswalk between the 2001 and 2011 version of the standards. See the crosswalk at [www.learningforward.org/standards/crosswalk.pdf](http://www.learningforward.org/standards/crosswalk.pdf).

**When will the new Standards Assessment Inventory be available?**

The revised Standards Assessment Inventory (SAI) based on the Standards for Professional Learning will be available for use by the beginning of the 2012-13 school year. During the 2011-12 school year, the SAI will continue to provide valid and highly reliable data about the effectiveness of professional learning and correlates to the newly revised Standards for Professional Learning. Practitioners will find the crosswalk referenced above useful for making connections between the two versions of the standards. Watch for an announcement in the spring about being a part of the pilot testing of the new SAI2 and having complimentary access to the SAI2 for a limited time.

**How can I learn more about the standards?**

This fall, Learning Forward will offer a multiweek e-learning program to explore the standards in depth through a facilitated opportunity for study and discussion. Visit [www.learningforward.org/elearning/programs](http://www.learningforward.org/elearning/programs) for details and to register. Also, Learning Forward will offer several options for learning about the standards at the 2011 Annual Conference in Anaheim in December. Sign up for a full-day preconference session or attend a shorter concurrent session to build understanding of the standards.

**Whom can I contact with questions about the standards?**

Jacqueline Kennedy, associate director of strategic initiatives, is the staff person responsible for standards. Feel free to contact her for assistance at [jacqueline.kennedy@learningforward.org](mailto:jacqueline.kennedy@learningforward.org) or 972-421-0890.

## What do you know?

While the Standards for Professional Learning are new, the concepts within the standards are by and large not new to Learning Forward members. The standards build on previous versions of the standards as well as the definition of professional learning. They move the field forward based on the latest knowledge from research and practice.

Examine with your team what you know about the new standards already, and what you need to know. Use the grid below to structure an individual reflection or a team discussion to explore each standard and, more importantly, implications for practice.

Refer to this issue of *JSD*, the standards book, and the standards web pages to build your knowledge.



### STANDARD

(DATA, FOR EXAMPLE)

**What do we/I know about this standard already?**

**Based on what we're/I'm reading, how does the new standard build on or expand what I already understand?**

**What else do we/I need to explore to build my knowledge of this standard?**

**What do we/I see happening in our school/district right now related to this standard?**

**With whom do we/I need to talk to investigate implications for practice in our school or district?**

By Hayes Mizell, Shirley Hord, Joellen Killion, and Stephanie Hirsh

# NEW STANDARDS PUT THE SPOTLIGHT ON PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

**T**oday's educators work under tremendous pressure. They are held accountable for preparing all students to meet increasingly rigorous academic standards. They must enable all students to perform at levels of proficiency, even those students without the preparation, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for optimal learning. In spite of profound demographic, economic, cultural, and technological changes that negatively impact student learning, the public expects educators to successfully reach all students. At the same time, the contexts in which educators work are often not conducive to effective practice. There are more requirements, fewer resources, less stability, and diminishing support. No one who is not accountable for ensuring student learning can fully appreciate the extent to which these conditions make it difficult for educators to succeed.

To support nations, provinces, states, systems, and schools in building educator capacity, Learning Forward has developed the Standards for Professional Learning. This is the third iteration of standards outlining the characteristics of professional learning that lead to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results. The standards are not a prescription for how education leaders and public officials should address all challenges related to improving the performance of educators and students. Instead, the standards focus on one critical issue: professional learning.

These standards call for a new form of educator learning. The decision to call these Standards for Professional Learning rather than Standards for Professional Development signals the importance of educators taking an active role in their continuous improvement and places emphasis on the learning. By making learning the focus, those who are responsible for professional learning will concentrate their efforts on assuring that learning for educators leads to learning for students. For too long, practices associated with

professional learning have treated educators as individual, passive recipients of information, and school systems have expected little or no change in practice.

Such learning opportunities have often been episodic and unconnected to a shared, systemwide purpose. This form of professional learning has consumed tremendous resources over the last decade and produced inadequate results for educators and students.

The quality of professional learning that occurs when these standards are fully implemented enrolls educators as active partners in determining the focus of their learning, how their learning occurs, and how they evaluate its effectiveness. These educators are part of a team, a school, and a school system that conceive, implement, and evaluate carefully aligned professional learning that responds to individual, team, schoolwide, and systemwide goals for student achievement. The standards give educators the information they need to take leadership roles as advocates for and facilitators of effective professional learning and the conditions required for its success.

Placing the emphasis on professional learning reminds public officials, community members, and educators that educators' continuous improvement affects student learning. Increasing the effectiveness of professional learning is the leverage point with the greatest potential for strengthening and refining the day-to-day performance of educators. For most educators working in schools, professional learning is the singular most accessible means they have to develop the new knowledge, skills, and practices necessary to better meet students' learning needs. If educators are not engaged throughout their careers in new learning experiences that enable them to better serve their students, both educators and students suffer. And if those educators are not learning collaboratively in the context of a sys-



**Quick reference guide to Standards for Professional Learning, p. 41.**

temwide plan for coherent learning tied to a set of goals aligned from classroom to school to school system, their professional learning is less likely to produce its intended results. Essential to improving professional learning's impact is recognizing and leveraging it systemwide, rather than using professional learning solely as a strategy for individual growth.

The standards make explicit that the purpose of professional learning is for educators to develop the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions they need to help students perform at higher levels. This process of new learning for educators is more complex than most people realize. Indeed, researchers have found that it can take 50 or more hours of sustained professional learning to realize results for students. Students' learning results are paramount. Therefore, educators must make serious efforts to develop and implement practices that effectively produce those results. To support these efforts, professional learning must also be a much more serious enterprise than has sometimes been the case in order to demonstrably benefit educators and their students.

### THE LINK TO STUDENT RESULTS

Learning Forward asserts that, when professional learning incorporates the indicators of effectiveness defined in its standards, educator effectiveness and student learning increase. Numerous research studies over the last 20 years confirm that

**The body of research about effective schools identifies collaboration among educators and professional learning as two characteristics that consistently appear in schools that substantially increase student learning.**

there is a strong relationship between teacher practice and student learning. Studies, too, conclude that professional learning positively influences educator practice — specifically, teacher practice. Studies of school and district leadership conclude that there is a relationship between leadership practices, teaching effectiveness, and student learning. Some studies conclude that there is a relationship between professional learning and student achievement. Many studies of school improvement and education reform name professional learning as one of the top five components of reform efforts. The body of research about effective schools identifies collaboration among educators and professional learning as two characteristics that consistently appear in schools that substantially

increase student learning. Some studies of the effects of professional learning have also produced insignificant results on teacher practice or student achievement when measured over a brief period of time, most often at the end of one year of professional learning. Not all professional learning used as a treatment, intervention, or as part of a reform initiative, however, incorporates all the essential elements included in the Standards for Professional Learning. A few studies explore the relationship of policies at various levels of government or system level to the

effectiveness of professional learning and its effects.

The field of professional learning requires additional research and evaluation studies that examine the interaction between the effectiveness of the professional learning and its effects on educator practice and student learning. Research in professional learning today establishes that it is an important lever to improve schools, educator practice, and student learning. With additional research focused on the kind of professional learning that meets the standards specified in the 2011 version of Standards for Professional Learning, the research may lead more directly to the conclusion that effective professional learning that meets the essential elements described within these standards will produce greater effects for educators and students.

### THE STATE OF THE FIELD TODAY

As more educators examined the effects of professional learning, the field gained clarity about what distinguishes effective from ineffective professional learning. In addition, an explosion of new technologies has emerged to support educator learning. With a grant from MetLife Foundation, Learning Forward facilitated a revision of the Standards for Professional Learning.

As the first step in developing new standards, Learning Forward undertook a comprehensive examination of the state of professional learning. A team of researchers from Stanford University's Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education led by Linda Darling-Hammond ([www.learningforward.org/stateproflearning.cfm](http://www.learningforward.org/stateproflearning.cfm)) conducted a three-part study that served as the foundation for the standards revision. The study included a review of the literature, a comparison of professional learning in the United States and in countries whose students outperform the U.S., an analysis of recent and past practice in professional learning in the U.S., and four case studies of state policy related to professional learning. This series of studies was made possible by generous grants from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, and MetLife Foundation.

The standards development process continued when Learning Forward again invited individuals representing leading education associations to review research and best practice literature to contribute to the standards revision with consideration of their own constituencies, including teachers, principals, superintendents, and local and state school board members. The associations agreed that a common set of standards to guide the field remained key. They viewed standards as essential for all aspects of professional learning, including planning, implementation, and evaluation at individual, school, and school system levels and as benchmarks for determining future directions for improvement. Rather than developing multiple sets of standards, nations, organizations, states, provinces, and school systems can use the Standards for Professional Learning as a foundation and devote their attention to implementing high-quality pro-

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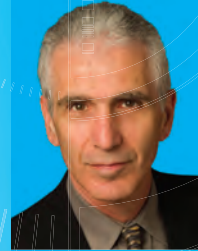


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professional learning and thereby realize the results of their efforts more quickly.

Learning Forward integrated additional input and contributions into the standards revision process by convening focus groups of practitioners, noted authorities, and government officials and circulating the draft standards for public comment.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE STANDARDS

The 2011 version of the Standards for Professional Learning includes several key changes from earlier versions.

**Fewer standards:** Seven standards emerged from the study of research literature about professional learning. While these seven were included in earlier versions of the standards, they are now more clearly defined, and some aspects are more prominent.

**Holistic view:** The standards work in partnership with one another. Focusing on some rather than all standards may contribute to the failure of professional learning to deliver on its promised results. These seven standards are not optional for professional learning that intends to increase educator effectiveness and results for all students. The context, process, content organizer is not as prominent in the new standards, yet remains a foundation for the seven standards. For it to be effective, professional learning occurs most often in learning communities; is supported with strong leadership and appropriate resources; is drawn from and measured by data on students, educators, and systems; applies appropriate designs for learning; has substantive implementation support; and focuses on student and educator standards.

**Combined content standard:** The three previously defined content standards — Equity, Quality Teaching, and Family Involvement — have been replaced with a single Outcomes standard that incorporates two dimensions: student learning outcomes and educator performance expectations. There are essentially two reasons. First, the Standards for Professional Learning as a whole are focused on increasing results for all students and educators. All seven standards, rather than a single one, focus attention on equity and all drive toward that goal. Second, the educator performance expectations as defined by policymakers include substantially expanded expectations for equity, family and community engagement, and role-specific performance expectations. This combined standard strengthens alignment between educator professional learning and its role in student learning.

**Revised stem:** The standards begin with a common statement: “Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students ... .” This statement confirms the link between educator practice and results for students. The link between educator learning and learning for every student is the

purpose of professional learning, and the stem makes that link evident. The statement also emphasizes equity of results. The use of “all” is intentional to elevate the significance of ensuring the success of every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, exceptionality, language, socioeconomic condition, culture, or sexual orientation.

**Three areas of focus:** The Standards for Professional Learning describe the context, processes, and content for effective professional learning. Learning Communities, Leadership, and Resources standards define the essential conditions for effective professional learning. Without these in place, even the most thoughtfully planned and implemented professional learning may fail. Data, Learning Designs, and Implementation standards describe the attributes of educator learning processes that define quality and effectiveness of professional learning. The single content standard, Outcomes, identifies the essential content of professional learning.

### FULFILLING THE PROMISE

Continuous learning provides members of any profession with new understandings, insights, and ideas for how to develop essential skills and behaviors. In short, it enables the profession’s members to refine and extend their knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions related to their specific role and context. Individuals are unlikely to seek the services of an automobile mechanic, plumber, or surgeon who isn’t up-to-date on the latest field knowledge, studies, products, and procedures. Students deserve nothing less from the educators who serve them.

As educators invest in continuous improvement through professional learning, they demonstrate professionalism and commitment to students. School systems that invest in professional learning and build coherence throughout the system demonstrate commitment to human capital development and acknowledge that investment in educator learning is a significant lever in improving student achievement.

The use of Standards for Professional Learning by school systems and educators supports a high level of quality of the professional learning. Further, use of the standards to plan, facilitate, and evaluate professional learning promises to heighten the quality of educator learning, performance of all educators, and student learning. Increased educator effectiveness makes possible a shift from current reality to the preferred outcomes of enhanced student learning results — a goal to which all educators subscribe.

•  
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**These seven standards are not optional for professional learning that intends to increase educator effectiveness and results for all students.**



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# LEARNING COMMUNITIES

The starting point for professional learning is in schools and classrooms

By Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller



**L**earning communities are best defined as “ongoing groups ... who meet regularly for the purposes of increasing their own learning and that of their students” (Lieberman & Miller, 2008, p. 2). Although learning communities vary in form and context, they share some fundamental core beliefs and values. Based on the idea that educators can learn from each other, learning communities create and maintain an environment that fosters collaboration, honest talk, and a commitment to the growth and development of individual members and to the group as a whole. They work from the assumption that teachers are not mere technicians who implement the ideas of others, but are intellectuals who are doing knowledge work. This means that learning communities privilege theory as well as practice; they encourage and support members to examine their

practice, to try out new ideas, and to reflect together on what works and why; and they provide opportunities for the collective construction and sharing of new knowledge. Equally important to the concept of a learning community is the connection it forges between professional and student learning. As educators identify and solve problems of practice together, they build the capacity and collective will to move forward the equity agenda of their schools and districts and enhance the learning and achievement of all students.

## WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS

We have selected five research studies that bolster the case that learning communities in schools are a critical element in professional development and student achievement. Each of these studies has made a major contribution to a growing and powerful research base about learning



Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

communities, how they can transform classroom practice, and, ultimately, enhance student learning. What follows are descriptions of each study and how it adds to our understanding of what learning communities are, what they do, and how they develop.

McLaughlin and Talbert (2001, 2006) undertook a large-scale study of 22 high schools in Michigan and California in which they described the characteristics of teaching communities and the kind of instruction they promoted. Only one of these communities embraced the ideas associated with a true learning community. In a weak community, where teachers worked in isolation and had little opportunity to engage in conversation with each other, instruction was text-focused and teacher-directed and students also worked in isolation and on routine assignments; educators graded on the curve. In a strong traditional community, where teachers and students were “tracked” in formal hierarchies according to experience or ability, teaching took the form of standards-based instruction and emphasized accountability that was measured by tests. By contrast, in learning communities — where teachers collaborated around teaching and learning and developed expertise through shared knowledge — teaching was fueled by the belief that all students can learn, focused on active student engagement, and ultimately led to enhanced student learning.

Where McLaughlin and Talbert drew portraits of contrasting teacher communities, Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2001) focused on a single learning com-

munity. Their idea was to join an English department with a history department and observe and document its development, which they defined in stages of beginning, evolution, and maturity. They uncovered distinct stages of growth. The first stage involved the formation of group identity, where teachers playacted a community and formed a pseudo-community in which there was little civility or interaction. What followed was a process the researchers called the navigation of fault lines, where opposing forces competed for attention, negotiated their essential tensions, and fought through their differences. The final stage involved the teachers taking communal responsibility for individual growth. As they moved through these stages, community members learned how to deal with differences, eventually recognizing that conflict can be dealt with openly and should be expected, and that all could grow from a connection to one another by working at various approaches to student learning.

Lieberman and Wood (2002) studied two teaching communities that took place during the National Writing Project summer institutes at UCLA and the University of Oklahoma in Stillwater. The researchers found that though the sites differed in location (urban and rural) and age (long established and newer), they shared 11 social practices that helped meld a strong community. These included:

1. Approaching each colleague as a valuable contributor;
2. Honoring teacher knowledge;

# We're all in this together

**By John Wiedrick**

*As told to Valerie von Frank*

Learning communities are important because when you work collaboratively with colleagues, you can make larger academic gains with kids.

Five or six years ago, when I was a teacher, a busload of school staff went to a workshop where we were introduced to the concept. I was excited that this idea was not just kindergarten teachers responsible for kindergarten kids, 7th-grade teachers responsible for 7th graders. We're all in this together. If we all understand the needs of our students, if we all sit down and use our professional knowledge to the best of our abilities, and we talk and research,

then implement and come back and discuss, we really move learning forward.

At first, the junior high teachers met voluntarily after school and over lunch. We left our meeting open to the entire staff. We didn't want to be seen as a secret clique inside the school. All of a sudden, a 4th-grade teacher showed up, then other teachers began to participate.

Three years ago was a tipping point. We had about 80% buy-in for the idea of learning communities. When I

took over as principal, I said, if we're doing this, we're all going to do it together. It's important to do as a team.

To become a whole-school learning community, we followed a step-by-step process. We solidified our mission and vision to be clear what we wanted and our nonnegotiables, what we call "the hills we're going to die on." For example, we will teach all kids to read at grade level. Then we put interventions in

place and monitor and tweak them when necessary.

We meet as an entire staff after school every second week and give people extra preparation time during the workday as compensation. We set clear objectives and have clear meeting norms, such as starting and ending on time. We had one or two resisters at first, but it boiled down to having a conversation about how this strategy would be effective for students in their classroom. When that point is clear, teachers don't say no.

We also have a weekly learning support team meeting to look at specific students' struggles. We have support from the central office. All of our daylong professional development days (we have six) focus on our literacy concept. Everything we do is tied to that one idea.

We give students a common reading assessment that remains the focus for the year and set goals based on data for the individual proficiency of each student. We give interim assessments, and, at our next meeting, look at the results, discuss strategies for intervention, then come back in two weeks and discuss the results.

Our 1st-grade kids are making massive gains — 10 to 12 months of reading growth in six months, especially among the students who were struggling. We make sure that as a school we celebrate and recognize these individual successes in the classroom. We send the message that individual successes tie to success for everyone.



**Wiedrick**

## St. Stephen's Catholic School

Valleyview, Alberta, Canada

Grades: **K-9**

Enrollment: **245**

Staff: **30**

Racial/ethnic mix:

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| White:                  | <b>40%</b> |
| Black:                  | <b>0%</b>  |
| Hispanic:               | <b>0%</b>  |
| Asian/Pacific Islander: | <b>0%</b>  |
| Native American:        | <b>60%</b> |
| Other:                  | <b>0%</b>  |

Limited English proficient: **15%**

Free/reduced lunch: **25%**

Contact: **John Wiedrick**, principal

Email: **john.wiedrick@hfcrd.ab.ca**

**John Wiedrick (john.wiedrick@hfcrd.ab.ca) is principal of St. Stephen's Catholic School in Valleyview, Alberta, Canada. Valerie von Frank (valerievonfrank@aol.com) is an education writer and editor of Learning Forward's books.**

3. Creating public forums for sharing;
4. Engaging in dialogue and critique;
5. Turning ownership over to learners;
6. Situating human learning in practice and relationships;
7. Providing multiple entry points in the learning community;
8. Guiding reflection on teaching through reflection on learning;
9. Sharing leadership;
10. Promoting an inquiry stance; and
11. Encouraging a reconceptualization of professional identity and linking it to professional community.

When engaged in these practices, teachers internalized not only learning in communities, but gained many strategies that they could do in their own classrooms.

In a series of observations that lasted several years, Little and Horn (2007) and Horn (2005) developed an extensive case study of a content-specific learning community that took place in a single high school. The Algebra Group, as it came to be called, was composed of nine teachers who met weekly. They began each meeting with a “check-in,” during which members were invited to discuss a problem they were encountering in their teaching or to offer for group consideration a new idea they had come across in the past week. The check-in served as a starting point for the serious, honest, and focused talk that became the signature practice of the group, engaging members in a level of “disclosure of and reflection on problems of practice” (Little & Horn, 2007, p. 50) that went much deeper than congenial conversation. It generated new learning and led to a deeper understanding of mathematics and how to teach it. As a result, students in the urban, working class school where the group convened and taught became noted for their high rates of participation and achievement in math. These researchers added that it is not only working together that makes a community, but also a particular kind of “talk” that deepens the communities’ understanding of practice.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) reported on Project START, a community of postbaccalaureate student teachers, their cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and college faculty who met weekly to engage in collaborative inquiry. The project was embedded within a larger research community that spanned 20 years and included a wide array of teacher-directed groups. These diverse research communities considered topics as wide-ranging as “language and literacy; curriculum and pedagogy; race, class, and gender; modes of assessment; and cultures of schools and teaching” (p. 66). As a result of their work, Cochran-Smith and Lytle uncovered a theory of action that propelled the groups. In challenging the theory-research split, teacher inquiry propelled a reconceptualization of the teacher role as involving knowledge construction and social action.

These five studies provide evidence of the critical role of learning communities in educator development and student

learning. For many years, it was assumed that professional development should be delivered from external sources. Research and experience have taught a different lesson: The starting point for professional learning is best located in schools and classrooms where teachers work and where they can define and solve real problems of practice. Professional communities build relationships between and among teachers who share students and who are working for greater student learning. Communities eliminate teacher isolation and start with what teachers know and do. They expose teachers to what they need to know, offering support and opportunities to learn from one another about how to provide the richest possible opportunities for student growth. Many teachers have significant expertise and can facilitate learning with their colleagues in a learning community. This kind of expertise can’t be bought.

**As educators identify and solve problems of practice together, they build the capacity and collective will to move forward the equity agenda of their schools and districts and enhance the learning and achievement of all students.**

### ESSENTIAL PRACTICES

Because each learning community develops in its own way and within its own particular context, it is difficult to isolate a set of generic practices. What follows is a list of ways that we have seen successful communities go about their work:

- They meet regularly and take the time to build collegial relationships based on trust and openness.
- They work hard to develop a clear purpose and a collective focus on problems of practice.
- They create routines and rituals that support honest talk and disclosure.
- They engage in observation, problem solving, mutual support, advice giving, and peer teaching and learning.
- They purposefully organize and focus on activities that will enhance learning for both the adults and students in the school.
- They use collaborative inquiry to stimulate evidence-informed conversations.
- They develop a theory of action.
- They develop a core set of strategies for connecting their learning to student learning.

### CHALLENGES

Building authentic professional communities in schools creates areas of tension and challenge. The most obvious challenge that learning communities face is that they embrace a set of norms and rules that are often in direct conflict with those of the schools in which they are located. Schools adhere to a bureaucratic model that privileges compliance to mandates over reflection on practice and external monitoring of benchmarks over peer review and feedback. On the other hand, professional

communities require an orientation that values openness to new ideas and practices and mutual accountability for learning (Talbert, 2010). It is very difficult to enact these values in a bureaucratic culture. Professional norms that enable and reward collaboration and support a shared vision are the foundations for learning communities. A culture that focuses on problems of practice and invests in the resources necessary to achieve educational equity is a culture where learning communities can grow and thrive. Figuring out how to negotiate a professional orientation in a bureaucratic structure is a difficult, but necessary, task.

The second challenge concerns the locus of control for the content and the process of the agenda of a learning community. In the face of pressure to provide a quick fix for the complex problems of schooling, it is often difficult for learning communities to hold onto control of the conversation. As federal, state, and district mandates take prominence, concerns about

teacher and student learning may be pushed to the bottom of the agenda. The challenge for learning communities is to guard against the usurpation of the teacher voice and the reduction of the professional learning community to just one more standardized professional development tool.

The third challenge has to do with time. There is no fast track to developing an authentic learning community. As we have learned through the work of Little and Horn (2007), it takes time and effort to unpack conversations and to get at real problems of practice. The capacity to engage in honest talk is of critical importance and develops gradually as trust and collegiality take root. And as Grossman, Wineberg, and Woolworth (2001) make clear, it also takes time to navigate the fault lines of differences in subject matter, approaches to teaching, gender, race, and ideas of privacy. Learning communities that acknowledge differences and allow them to co-exist reach common ground only after an extended process of continuous engagement and commitment.

The final challenge is sustaining a community that is an integral part of school in the face of rapidly changing demands on teachers, teaching, and learning. When successful, communities can change the culture of the school for students, teachers, and administrators, but the members must hold onto the commitment to creating shared values, maintaining a collective focus for student learning, working collaboratively in coordinated efforts to improve, and holding onto collective control over decisions affecting their teaching and learning.

When rooted in the everyday life of a school, learning communities can be sustained. Members of the community have to pay attention to the purposes of the community and find ways that they can push back on the routine pressures of schools. In this way, nurturing the community becomes a new way of thinking about continuous learning, improving one's practice, and finding ways to improve student achievement.

**When successful, communities can change the culture of the school for students, teachers, and administrators, but the members must hold onto the commitment to creating shared values, maintaining a collective focus for student learning, working collaboratively in coordinated efforts to improve, and holding onto collective control over decisions affecting their teaching and learning.**

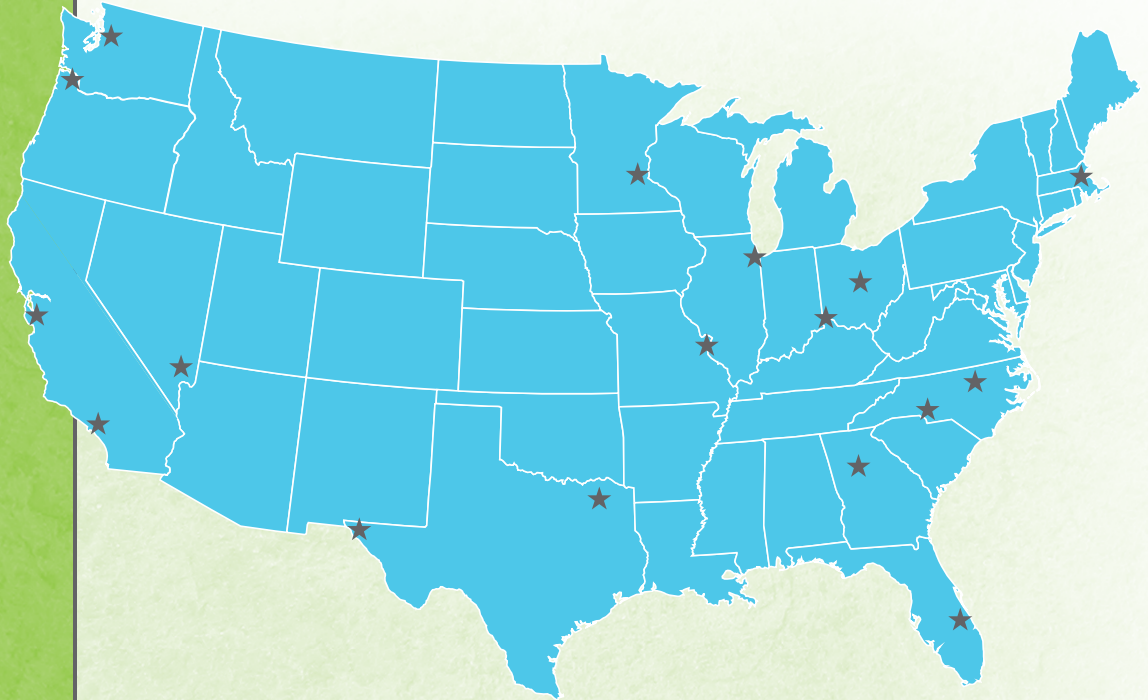
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# LEADERSHIP

Support and structures make the difference for educators and students

By Kyla L. Wahlstrom and Jennifer York-Barr



“**E**veryone has a stake in the education of our children ... [and] people who work in schools and people who study schools know that leadership makes a difference” (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010, p. 32).

The critical role that leadership plays in student learning is documented in a six-year research study funded by The Wallace Foundation that examined the effect of leadership on learning (see Louis et al., 2010). From that research, professional development emerges as a primary vehicle for authentic and sustainable school improvement. The voices in interviews of nearly 900 teachers, principals, and district staff in 167 schools across the U.S. tell the story of the actions that effective school leaders take to develop and support the context and processes leading to

increased student achievement.

Learning Forward’s Leadership standard has three key contextual concepts that clearly link with the Learning Forward findings: building capacity, providing support, and distributing responsibility. From all the data in the national leadership study, it was clear that context matters. When leaders attend to the context in which others around them learn, they strive to put in place structures and supports that are likely to be effective. This is true whether the leadership comes from the district level, or from a principal working with teachers in her school, or a teacher leading among his peers or with his students. High-quality leadership has no substitute, and high-quality professional development depends on such leadership.

Building capacity appears most evident in the actions that leaders take to build self- and collective efficacy among those being led. Self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable





Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students **requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.**

of undertaking a task. Collective efficacy is the belief that as a collection of individuals, a group such as a school staff has the capacity to address the needs of all the students in the school (Bandura, 1982,1997). Developing a sense of efficacy plays a key role in one's willingness to persist in a difficult task, despite obstacles and others' perceptions that the task is insurmountable. Developing and sustaining a sense of efficacy, therefore, is an essential capacity for fueling high engagement in continuous learning that expands and deepens educators' knowledge and skills, striving to ensure that all children learn well. Leadership for effective professional development never loses sight of capacity building, understanding the belief in the power of personal growth.

When a leader develops capacity, he or she is also enhancing others' sense of influence. Essentially, leadership is about influencing others in positive and productive ways around organizational purposes. Those who work in schools know that influence happens at every level of the system, with collegial influence being perhaps, the most powerful means of aligning and accelerating effort for the good of the children (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Powerful learning occurs when teachers can witness and engage in reflection about practices that positively impact students who are "just like my students." Individual expertise can evolve to become cornerstones of collective practice that result in greater degrees of coherence for the adults and students in schools.

Each person is a source of influence, whether realized or not. Choices of attitude, language, behavior, and how

to direct one's energy contribute enormously to the culture and the conditions of teaching and learning in schools, for better or worse. The decentralized, layered structure of schools requires influence at the most local level of practice, the classroom, if continuous learning and improvement is to be our reality. Building influence, therefore, is about building capacity.

The concept of providing support is the logical next ingredient for leadership in professional development. Findings from Learning From Leadership revealed that supporting the professional development needs of both principals and teachers were most thoroughly addressed in the highest-performing schools. In those cases, districts had developed an intentional, coherent system of professional development for all professionals in the system. Support came in the form of creating professional learning communities for all, as well as allowing for individualized adaptations for the unique needs of each school.

Again, context comes into play. Every school is the same, yet every school is different. The same could be said for every grade level or subject area, every team, every class, every teacher, and every student. Providing support does not mean that the same kinds of supports are needed in every school or for every person. Still, some key elements uncovered in the research were nonnegotiable, such as the use of student work as data to inform practices and the importance of reflective conversations as a means of professional growth. To address the challenge in providing effective support requires engaging in the conversation about

# To be effective, leaders must dig deeper

**By Deborah Jackson**

*As told to Valerie von Frank*

**A**s a classroom teacher and administrator, I worked under some very dynamic principals who modeled for me what good leaders do. They created environments in which kids achieved and schools became communities. I observed my middle school principal's instructional leadership and how she helped the school close achievement gaps. At high school, the principal modeled partnering with the community.

Years ago, a principal was just a manager, managing resources. Everything else fell into place. Now, we've been forced to dig deeper. We've

changed, our kids have changed, and our world has changed. Leaders have to look at instruction, ensure students are receiving a viable curriculum, and look at standards and assessments to be able to apply those. Then we have to align with the state. We have to look at the effectiveness of teachers and administrators and see what they need in order to do the work. We're asked to be little mayors, because we are in our communities facilitating discussions about instruction.

We have to be knowledgeable about data.

We have to be able to lead a range of teachers. We have generational pockets. Teachers who have been previously trained to go into their classrooms and close the door now have to collaborate in teams, have to talk about instruction and the impact on kids. Leaders can't assume adults know how to collaborate, because collaboration takes trust. Leaders have to facilitate discussions and professional development

around how to collaborate. That learning is critical when you bring people from various backgrounds and knowledge bases together and ask them to open up about their classrooms, students, and personal instruction.

We have to select personnel and support and retain them. With frozen salaries, we have to keep teachers motivated. Professional learning time is critical to sustaining teachers.

We have redesigned our school's master schedule to allow teachers to meet for professional development during the school day. Our school has to have common language around professional development. Teachers all meet in collaborative teams by department for 90-minute blocks at least once a week and usually twice.

School leaders have to be experts in what we're talking about for our teachers to build capacity. We monitor teacher learning, knowing that educational power is in the staff, and motivate by offering professional development points for teachers to participate. The points are good toward their recertification. We also have to build teacher capacity to be leaders, so teachers sometimes lead our professional development.

Finally, as school leaders, we are brokers with the district to get the resources we need, whether that is a released day for professional development, a two-hour student released time for additional teacher learning, or other resources. Professional development increases individual and team effectiveness — improving teaching and learning in the process and benefiting students.



**Jackson**

## McLean High School

McLean, Va.

Grades: 9-12

Enrollment: 1,914

Staff: 123

Racial/ethnic mix:

|                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| White:                  | 61% |
| Black:                  | 4%  |
| Hispanic:               | 9%  |
| Asian/Pacific Islander: | 20% |
| Native American:        | 0%  |
| Other:                  | 6%  |

Limited English proficient: 11%

Free/reduced lunch: 9%

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differentiated allocation of district resources among schools. Another dimension of that conversation is determining ways by which the progress of individual schools is evaluated in light of resources provided. For example, using only annual student test scores is an insufficient evaluation measure in any district that has variation in student performance among its schools.

Effective leaders link support with structure, as together those concepts create a stable base from which to move forward. Providing both simultaneously can go a long way toward supporting implementation for real change. There are big structures, such as regularly scheduled time for teams to meet, and small structures, such as group and intergroup learning protocols. Some schools create an annual calendar that clearly delineates learning blocks for staff, including team times and whole-school professional development. School and team goals determine the learning focus within each block. Educators sketch out specific adult learning targets for a semester or sometimes an entire year. The calendar is posted on a wall, and school learning leadership teams review progress regularly. Adult learning targets are refined or learning time extended as needed. Small structures guide group processes and intentionally support development of conversational norms that support reflective practice. Learning leaders realize that intentionally designed structures are as essential for adult learning as they are for student learning.

As we seek to improve practice in specific classroom contexts, the past 30 years of educational research have yielded enormous amounts of information about what works. We have a more explicit map of the instructional landscape and have become more focused on high-leverage strategies. The problem arises when moving from declarative knowledge — the “what” — to procedural knowledge — the “how.” We know about a lot of “whats”; however, we know less about how to do them. Support for closing the implementation gap requires harnessing and directing the energy of teachers through job-embedded professional learning explicitly directed at the classroom context to figure out exactly when, where, and how to introduce new practices into instructional routines, followed by many opportunities to practice, reflect, and refine.

As essential as structure is, it is not sufficient for supporting high engagement of adult learners in schools. Both structure and nurture are necessary. The Nike slogan, “Just Do It,” may work for aspiring runners, but it falls short as a means of nurturing acquisition of new instructional practices. This is where effective leadership for professional development becomes highly nuanced. From the perspective of an individual teacher, any new expectation is perceived as coming from the outside. Effective ground-level leadership, often taking the form of teachers leading and learning side-by-side with colleagues, requires balanced amounts of structure and nurture that result in outside practices becoming inside practices. This happens through leadership that supports teachers in understanding the new practice

and how it supports student learning. Teacher engagement in this process builds ownership and, ultimately, commitment.

In the end, it is about distributing responsibility that allows the first two concepts in effective leadership, building capacity and providing support, to fully enact change. Recent research and research reviews have explored the dimensions of distributing or sharing leadership, and all have concluded that distributing leadership not only builds capacity and supports change, it expands the degree of change possible (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005; Louis, 2006; Spillane, 2006; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Distributing responsibility is not about reducing the administrator’s workload. Rather, it is having a common understanding that improved student learning is the result of collaborative endeavors, with different initiatives in the school or district having different persons leading the range of efforts. In fact, there is not one single pattern of leadership distribution that is consistently associated with a type of shared teacher leadership in implementing changes or with improved student learning, and it is also proven that without shared leadership, gains in student learning are not as significant (Louis et al., 2010).

As isolation, a dominant characteristic of traditional school culture, continues to give way to collaboration, educators are discovering the wealth of expertise available right down the hall. While we acknowledge that both external and internal resources are essential, our current tendencies for seeking expertise focus much more heavily on outside sources of knowledge. We need to tap and grow the expertise from within, with the distinct advantage of internal expertise being readily available and contextually valid. The pathway for both generating and sharing local expertise is empowering teachers to be partners in the work of instructional leadership.

Distributed leadership is grounded in defined goals, along with agreement about sources of data that will be used to monitor progress. The concept and practice of distributed leadership stem from recognition that leadership is present throughout schools and school districts. With distributed responsibility comes distributed accountability. A clear delineation of the structures and expectations enables the distribution of responsibility to become a road map for staying on course together.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

If we are not satisfied with our student learning results, we must examine our systems and structures. The work of leadership is to create the conditions that support continuous professional learning that results in improved classroom practice such that students engage and learn at high levels. Are structures and resources aligned to support job-embedded learning so that teams of educators have opportunities to learn from research-based teaching practices? Do these teams serve as an ongoing support for daily implementation and reflection on practice? Is individual support available in particularly challenging practice

*Continued on p. 32*

# RESOURCES

The dollars and sense of comprehensive professional learning

By Allan Odden

**V**ery little of the professional development literature identifies its costs. Many say good professional development is expensive, but what is meant by expensive, and if so, expensive relative to what? This article shows that effective professional development is not expensive relative to overall spending and that its key elements and their costs can be identified and afforded. Further, I have never had a legislative committee addressing school finance adequacy balk at resourcing a comprehensive professional development system (e.g. Odden, Picus, Goetz, et al., 2005). The systemic distribution of the most effective instructional practices is a core strategy in nearly all case studies of schools and districts that have dramatically moved the student achievement needle (Odden, 2009).

A more uniform distribution of effective teaching is the

underpinning for what schools can do to close the achievement gaps that plague American school systems. Collaborative teacher work on curriculum and instruction issues is the prime way to have such effective instruction more systemically deployed (Raudenbusch, 2009). Thus, collaborative teacher work using student data to collectively hone instructional practices is the cornerstone for improving instructional effectiveness. Moreover, comprehensive, ongoing, intensive professional development most effectively works through these collaborative teacher teams' work, and together they become the mechanisms through which high-quality professional development penetrates classrooms in systematic rather than random or individualistic ways.

## EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The emerging consensus on what characterizes effective professional development draws on empirical research





Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

studies that link program strategies to changes in teachers' instructional practice and subsequent increases in student achievement. These studies include, among others, research on professional development generally, studies of comprehensive professional development to improve reading, mathematics and science teaching, and a major, federal government-supported evaluation of a large-scale, national mathematics and science professional development program (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Elmore & Burney, 1999; Garet, Birman, Porter, Desimone & Herman, 1999; Joyce & Calhoun, 1996; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Loucks-Horsley, Love, Stiles, Mundry & Hewsen, 2003; Supovitz & Turner, 2000).

In summarizing the key features of effective professional development, my research group and others (e.g. Elmore, 2002; Garet et al., 1999; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Odden, Archibald, Fermanich, & Gallagher, 2002a, 2002b) have identified six structural features of such programs. These findings have been incorporated into several publications of Learning Forward (e.g., Hirsh & Killion, 2007, 2009) and are reflected in Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning.

**Form, duration, and active learning** together imply that effective professional development includes some initial learning in training sessions as well as considerable longer-term work in which teachers incorporate the new methodologies into their actual classroom practice. Active learning implies some degree of coaching during regular school hours to help collaborative groups use student data to hone

instructional strategies, to help teachers incorporate new instructional strategies into their classroom instructional practices, and to help teachers debrief on the effectiveness of the unit after it is taught.

**Content focus** means that effective professional development focuses largely on subject matter knowledge, what is known about how students learn that subject, and content for the actual curriculum used in the school.

**Collective participation** implies that the best professional development includes groups of and, at some point, all teachers in a school or district, who then work in collaborative teams to implement the new instructional strategies, and in the process, build a professional school community.

**Coherence** suggests that the professional development is more effective when the signals from the policy environment (federal, state, district, and school) reinforce rather than contradict one another or send multiple, confusing messages. Coherence also implies that professional development is part of implementing new curriculum and instructional approaches.

Note that there is little support in this research for having individually oriented professional development plans be a primary element of a professional development system. Research implies a much more systemic approach that involves all teachers in the school focused on many of the same issues.

#### **A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COST STRUCTURE**

In previous research, my colleagues and I developed a cost structure for effective professional development

# The budget speaks volumes about priorities

**By Barbara Nakaoka**

*As told to Valerie von Frank*

The way you handle the budget speaks volumes about where your priorities are. When I began teaching, I saw the power of professional development because it enabled me to help students learn better and learn more. At the start of my superintendency, we built in cost savings so we could redirect money and continue with professional development because expectations are ratcheting up every year. Unless you provide training for teachers, principals, and everyone in the system, you will not be able to handle those expectations and create change that benefits students.

I am a hands-on superintendent. My message to the instructional division and district has been about the value of professional learning communities and the need for professional development. I put an emphasis on building trust so professional development is accepted.

We set specific expectations not only for schools but for employees. Setting expectations is a catalyst in getting the work done and moving the money to be able to do training.

We use state categorical money targeted for intervention and Title II money—whatever money we can eke out. We hire district program specialists — teachers on special assignment — who present but also go into classrooms to work with teachers. We bring in consultants for their expertise in instructional development. The key is monitoring implementation.

Professional learning communities have been the

pivotal change in the district. We use them at all levels, including in the superintendent’s cabinet, to make data-driven decisions. We interject data all the time to solve problems. District departments use data to determine what to work on. District-level administrators have to be trained as much as site-level staff, so they all take part in professional development. For example, when a teacher says he or she is being asked to do “X,” human resources staff need to know what that “X” is.

At the site level, learning teams meet at least twice a month. We hire substitutes at times to allow teachers to work in learning teams, and we’re working hard to develop individuals’ leadership skills within learning communities. District-level departments work with site staff and facilitate meetings at the site.

For a large district, consistency is a leveraging point. Working in isolation drains money. You have to focus on alignment all the time. For example, central administrators met with the high school principals and asked them key questions, then gave direction to the secondary division so we were all on the same page. Money and time weren’t wasted on things that wouldn’t receive support or that weren’t meeting the needs of teachers and staff.

The types of things that worked in the past are not going to continue working. Standards are helpful because standards give us guidelines to leverage change, and professional development standards give us the impetus to enable students to have the best-qualified educators.



**Nakaoka**

## Hacienda La Puente Schools

City of Industry, Calif.

Number of schools: **33**

Enrollment: **20,942**

Staff: **1,291**

Racial/ethnic mix:

White: **4.3%**

Black: **1.2%**

Hispanic: **79.7%**

Asian/Pacific Islander: **14.0%**

Native American: **0.2%**

Other: **0.7%**

Limited English proficient: **19.6%**

Free/reduced lunch: **70%**

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| <b>A COST STRUCTURE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>                         |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Cost element</b>  | <b>Ingredient</b>   | <b>How cost is calculated</b>  |
| <b>Teacher time used for professional development</b>                        | <p><b>Time within the regular contract:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When students are not present, before or after school, or on scheduled in-service days, half days or early release days.</li> <li>Planning and collaboration time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Time outside the regular day/year:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time after school, on weekends, or for summer institutes.</li> <li>Released time provided by substitutes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers' hourly salary times the number of student free hours used for professional development.</li> <li>Not included as a cost; coded as costs for elective teachers.</li> <li>Stipends or additional pay based on the hourly/daily rate that teachers receive to compensate them for their time.</li> <li>Substitute wages.</li> </ul>    |
| <b>Training and coaching</b>   | <p><b>Training:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salaries for district trainers.</li> <li>Outside consultants who provide training.</li> </ul> <p><b>Coaching:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salaries for district coaches, including on-site facilitators.</li> <li>Outside consultants who provide coaching.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sum of trainer salaries, consultant fees, comprehensive school design contract fees, conference fees, and tuition reimbursement for university training.*</li> <li>Sum of instructional coach/facilitator salaries and benefits OR consult fees.</li> <li>Consultant fees or comprehensive/turnaround school design contract fees.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Administration of professional development</b>                            | Salaries for district or school level administrators of professional development programs.  | Salary for administrators times the proportion of their time spent administering professional development programs.  |
| <b>Materials, equipment and facilities used for professional development</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials.</li> <li>Equipment.</li> <li>Facilities.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials for professional development.</li> <li>Equipment needed for professional development activities.</li> <li>Rental or other costs for facilities used for professional development.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Travel and transportation for professional development</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel.</li> <li>Transportation.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs of travel to off-site professional development activities.</li> <li>Costs of transportation within the district for professional development.</li> </ul>  |

\* Tuition and conference fees were a sixth cost element in the original structure. Because these are types of training, I placed them in the training category.

(Odden, Archibald, Fermanich, & Gallagher, 2002a, 2002b). The cost structure that we developed devolves directly from the six structural features mentioned above; an updated/revised version is displayed in the table above.

Form, duration, collective participation, and active learning require time of three types of individuals: teachers, coaches and mentors, and trainers, with various combinations of time for each of these three during the regular school day and year as well as outside of the regular day and year.

Principal time is also required, as it is the principal who structures the organization of teaching and learning, and the school's schedule, in ways that facilitate ongoing professional development. But the model does not include principal time as a professional development cost, as each school needs a principal and the principal performs multiple roles to make the school effective, one of which is supporting structures for effective professional development.

Time is the largest cost. The cost structure includes time

for teachers both for training and for ongoing collaborative — and some individual — work on the curriculum and instructional program. Training time would be pupil-free time, which could be during intensive summer institutes or on various days through the school year. We resource these days above and beyond the regular 180 days of instruction for students, rather than using substitutes to take these days out of the 180-day student instructional year. In estimating these costs, Section 3 includes the cost for 10 pupil-free days for all teachers.

While the cost structure includes the time during the school day that is available for both individual planning and collaborative teacher work, our framework does not include these as professional development costs. Rather, we argue that those are costs of having elective classes and programs in schools. Core teachers are grade-level teachers in elementary schools, and English/reading/language arts, mathematics, science, history, and world language teachers in secondary schools; all other teachers are considered elective teachers. More specifically, in

our school finance adequacy work (Odden & Picus, 2008), we staff elementary and middle schools with core teachers and then, assuming a six-period day, provide an extra 20% of core teachers for elective classes, with each teacher — core and elective — providing instruction for five periods. If schools need to create a seven-period day to provide for collaborative time, we recommend that class sizes be increased to provide the extra teachers needed for that additional period as well as to keep costs comparable to a six-period day. We staff high schools assuming a four 90-minute block schedule with teachers instructing for three blocks a day, thus needing elective teachers at a rate of 33% of core teachers. A pupil-free 90-minute block each day provides ample time during the day and week for individual planning time and time for teacher collaborative groups, for both core and elective teachers.

We code all these staff beyond core teachers as costs for elective teachers but NOT as professional development costs. This approach to staffing schools allows for all schools to provide a rich liberal arts curriculum and provides planning, collaborative time and professional development for all teachers. However, as Hord and Hirsh (2009) note, principals must design school schedules so teachers in collaborative groups have common pupil-free time so they can meet during the school day.

The second prime cost time element is instructional coaches, who are increasingly being identified as a critical element of professional development. Coaches help collaborative teams analyze student data, prepare standards-based curriculum units, and analyze unit impact after all teachers have taught the unit and used a common end-of-unit test. Coaches also can work with individual teachers providing individually focused assistance, as well as teaching model lessons.

Coaches can be mentors, and sometimes are called that. But I argue (Odden 2011) that organizing teachers into collaborative groups constitutes the most effective way to mentor new teachers. Such groups provide access to instructional materials and strategies that are part of curriculum units, expose the new teacher to the analytic expertise of experienced teachers assessing student data for refining curriculum units and analyzing impact of the units after they are taught. And instructional coaches can provide tailored help to new teachers as well. This obviates the need for a more costly new teacher mentoring program; the mentoring is built into the overall professional development structure.

The third prime time cost element, trainers, can be central office staff from categorical programs, from district professional development offices, outside consultants who are individuals or part of comprehensive school designs, presenters at conferences, or university professors. The costs related to the latter two are conference fees and tuition units. Since many teachers are required to earn graduate degrees and many teachers argue that university training too often does not really help them be more effective, states and districts should be more strategic about why graduate degrees and classes are required and provide tuition

reimbursement or allow units to count on salary schedules only when programs and courses have proven to enhance teachers' instructional expertise.

Further, all professional development strategies require some amount of administration, materials and supplies, and miscellaneous financial support for travel. But these costs generally are quite low.

## THE COSTS OF EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Based on the above summary analysis, Odden and Picus (2008) concluded that the marginal resources (over and above that required to staff schools generally) needed to deploy effective, intensive professional development are:

**1. Time during the summer for intensive training institutes.** This training can most easily be accomplished by ensuring that approximately 10 days of the teacher's normal work year are dedicated to professional development, thus pupil-free. These days are in addition to the approximate 180 days for student instruction and in addition to about 10 days for opening and closing school and for parent conferences, which produces a teacher work year of about 200 days.

We also recommend that districts keep primary control over the use of these days so they are used for systemic training on the district's and school's approach to curriculum and instruction.

At an average teacher salary (\$50,000) and benefits (40% of salary) of \$70,000, and 200 typical workdays, this costs \$350 a day or \$3,500 for the 10 days. Since most teachers already have some professional development days, we have found that states generally need to add only about five days to the typical teacher work year to total 10 pupil-free days, so the incremental cost is often half of \$3,500.

**2. On-site coaching for all teachers to help them incorporate new instructional practices into their instructional repertoire.** The basic recommendation is for one instructional coach for every 200 students. This formula produces 2.5 FTE coach positions for a 500-student school, but does not mean there are 2.5 people doing coaching. The coaching configuration could vary across schools and, for example, could include a full-time reading coach, and half-time mathematics, science, and technology coaches, all totaling 2.5 FTE positions. Instructional coaches are generally paid on the teacher salary schedule. So if teachers average 25 students in their class, each teacher triggers one-eighth of an instructional coach, or \$8,750 per teacher (\$70,000 divided by 8).

**3. Collaborative work with teachers in their schools during planning and collaborative time periods, thus reinforcing the strategic and instrumental need for these times, which can be provided if schools staffing includes elective teachers.** This requires smart scheduling of core and elective teachers during the regular school day and week. However, as discussed above, we code elective teachers as elective and not professional development costs.



**4. Funds for training** during the summer and for ongoing training during the school year, the cost of which is about \$100 per pupil, which is meant to cover any central office professional development staff, any outside consultants or school turnaround organizations, and spending for tuition reimbursement (Odden & Picus, 2008). This figure would also include miscellaneous administrative, materials and supplies, and travel.

Some analysts add the “lanes and columns” of teacher salary schedules to professional development costs (increases based additional education or degrees), as those salary dollars are provided on the basis of training provided by colleges and universities. I have never included those costs and argue that it is inappropriate to do so. Those variables are simply a way to allocate teacher salaries. If a different salary schedule were used that did not include lanes for units and degrees, which I have recommended for years (Odden & Wallace, 2007), those dollars would be kept in the salary budget and not reverted to the professional development budget.

In sum, assuming an average teacher salary and benefits of \$70,000, the specific costs of professional development, over and above staffing for schools generally, are:

1. \$3,500 per teacher for training time.
2. \$8,750 per teacher for instructional coaches/mentors/instructional facilitators.
3. \$100 per pupil for trainers and other administrative and miscellaneous costs. If each teacher averages 25 students, this cost item then is \$2,500 per teacher.

These costs total \$14,750 per teacher, or an extra 21% over a core teacher’s salary and benefits. However, many districts already have substantial funds invested in professional development (e.g. Miles, Odden, Fermanich & Archibald, 2004), so the above figure should not be considered the extra cost of operating a systemic professional development.

Finally, if we converted the above per-teacher figures (excluding the elective teachers) to a per-pupil figure (assuming 25 students in a classroom), the costs of professional development would be \$590 per pupil (\$14,750 divided by 25). This figure for the *cost of professional development equals about 5.4% of an operating spending per pupil* figure of \$11,000, which is close to the national average. This is a reasonable figure and represents a robust and comprehensive approach to funding all the requirements for an intensive, ongoing, and systemic professional development program that would address all school training needs over time.

In conclusion, the costs of a comprehensive, effective, and ongoing professional development program for all teachers is not expensive. It is just about \$590 per pupil or 5.4% of a district’s operating expenditure per pupil. And that figure includes 10 pupil-free days for training, instructional coaches at the rate of one for every 200 students (eight teachers), and sufficient funds for trainers and miscellaneous costs. These figures would change in any state or district depending on the average teacher salary, the benefit rate, and the current operating expenditure per pupil.

## GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE

In order to deploy resources for an effective, ongoing professional development program linked to helping teachers be more effective, schools and districts will need to:

- Eliminate all current professional development, program improvement, and other training programs that are not focused on the strategic instructional and curriculum programs of the school or district and redeploy those dollars to the resources suggested above;
- Capture the bulk of current pupil-free days that have been given to teachers for their own use and use them and any additional that are provided for training for the more curriculum-based professional development core to the district’s and school’s goals; and
- Organize schools into multiple, appropriate collaborative teams so all teachers will have the time and team activities that are critical to helping all teachers incorporate new instructional practices into their normal classroom practice, thus making the overall professional development program work, leading to improved instructional practice that boosts student learning and helps close the achievement gaps.

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## Leadership

*Continued from p. 25*

contexts? Is leadership sufficiently distributed so that all stakeholders have the expectation, perceptions, and belief that it is only through collaboration that effective and successful change can be enacted? These are the essential questions that leaders of professional learning must address.

Learning leaders live the value of reflective practice. Where there is no reflection, there will be no learning. Supporting the continuous development of individual and collective expertise emerges from engaging with new ideas and from reflecting on daily practice. Reflective educators expand their repertoire, deepen their expertise, and remain energized in their work. Professional learning creates energy and enthusiasm for improving practices that build efficacy and result in improved outcomes, not only for students, but for the professionals as well.

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# Assessing Professional Learning. How do you measure up?



## Audits

Learning Forward's professional development audit provides baseline data about your district's current professional development program in relation to state/district goals and our Standards for Professional Learning.

By studying district data, conducting onsite interviews, observations, and focus groups, expert professional developers assess the strengths and weaknesses of your district's professional learning and recommend strategies for achieving your goals.

### Past audit clients:

- Boston Public Schools, Mass.
- Erie School District, Pa.
- Webster Central School District, N.Y.

*"The entire audit process, from assisting the district planning team in developing district goals for our audit to the receipt of the final written report, was one of the most professional endeavors we have experienced. The members of the Learning Forward Audit Team were very much a team of qualified experts."*

— Jan Morrison, Washoe County (Nev.) School District



## Standards Assessment Inventory

Our Standards Assessment Inventory (SAI) is a 60-item, online survey that provides data on a school's or district's professional development to support school improvement planning.

Each member of your staff will spend only 15 minutes responding to the online survey. The SAI price includes two administrations—one in the fall and one in the spring in one school year. Learning Forward offers reports, online resources,

and face-to-face support in analyzing and using the SAI results to improve professional learning.

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory has established the validity and reliability of this instrument.

### Recent SAI clients:

- Arizona Department of Education
- Arkansas Department of Education
- Rockdale County Public Schools, Ga.
- Lewisville Independent School District, Texas
- Moraga School District, Calif.
- Juneau School District, Alaska
- Hackensack Public Schools, N.J.
- Greater Essex County District School Board, Windsor, Ontario



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# DATA

Meaningful analysis can rescue schools from drowning in data

By Douglas B. Reeves and Tony Flach

**L**earning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning have the potential to influence educational policy and practice in profound ways for the systems that are courageous enough to take them seriously, and the Data standard is a critical element systemwide. Schools are overwhelmed with data warehouses, colorful charts and graphs, and endless PowerPoint presentations. The millions of dollars that governments at all levels are investing in data systems will be wasted unless significantly greater attention is paid to the systematic evaluation of teaching and leadership decisions based on data. However, in many schools, the availability of data is inversely proportional to meaningful analysis. The reality is that many common practices substitute the appearance of data analysis for the reality of substantive analysis

To realize the achievement of the Data standard, we offer three imperatives for school leaders and policymakers. First, close the implementation gap for professional learning standards. To close the gap between the aspirations expressed in the standards documents and the reality of educational systems, leaders at every level must hold themselves accountable for the implementation of the standards. Second, change accountability from an evaluation system, linked to punishments and rewards to a learning system. Feedback for improved performance has a greater impact on morale and productivity than the use of the same data for financial incentives alone. We recognize the present political reality that data will be used for economic incentives; we are suggesting, however, that the massive investment that educational systems are making in data systems could be used for far more constructive purposes. Third, change





Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

data system investment strategy from one that disproportionately allocates resources to hardware, software, and data warehouses to new strategies that disproportionately allocate resources of money and time to data analysis and decision-making processes. With these emphases, the Standards for Professional Learning will have the opportunity to influence student learning and improve teaching and leadership effectiveness. Without these imperatives, however, teachers and leaders will continue to be drowning in data but failing to have the time, professional learning, and leadership support to use data to improve teaching and learning.

### CLOSING THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP

Consider the fate of academic content standards over the past two decades. In some schools, standards formed the basis of new curricula, teaching methods, assessments, and grading systems. When the work of students was compared to a clear and objective standard rather than to that of other students, both academic achievement and educational equity improved. Standards-based education allowed researchers from multiple perspectives to document sustained improvements in a variety of schools. Marzano (2007) and Hattie (2009) provide meta-analytical approaches that offer compelling evidence of the impact on student achievement when students have learning goals that are explicit and teachers provide accurate and specific feedback to improve performance related to those learning goals. Hattie in particular describes the power of feedback from formative assessments. Teachers use the formative assessments

to provide meaningful recommendations for improved performance to students as well as using that feedback to understand the effectiveness of their instructional practices. Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) and Fullan (2010) complement that research with case studies of sustainable system reform, while Anderson (2010) links specific gains in student achievement to comprehensive and consistent data analysis. Certainly the standards movement alone was not responsible for all of these improvements; when the right “constellation of practices” (Reeves, 2011a) came together, improvement was significant and sustained. The last study, including an analysis of student results over three years in more than 2,000 schools, suggested that of 21 teaching and leadership practices observed, effective monitoring of student, teacher, and leadership data was significantly more powerful than other variables, particularly when effective monitoring was combined with leadership focus and teacher efficacy. The research suggests that student success is possible with the right combination of teaching and leadership strategies, and standards for professional learning play an integral role.

### STANDARDS ARE NOT ENOUGH

Unfortunately, these success stories are overshadowed by the number of instances in which standards were merely adopted by governing boards and never implemented at the classroom level. Two decades after the dawn of the voluntary standards movement and one decade after No Child Left Behind required all states to have academic content

# Data drives learning for teachers and students

**By Denise Torma**

*As told to Valerie von Frank*

We developed a six-year strategic plan with a steering committee of 35 stakeholders who reviewed research on 21st-century learning and the future of education and then created a district vision, mission statement, and set of beliefs that formed the basis for the plan. Our mission is: "We will create an environment that will help students become problem solvers, collaborators, and critical thinkers." The goal is moving students forward, and professional development drives that.

Two years ago, we were looking for a tool to assess professional development in the district.

I contacted Learning Forward and learned about the Standards Assessment Inventory. We began using it in spring 2010, and we got a pulse for professional development in the district. We found out we had pockets of strengths and areas for improvement.

We then used the results to plan. Each year, principals set goals for professional development, student achievement, and leadership. The Standards Assessment Inventory is the focal point of the professional development goals. Principals set their

goals according to the results and how those fit with the district's strategic plan. They list a goal, along with a related standard, and evaluate professional development based on student achievement.

A team of central office administrators reviews all the Standards Assessment Inventory results and meets with each principal to listen to what each learned

from that building's assessment. Administrators ask the principals guiding questions: What are the strengths? What are areas for improvement? What are the surprises? What questions do you have? What are your two priorities for next year? Then we look for commonalities and what is unique to a building to plan professional development for next year.



**Torma**

Other data also aid planning. We store student data online, including common assessment results, state standardized test results, SATs, and more. Principals use these data with teachers to look at each student to maximize instruction. These data inform building-level professional development planning.

In addition, each school has an electronic folder that is the story of the school in four parts: demographics, the results of student and parent surveys, state standardized test results, and a focus for work. These data go back at least five years so we can monitor trends. The principal and administration manage the principal's goals in this section. The principals write monthly reports and submit them online, attaching documents that substantiate the work they did during the year to meet each goal. Principals work with their faculties in August to look at the data and discuss ways to improve student achievement.

Data drive our professional development, which drives our student achievement. We use data to monitor, assess, and plan ways to improve. We're always trying to push the bar higher for all achievement.

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## East Penn School District

Emmaus, Pa.

Number of schools: **10**

Enrollment: **8,019**

Staff: **541**

Racial/ethnic mix:

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| White:                  | <b>83.0%</b> |
| Black:                  | <b>4.1%</b>  |
| Hispanic:               | <b>7.1%</b>  |
| Asian/Pacific Islander: | <b>5.7%</b>  |
| Native American:        | <b>0.1%</b>  |
| Other:                  | <b>0.0%</b>  |

Limited English proficient: **5.3%**

Free/reduced lunch: **15.4%**

Contact: **Denise Torma, assistant superintendent**

Email: **tormaden@eastpennsd.org**

standards supported by standards-based assessments, there remain an astonishing number of schools where instruction and assessment are indistinguishable from 1991. Despite a blizzard of standards, pacing guides, and mandates from federal, state, and local education policymakers, the fact remains that the same performance by the same student can yield wildly different evaluations based solely upon the idiosyncratic judgment of individual classroom teachers (Reeves, 2011b), the antithesis of what standards-based assessment should be. Data about the effectiveness of professional development strategies and the implementation of academic standards were the missing links. Leaders and policymakers have the opportunity to learn from the past and immediately begin monitoring the effectiveness of data analysis practices, to begin using data on data to improve learning.

Similarly, data systems have proliferated. Indeed, it is difficult to find a school that does not profess to have teachers and administrators “looking at data.” Given the avalanche of data coming from state and local sources, one cannot avoid “looking at” the data. The question is what teachers and administrators are doing with it.

#### IMPLEMENTING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING STANDARDS

Consider this sample scoring guide for application of the Standards for Professional Learning for data analysis.

**1. Not meeting standards:** Meetings are inconsistent and haphazard. There are no agendas and little reference to data. Teachers and administrators are preoccupied by other concerns, including discipline, parent complaints, and policy disputes. While information about student achievement is available, school leaders complain that teachers are “not ready” for this sort of analysis.

**2. Progressing:** There is a sincere attempt to look at data, but only in the most general form. The threat of complaints prevents any classroom or student-level analysis, so the data analysis leads only to platitudes about “working smarter” and there are not explicit instructional or leadership decisions that emerge from the meetings.

**3. Proficient:** Teachers and administrators meet weekly to consider a variety of data sources, including formative and summative assessments as well as teacher observations. Each meeting has written records of decisions and commitments, with explicit teaching and leadership decisions based on clearly identified student data.

**4. Exemplary:** In addition to all of the characteristics of “proficient” performance, teachers and administrators regularly share their insights with their colleagues, benefitting not only their colleagues within the school, but the entire system. There is clear and compelling evidence that best practices are replicated and ineffective practices are discontinued. We have created other scoring guides for data analysis that are more detailed (available as free downloads at [www.LeadandLearn.com](http://www.LeadandLearn.com)), but

our experience suggests that when it comes to creating rubrics for professional practices, specificity, clarity, and brevity beat complexity every time.

This brief example illustrates how schools can transform standards for professional learning into practical guidelines. Each staff meeting could conclude with an objective analysis of performance. My colleagues at the Leadership and Learning Center have field-tested scoring guides like this using a combination of direct observation, interviews with teachers and principals, focus groups, and anonymous and confidential surveys. The schools we observed had the same data systems, same professional development seminars, and same state and district mandates for data analysis. Nevertheless, they varied widely in their actual implementation of data analysis standards.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY AS A LEARNING SYSTEM

The Standards for Professional Learning make a trenchant ethical point that the data that are to be analyzed by schools must include student, educator, and system performance. In brief, effective data analysis must include much more than test scores. The application of a scoring guide for professional practices allows a system to take the standards seriously, examining the interrelationship between professional practices surrounding data analysis and gains in student achievement. Analyzing data from more than 600,000 students in more than 700 schools, we plotted the relationship between effective data analysis and gains in student reading and math scores. The results offer good and bad news. The good news is that there is a clear and consistent relationship between deep implementation of professional practices surrounding data analysis and gains in student achievement. We have found that to be true not only with regard to deep implementation of data analysis, but also other instructional initiatives, such as professional learning communities, positive behavioral support, effective instructional practices, and instructional coaching. The bad news is that in almost every case, the relationship between implementation and student achievement is nonlinear. That is, the impact of implementation on student results does not proceed in a stair-step like fashion, with each increment of improvement in implementation associated with a gain in achievement. In fact, middle levels of implementation — which demand a good deal more effort by teachers and students — have no better results than low levels of implementation. Unless leaders and educators are committed to deep implementation of a relatively small number of instructional initiatives, then they will never have the time and energy to get to deep levels of implementation required in order to influence student achievement in a meaningful way.

Systems that focus exclusively on test scores would be like an initiative to combat student obesity by posting the annual weight scores of every student and exhorting teachers to improve the scores. But with an exclusive focus on weight loss, neither parents nor policymakers would ever know if weight

loss was associated with improved diet and exercise or with eating disorders and drug abuse. After all, all we care about is the score. Similarly, the best way to improve average SAT and ACT scores in any high school is to limit the number of students who take those assessments to those with the best academic preparation. Any principal and faculty member who seeks to encourage the broadest level of post-secondary opportunity by increasing the number of students taking the SAT and ACT will almost certainly be punished by an accountability system that focuses exclusively on the average test score. In brief, we must consider causes — teacher and leadership actions — not just effects — student scores. The Standards for Professional Learning make an important ethical statement when they conclude that student test data, without data about inputs such as instructional practice and professional development, are insufficient to improve system performance or inform decisions about professional learning.

Data analysis requires time and practice. Schools that bring in an inspirational speaker to address the faculty on “Data Day” are doomed to disappointment. Only schools that are willing to commit to a consistent and rigorous discipline that includes an examination of data at every level — student, teacher, administrator, and system — will make the leap from intent to impact.

#### FROM EVALUATION TO ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

The reason that so few teacher and administrator evaluation systems provide any opportunity for accountability to serve as a learning tool is that the words “needs improvement” are both rare and an invitation to litigation. As DuFour and Marzano (2009) demonstrated, evaluation scores are so disconnected from reality that they cannot be used as a tool for feedback and improvement. The picture for administrators is even worse (Reeves, 2008), with many leaders never receiving an evaluation and the content of the evaluations deteriorating as experience and placement in the hierarchy increases. We know what to do. Stiggins (2007) has long demonstrated that accountability for learning is the best practice in providing feedback to students. Marshall (2010a & 2010b) has demonstrated that rubric-based observations can be provided for teachers and administrators in a way that leads to improved performance through accurate, consistent, frequent, and meaningful feedback. Amabile & Kramer (2011) documented that frequent feedback to improve performance is associated with employees feeling that they are having their best days at work. Strikingly, annual performance reviews, financial rewards, and public recognition weren’t nearly as powerful as frequent and specific feedback. Improved educator performance stems directly from open and honest data on their professional practice.

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS IN ACCOUNTABILITY FOR LEARNING SYSTEMS

There are two essential questions for any accountability

system. First, which specific teaching practices are associated with improvements in student learning? Second, which specific leadership practices are associated with improvements in teaching? As the Standards for Professional Learning suggest in their description of input data, only an accountability system that includes student, educator, administrator, and system performance data will be able to address those questions.

#### POLITICAL REALITIES AND FALSE DICHOTOMIES

The political reality is that many jurisdictions have made a decision to evaluate and compensate teachers and administrators based solely upon changes in student test scores. Many researchers, Pink (2009) among them, have made the point that extrinsic motivation can be counterproductive and, particularly in the case of student test scores, can lead to a host of unintended consequences. Nevertheless, just because a data system is misused in some areas should not lead to the conclusion that the system is worthless in all areas. As the data from implementation audits demonstrate, it is possible to link professional practices, or input data, with student learning in a constructive manner, even if the same data are misused in ill-advised reward and punishment schemes.

#### FROM “RESPONSIBLE FOR DATA” TO RESPONSE TO DATA

There is, we believe, a way out of this conundrum. The Standards for Professional Learning suggest that comprehensive data analysis includes not only test scores, but also system, teaching, and leadership observations, as well as a variety of student demographic data. The last of these data elements do not excuse poor student performance, but rather help teachers and school leaders understand potential trends and suggest essential interventions to support student success. The subtle but essential shift in data-based conversations with teachers is a move from the contention that teachers are “responsible for data” — an indefensible position when that data includes multiple factors beyond the control of the teacher — to the contention that teachers and administrators are responsible for their “response to data.” When a student arrives in 9th grade reading on a 4th-grade reading level, that is not the fault of the 9th-grade teachers and administrators, any more than those teachers and administrators are responsible for the height, weight, home life, or housing of that student. Not all of these students arrive in 9th grade with red flags waving, screaming the message, “I need intervention right now!” Some of these students have the social and political skills to finish middle school with C and D grades, with the occasional B because they are a “pleasure to have in class.” Therefore, their needs are not immediately obvious to 9th-grade counselors and teachers looking only at previous transcripts.

However, 9th-grade teachers, administrators, and the educational systems that support them are responsible for how they respond to this situation. When I ask 9th-grade teachers and





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# Denver



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for Teacher Leaders  
and the Administrators  
Who Support Them

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### Call for Proposals

Submit your proposal to present a session at our 2012 Summer Conference and join your colleagues in exploring best practices in professional learning. Proposals are accepted online only. Apply online at <http://proposals.learningforward.org>.

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administrators, “How will the curriculum, schedule, teacher contract, administrative support, and instructional strategies be different for a student who is significantly below grade level in reading?” the most common response I receive is, “It won’t be — the schedule is set.” By contrast, there are high schools that assess literacy for every incoming student within the first two weeks of school and make interventions where necessary, providing double or even triple time for literacy in those critical early months of high school to avoid multiple failures later in life. Data analysis is not about “looking at data” but about responding to data with decisive actions in teaching, leadership, professional learning, and allocation of instructional resources.

### BALANCE DATA SYSTEM INVESTMENTS

Data systems are powerful and necessary tools to improve teaching, leadership, and learning. However, data systems by themselves are insufficient for educational improvement. Technology vendors and advocates, along with professional development leaders, must make a fundamental shift in their focus on professional learning from how to use data systems to how to make better instructional decisions based on data contained in those systems. These are two distinctly different skills, and the latter has received short shrift in the past several years. We have found that the best (and most ethical) practice is to make the data analysis training “agnostic,” in the words of one of our colleagues — that is, divorced from vendor of the equipment and software. While data systems may come and go, schools need consistent disciplines (Anderson, 2010) to link data to decision making. Although we have observed school systems that claim to devote one-third of their technology and data analysis budget to professional learning, we find that to be consistently insufficient. The demands of the Learning Forward Data standard do not call for a one-time investment. The links between student data and practices are complex and varied, and therefore schools must be willing to invest time, resources, and intellectual energy on a continuous basis to gain maximum value from their significant investment in the hardware and software to support data systems.

### LONG-TERM CHALLENGES

Many school systems are facing their greatest financial crises since the Great Depression. These challenges are not short-term. In many areas the decline in property values will lead to a long-term decline in school system revenues. Federal funds, which mitigated some of the worst financial damage in some schools in the past year, will soon evaporate, returning to their pre-2008 levels or lower. So what happens when the money runs out and the mandates expire? If data analysis for improved teaching, leadership, and learning is based solely on the external stimuli of money and mandates, then it was all a pipe dream, an evanescent vision of what might have been. But if these professional standards have the moral foundation that we believe that they do, then the standards will outlast transitory political

and financial conditions and form the basis for generations of improved opportunities for students.

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# STANDARDS *for* PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

## About the standards

**T**his is the third version of standards that outline the characteristics of effective professional learning. This edition, drawn from research and based on evidence-based practice, describes a set of expectations for effective professional learning

to ensure equity and excellence in educator learning. The standards serve as indicators that guide the learning, facilitation, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning.

As with earlier versions of the standards, including the last revision in 2001, Learning Forward invited representatives from 40 leading education associations and organizations to contribute to the development of the standards. Together, these representatives reviewed research and best practice literature to contribute to the standards revision with consideration of their own constituencies, including teachers, principals, superintendents, and local and state school board members.

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With support from  
**MetLife Foundation**

**STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

*Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students ...*

**LEARNING COMMUNITIES:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

**LEADERSHIP:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.

**RESOURCES:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

**DATA:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

**LEARNING DESIGNS:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

**OUTCOMES:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

### 4 prerequisites for effective professional learning

The seven new standards focus attention on educator learning that relates to successful student learning. Implicit in the standards are several prerequisites for effective professional learning. They are so fundamental that the standards do not identify or describe them. These prerequisites reside where professional learning intersects with professional ethics.

Professional learning is not the answer to all the challenges educators face, but it can significantly increase their capacities to succeed. When school systems, schools, and education leaders organize professional learning aligned with the standards, and when educators engage in professional learning to increase their effectiveness, student learning will increase.

**1 Educators' commitment to students, all students, is the foundation of effective professional learning.** Committed educators understand that they must engage in continuous improvement to know enough and be skilled enough to meet the learning needs of all students. As professionals, they seek to deepen their knowledge and expand their portfolio of skills and practices, always striving to increase each student's performance. If adults responsible for student learning do not continuously seek new learning, it is not only their knowledge, skills, and practices that erode over time. They also become less able to adapt to change, less self-confident, and less able to make a positive difference in the lives of their colleagues and students.

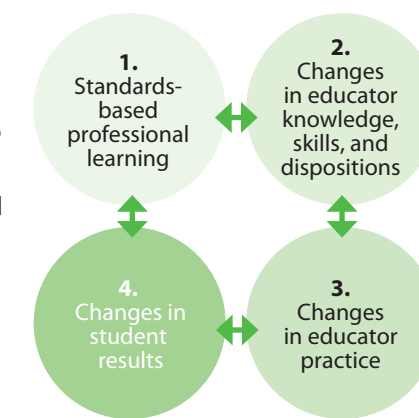
**2 Each educator involved in professional learning comes to the experience ready to learn.** Professional learning is a partnership among professionals who engage with one another to access or construct knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions. However, it cannot be effective if educators resist learning. Educators want and deserve high-quality professional learning that is relevant and useful. They are more likely to fully engage in learning with receptive hearts and minds when their school systems, schools, and colleagues align professional learning with the standards.

**3 Because there are disparate experience levels and use of practice among educators, professional learning can foster collaborative inquiry and learning that enhances individual and collective performance.** This cannot happen unless educators listen to one another, respect one another's experiences and perspectives, hold students' best interests at the forefront, trust that their colleagues share a common vision and goals, and are honest about their abilities, practices, challenges, and results. Professional accountability for individual and peer results strengthens the profession and results for students.

**4 Like all learners, educators learn in different ways and at different rates.** Because some educators have different learning needs than others, professional learning must engage each educator in timely, high-quality learning that meets his or her particular learning needs. Some may benefit from more time than others, different types of learning experiences, or more support as they seek to translate new learning into more productive practices. For some educators, this requires courage to acknowledge their learning needs, and determination and patience to continue learning until the practices are effective and comfortable.

### Relationship between professional learning and student results

1. When professional learning is standards-based, it has greater potential to change what educators know, are able to do, and believe.
2. When educators' knowledge, skills, and dispositions change, they have a broader repertoire of effective strategies to use to adapt their practices to meet performance expectations and student learning needs.
3. When educator practice improves, students have a greater likelihood of achieving results.
4. When student results improve, the cycle repeats for continuous improvement.



**This cycle works two ways: If educators are not achieving the results they want, they determine what changes in practice are needed and then what knowledge, skills, and dispositions are needed to make the desired changes. They then consider how to apply the standards so that they can engage in the learning needed to strengthen their practice.**

## SUGGESTIONS FOR USE

**S**tandards for Professional Learning are designed to set policies and shape practice in professional learning. Improvement is a continuous process without a beginning or end. Because professional learning is at the core of every effort to increase educator effectiveness and results for all students, its quality and effectiveness cannot be left to chance. The standards will guide the efforts of individuals, teams, school and school system staff, public agencies and officials, and nonprofit and for-profit associations or organizations engaged in setting policy, organizing, providing, facilitating, managing, participating in, monitoring, or measuring professional learning to increase educator effectiveness and results for all students.

These standards stimulate dialogue, discussion, and analysis that lead to increased effectiveness in professional learning regardless of the state of current practice. Here are several suggestions for how various types of educators may use the standards to deepen their understanding of effective professional learning and how to strengthen professional learning for all educators. The book *Standards for Professional Learning* (Learning Forward, 2011; see ordering information at right) offers a more comprehensive list.

### INDIVIDUALS CAN:

- Study the standards to develop a foundational knowledge about effective professional learning.
- Use the standards to request improvements in professional learning in which they participate.
- Apply the standards to the planning, design, facilitation, and evaluation of professional learning they lead.

### SCHOOL STAFF CAN:

- Share the standards with external assistance providers who facilitate professional learning with school staff.
- Share the standards with parents, guardians, and community members to foster their support for professional learning as a means to increase student learning.
- Bring the standards into all program implementation or improvement discussions.

### SCHOOL SYSTEM STAFF CAN:

- Post the standards on or link to the standards from the school system's website.
- Use the standards as criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of all professional learning.
- Prepare a resolution that the school trustees adopt the standards as expectations for all professional learning.

## MORE TO COME

Learning Forward, with continuing support from MetLife Foundation, will develop additional tools to support the implementation and evaluation of the standards.



“Using the standards to shape more effective professional learning will require study, thought, discussion, and planning.”

— *Standards for Professional Learning*

## ORDER THE STANDARDS TODAY

Have at your fingertips the full text of the standards, including in-depth elaborations for all seven standards, related research citations, a comprehensive introduction, crosswalk between the previous and current versions, and more complete suggestions for use.

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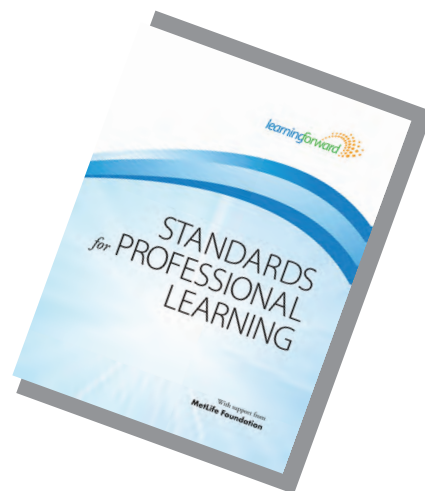
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# Standards policy action guide

By Joellen Killion

Full implementation of the new Standards for Professional Learning will require individuals and teams of education leaders to become advocates for effective professional learning and to advance policy changes required to adopt the new standards or to revise the existing policies that address the 2001 edition of Standards for Staff Development.

This guide is designed to assist education leaders to initiate policy changes related to the new Standards for Professional Learning. Because policies about professional learning differ among school systems, states, provinces, or nations, education leaders who want to become advocates for effective professional learning may want to add additional steps to the process outlined here or may find that some steps do not apply to their education systems.

## Strategies for states/provinces with no professional learning standards tied to policy

For those entities that have not adopted the previous version of the standards, the release of Standards for Professional Learning is an opportunity to examine what role standards might play as part of local, state, provincial, or national policy.

### STEP 1: Determine existing assumptions related to Standards for Professional Learning.

For example, which of the following assumptions best fits the most common views about the role of Standards for Professional Learning in policy?

- a. Adopting standards into policy at the state or ministry level sets the context for implementation and supports results.
- b. Good practice is more important than policy about professional learning.
- c. The more people who know the standards, the better professional learning will be.
- d. In order to move the standards into state/provincial policy, school systems must first adopt the standards into local policy.
- e. Local school system policy has greater leverage than state/provincial policy when it comes to professional learning.

*Generate your own assumptions about standards and policy.*

### STEP 2: Determine your individual or organization’s goals related to Standards for Professional Learning.

Goals might include:

- a. Adopt the standards into state/provincial/national policy, regulation, administrative guidelines, etc.
- b. Adopt the standards into local school system policy, regulation, administrative guidelines, etc.
- c. Establish the standards as criteria for funding for professional learning, i.e. Title II, Title I, ASCI, etc.
- d. Implement a knowledge campaign.
- e. Establish awards for schools and/or districts exhibiting the standards in practice.
- f. Use the standards to evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning.

*Generate your own goals for standards.*

An expanded version of this tool is available at [www.learningforward.org](http://www.learningforward.org) and offers guidance to those entities that have adopted or adapted the previous versions as well as those that have not.

### STEP 3: When goals are established, create an action plan with timeline, assignments, indicators of success, and evaluation plan for professional learning.

### STEP 4: Monitor progress and adjust.

### STEP 5: Report publicly to other education leaders about progress toward achieving the identified goals.

# LEARNING DESIGNS

Study, learn, design;  
repeat as necessary

By Bruce R. Joyce and Emily F. Calhoun



**D**esigners reside mostly in school districts and schools and can have primary assignments of all sorts. In many districts, central office personnel are most visible on design committees, but teachers, principals, and superintendents are included. Members of professional learning communities can design their own processes, and individual teachers can, too. States do also. National organizations and commercial companies are increasingly designing distance courses (Ross, 2011).

Learning Forward asked us to write about design referring to the new Standards for Professional Learning and drawing on research. We needed to synthesize a considerable quantity of research, opinion, and experience into a few principles of design that will have practical applications.

We organized this essay around a scenario that begins

when a group of promising professional development providers from several school districts in a small state organize themselves to study design. They want to learn to build and implement programs for the districts that employ them. Let's call them the professional development design team.

Such groups have existed. Just in our own work with our primary colleagues, we organize teams whose members study design and make decisions and implement them, becoming providers in the process. Those teams are made up of teachers, principals, central office personnel, and superintendents and their deputies. Some groups have been intact for many years, helping each other to study and improve design (Joyce & Calhoun, 2010, pp.84-94).

The scenario moves through phases as our design team members experience the professional development that enables *them* to learn how to build effective and positive components of staff development. The program for the de-



Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

sign team is built from an inquiry perspective. Members are asked to test ideas, including standards. For example, if a standard recommends a given procedure, the design team will examine the literature behind it. The scenario works its way through three overlapping phases.

#### **PHASE ONE: Study the learning capacity of people, educators, and students.**

The first element of design is a stance toward learning capacity. How educators think about learning capacity will hugely influence the kinds of learning experiences they are likely to design.

Our design team looks at research on the general human capacity to learn and on conceptual flexibility (Joyce & Calhoun, 2010, in press). They will discover that the research on human learning leads to a positive view of the rich panoply of human abilities and the heroic efforts that have provided the knowledge that the present generations build on. Our team members will discover that people have considerable capacity to learn a vast variety of things. Humans have adapted and invented. They have mastered ideas and created new ones and have done so in all cultures. Several recent neuroscientific studies have been wonderfully affirming.

They will find that, in our culture, there are differences in integrative complexity (Hunt & Sullivan, 1974). That is, some folks hold on to ideas grimly while others welcome and integrate new information. As they think of the children being born today, they will note that virtually all these children can learn the culture and how to function in it,

and all will find a place if loved and educated. The average bear is a smart bear. The design team will test our belief that *teachers are wonderful learners. Nearly all can master just about any model of teaching that has been invented by other teachers and researchers, and do so to the extent that they can teach their students how to learn from those models and achieve their objectives.* If educators believe this thesis, they approach design from the perspective that teachers are intelligent, capable beings. If not, they can find themselves designing training for persons they consider second-class learners.

A second belief is that professional teachers have the capacity to adapt to and change circumstances, making things work for them. Our design team needs to study this question carefully, for there are educators who see teachers as rigid and resistant.

Finally, our team will examine a major hypothesis about student learning capacity. A decent place to begin is the reader-friendly but broad and well-grounded *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).

We believe that all students have considerable learning capacity. Our team will learn that to design effective curriculums, educators have to give up the belief that students' socioeconomic backgrounds are the determining factor in achievement and embrace the belief that curriculum and instruction are the major factors in school learning. People who think that kids are impaired create curriculums for the impaired with predictable consequences — they im-



# Schoolwide focus needs all, including parents

**By Shirnetha Stinson**

*As told to Valerie von Frank*

**A**s instructional facilitator and assistant principal, I worked with my principal to develop a vision of sustained, ongoing professional development. We had to change from a “spray-and-pray” model — spray it out there and pray the teachers go back in the classroom and implement it — to professional development on campus involving everyone in our school. Now, we purposefully plan and execute professional development. We have eliminated faculty meetings. If we meet, we meet for a learning purpose.

We have a school leadership team that includes representatives from each grade level, the special education department, and the special areas, as well as the assistant principal, and principal. The team meets six times throughout the year, beginning with a leadership planning meeting in the summer. We look at performance expectations using state standards, federal Adequate Yearly Progress goals, and at our trends across the school to decide which areas to focus on. From there, we select professional development needs that align with our

school improvement goals. We also get teacher input through a survey as an additional data point.

We have shifted our professional development to work more with one another. We have book studies based around student needs and teacher interests. I facilitate study groups in which we analyze the data and research instructional strategies. I work with teachers to develop their abilities to lead these

groups. We hire substitutes to allow us to do peer observations, co-teach, or observe model lessons, and then we have dialogue about what we observe and have consultants or coaches work with us to follow up. The district also offers daylong or half-day sessions that grade-level teams use in their studies.



**Stinson**

We periodically evaluate ourselves as a form of reflection, either individually or as a learning team. These are not performance evaluations. We use Innovation Configuration maps for teachers to decide at what level they are performing and to set goals for themselves.

We have a schoolwide focus. Everyone in the school, from paraprofessionals to office secretary to principal, takes part in professional learning around the topic. We also involve parents.

For example, we discovered students were struggling with figurative language and not understanding metaphors, similes, and idioms. Parents use idioms a lot in everyday language. So teachers would point out whenever a child used an idiom; we asked parents to explain the meaning of the idioms they used; and even the bus driver had students on the bus sharing idioms with him to see whether he knew what they meant. Sometimes it’s not all looking at data, but having everybody aware of the strategies that are in place.

Our teachers are really teaching as one unit, teaching our children what they need to know according to the standards and the learning goals we have.

**Shirnetha Stinson (sstinson@lcsd.k12.sc.us) is assistant principal of Clinton Elementary School in Lancaster, S.C. Valerie von Frank (valerievonfrank@aol.com) is an education writer and editor of Learning Forward’s books.**

### Clinton Elementary School

Lancaster, S.C.

Grades: **Pre-K-5**

Enrollment: **400**

Staff: **44**

Racial/ethnic mix:

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| White:                  | <b>4%</b>  |
| Black:                  | <b>95%</b> |
| Hispanic:               | <b>1%</b>  |
| Asian/Pacific Islander: | <b>0%</b>  |
| Native American:        | <b>0%</b>  |
| Other:                  | <b>0%</b>  |

Limited English proficient: **0%**

Free/reduced lunch: **99.5%**

Contact: **Shirnetha Stinson, assistant principal**

Email: **sstinson@lcsd.k12.sc.us**

pair them. As our team studies this issue, they will find many cases where schools generated outstanding achievement for students because the faculties believed their students were capable; whereas other faculties others regarded their students as hard to teach. Reality gradually matched the beliefs — schools where beliefs were positive generated high achievement, and low achievement occurred in schools with low expectations. A study by Harkreader and Weathersby (1998) that used data from *all* Georgia schools to build a sample found that some schools in the low socioeconomic bracket outranked many of those in the high socioeconomic bracket. Our team will examine the Iowa Association of School Boards (2007) study indicating that a positive ethos in both districts and schools was associated with the exceptional performance of schools in the low socioeconomic bracket. As Ron Edmonds said, “How many effective schools would you have to see ...,” referring to schools that refused to be defeated by the negative rhetoric about socioeconomic status (Edmonds, 1979, p. 22).

A part of giving up the student background thesis is recognizing that in schools populated by middle and high socioeconomic status students, an average of 20% of the students fail to learn to read and write adequately. Essentially, favorable socioeconomic status does not override poor curriculum.

Let’s summarize what our design team has learned in Phase One of its study:

- Teachers have fine learning capacity.
- Teachers have considerable flexibility — enough to understand their own individuality and modify professional development participation to help themselves have success.
- All students can learn, and the negative socioeconomic hypotheses are now passé. Socioeconomic status does not predict achievement — curriculum does.

These three affirmative theses are the foundations of design for professional development. Under the negative alternatives, teachers can be treated as mediocre and inflexible learners. Just as bad, the content of professional development will be muted if designers treat student learning as environmentally determined rather than as an outcome of professional function.

#### **PHASE TWO: How teachers learn new repertoire when they need to do so.**

Our design team now proceeds to study how teachers learn. They will find that the concept of repertoire is very important to how educators learn. Most teachers have good control over some teaching strategies and less control over others. For professional development design, the important consideration is how close the new content is to the developed repertoire of the teachers who are involved. Is it very close, a bit farther away,

or in new territory?

Here are some items the design team will find on its journey.

#### **A BIT OF NEW REPERTOIRE CLOSE TO THE RANGE OF DEVELOPED SKILLS**

Let’s imagine that a school faculty learns that having working in-class libraries gives students greater access and proximity to books, and that access has a positive effect on students learning to read (McGill-Franzen, Allington, Yokoi, & Brooks, 1999). So the faculty decides to obtain the resources to ensure that their classroom collections contain 400 to 600 books, and they do so without depleting their school library. Then, another facet of the McGill-Franzen et al. studies kicks in. Without some professional development, many teachers have difficulty getting new books into students’ hands on a regular basis. Some new repertoire is apparently required. However, only about 10 hours of professional development (say, five two-hour sessions) were needed to help teachers learn to use the collections productively. For this initiative that increases student learning in reading and writing, some training is needed, but only a little.

Our design team decides that it needs to learn whether initiatives by school faculties, professional learning communities, and districts ask for additions in repertoire that are just out of the range of the educators who are trying to learn to use them and therefore require a only a modest amount of professional development to achieve implementation.

#### **A LARGER NEED**

Another faculty decides to study student learning in reading using performance-based measures. They discover the Gray Oral Reading Test and the Gunning procedure for assessing levels of competence when students are beginning to learn to read: It is very useful up to about a high end of grade 2 level.

They obtain the manuals for the Gray Oral Reading Test and begin by administering it to a few students. They find that assigning the levels in it is not easy and that miscue analysis is a lot more complicated than they thought. The Gunning procedures require finding books that require a range of competencies from students. This is not as easy as expected.

They end up finding an experienced consultant from their intermediate service agency and spend about two hours per week with her for about 10 weeks, practicing all the while. Part of their time is face-to-face, and part is on Skype. They also make and share videos of assessments, both for discussion and learning for themselves and for potential resources for teaching others.

The movement toward performance measurement was just a little too far out of their repertoire and needed more help than faculty had anticipated.

**The content of professional development will be muted if designers treat student learning as environmentally determined rather than as an outcome of professional function.**

Again, our design team has discovered that they need to learn how to help clients (schools, professional learning communities, districts, individuals) assess whether an initiative requires knowledge and skills that are significantly outside the current repertoire of the majority of the staff.

### NEW REPERTOIRE

Now our design team approaches initiatives where most participants need to learn ways of teaching that are really new to them. When that happens, what kind of design do participants need?

Our designers turn to an example of a learning community that realizes that its students are not receiving a top level of instruction in writing. Members of the community find they have much to learn, including:

- How to assess competence in writing much more precisely than in the past;
- How to understand the nature of writing and how it develops;
- How to demonstrate writing — showing students aspects of composition;
- How to develop stimuli to elicit writing from students; and
- How to help students assess and improve their writing.

Learning to demonstrate writing is a key here, and is seriously new repertoire for most teachers (Joyce, Calhoun, Newlove, & Jutras, 2006).

As the design team looks at the literature, they will find that really new repertoire needs the following:

- The in-depth study of rationale of what is to be added to the repertoire.
- Demonstrations: They need to see many demonstrations.
- Practice: As they study rationale and observe demonstra-

tions, they need to build lessons together and practice them, alternating demonstrations and practice.

- Study of student response and learning: As the teachers practice, they learn to examine student behavior — what they understand and what they produce — by studying student writing samples. The formative study of student learning is extremely important when new practices are implemented. While teaching, teachers observe evidence of learning and then decide if instruction needs to change. Our design team begins to realize that it cannot offer professional development without mastering the content of the innovation. In this case, the team cannot teach others methods for teaching writing without mastering them first. Let's summarize what our team learned during Phase Two of its exploration:

- The design changes depending on whether the objective is close to familiar repertoire, is somewhat different repertoire, or is significantly new repertoire.
- For new repertoire, there may be other approaches that will work, but we know that teachers learn through studying rationale, analyzing demonstrations, practicing, and studying student response (Joyce & Calhoun, 2010). The study of student response is immediate and focuses on performance.
- The design team now knows something about how teachers learn new repertoire. They can judge whether the goal of the professional development involves learning things that fit more or less easily into the current developed repertoire and can adjust the complexity of the professional development process accordingly.
- A related bit of learning: Our design team learns that the first year of an initiative in professional development is critical.

During that first year, if there is a decent level of implementation but minimal effects on teacher repertoire, a decision needs to be made about whether to continue the initiative. The content or design may be weak. Energy for implementation may be weak. In most cases, it should be discontinued, because initiatives that have little effect in the first year usually have no better effects in subsequent years unless the content of the professional development is improved, the design is improved, or the energy for implementation increases. The hopeful belief that it takes several years to see if something works has not proven out in practice. The practical rule is if educators have good content and a good design that will get them good implementation, they will see the effects in year one. If not, they need to go back to the drawing boards and redesign content, process, or the organizational approach to implementation.

### PHASE THREE: Design in field contexts.

Our team needs to work with projects in schools and districts as team members continue their studies. Sometimes they will be asked to design projects and sometimes asked to see if they can improve existing ones.

### NEW COMPONENT

A new component of professional learning is being generated by the need to integrate information and communication technologies into core curriculum areas of the school. While many teachers are reaching out to the web and using the library resources being developed, the core curriculum areas need to be redeveloped into what my colleagues and I call *hybrid* courses (the term *blending* is often used), where the familiar campus course is augmented by technology resources. Components of distance courses can also be integrated into campus courses and curriculum areas from kindergarten through grade 12. The teachers who take this on will need support through serious professional development. Professional development to help them to learn to generate online components for their courses is currently available, often online itself. We should soon enter a new era of research on how to design the online and offline professional development on integrating this technology into core areas.

### AN ENTRY-LEVEL PROJECT

One district asks the design team to initiate a better program for assessing competence in reading.

The team needs to learn what the district has been using, who administers the tests, who analyzes the results, and what are the findings. The team finds that the district has been trying to use norm-referenced tests to measure growth and that its analysis is very hard to follow. The team recommends that the district learn to use tests of performance and to interpret the results. The design team needs to organize a district assessment team, prepare the assessment team to use the Grey and Gunning procedures as mentioned above (or similar performance-measuring tools), and shepherd the assessment team through the process of testing, analyzing, and interpreting. The district is then positioned to make an initiative. Note that the design team prepares a cadre. The design team or other consultants can provide professional development to the cadre, but without in-district providers, the district would be dependent on external help.

### A MORE COMPLEX PROJECT

Another district asks the design team to assess its K-2 literacy coach program and see if the design team can improve it. Generally, the K-2 achievement in literacy is modest.

As in every case, the design team needs to get a picture of the program design, its administration, professional development that has been provided, and degrees of implementation. The design team needs to obtain opinions by personnel in all roles about the program's impact and success and estimates of the skills possessed by the current coaches (e.g their repertoire). They also need to assess the literacy-teaching repertoire of a sample of the K-2 teachers.

The design team soon learns why it was asked in. The team finds that coaches were selected from volunteers whose competence was attested to by the opinion of their principals. These volunteers were then relieved from classroom duties and assigned as coaches in schools other than their own. They were asked to introduce themselves to the principal and the faculty and to begin a process of finding teachers who might want their services. Few did, and the coaches occupied themselves with those friendly faces.

The study of repertoire proved to be most telling. Our design team concluded that the coaches and grade 1-2 teachers generally teach reading and writing very similarly. Thus, the coaching program would generally duplicate the teaching processes in schools where many students are not learning to read and write capably. None of the coaches were kindergarten teachers, and they had to study the kindergarten classes to get some idea about what was going on while knowing that they were probably not going to be in a position to help.

Our design team decided not to address problems stemming from poor administrative processes, but to recommend to the

district that it consider developing a renovated K-2 curriculum, one with a good chance of improving student learning, and then determining the degree that it would require serious new learning by the staff, followed up by designing the professional development to achieve it. Essentially, coaches from failing schools had been sent to other failing schools with a terrible administrative interface but with little to teach. However, experiencing a new and successful curriculum will probably result in a new generation of coaches with much to teach.

### A YET MORE COMPLEX PROJECT

The regional Title I organizers ask our design team to see if the team can improve the Title I reading program. The organizers want the team to concentrate on several schools where they believe student learning is unusually low.

Our design team begins by studying student achievement and current instructional practice in the schools starting with 1st grade. They will interview the teachers and principals to try to get their perspective on the school, parents, and the picture of achievement. Because Title I schools have such heavy supplementary funding — about \$1,100 per qualifying student — they need to learn how that money is used.

Judging from district tests, the average achievement in one of the schools is awful — at the end of the year, 1st-grade scores approximate those normally achieved after three months of school. The design team's second school is similar to the first. It has six 1st-grade classrooms, three with virtually no achievement, three with respectable achievement, a faculty divided between those who think that low socioeconomic status is the major cause of low achievement and those who think that curriculum plays the major role.

After just their 1st-grade experience, our design team knows that designing professional development at this stage is not a worthwhile activity. The Title I organizers need to develop a team of their own to focus on general school improvement. The school cultures have to be changed, learning communities organized, and leadership needs to be renovated seriously. When the district has made progress on these fronts, it can turn to the design team again, if it chooses. This is an optimal time to redo the budget, including providing laptops for all students, interactive boards for all classrooms, and professional development for all teachers.

Let's summarize what our team members are learning from their Phase Three field experiences:

**The practical rule is if educators have good content and a good design that will get them good implementation, they will see the effects in year one. If not, they need to go back to the drawing boards and redesign content, process, or the organizational approach to implementation.**

*Continued on p. 69*

# IMPLEMENTATION

Learning builds the bridge  
between research and practice

By Gene E. Hall and Shirley M. Hord



**O**ne indisputable finding from our years of research on what it takes to conduct successful change in schools and colleges is this: Introducing new practices alone seldom results in new practices being incorporated into ongoing classroom practices.

For example, we were dismayed at the recent release of two substantive studies of professional development (to support school improvement in mathematics and reading) that concluded that the professional development in each case was ineffective (Drummond et al., 2011; Randel et al., 2011). However, in both studies, the researchers did not assess implementation. It is hard to imagine how professional development can be judged if its implementation has not been documented. Such work, it would seem, is “the appraisal of a nonevent” (Charters & Jones, 1973).

We are happy to join with Learning Forward in recognizing the imperative of implementation. The Implementation standard states: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

## **ASSURING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

It has only been in the last decade that we have come to understand the reality that change is based on learning. The profession, the press, and the public cry for school improvement, in order that all students learn to high levels. For school improvement to be realized, the first task is to identify and delete those programs and practices that are not supporting students in learning well. The next step is to find the best solution having the potential to promote quality teaching and successful student learning. After specify-



Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students **applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.**

ing the new practice(s), teachers and administrators must learn what the new practices are and how to use them, and transfer the new way into classroom practice. See diagram on p. 55.

“Change is learning. It’s as simple and complex as that.” This is the first principle in our beliefs and assumptions about change (Hall & Hord, 2011, p. 6). Change cannot occur without professional learning. When educators adopt new and more effective practices, the next step is to develop new understandings and acquire new skills. These new practices, in turn, enable students to reach high levels of successful learning. The seven Standards for Professional Learning are intended make high-quality professional learning a reality.

#### **APPLYING CHANGE PROCESS RESEARCH**

Within the Implementation standard is the explicit acknowledgement that findings from change research, including its constructs and measures, can inform efforts to implement the standards. The explicit purpose of the Implementation standard is to ensure that educators address implementation and apply evidence-based strategies. Change research constructs and measures can be used to develop implementation strategies and assess progress.

In many ways, today’s innovations and initiatives represent major change. These changes are complex, subtle, and more sophisticated than we think. Symbolically, it is as if implementers were expected to back up, get a running start, and leap across the Grand Canyon. What is needed is an

Implementation Bridge (Hall, 1999; Hall & Hord, 2011). See diagram on p. 57.

As with real bridges, different change efforts require varying lengths, degrees of stability, and combinations of supports. It takes time to move across a bridge. By assessing how far across the bridge each participant, group, and school has progressed, formative evaluations can inform change leaders of participants’ needs. Formative evaluations are important for assessing progress. Summative evaluations, which assess the effectiveness of the innovation, should only include those participants who have made it all the way across the bridge.

When change is assumed to be an event, there is no bridge. Implicitly, adopters of the new approach are expected to make a giant leap across a chasm. With today’s complex innovations, the chasms are likely to be deep and wide. Attempting to jump across these chasms is most likely to result in injury and failure. This is true for individuals, schools, school districts, and larger systems.

The diagram on p. 57 presents the Implementation Bridge, a metaphor for moving from the earlier or less advanced stages to the later or more advanced stages of the three diagnostic dimensions of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM): Stages of Concern, Levels of Use, and Innovation Configurations. Each of these CBAM elements is an evidence-based construct with related measuring tools that can be used to assess how far across the bridge each individual, school and/or district has progressed. Each can be used alone or in various combinations to measure imple-

# The key to progress is to stay focused

By **Raymond Aguilera and Olivia Zepeda**

*As told to Valerie von Frank*

Our district is committed to supporting teachers with ongoing professional development to enable them to become more effective in the classroom. We provide early release time on Wednesdays to enable teachers to meet in learning teams, but the power is in the classroom in job-embedded learning because the classroom is where we can identify teachers' needs and give teachers assistance during instruction.

We monitor instruction closely and analyze data. We give districtwide benchmark assessments four times a year, along with weekly formative

assessments. As we monitor data, we have immediate intervention if we do not see student growth. Every year, we get better. With assistance from SEDL, we use the Concerns-Based Adoption Model to determine how well teachers are implementing new practices in teaching reading and writing.

Consultants and administrators meet monthly to discuss teachers' levels of use of the new practices. This approach helps us to differentiate professional development. After they determine teachers' levels

of use, we create individualized plans for teachers' learning. Consultants and coaches work with teachers in their classrooms, providing feedback, coaching, and modeling lessons.

At our annual data summit, about 100 teachers and administrators reviewed and analyzed student achievement data and developed formal plans for

achieving academic goals. We provide three days before the beginning of the school year for teachers



**Aguilera**



**Zepeda**

to attend district professional development based on individualized plans. The professional learning is supported in a variety of ways, from having a master teacher go into a classroom to help the teacher with materials to having master teachers model lessons.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children has accredited San Luis Preschool and created a video showing the school as a model for the nation. The district has worked hard to demonstrate how preschool teachers can incorporate a research-based curriculum into a play-based philosophy while taking into account factors such as English language learners and children with special needs.

One of our primary areas of focus has been English language learning. We are proud that, over the last two years, more than 1,800 students learning English were reclassified as English-fluent. Over the last 10 years, the percentage of ELL students has decreased in the district from 99% to 50% of our student body. The keys to our progress are job-embedded professional development and our focus. It's critical to stay focused on a few initiatives. The district administration's role is to provide stability.

**Raymond Aguilera ([agui2400@yahoo.com](mailto:agui2400@yahoo.com)) is superintendent and Olivia Zepeda ([ozepeda@gesd32.org](mailto:ozepeda@gesd32.org)) is assistant superintendent of Gadsden Elementary School District #32 in San Luis, Ariz. Valerie von Frank ([valerievonfrank@aol.com](mailto:valerievonfrank@aol.com)) is an education writer and editor of *Learning Forward's* books.**

## Gadsden Elementary School District #32

San Luis, Ariz.

Number of schools: **9**

Enrollment: **5,000**

Staff: **260**

Racial/ethnic mix:

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| White:                  | <b>0%</b>  |
| Black:                  | <b>0%</b>  |
| Hispanic:               | <b>99%</b> |
| Asian/Pacific Islander: | <b>0%</b>  |
| Native American:        | <b>0%</b>  |
| Other:                  | <b>1%</b>  |

Limited English proficient: **50%**

Free/reduced lunch: **97%**

Contact: **Raymond Aguilera, superintendent**

Email: **[agui2400@yahoo.com](mailto:agui2400@yahoo.com)**

## THE PATH TO IMPROVEMENT

School Improvement

Change

Learning

mentation progress and as diagnostic information for planning next action steps to facilitate moving further across the bridge. Each also is important in summative evaluations. These three tools, individually and collectively, can be applied to implementation of the Standards for Professional Learning.

The following are brief descriptions of each of these diagnostic dimensions. More can be learned through the study of key texts (Hall & Hord, 2011), various technical documents, and related training resources.

**Stages of Concern** addresses the personal/affective aspects of change. There is an array of feelings, perceptions, worries, preoccupations and moments of satisfaction for those engaged with implementing new approaches. This personal side of change is important to understand because failing to address concerns can lead to resistance and even rejection of the new way. A set of categories, or “stages,” of concern has been identified. As a change process unfolds, these different Stages of Concern can increase and decrease in intensity.

At the very beginning of a change, most participants will be **unconcerned**. Their attention will be on getting through the school year and planning for summer. These participants are not on the bridge. They may be aware that they are approaching a bridge — “I heard something about some sort of new standards, but I am really concerned about . . .” — but it is not something that needs to be thought about currently. However, the change process leaders should be doing things to address this concerns stage — for example, providing general information about what will be happening.

As participants begin to step out on to the Implementation Bridge, **self** concerns become more intense. “What do these new standards mean for me?” This, too, is a time when more

information should be provided. It also is important to be reassuring: “You can do this. We are here to support you.”

As implementers move fully onto the bridge, **task** concerns become most intense: “I am spending all my time organizing materials and trying to schedule everything.” These concerns should be anticipated and addressed in the implementation plan. How-to supports, including coaching and timeline projections, should reflect the understanding that these concerns can last several years.

When implementers make it across the bridge, **self** and **task** concerns should decrease while **impact** concerns should increase. “I am seeing how my use of the these standards is making a big difference in the knowledge and skills of teachers and school leaders. You can now see the results in what students are doing.” How leaders address the potential arousal of impact concerns can make all the difference in ultimate implementation success and effectiveness.

There are two other CBAM constructs and measures that can be applied with the Implementation Bridge metaphor.

**Innovation Configurations (IC)** address the well-documented fact that each implementer does not necessarily use the same operational form of the change. Those involved may say they are using “it,” but what is in operation within each classroom and school can be significantly different. In our first study of this phenomenon, teachers in different states claimed that they were team teaching. But the configurations of teaming were quite different. The number of teachers (two to six), the

**When implementers make it across the bridge, self and task concerns should decrease while impact concerns should increase.**



grouping of students (fixed, heterogeneous, homogenous), and what teachers taught (all subjects, one subject) were components that varied. Each combination of these variations results in a different Innovation Configuration — what the innovation looks like in practice — with different teachers and in different schools.

In recent years researchers have become very interested in fidelity of implementation. Innovation Configurations is a way to describe and contrast different implemented forms of an innovation. With the Implementation Bridge metaphor, there should be increasing fidelity in terms of Innovation Configurations as implementers move further across.

**Levels of Use** is the third construct from change research to consider. Traditional research and program evaluation designs assume a dichotomous population: treatment group and control group, or users and nonusers. Levels of Use describes a set of behavioral profiles that distinguish different approaches to using an innovation. Three different nonuser profiles have been described and five different user profiles. Each of these has been defined in terms of behaviors and each has implications for how to facilitate change and for evaluating change success and effectiveness.

For example, educators at **Level 0 Non-use** are not doing anything related to the change, in this case the new professional learning standards. They don't talk about it, they don't check it out on the web, and they do not attend an introductory meeting. This behavioral profile is different from the person at **Level I Orientation**, who asks questions, attends the introductory meeting, and considers use of the innovation. Both of these levels represent people who are not using the change. However, in terms of facilitating a change process, the interventions that should be emphasized for each are quite different.

Among the Levels of Use, one that is particularly important is **Level III Mechanical Use**. This is an approach where the

implementer is disjointed in what he or she is doing. Implementers at this level continually check back to the user manual, their scheduling is inefficient, they can't plan beyond tomorrow, or anticipate what will happen next week. We know from research that most first-time implementers will be at Level III Mechanical Use. We also know that many will continue to be at this level through the first two or three years of implementation. If the inefficiencies of Level III use are not addressed, then the Implementation Bridge can become very long, and some

**Providing feedback about how the change process is unfolding is important. Each of the CBAM diagnostic dimensions described here can be used to measure how far across the Implementation Bridge each teacher, school, or district has progressed. The same constructs and data should be used as feedback to leaders and implementers. These data can be used to plan next steps.**

implementers will jump off.

There are many implications of Level III Mechanical Use. One that will be particularly important with the new standards is deciding when and with whom summative evaluation studies should be conducted. Change research has clearly documented that most first-time users will be at Level III Mechanical Use. These are not the implementers who should be included in a summative evaluation study. They are inefficient and have not reached full understanding of how to use the new way. Summative evaluation samples should be comprised of implementers who have made it across the bridge. They have established routines and can predict what will happen next. This behavioral profile is **Level IV-A Routine**. When summative evaluations include many first-time users, it is not surprising that there are no significant differences in outputs.

#### PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Another key theme in the Implementation standard is providing constructive feedback. Providing feedback about how the change process is unfolding is important. Each of the CBAM diagnostic dimensions described here can be used to measure how far across the Implementation Bridge each teacher, school, or district has progressed. The same constructs and data should be used as feedback to leaders and implementers. These data can be used to plan next steps for making further implementation progress. These data also can be used in reports about implementation progress. In addition, these same data can be used in summative evaluations that relate the extent of implementation to outcomes.

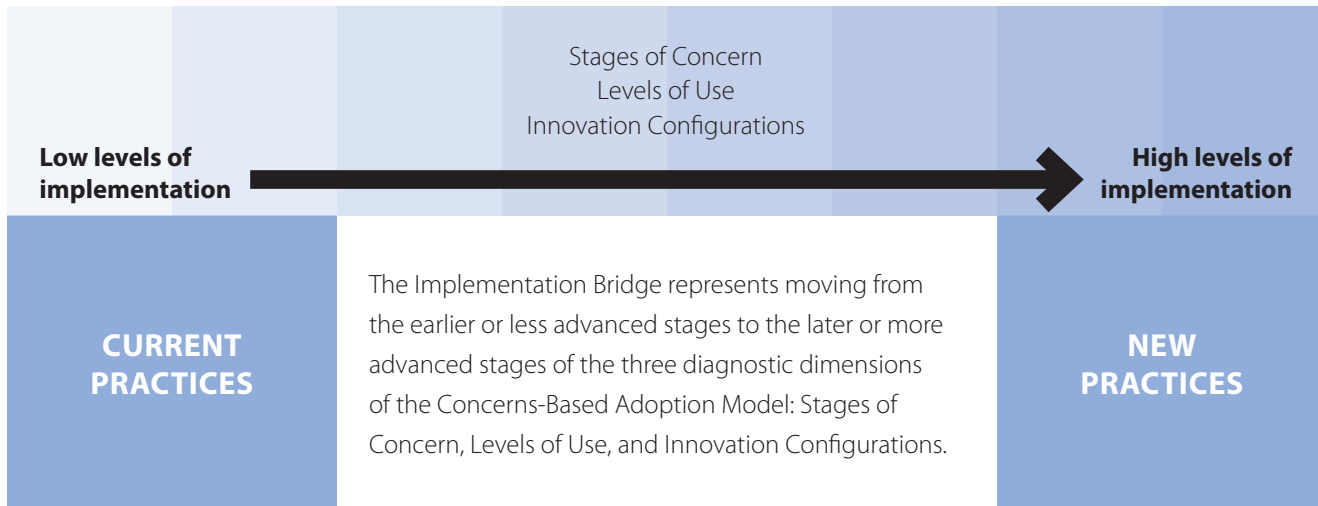
Assessing implementation at regular intervals and providing feedback to all participants are important keys to implementation success.

#### SUSTAINING CHANGE BEYOND IMPLEMENTATION

We know a lot through research, practice, and theory about how to launch a change process, facilitate movement across an Implementation Bridge, and assess implementation progress and evaluate innovations. What we know less about are the essential elements and processes that are necessary to sustain long-term use of an innovation. Getting across the bridge is necessary, but what are the processes and structures that assure

**We know a lot through research, practice, and theory about how to launch a change process, facilitate movement across an Implementation Bridge, and assess implementation progress and evaluate innovations. What we know less about are the essential elements and processes that are necessary to sustain long-term use of an innovation.**

## IMPLEMENTATION BRIDGE



continuing use of high-fidelity configurations, in this case, of the standards? How do we prevent abandonment? Addressing the sustainability challenges of the latest standards will need special attention.

One indicator of sustainability will be when the implemented Standards for Professional Learning have a line item in the school or district budget. Another will be when it becomes regular practice for new staff to have access to learning and development. Still another important indicator will be that the process and criteria for succession of principals and relevant staff at the district office includes evidence of their understanding and interest in supporting professional learning through the standards. Above all, school and district leadership will provide continuous attention and direct the attention of others to the standards' value. These leaders become the internal and external champions for sustaining the standards and a continued focus on professional learning.

Supporting and celebrating the standards and their practices are keys to the standards' robust sustainability and the capacity to contribute richly to the ultimate goal — student learning success.

We see this standard as uniquely significant in that the standards revision architects explicitly identified the importance of addressing implementation. A strength of the Implementation standard is its reference to change process research that can be applied to assessing and guiding the implementation of professional learning. Understanding that change begins with the learning of educational professionals is crucial. Only through increasing adult learning will we increase student learning.

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# OUTCOMES

Coaching, teaching standards, and feedback mark the teacher's road to mastery

By Jon Saphier



**W**hat would happen if we found agreement around the world on what constitutes high-expertise teaching? For one thing, there would be a set of standards universally embraced that clearly defines core agreements about good teaching and learning. It would be obvious that proficiency in the knowledge, skills, and practices that comprise good teaching would be the highest-leverage path to increasing student achievement. Teacher preparation and subsequent professional development for all teachers everywhere would be based on the standards. Every effort would be made to assure that expert practices show up consistently in every classroom — from widely available classroom coaching on these practices to policies that reflect our public will to focus on expertise. Consider this: That

## TEACHER

scenario is not a distant fantasy; it is fast approaching if we look around the globe.

### THE UNIVERSALS OF SUCCESSFUL TEACHING

True professions are grounded in a common knowledge base that all practitioners must study and in which they must show a certain level of proficiency to be licensed. This is true in architecture, law, and engineering. Visit the university libraries of schools for these professions, and you will see common organization of topics; common courses populate the curriculum. In the various state licensing boards are similar assessments. On the other hand, visit teacher preparation programs around the country and professional development academies in large districts and in regional collaboratives, and you will see vast variety and little consistency. It's time for a change, and the coalescing international teaching standards can provide it. There is nothing wrong



Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

with focusing on local needs, but the common ground for professional development should be the universal building blocks — those high-leverage essentials — that we know impact student learning. This is the path to creating a true profession and elevating the instruction children receive.

Feedback, properly understood, is one of these building blocks, its potent impact on student learning well-documented (Hattie, 2009; Saphier, Haley-Speca, & Gower, 2008; Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2009). The significance of this standard becomes apparent when one examines the actual teacher behavior associated with effective feedback. In order to give students feedback that meets the careful standards defined by Wiggins (2010) and others, the criteria for success need to be crystal clear to both the teacher and the students. Thus “feedback,” properly done, includes a cluster of other important and necessary teacher skills: formulating clear and rigorous objectives; defining and communicating criteria for success; and providing frequent feedback that is value-neutral, helpful, and useful for students to act upon. Feedback becomes the center of a group of skills that balance and complement one another.

Making students’ thinking visible is another group of skills that produces a high degree of student talk both with the teacher and one’s fellow students, about the content, and at a high level of thinking (Collins, Holum, & Brown, 1991; Perkins, 2006; Saphier et al., 2008). Proceeding from Vygotsky’s insights about the social nature of learning (Vygotsky, 1986), these skills make students active thinkers about the content; the teacher gets a constant reading

on who understands and who doesn’t. In turn, students are required to become good listeners to one another and be active processors of information. In addition, the successful implementation of these skills has a direct positive effect on the climate of risk taking and mutual support among students.

It is no wonder that the last two decades of research of these skills have elevated their status. For example, 21st-century research on successful instruction in mathematics (Lampert, 2001; Chapin, O’Connor, & Anderson, 2003; Fuson, Kaichman, & Bransford, 2005) and in literacy (Allington, 2011) supports the potency of making thinking visible. In the 1990s, New York City’s District 2 became the highest-performing district in the city by emphasizing these skills for all teachers in all subjects.

Making students’ thinking visible and feedback are two examples of high-leverage universals that occur in teaching standards around the world. Like the other building blocks that are emerging as worldwide standards, these skill sets come to life when we share images of what they look and sound like in action. See specific looks and sounds for making students’ thinking visible at [www.learningforward.org/news/jsd](http://www.learningforward.org/news/jsd). Unfortunately, important professional development topics such as these rank low on professional development agenda.

#### TEACHER STUDENT LEADER

Because the Outcomes standard refers to numerous aspects of performance standards for educators and content standards for students, we explore multiple perspectives in the following pages.

# Framework provides a road map for teachers

**By DeNelle West**

*As told to Valerie von Frank*

**G**winnett County is helping new teachers learn what it means to be professional educators. We use Charlotte Danielson’s framework for teaching to be able to define outcomes for new teachers and to link together the district’s mentoring, coaching, and professional development processes in a way that helps teachers, especially new teachers, become more thoughtful practitioners.

We begin with an orientation, where we discuss culture, our formal evaluation process, and the content curriculum. To address specific teachers’ learning needs, we do a needs

assessment. We ask what they want — lesson study, courses, a mentor. We also do an anonymous survey to find out where they feel they need more support. We then design professional development around the framework.

The components of the framework are classroom environment, planning and preparation, instruction, and professional responsibilities. New teachers have opportunities for 50 hours of courses to explore these areas. Each area includes four to five components that help teachers understand best

practice.

We model for teachers the application of the content in these areas so they can plan how to use a strategy in the classroom. We then offer classroom coaching support for follow-up.

Beginning teachers ready for deeper exploration, for inquiry and to work collaboratively, work in lesson

study. This approach blends content and pedagogy, and challenges teachers to think about how students learn and how they can improve their teaching.

We also help experienced teachers become mentors. To prepare mentors to work with beginning teachers, we provide



**West**

a higher level of the same content to allow veterans to reflect on their own practices and identify areas from the framework

where they, too, may need additional support. We then show them how to mentor a teacher, what good mentoring would look like in the classroom, and how to identify what support a new teacher might need.

The district has four staff development coaches and numerous curriculum area coaches. To prepare coaches to work with beginning teachers, we have a program built on Learning Forward’s standards and Innovation Configurations.

We align all staff development to make sure we have consistency in expectations for teacher performance. By aligning everything we do with the framework, our school system clearly communicates how staff development can help teachers to continually grow as professionals.

When we think of teacher outcomes in terms of professional development, we think of what change we want to achieve — a change in teacher knowledge, change in teacher practice, a change or impact on student achievement. Having a framework guides our work. It gives us a road map for where we’re heading.

**DeNelle West is coordinator of teacher development for Gwinnett County (Ga.) Public Schools. Valerie von Frank (valerievonfrank@aol.com) is an education writer and editor of Learning Forward’s books.**

## TEACHER

### Gwinnett County Public Schools

Gwinnett County, Ga.

Number of schools: **132**

Enrollment: **162,459**

Staff: **20,433**

Racial/ethnic mix:

White: **31.6%**

Black: **28.9%**

Hispanic: **25.0%**

Asian/Pacific Islander: **10.4%**

Native American: **0.4%**

Other: **3.8%**

Limited English proficient: **7%**

Free/reduced lunch: **52.4%**

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**coordinator of teacher development**

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**k12.ga.us**

## TEACHING AND LEARNING ACADEMIES

To realize the promise of a commonly agreed-upon set of standards for successful teaching, professional development must maintain a relentless and ongoing focus on the highest-leverage teaching skills. These skills need to be properly expanded into clear exemplars that educators can understand at the concrete level and tied to performance assessments, just as we do for students in the curriculum standards movement. The foundation of professional development, then, will move away from being reactive to individual teacher evaluation prescriptions or exclusively driven by local needs assessments and move toward a unifying vision of high-expertise practice. This shift is essential to making teaching a true profession.

The knowledge and skills for high-level professional practice in teaching needs to be available for all practitioners throughout their careers with appropriate components offered at timely junctures in one's path. Ideally, this would mean a teaching and learning academy with permanent offerings and in-class follow-up for the essential categories of professional knowledge and skills. See the box at right for potential categories.

Only large districts could hope to create such academies, but regional collaboratives could also do so, especially with federal and state support.

High-leverage essentials of good teaching and learning, however, are professional development topics that should be alive in every district every year, and not just offered periodically or at local initiative. See those essentials at [www.learningforward.org/news/jsd](http://www.learningforward.org/news/jsd).

## COACHING AND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers (2002) proved three decades ago that workshop-based professional development, no matter how well designed and delivered, had little effect on classroom practice. They also found that this outcome could be changed dramatically if participants actively practiced new skills in the workshops and then were given feedback and coaching on-site in their classrooms on the application of the skills. My argument for performance assessment of professional development is really a call to translate that powerful finding into the design of all professional development. If we are giving our teachers learning experiences in what are now emerging as universal standards for successful teaching, we must make sure the practices show up in action.

### More at [www.learningforward.org/news/jsd](http://www.learningforward.org/news/jsd)

- Specific looks and sounds for making students' thinking visible.
- High-leverage essentials of good teaching and learning.

The emerging consensus of teaching standards creates a case too powerful to ignore: We must not only enable all teachers to receive professional development in the building blocks of successful teaching and learning, we must support them with coaching and assess their individual capacity to use the skills properly after the training. The implications for us as professional developers of adults is the same as for teachers of children: Develop performance tasks for teachers on skills we are teaching; identify benchmarks of progress toward final proficiency; and give ongoing feedback to participants on their progress to mastery.

The formula above has been difficult to implement in traditional professional development of the past. Two 21st-century approaches, however, now make it feasible to ask participants learning new skills to practice them and get feedback: embedded coaching structures and technology.

In districts such as Montgomery County, Md., my consulting group Research for Better Teaching works through building-based instructional coaches. These carefully chosen professionals teach frequent building-based modules and study group sessions on core teaching skills. They are then available to give in-class feedback to teachers. Having a common agreement across the county for what their teaching standards look like and sound like in action has enabled them to give objective feedback in building-based settings. The county's Center for Skillful Teaching functions like an in-house academy that offers professional development every year in these core standards and provides continuity of focus (continuously since 2000) on the building blocks in their standards. The payoffs in student achievement have been significant, as documented by Childress, Doyle, & Thomas (2009).

Video technology, ever more portable and accessible, makes it possible for teachers to video their experiments with new instructional strategies without another person in the room. This technology is applied in a number of districts for self-analysis and self-reflection. It also can enhance face-to-face professional development sessions when professional developers or coaches review classroom video and provide feedback to teachers online. With central district video servers, this feedback can be provided remotely and securely.

None of these changes is without its challenges. Principals and coaches must develop solid partnerships to strengthen the

### At the teaching and learning academy

Here are potential categories of knowledge and skills for a comprehensive teaching and learning academy:

- Content
- Content analysis
- Content specific pedagogy
- Classroom management
- Cultural proficiency.
- Motivation
- Instruction
- Planning and curriculum
- Data analysis
- Relations with parents and community

adult professional culture of nondefensive examination of practice (Saphier & West, 2009). School boards must be convinced to support coaching positions with long-term commitments. Districts have to invest in equipment and professional development for their principals, professional developers, and coaches, so they become expert analysts of instruction in addition to learning coaching skills. But this we can do now, especially if we can surmount the final and most significant obstacle: the political will.

### THE REST OF THE JOB

On the whole, American policymakers do not understand that the knowledge and skills required for successful teaching, especially for children of poverty, is as large and complex as that for high-level practice in law, architecture or engineering. Our populace, our voters, our legislators, and even our most influential policymakers believe anyone can teach successfully if they are smart, literate, and know content. And if they are idealistic and motivated, then they will be more than competent; they will be stars. By all means, let's get smart, motivated people

who know their content into teaching. But let's finish the job as our competitors do so thoroughly in Singapore, Finland, and South Korea by giving them the expertise they need to use their intelligence and actualize their commitment.

Recently, policymakers' attention has been focused on teacher evaluation as a result of several recent reports, such as *The Widget Effect* (Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern,

& Keeling, 2009, which show that school district evaluation systems, with notable exceptions, are woefully inadequate. Missing from the table, however, is the understanding that teacher evaluation alone does not develop high-expertise teachers. Such development comes from embedding the standards in the other processes that impact teaching expertise: preparation and licensing; hiring; induction for new teachers; contact with peers during properly structured collaborative work; adult professional culture in the workplace; and access to high-quality sustained professional development, including coaching, in the highest-leverage teaching skills.

This country is committed to student learning standards. We are committed to assessing student progress in relation to those standards. We are committed to accountability. But until we become committed to developing high-expertise teaching and are fully mindful of its complexity, we will continue to fall short of the promise of democracy. That is the promise to provide all children, regardless of the circumstances of their birth, with a fair chance at a good life.

Generating that commitment requires organizations such as Learning Forward to educate the public and legislators about the complexity of good teaching. High-expertise teaching is not easily won.

Missing from the table is the understanding that teacher evaluation alone does not develop high-expertise teachers.

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# OUTCOMES

## Content-focused learning improves teacher practice and student results

By Laura Desimone

**C**ontent focus and coherence are fundamental to professional development that helps teachers boost student learning. Learning Forward's Outcomes standard emphasizes that teacher learning should be focused on subject-matter content and how students learn that content, and consistent with the individual, school, and district factors that shape teachers' work lives. Several key scholars have helped shape our understanding of content focus and coherence and provided evidence to support their significance.

### CONTENT FOCUS

Lee Shulman (1987) helped initiate the discussion of focusing on content and how students learn content. He highlighted what some researchers call pedagogical content knowledge — the specialized knowledge teachers need to effectively convey content to students, such as the knowledge to select appropriate models to illustrate new concepts, as well as knowledge of learners and their characteristics. He distinguished pedagogical content knowledge from expert knowledge of a particular content area, such as expertise in the axioms, formulas, and ideas of mathematics. Moreover, he said we must distinguish content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge from general pedagogical knowledge, which is knowledge about class-

room management and organization across content areas. Shulman convincingly argued that, to teach successfully, teachers must have a deep and meaningful understanding of the content they teach, as well as how students learn that content, including common misunderstandings.

In the context of mathematics, David Cohen (1990) offers a potent illustration of what can happen when professional development does not foster a deep understanding of content and how students learn content. Cohen's seminal piece describes how one teacher, Mrs. Oublier, implemented a mathematics reform. It has been used for two decades to show that both content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are important in translating professional development into desired practice. Mrs. Oublier attended professional development that exposed her to an inquiry-oriented mathematics reform, which included using manipulatives to teach concepts and emphasized asking students to offer explanations to demonstrate their understanding of mathematical concepts. She was enthusiastic and committed to the reform. But, when an outside observer watched her class, he saw her teaching the curriculum in ways that reflected a poor understanding of the mathematics as well as a misunderstanding of the reform itself. For example, Mrs. Oublier thought students' math understanding would be boosted simply by touching the manipulatives. She did not have a fundamental understanding of how to use the

STUDENT



## 4 components critical to principal development

By Glenn Nolly

*As told to Valerie von Frank*

Through the University of Texas, Austin, we provide a 12-credit-hour block of courses that includes theory and an introduction to practice for future leaders based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards. The major portion of the coursework is a research study to analyze a school's data. We interview the principal, interview the teachers, and do a community walk. Their task is to develop a case study with recommendations for what that school's principal can do to make the school better. The apprentices then research best practices for their recommendations. The case study approach is an opportunity to talk about the principalship in its entirety so these future leaders can go into it knowing how to impact student achievement positively.

### LEADER

There are four important elements of any leadership development: instructional leadership, relationships, politics, and data analysis.

Instructional leadership is critical. The principal has to have enough knowledge about instruction to be able to put into place systems that support teachers as they do their work. It is impossible for a principal to be completely knowledgeable in the pedagogy of each content area. A good instructional leader realizes that teachers should have the opportunity to work together in like groups to discuss content and associated pedagogy.

Another component is understanding the importance relationships play in school environments and structures — the relationship of the principal with the community, teachers, students, and the relationship that teachers develop with students. We focus on how leaders can improve communication. We discuss issues of equity, diversity, acceptance.

Another thing principals should have an idea of is the political terrain and how to map it to accomplish changes in instructional strategies that

should occur. First, you have to understand there are political structures. For example, in the community we are studying, there are two extremes — an affluent community and a poorer community. We can't impose middle-class values and a middle-class power structure on the whole community. We have



Nolly

to understand the impact of policy on the lives of people. Navigating political structures can be taught by helping individuals recognize that they must understand who the political brokers are and have access. Leaders need to build relationships with those who can help them accomplish their goals.

A final component of leadership is knowing how to analyze data and what to do once you've figured out what the issue is. We must learn how to deeply analyze data to uncover issues of equity. The class does an equity audit and looks at what kinds of classes males and females have access to and admission to Advanced Placement classes. Invariably, we find that poor and minority students are disproportionately disciplined.

We are realizing that the principalship requires special preparation. Part of that should be in the field. Universities need to move away from complete theory to a blending of theory and practice. This program involves a full-year internship supported by individual coaching and monthly feedback in their cohort.

Principals need opportunities to work with other principals to discuss issues and to learn how to be instructional leaders, not only managers.

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manipulatives, how they might help student thinking, and how she could capitalize on using the manipulatives with her own teaching. This is an excellent example of the limits of professional development that focuses solely on pedagogical strategies such as example lesson plans or activities, rather than on teacher learning about the content of the lesson, how students learn, what is important about the ideas and how they are presented, how students can engage with the material, common misunderstandings of the content and how to address them, and how to connect concepts and representations.

In-depth case studies of teacher learning have expanded our ideas about how effective teaching is linked to teacher knowledge of content and how students learn that content (for example, Grossman, 1990; Leinhardt & Smith, 1985; Stein, Baxter, & Leinhardt, 1990). Using a nationally representative sample of teachers, Michael Garet and his colleagues (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001) conducted the first study that provides systematic, quantitative evidence that content focus in professional development works to improve teaching. They administered a national survey to more than a thousand teachers, drawn so that the sample was representative of most teachers in the U.S. (the sample covered about 90% of districts). The researchers found that teacher reports of increases in their teaching knowledge and skills and changes in classroom practice were significantly related to whether their professional development in math and science had focused on math or science content and how students learned that content. This study confirmed, in the case of math and science, that professional development should focus on subject-matter content. This combination of theoretical and empirical studies has given renewed emphasis to the profound importance of subject-matter focus in designing high-quality professional development.

## COHERENCE

Learning Forward's Outcomes standard also emphasizes that professional development should be coherent with factors that affect teachers' work. Professional development for teachers is frequently criticized on the grounds that the activities are disconnected from one another — in other words, individual activities do not form part of a coherent program of teacher learning and development. A professional development activity is more likely to be effective in improving teachers' knowledge and skills if it forms a coherent part of a wider set of opportunities for teacher learning and development.

Several dimensions of coherence are critical for effective professional development. One of these dimensions is the extent to which professional development builds on what teachers already know and is appropriate for their level of knowledge and skills. Professional development is less effective if it is targeted too low or too high, or if it doesn't build on ideas that teachers have already been exposed to. Thus districts and school leaders can play

a critical role by thinking about teacher learning opportunities comprehensively. Instead of providing an array of workshops on assorted topics that teachers choose, leaders can construct opportunities that build on one another and provide opportunities for learning that are adapted to individual teachers' needs.

A second critical dimension of coherence is that professional development content should be aligned with national, state, and local standards; assessments; curriculum; and other reforms. This type of alignment is a fundamental component of standards-based reform. Michael Smith and Jennifer O'Day (1991) argue that aligning policy instruments (for example, standards, assessments, curriculum) with teacher learning opportunities is a fundamental building block of successful reform. Teachers receive guidance about what to teach and how to teach it from multiple sources, such as material covered in formal professional development, textbooks, assessments, and state and local standards. If these varied sources share a coherent set of goals, they can help teachers improve teaching practice; if they conflict, they may create tensions that impede teachers from developing their teaching in a consistent direction (Grant, Peterson, & Shojgreen-Downer, 1996). One approach to making teacher professional development more coherent is to align professional development with state and district frameworks, standards, and assessments. This process can take a number of forms. For example, professional development can be chosen to reflect the topics emphasized in state and district standards. Professional development can also focus on the goals for student learning emphasized in state assessments or the pedagogical methods emphasized in state curriculum frameworks (Webb, 1997).

A third dimension of coherence is how professional development encourages and supports sustained professional communication among teachers who are working to reform their teaching in similar ways. An ongoing discussion among teachers who confront similar issues encourages them to share solutions to problems, and it reinforces the sense that improvement is possible. Several researchers have focused on how teacher interactions with one another affect their learning. Judith Warren Little (1993) shows how learning opportunities are embedded in teachers' daily lives. Embedded professional development, directly related to the work of teaching, can take the form of co-teaching, mentoring, reflecting on lessons, group discussions of student work, a book club, a teacher network, or a study group. By sharing methods, discussing written work, and reflecting on problems and solutions, teachers foster a better understanding of the goals for student learning that proposed changes in teaching imply. David Cohen, Milbrey McLaughlin, and Joan Talbert (1993) view professional development as a complex

**In-depth case studies of teacher learning have expanded our ideas about how effective teaching is linked to teacher knowledge of content and how students learn that content.**

array of interrelated learning opportunities, which can range from formal, structured seminars to informal hallway discussions with other teachers. Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle (1999) emphasize a broad-based view of teacher professional development, treating teacher learning as interactive and

**When teachers, in professional learning communities, can discuss new ideas with other teachers, practice them, receive feedback, share students' reactions, and brainstorm with other teachers, they much more successfully implement what they learn in professional development.**

social, based in discourse and community practice. Hilda Borko (2004) also helps us understand that formal or informal learning communities among teachers can act as powerful mechanisms for their growth and development. In the past decade, Ken Frank (Frank & Yasumoto, 1998) has shown how social networks and helping behaviors can translate what is learned in professional development to the classroom.

All of this suggests that teachers are more likely to change their practice when they experience professional development that builds effectively on their knowledge and skills, is aligned with other policies that influence their teaching, and fosters ongoing formal and informal professional communication. This is true even among teachers who have gained the same underlying knowledge and skills as a result of their professional development experiences. The work by Garet and colleagues (Desimone, Porter, Garet et al., 2002; Garet et al., 2001) provides empirical support for the relationship among the coherence of professional development, growth in teacher knowledge and skills, and changes in classroom practice.

empirical support for the relationship among the coherence of professional development, growth in teacher knowledge and skills, and changes in classroom practice.

### IMPORTANCE OF THIS STANDARD

Professional development that does not increase teachers' content knowledge and knowledge of how students learn content and that is not coherent as defined above holds little chance of improving student learning. Careful, detailed work by scholars such as Deborah Ball (2000) and Mary Kay Stein (Stein & Lane, 1996) shows that teachers' lack of content knowledge is detrimental to student learning. For example, when teachers do not understand the mistakes children make in their thinking, they cannot correct those mistakes. When teachers do not have a broad but in-depth knowledge of a field like mathematics, they cannot make the connections between concepts, graphics, and representations that allow students to develop a conceptual understanding of math topics. Much research shows that teachers with a limited knowledge of math tend to focus on memorization and procedures and can't offer students multiple ways of solving the same problem. Also, such teachers tend to miss opportunities to connect important concepts and representations.

Many research studies have shown how teacher content knowledge is related to improved teaching and is thus essen-

tial for student learning. Take math, for example. Scholars have shown that teacher knowledge about math and how to teach math is likely to translate into several desirable types of instruction, such as the ability to construct better mathematics representations, better understand students' methods and mistakes, and have a clearer understanding of structures underlying mathematics and how they connect (for example, Ball, 1993; Borko et al., 1992; Carpenter, Fennema, Peterson, Chiang, & Loef, 1989; Leinhardt & Smith, 1985; Ma, 1999; Thompson & Thompson, 1994). In general, teachers with more explicit and better organized knowledge provide instruction that features conceptual connections, appropriate and varied representations, and active and meaningful student discourse. According to Fennema and Franke (1992), teachers with more knowledge differ in the "richness of the mathematics available for the learner" (pp. 149-50). Teachers with limited knowledge have been found to portray the subject as a collection of static facts; to provide impoverished or inappropriate examples, analogies and/or representations; and to emphasize seatwork assignments and/or routinized student input as opposed to meaningful dialogue.

When professional development is not coherent, teachers have to deal with the tension of learning things in professional development that are not consistent with policy messages they are receiving. In a study of comprehensive school reforms, which rely primarily on professional development to foster teacher change, a synthesis across multiple studies showed that when a professional development reform pushed in a different direction from accountability or standards, teachers did not adopt and implement the improved teaching fostered by the professional development (Desimone, 2002). Extraordinary measures were sometimes necessary to address the misalignment, such as allowing schools to be exempt from standardized achievement test results, to allow teachers to work on changing their instruction in ways that were not responsive to the district testing regime.

Coherence in terms of embedded practice and dialogue has been shown repeatedly to be a critical component in teacher learning. When teachers, in professional learning communities, can discuss new ideas with other teachers, practice them, receive feedback, share students' reactions, and brainstorm with other teachers, they much more successfully implement what they learn in professional development (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Cohen, McLaughlin, & Talbert, 1993; Little, 1993).

### ESSENTIAL PRACTICES

In my own work, I have found that both content focus and coherence are essential to effective teaching practice. In studies of large-scale samples of teachers, my colleagues and I have found that teachers who participate in content-focused professional development are more likely to use inquiry-oriented instruction (Smith et al., 2007); and that teachers are more likely to change their instruction and increase their knowledge

and skills when professional development is coherent in terms of activities being aligned with each other, with teacher knowledge and beliefs and with school, district and state reforms and policies (for example, Desimone, 2009). Further, my colleagues and I have found that teachers who are able to engage with one another to build an interactive learning community around professional development tend to report that the professional development increased their knowledge and helped them change their practice (Desimone, Porter, Garet et al., 2002; Garet et al., 2001).

Similarly, in estimating the effect of different qualities of professional development, I found that content focus and coherence are two of the most important factors in determining whether teachers consider the professional development useful for developing their knowledge and skills and making improvements in practice. Further, in a synthesis of professional development literature, I found that content focus and coherence are consistently found to contribute to professional development's effectiveness (Desimone, 2009).

## CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

One major challenge in developing, administering, and studying the effects of content-focused professional development lies in conceptualizing and defining different types of teacher knowledge and how to measure them. Deborah Ball and Heather Hill, among others, have made great progress in this area for mathematics (Hill, Ball, & Schilling, 2008), although there is substantial work to do in defining and measuring the domain of knowledge for teaching. There is still no consensus regarding the form, structure, or components of pedagogical content knowledge, the amount of this knowledge that teachers should have, or the extent to which this form of knowledge includes teacher beliefs about particular content or how to teach that content. There is also little consensus regarding the amount of knowledge teachers must possess, the particular characteristics of knowledge that enable effective teaching, and the role of teacher knowledge in instructional practice and student achievement. Another challenge is the imprecision with which we are able to link teacher learning and knowledge and how it affects student learning. Furthermore, conceptualizations of teacher knowledge are often based on logic and intuition. Researchers have generated relatively little evidence to support intuitions regarding the content and structure of teacher knowledge.

A major challenge to providing content-focused, coherent professional development is cost. Schools and districts understandably feel a responsibility to reach large numbers of teachers. But a focus on breadth in terms of number of teachers served comes at the expense of depth in terms of the quality of the experience. One clear direction for schools and districts is that, in order to provide useful and effective professional development that has a meaningful effect on teacher learning and fosters improvements in classroom practice, funds should be fo-

cused on providing high-quality professional development that is content-focused and coherent. This would require schools and districts either to focus resources on fewer teachers or to invest sufficient resources so that more teachers can benefit from high-quality professional development.

Time is also a substantial constraint to providing the dimension of coherence that allows teachers to engage with each other about instruction. It takes time from the school day to offer teachers a chance to talk with each other, practice, observe, get feedback, and meet with their professional communities. Few schools, especially inner-city public schools, have the resources to give teachers this amount of time. Again and again, teachers complain that a major reason for not implementing what they learned in professional development is that they don't have enough time to understand and practice and get feedback on what they are doing (Desimone, 2002).

## TAKING ACTION

Districts and schools can take several measures to foster content-focused, coherent professional development. My research on leadership and district roles indicates that districts can play a key role in organizing and aligning professional development with district priorities. For example, involving teachers in planning professional development helps ensure that it responds to their needs, concerns, knowledge, skills, and challenges (Desimone, Porter, Birman, Garet, & Yoon, 2002). We also found that professional development tended to be more content-focused and coherent when districts used multiple funding sources to pay for professional development activities (a way of merging and integrating goals from multiple programs) and when they explicitly aligned professional development activities with state or district standards and assessments. District monitoring of activities and their effects through continuous improvement efforts was also related to better professional development.

**Time is a substantial constraint to providing the dimension of coherence that allows teachers to engage with each other about instruction.**

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- In a given setting, planning a new professional development program or revising an ongoing program involves the study of the organization, the states of learning of students, the curriculum and instruction used by the instructors, and the professional social climate of a sample of the schools.
- A local design team needs to be organized and legitimized by the district officials and needs to include a healthy sample of teachers, principals, and district organizers.

## DESIGN AND ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Here we draw directly from our formulation of five models of professional development and underline how our design team might relate to them. Each model can be the design core of a professional development component (Joyce & Calhoun, 2010).

**Support for individuals:** The most common form is stipends and brief leaves for individual teachers. The objective is to enable individuals to create their own learning opportunity. Their judgment determines goals, and their energy and good scouting ability generate the processes. Can our design team organize school district personnel, including policymakers, to build a component around this model? Yes, it can.

**Personal and professional service models,** such as coaching and mentoring programs, have been written about by so many others that we will simply urge our design team to look into them carefully.

**Collegial study models** (usually in the form of professional learning communities) also have a huge literature for our design team to explore.

**Curriculum implementation models** are important because curriculum improvement depends on professional development. Our design team finds that the concept of repertoire and the knowledge about how people learn new repertoire are at the core of those models.

## DESIGN REQUIRES LEARNING

We will not try to summarize this short piece here, but rather to commend the organization for attempting to build standards to guide its constituency. We have read the Hall & Hord (2011) article in this issue on implementation (p. 52), and one of the authors' most important points is that implementation *requires* new learning. That is true of design as well. This may be the most important message from the latest version of the standards.

Ron Edmonds' fine statement makes the issue clear: "We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far" (1979).

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**Curriculum implementation models are important because curriculum improvement depends on professional development.**

# FORGE A COMMITMENT TO AUTHENTIC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

By Arne Duncan

All work to improve the quality of professional development must begin with one simple assumption: Teaching is an incredibly complex profession that draws on a wide set of intellectual and emotional skills. Even the best teachers need to continue to learn and improve their practice, and many are willing to do so. The bottom line is that all teachers — all educators — grow from professional learning experiences that sharpen their practice.

However, the teaching profession in America is at a crossroads. Designed more than a century ago, in many ways teaching remains stuck in an outmoded and inadequate system of preparation and improvement. States, districts, and the federal government spend \$25 billion annually on support services to develop teachers and leaders (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). But most of what is spent has neither improved teaching nor benefitted teachers or students. Instead, teachers tell me about hours wasted in staff development seminars that do not meet their needs and do little to impact their teaching.

Leaders in education talk a lot these days about the need to improve the educational achievement of our students, describing how we can't afford to lose the one-quarter who drop out and why we need to close achievement gaps. But for a real transformation to take place in our schools and classrooms, we must radically rethink how we support teachers to offer the world-class education our children deserve.

Learning Forward has just published the updated Standards for Professional Learning, and I applaud the organization's efforts to help states and districts build the capacity of their teachers and educators. These standards are an important statement



Photo by U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

of principle, but by themselves they aren't a panacea for the problems facing professional learning in American education. We can't continue to tinker with half measures while avoiding the challenges we face transforming our schools. The new standards remind us that we need to reform our current ineffective systems of professional development and build new ones focused on the two essential goals of the standards: *strengthening educator effectiveness* and *improving results for all students*. Since these goals are not a radical departure from those created in 2001, they beg the question, *Will we let another 10 years pass while we stay trapped in the status quo without making real reform, or will we work now to take these standards seriously?* Put another way, will we continue to give lip service to the standards, or will we walk our talk?

## LOUSY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, BUT PLENTY OF IT

Our nation's schools spend a lot of money on professional

development but receive little in return. The federal government alone allocates \$2.5 billion a year on Title II funds to improve teaching and teacher leadership. However, often these funds have been used to decrease class size or purchase equipment. States and school districts also allocate funds to professional development, but there's no indication that this is spent on evidence-based practices that improve teachers' skills and abilities in the classroom or that improve student learning. We need to ensure that those funds are used to help teachers and students and that they are tied to the Standards for Professional Learning.

Right now, that is not happening enough. I continue to hear from frustrated teachers all over the country who tell me that they are required to attend outdated and unhelpful workshops that they do not need. Principals report that their professional development efforts have been largely unfruitful, resulting in little if any change in student outcomes. Given the poor track record of some professional development programs, it is not surprising that curriculum directors, superintendents, and principals may lack confidence in the value of professional development.

In these tough economic times, the discussion can't be about pouring more money into a broken system. We must focus much more intentionally on using existing professional development dollars wisely. The Standards for Professional Learning present an opportunity to guide educators in designing professional development experiences that are worthy of our investments if we focus all of our energy around the two professional learning objectives, strengthening educator effectiveness and improving results for students. Getting there will require a substantial shift in thinking. We need to acknowledge teachers as learners, use student and teacher needs to direct professional learning, invest in whole-community growth, and make professional development a leadership priority.

## TEACHERS AS LEARNERS

I've stressed the importance of continual learning for teachers so they can reach all students. Even the best teachers can benefit from professional learning that keeps them abreast of advances in the art and science of teaching and learning. Some will collaborate with teachers in other grades to vertically align their curriculum with their state's newly adopted college- and career-ready standards. Others will benefit by developing skills using emerging technology to foster student growth. Some desire useful strategies to engage parents and families in their children's education. Many tell me that they need help analyzing student data and refining lesson plans to accelerate growth. The list could go on forever because the potential for learning is unbounded.

Sometimes, the research offers teachers new information to update their methods. For example, recent studies in mathematics instruction have found that students learn to solve algebraic

equations better when teachers assign mixed types of problems for independent practice, as opposed to blocked problems that are all alike. Research supported by the Institute of Education Sciences indicates that often teachers aren't aware that although their students often do better on homework with similar sets of math problems, when they practice with mixed kinds of equations, students actually process the material more deeply and retain their knowledge (Taylor & Rohrer, 2010). Research findings such as these — that arm teachers with innovative strategies to maximize independent practice — continually emerge in the educational field. Most teachers would welcome professional learning opportunities that help them stay current.

## USE EVALUATIONS TO DIRECT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Given the vast array of knowledge and skills that may be developed in teachers, how could anyone — teachers, teacher leaders, instructional coaches, principals, superintendents — make wise decisions about professional learning without first determining where a given teacher is strong and where he or she would benefit from further work?

The need to strategically align professional learning is precisely why it is critical that schools get teacher evaluation right. It is why the Department of Education is supporting states and districts as they build systems to measure the strength of a teacher's instructional practice and identify areas for professional growth through teacher evaluations that encompass multiple measures, including student growth. These measures could also include observations, student portfolios, and surveys of students, parents, and peers. Nearly everyone I talk to acknowledges that systems that rate 99% of the teachers as satisfactory have little value. Without a rigorous, meaningful evaluation system that values teachers as professionals with unique skills, strengths, and shortcomings, we diminish their value, treating them like interchangeable parts of a large and impersonal educational machine in which one size fits all.

## INVEST IN WHOLE-COMMUNITY GROWTH

Professional development tied to evaluation systems is not enough. To create professional development worthy of world-class schools, we have to break ourselves free from the inertia of the status quo. We should fully embrace Learning Forward's call for professional learning as a catalyst for whole-system reform. We need to set high standards and immerse teachers in learning communities that build everyone's capacity and involve teachers in leading their schools. We need to abandon the crusty mindset that sees professional development as something that can be imposed on teachers from the top down.

In the past, professional development programs have taken individual teachers away from their workplace to receive training elsewhere, developing, at best, solo fliers. This has proven to be an inefficient way to change schools. Bringing a skilled and invigorated teacher into a bad system does not usually improve



the school, but it might bring down the newly inspired teacher. On the other hand, professional learning that relies on learning communities driven by teams of teachers can have an enormous impact on entire school systems, with everyone growing in the same direction or getting out of the way.

This is one reason I like the Take One! option offered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which sets a high bar for professional standards. Its Take One! program allows teachers in a school to work together to complete a large portion of national certification and bank their scores. It's also why I am a fan of the TAP System for Teacher and Student Advancement. TAP works to build teams of teachers who interact with one another to build their collective ability to focus on evaluation, professional development, and career advancement. Programs like TAP and Take One! are important because the challenges we face in education today will not be solved by individual teachers or leaders, but from teams of teachers, schools, students, families, and communities who are all invested in common goals and who develop a common attitude, intention, and energy in their schools. There are countless examples of schools that have adopted teamwide or schoolwide learning communities as a means for building educator capacity and improving student achievement — always, collaboration among a group of committed educators is the key.

This kind of whole-community learning done right has the benefit of leading to greater transparency. If I am a science teacher, I regularly visit another teacher's classroom to observe how she teaches, and she comes into mine. We grow by assessing what works and what doesn't and through processing the differences together. We meet regularly with our larger community of science teachers to share our scores on assessments, evaluate our students' mastery, determine how our practices need to change, and hone our craft. Over time, this process becomes less intimidating because we are part of a community that is vested in the whole group's growth and success.

The beauty of this transparency is that it has the effect of building shared accountability and internal motivation. When faced with powerful information about their students' learning, teachers, as learners themselves, are compelled to do something with what they've learned. They take the data they have from student performance and look for ways to improve. They insist on knowing which strategies work and which ones don't. They are not afraid of expanding their knowledge and skills by sharing their experiences or considering alternatives that have the potential to improve their practice, such as reading a book or an article, discussing a problem online with a connected community, taking a class, and so forth.

#### MAKE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING A LEADERSHIP PRIORITY

For systems of continual assessment and improvement to function and sharpen the skills of all teachers, leaders in schools and school districts have to be willing to seriously consider the

proposals in the Standards for Professional Learning. Professional learning cannot be the afterthought that it has been for so long. Those who seek to improve student learning must make professional development for teachers and teacher leaders their most important priority, in both word and in deed. Teachers need instructional leaders who set high goals and then offer a rich array of professional learning opportunities and supports that help them to address the issues most in need. Teachers rely on principals who direct professional learning dollars to channels that develop them professionally, leaders who will resist temptations to use staff development funds to purchase equipment or pay for incidental expenses unrelated to their growth. They ought to have leaders who protect Title II funds and use them to strengthen the profession, not to reduce classes sizes. And they should have principals and superintendents who are equally learners engaged in their own learning communities to strengthen their skills and practice.

As we expect continuous improvement on the part of teachers and school and system leaders, we must hold professional learning to that very same expectation. These new standards rightly call for all professional learning to be evaluated on an ongoing basis for its effectiveness and results. Teachers, principals, and district leaders deserve to know which programs lead to better results for students, and the programs themselves deserve useful feedback about how they can improve. Especially in tight budget times, we cannot afford to be blind to the effectiveness of the professional learning programs in which we invest.

Finally, teachers need principals and leaders who understand that they are unlikely to be motivated to improve by prescriptive, top-down mandates or by superficial extrinsic rewards. The effort to transform professional learning for teachers will not be led by federal or state policymakers. It will reside within the hearts and minds of teachers and school leaders across America.

The best instructional leaders recognize and nurture teachers' innate desires to help students excel and improve their lives. They harness these motivations and offer to teachers professional learning that is personally meaningful and helps students propel themselves beyond their current circumstances. When this happens, when teachers' desires matches their ability, leaders will have created a sustainable energy that keeps reform moving forward — a culture of continual renewal that touches everything and everyone, especially our students.

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**Arne Duncan is the U.S. Secretary of Education. ■**



Guerra



Nelson

## Effective diversity facilitation matches teachers' cultural knowledge with the learning experience

The effectiveness of professional development aimed at increasing cultural awareness among teachers depends on matching the needs of teachers to the appropriate approach. For the last 10 years, we have been conducting research on educators' beliefs about diversity, their level of cultural knowledge, and application of that knowledge to practice. Our findings indicate teachers have varying levels of cultural responsiveness from culturally responsive or a high level of cultural competence to none or culturally unaware. Knowing the levels teachers are at helps professional developers design effective learning experiences.

**Culturally responsive** educators are those who hold pluralistic beliefs about diversity, have knowledge of invisible culture, and implement culturally responsive practices. Invisible culture comprises aspects of culture such as assumptions and values that are not observable and are unconscious. They are the explanation for why we do things the way we do. When involved

in culture clashes, culturally responsive educators use their knowledge of invisible culture to identify inequitable school policies, procedures, and practice and transform them into culturally responsive components. They view the funds of knowledge that diverse students and families bring as assets that must be incorporated into schooling if access and success for diverse students are to be comparable to white, middle-class students.

In comparison, **culturally aware** educators tend to hold few and subtle deficit beliefs about diverse students and families. They have knowledge of hidden culture (aspects of culture not easily known without interaction), but are generally unaware of invisible aspects of culture. In many cases, educators in this category consider differences in culture as the source of conflict and employ culturally based practices. However, because they lack knowledge of invisible culture, educators in this category may be unable to identify cultural differences as the source of some clashes. When this

occurs, they use best practices that do not account for cultural differences.

Educators having a **general awareness of culture** tend to express deficit beliefs that are much less subtle than those held by culturally aware educators. They also tend to have little knowledge of hidden or invisible culture. They tend to apply cultural knowledge by centering on the visible aspects of culture such as food,



names, dress, language, and holidays. Educators with general awareness tend to believe students' or parents' lack of knowledge, skills, experiences, or values is the cause of clashes rather than considering differences in invisible aspects of culture. Because they do not fully understand the role culture plays, they employ generic strategies or technical solutions instead of culturally responsive practices.

Educators with **little cultural awareness** tend to hold a number of blatant deficit beliefs about diverse students and families and have only basic knowledge of visible aspects of culture. Because they are unable to identify the influence of culture in most clashes, they attribute problems to students and parents and recommend technical solutions aimed at "fixing"

In each issue of *JSD*, Patricia L. Guerra and Sarah W. Nelson write about the importance of and strategies for developing cultural awareness in teachers and schools. Guerra (pg16@txstate.edu) is an assistant professor and Nelson (swnelson@txstate.edu) is an associate professor in the Department of Education and Community Leadership at Texas State University-San Marcos. Guerra and Nelson are co-founders of Transforming Schools for a Multicultural Society (TRANSFORMS). Columns are available at [www.learningforward.org/news/authors/guerranelson.cfm](http://www.learningforward.org/news/authors/guerranelson.cfm).

them. Only when clashes concern the most obvious aspects of culture like language and race are they able to identify that cultural difference may be at work. Even then, they offer only simplistic solutions such as being sensitive to differences.

**Culturally unaware educators** express many blatant and harsh deficit beliefs (e.g. stereotypes) about diverse students and families and appear to lack even the most basic knowledge about culture and may refuse to acknowledge the legitimacy of cultural differences, believing it is the responsibility of students and families to assimilate to the culture of the school. Culturally unaware educators tend to have such entrenched deficit beliefs that change may be impossible without an experience that shatters their reality and directly confronts their biased beliefs.

Our research suggests that in an average faculty of 100, fewer than five teachers have high levels of cultural responsiveness. Most teachers are in one of the two middle groups. The fact that the majority of teachers have only general to little awareness of culture is not surprising since most are required to take only one multicultural course, if any, in their teacher preparation program. Their degree of receptiveness to diversity training may vary, but they want to be a good teacher for *all* children. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of culturally unaware teachers, whose beliefs are so deep-seated they tend to staunchly oppose diversity training and are resistant to change.

Having knowledge of research that explains the levels of cultural responsiveness aids staff developers and other school leaders in making better choices about the type of diversity professional development individual faculty members need. A mismatch in the approach to diversity training may not only be ineffective in reframing deficit thinking and changing practice, but may also create a backlash against additional training.

#### **WHAT TYPE OF DIVERSITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS BEST SUITED FOR EACH LEVEL?**

If you're fortunate to have a **culturally responsive** teacher on staff, make her a teacher leader in diversity and further her skill development in facilitation, conflict mediation, and instructional coaching. With adequate professional development, the culturally responsive teacher can deliver individual and small-group diversity training to other faculty, facilitate book and article study groups, provide instructional coaching, and lead committee efforts to identify and transform inequitable school policies, procedures, and practices. Since her cultural responsiveness is high, she's ready to participate in professional development that openly confronts racism and other biases such as sexism and homophobia through a direct approach. While deepening her own understanding of these issues, she will develop the skills, confidence, and courage to challenge the deep-seated deficit beliefs of culturally unaware teachers.

**Culturally aware teachers** and those having **general to little awareness of culture** usually benefit from professional development that employs a constructivist approach. Through engaging activities and discussions that build on the existing knowledge and experience of participants, teachers in these sessions not only learn from the activities but also from each other. Because teachers start with varying levels of cultural knowledge, expect cultural responsiveness to develop at different rates. The key is to monitor progress and adjust the professional development to address their advancing knowledge. (For more information on constructivist and direct approaches to diversity training, see our June 2011 *JSD* column, "The right facilitator can help teachers make meaningful change to their instructional practice.") It is important to note teachers in these categories report being turned off by

diversity sessions that take a direct approach. Such an approach often begins with the assumption that all teachers are racist, and the aim is to get teachers to acknowledge this. Teachers with general to little awareness indicate they arrive at such sessions with good intentions, but leave feeling guilty and helpless to change. They often do not return to these sessions or other types of diversity professional development. As a result, their deficit beliefs and practice remain unchanged.

Although **culturally unaware** teachers would appear to also benefit from a constructivist approach and it would seem reasonable for them to participate in the same professional development as their colleagues having general to little awareness of culture, this is not the case. Entrenched in their deficit beliefs, culturally unaware teachers tend to sabotage training efforts, consume the trainer's time, and negatively affect the experience of others. Often expressing disdain and resistance to change efforts, they openly voice deficit beliefs about diverse students and families and attempt to counter positive views of cultural differences. Unnerved by such comments, other teachers withdraw from the conversation, which hinders their learning. A direct approach, which centers on race and addresses deficit beliefs head-on, may be the best match for culturally unaware teachers. The direct approach offers the best and most efficient option for changing entrenched deficit views. However, even the direct approach may not be enough to change the problematic beliefs and practices of culturally unaware teachers. If the direct approach fails, measures must be taken to ensure culturally unaware teachers do not remain in the classroom because they are harming students and families. ■



## If we open our minds, we can close the generation gap in the workplace

*I often write to music. The musical backdrop to Fierce Leadership (2009) was often Trio Mediaeval, who sing traditional ballads, hymns, and lullabies from Norway. I also spent days writing to the sounds of Pete’s Pond at the Mashatu Game Reserve in Botswana. For me, amassing a diverse collection of thoughts, ideas, emotions, and worldviews through the words, songs, and actions of others helps me be awake, engaged, and connected. The greatest insights often come from people who are different — older, younger, from other cultures, other lifestyles — than me. And to learn from them, I must be willing to consider that what might be true for others might be true, or at least useful, for me as well.*

*Seeking out people with different views and perspectives is often challenging because it requires us to set aside judgment and open our minds. But we have to remind ourselves that to get beyond where we are, we would all be well served to stop talking and listen to one another. Connection, engagement, inclusion — achieving these is a worthy goal that will remain just that unless we create deep connections in this moment, with the person across the table in the meeting, the one with whom we disagree, the one we haven’t valued, or haven’t really seen, until now.*

— Susan Scott

### By Deli Moussavi-Bock

With all the books and courses on generations, I still continue to hear people complain about this or that generation. As George Orwell said, “Each generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one before it and wiser than the one that comes after it.” It’s humorous and true, and I get concerned when I hear generalizations like, “Kids today are disrespectful” or “Older people are out of it.”

When I think of workplace competencies, it seems like even a modicum of literacy about generations would go a long way;

lack of it continues to lead to massive misinterpretations, lost opportunities, and most importantly, diminished trust and community in the workplace and beyond. The stakes become higher when I consider schools and how much these ongoing misinterpretations and assumptions about each other get in the way of learning for adults and students.

In *Retiring the Generation Gap* (2006), Jennifer Deal demonstrates that all generations have pretty much the same values. She makes the distinction between values and behavior. We see someone’s behavior that is markedly different from our own and mistakenly assume that our values are different rather than realizing those same values

manifest in different behavior from generation to generation.

If we start by focusing on similarities, respecting differences and interpreting behavior through each generation’s lens, there’s hope to arrive at common ground and move to solutions. The question becomes, how can I embrace my generation and build bridges with the others?



Moussavi-Bock

### GENERATIONAL MIX AT WORK

Working effectively with a multigenerational workforce is one of the greatest challenges facing today’s

In each issue of *JSD*, Susan Scott ([susan@fierceinc.com](mailto:susan@fierceinc.com)) explores aspects of communication that encourage meaningful collaboration. Scott, author of *Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success At Work & In Life, One Conversation at a Time* (Penguin, 2002) and *Fierce Leadership: A Bold Alternative to the Worst “Best” Practices of Business Today* (Broadway Business, 2009), leads Fierce Inc. ([www.fierceinc.com](http://www.fierceinc.com)), which helps companies around the world transform the conversations that are central to their success. Fierce in the Schools carries this work into schools and higher education.

Columns are available at [www.learningforward.org](http://www.learningforward.org). © Copyright, Fierce Inc., 2011.

leaders. Managers frequently have difficulty motivating employees of different ages and at different stages of their careers. Yet, understanding what each generation thinks, values, and desires is critical for a more collaborative and successful work environment.

Each generation thinks it's better than others. Why is that? If our values are similar but we express them in very different ways, opportunities for misunderstandings are rife. And think about the impact of the generational mix in schools. How wonderful it is when old guard and new blood work side by side and leverage their differences to benefit students.

### GOING FORWARD

Given generational differences in behavior, what can we do, instead of making assumptions and letting misunderstandings proliferate?

Consider the impact of motivating people from *their* perspective (rather than our own) and moving beyond a culture of us vs. them to create an atmosphere of inclusion, to leverage and appreciate the very diversity that's right under our noses. Deal talks about how each generation is looking for clout,

either holding on to clout or gaining clout they don't yet have. What if we work together to increase our collective clout in service to a common goal?

Consider this question, in your team, your school, your organization: Who owns the truth? Imagine your team, your school, or your organization as a giant beach ball. You're all standing on a gigantic beach ball. You are standing on the blue stripe. The ball is so huge that from your vantage point, all you can see is blue, nothing but your stripe. You could assume the entire world is blue. And you know better. You know that somewhere out there is a yellow stripe, a red stripe, a green stripe, maybe even a stripe with a color you've never seen. The ball is a combination of all its stripes, not just yours. Real collaboration starts with recognizing that everyone owns a piece of the truth — one stripe on the beach ball — and that no one owns the entire truth. No one can see everything, be everywhere.

Given this, your work is to interrogate the multiple competing realities that exist in your organization, to actively seek out different perspectives and ask, "What do you see that I'm not seeing?" And *really ask*. That doesn't mean you always agree

with the other person. You may say, "I don't see it that way, and I want to understand your thinking." That simple statement goes a long way in creating a relationship where someone feels heard and understood versus misinterpreted.

So instead of jumping to judgment when you're about to interpret someone's behavior, get curious. Actively solicit different perspectives, competing views of reality and honor them, even if you don't agree.

If you practice interrogating reality and do so sincerely and without laying blame, people will start speaking with you, telling you what's on their minds. And you'll get to the truth of matters — the ground truth on what people really think and feel.

The outcomes are profound when you interrogate reality rather than move forward based on unexplored assumptions. You gain a better understanding of each generation, a better work community, increased productivity, satisfaction, and job enjoyment as well as increased enthusiasm and buy-in for achieving outcomes. You develop yourself and people across generations. You become the kind of person to whom people will speak the truth. And we need to build on the truth in order to make progress and move forward, not just for ourselves, for the common good. As Alan Autry said, "Leadership requires the courage to make decisions that will benefit the next generation."

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**Scott, S. (2009).** *Fierce leadership: A bold alternative to the worst "best" practices of business today.* New York: Crown Business.

**Deli Moussavi-Bock (deli@fierceinc.com) is the director of training for Fierce in the Schools. ■**

### Interrogating reality with a group

When you have decisions to make, problems to solve, strategies to design, invite people from all generations, including students, to your meetings. Get creative. Whose perspective would be useful to understand?

- Act in a way that is consistent with your objective of honesty. In other words, model it yourself. Say things, confess things that scare you.
- Set a tone and an atmosphere in which competing ideas, opinions, and styles are not just encouraged, but expected.
- Engage people intellectually *and* emotionally. "What do you feel?"
- Ask people for specifics regarding context as well as content. "Please say more about that."
- Involve attendees in two-way discussions rather than coming across as a "presenter" who is merely a talking head.
- Moderate interactions to avoid inappropriate comments, nonconstructive criticism, and grandstanding. Blunt honesty is useful; offensive comments are not.
- Make needed adjustments in pacing and participation to ensure that you involve and hear from everyone present.

Source: Scott, 2009.

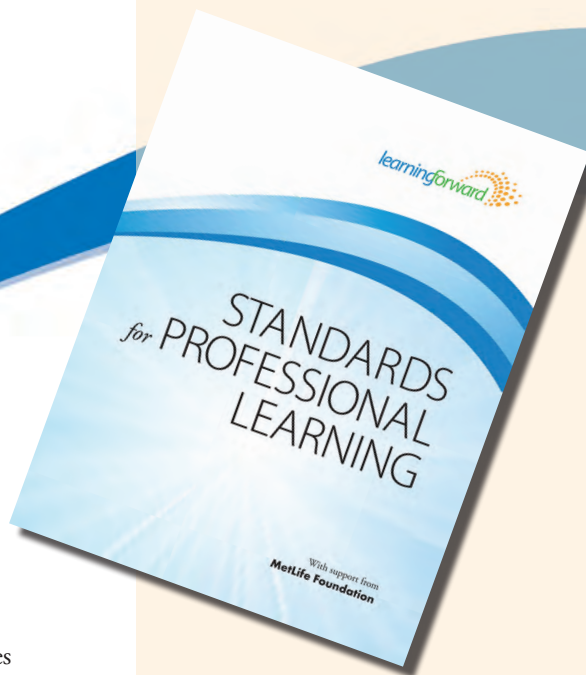
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## STANDARDS *for* PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

**T**his latest version of the standards, the third since 1995, defines the essential elements of and conditions for professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and student results. As with earlier versions, the latest standards represent the work of many organizations and associations. To ensure that the standards meet the needs of today's educators, Learning Forward and the contributors examined the latest research and practice on planning, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning.

The seven standards in this book, working in partnership with each other, focus on educator learning that leads to successful student learning. Effective professional learning that meets the standards is interactive, relevant, sustained, and embedded in everyday practice. The standards apply to professional learning for all educators, regardless of their role in the education workforce. Widespread attention to the standards increases equity of access to high-quality education for every student, not just for those lucky enough to attend schools in more advantaged communities. Everyone who funds, plans, facilitates, participates in, and advocates for effective professional learning will benefit from studying the standards to improve professional learning.

*This work is supported in part by MetLife Foundation.*



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## **New standards put the spotlight on professional learning.**

*By Hayes Mizell, Shirley Hord, Joellen Killion, and Stephanie Hirsh*

Learning Forward introduces new Standards for Professional Learning outlining the characteristics of professional learning that lead to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results. A focus on learning ensures that learning for educators leads to learning for students.

## **Quick reference guide to Standards for Professional Learning.**

This special pullout feature provides an at-a-glance view of the Standards for Professional Learning, the prerequisites for effective professional learning, the relationship between professional learning and student results, and suggestions for how to use the standards.

## **Learning Communities:**

The starting point for professional learning is in schools and classrooms.

*By Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller*

Learning communities encourage and support members to examine their practice, try out new ideas, and reflect together on what works and why. As educators identify and solve problems of practice together, they build the capacity and collective will to enhance the learning and achievement of all students.

**Practitioner viewpoint: John Wiedrick, Valleyview, Alberta, Canada.**

## **Leadership:**

Support and structures make the difference for educators and students.

*By Kyla L. Wahlstrom and Jennifer York-Barr*

When leaders attend to the context in which others around them learn, they strive to put in place structures and supports that are likely to be effective. This is true whether the leadership comes from the district level, or from a principal working with teachers in her school, or a teacher leading among his peers or with his students.

**Practitioner viewpoint: Deborah Jackson, McLean, Va.**

## **Resources:**

The dollars and sense of comprehensive professional learning.

*By Allan Odden*

Collaborative teacher work using student data to hone instructional practices is the cornerstone for improving instructional effectiveness. So how much would effective professional learning cost? On average, \$590 per pupil, according to the author, who outlines a cost structure for professional learning that itemizes each element and how its cost is calculated.

**Practitioner viewpoint: Barbara Nakaoka, City of Industry, Calif.**

## **Data:**

Meaningful analysis can rescue schools from drowning in data.

*By Douglas B. Reeves and Tony Flach*

In many schools, the availability of data is inversely proportional to meaningful analysis. The authors call on school leaders and policymakers to close the implementation gap, switch from an evaluation system to a learning system, and allocate more resources to data analysis and decision making.

**Practitioner viewpoint: Denise Torma, Emmaus, Pa.**

## **Learning Designs:**

Study, learn, design. Repeat as necessary.

*By Bruce R. Joyce and Emily F. Calhoun*

Professional development designers move through three phases to create high-quality learning designs best suited to their schools and school districts: 1) Study the learning capacity of educators and students; 2) study how teachers learn; and 3) apply what the designers learned in order to create alternative models of professional development.

**Practitioner viewpoint: Shirnetha Stinson, Lancaster, S.C.**

## **Implementation:**

Learning builds the bridge between research and practice.

*By Gene E. Hall and Shirley M. Hord*

Once new practices that promote quality teaching and successful student learning have been identified, educators must learn what they are, how to use them and how to transfer them into classroom practice. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model provides a bridge between research and practice.

**Practitioner viewpoint: Raymond Aguilera and Olivia Zepeda, San Luis, Ariz.**

## call for articles

**Theme:** Learning communities

**Manuscript deadline:** Oct. 15, 2011

**Issue:** June 2012

**Theme:** Data

**Manuscript deadline:** Dec. 15, 2011

**Issue:** August 2012

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**Manuscript deadline:** Feb. 15, 2012

**Issue:** October 2012

- Please send manuscripts and questions to Christy Colclasure ([christy.colclasure@learningforward.org](mailto:christy.colclasure@learningforward.org)).
- Notes to assist authors in preparing a manuscript are at [www.learningforward.org/news/jsd/guidelines.cfm](http://www.learningforward.org/news/jsd/guidelines.cfm).

**Outcomes:** Coaching, teaching standards, and feedback mark the teacher’s road to mastery.

*By Jon Saphier*

The emerging consensus of teaching standards illustrates the need for professional development in the building blocks of successful teaching and learning. Suggested strategies include: Develop performance tasks for teachers; identify benchmarks of progress; and give ongoing feedback to adult learners.

**Practitioner viewpoint:** DeNelle West, Gwinnett County, Ga.

**Outcomes:** Content-focused learning improves teacher practice and student results.

*By Laura Desimone*

Content focus and coherence are fundamental to professional development that helps teachers boost student learning. Learning Forward’s Outcomes standard emphasizes that teacher learning should be focused on subject-matter content and how students learn that content, and consistent with the individual, school, and district factors that shape teachers’ work lives.

**Practitioner viewpoint:** Glenn Nolly, Austin, Texas.

**Forge a commitment to authentic professional learning.**

*By Arne Duncan*

The teaching profession in America is at a crossroads. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan calls on education leaders to radically rethink how we evaluate and prepare teachers: Acknowledge teachers as learners, use student and teacher needs to plan professional learning, invest in whole-community growth, and make professional learning a leadership priority.

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**coming up**  
in October 2011 *JSD*:  
Learning designs

## columns

### Cultural proficiency:

Effective diversity facilitation matches teachers’ level of cultural knowledge with the appropriate learning experience.

*By Patricia L. Guerra and Sarah W. Nelson*

Knowing teachers’ levels of cultural awareness helps professional developers design effective learning experiences.

### Collaborative culture:

If we open our minds, we can close the generation gap in the workplace.

*By Susan Scott and Deli Moussavi-Bock*

Generational differences offer an opportunity to explore a wide range of perspectives.

### From the director:

Districts can take a powerful first step by adopting the new Standards for Professional Learning.

*By Stephanie Hirsh*

Strengthen teaching and learning by moving Learning Forward’s new standards into policy and practice.



## MetLife Foundation supports standards

Learning Forward has received a \$500,000 grant from MetLife Foundation to disseminate and implement its newly revised Standards for Professional Learning. Forty professional associations and education organizations contributed to the revision of the standards following extensive research and input from educators and policymakers worldwide. MetLife Foundation also provided funding for the research and development of the new standards.

“We believe that high standards for professional development increase learning for everyone in a school, educators as well as students,” said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “Our support will help Learning Forward, other leadership organizations, and schools across the nation promote the new standards and put them to work.”

“Revision of the standards is just the beginning of the process to transform professional learning so that it increases educator effectiveness and student results. The real work is moving the standards into both policy and practice to increase the

### COMING SOON

As with past versions of the standards, Learning Forward will create a variety of resources to aid in dissemination and implementation. Look for the following in the coming months:

- Facilitator Guide: November 2011
- Innovation Configuration Maps, Vol. 1: February 2012
- Innovation Configuration Maps, Vol. 2: April 2012
- Innovation Configuration Maps, Vol. 3: June 2012
- Standards Assessment Inventory: August 2012

quality of professional learning,” says Learning Forward Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh. “This support from MetLife Foundation will enable broad-based dissemination, development of new tools to support implementation and evaluation of professional learning, and strategies to monitor the impact in both policy and practice,” she said.

### MetLife Foundation

### book club

#### CONSTRUCTING AN ONLINE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NETWORK FOR SCHOOL UNITY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

by Robin Thompson, Laurie Kitchie, and Robert Gagnon

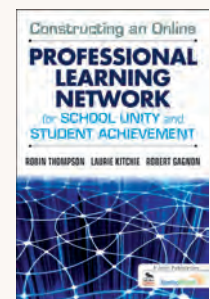
What if professional learning communities were available 24 hours a day, every day of the year? Learn about networks that create a space to share lesson plans, student work, a new curriculum, and provide a discussion forum for all stakeholders. The authors explain how they created an online professional learning network to share a new core curriculum, and provide a framework for constructing an online network to fit any school’s needs. Benefits include:

- Enhanced communication among teachers, administrators, and the community;
- Easy access to professional development for many more participants;

- Implementation of best practices and instructional strategies for improved teacher quality; and
- Increased understanding of and commitment to reaching educational goals.

Included are checklists, flowcharts, screenshots of an actual personal learning network, case studies, and a glossary of terms. This book provides all the tools educators need to build a successful and motivating online professional learning network.

Through a partnership with Corwin Press, Learning Forward members can add the Book Club to their membership at any time and receive four books a year for \$59. To receive this book, add the Book Club to your membership before Sept. 15. It will be mailed in October. For more information about this or any membership package, call 800-727-7288 or email [office@learningforward.org](mailto:office@learningforward.org).





## When leaders value standards, they create effective work cultures

**A**s a principal of a high-poverty campus, I am always on the lookout for additional funds. As I've mentioned before, I am fortunate to work with outstanding teacher leaders who are continually learning. We learn from each other, the students, parents, books, workshops, experts, and, on rare occasions, from the business world. As I consider the release of our new Standards for Professional Learning, I am reminded of my recent exposure to standards from another organization. My lesson learned: Standards guide effective practice.

As part of our 8th-grade curriculum, I teach an etiquette class. Our culminating activity is to eat out at an upscale restaurant to practice what we have learned. Unfortunately, the restaurant we chose offered a very small discount that made the excursion cost prohibitive. Fortunately, my son waits on tables at a restaurant that is owned by the same company that owns the upscale restaurant. The employees of these restaurants receive a 50% discount for up to four people on meals. We seized the opportunity to see if we could get a couple of employees to host our group of 8th graders. I can't say I was optimistic that we could get volunteers.

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**Mark Diaz is president of Learning Forward's board of trustees.**

### on board MARK DIAZ

The day arrived with our students wearing their Sunday best. The "Chili Heads" (employees of Chili's restaurants) arrived with smiles on their faces, two more volunteers than we needed, and ate a meal with us. I was struck by their genuine kindness, their love of being together, their unstated mission of helping others, and the immediate rapport they created with the students. They talked about their futures with the students; all were going to college or culinary school, or are on the management track. They talked about working at Chili's as a family experience.

I wondered, why would employees take time from their personal schedule with no thought of remuneration to do this? What is the culture of Chili's, and what are the standards that encourage this behavior? To find out, I contacted Marcy, the manager for the past four years of the Chili's franchise where the Chili Heads came from.

Marcy was humble about her role as leader. She feels fortunate to have had an excellent mentor, a group of natural leaders as employees, and standards that indicated to her she was not crazy doing what she was doing. As a manager, she sees her job to develop leaders, invest in personnel, and create a "can culture" versus a "can't culture."

She describes the standards that guide their work culture. Employees hold each other accountable, value communication, offer healthy feedback, and support each another. Employees consider being a Chili Head an opportunity rather than a job.

When I asked her about districts' decisions to cut back on professional development in this financial environment, she said, "Leaders build leaders." While she couldn't put herself in district leaders' shoes, she did have a suggestion: "Can't they cut back on spelling instead?"

Doesn't this sound familiar? This restaurant understands the role of mentors, a positive culture, mutual accountability, communication, feedback, support, leadership development, and sustained investment in personnel. They have standards, and they use them every day.

When I returned to our campus, I wondered — are we Chili Heads? And I wonder with you — how can our standards help guide your work so your faculties have the opportunity to grow, lead, and serve? ■





**LEARNING FORWARD'S PURPOSE:** Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.

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Photo by MICHAEL JENKINS

From left: Teachers Debbie Brock and Shelia Jenkins, Principal Rachel Ray, and Assistant Principal Shirnetha Stinson work as a learning team at Clinton Elementary School in Lancaster, S.C.

### 3rd-grade team wins Shirley Hord Learning Team Award

The 3rd-grade team from Clinton Elementary School in Lancaster County (S.C.) School District is the winner of the 2011 Shirley Hord Learning Team Award. This award, presented by Learning Forward and Corwin, is given to a team of teachers that demonstrates Learning Forward's definition of professional development in action.

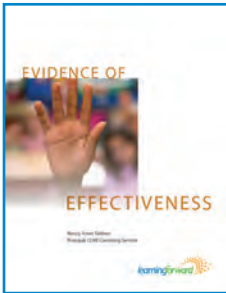
"Members of this team not only impacted their students, but also their colleagues," said Clinton Elementary School Principal Rachel Ray. "They understand that their actions have a direct impact on student learning." Schoolwide, 70% of Clinton students were reading independently on grade level in May 2011, compared to 8% in August 2009. Third-grade students have made a 26-point gain in English language arts and 28-point gain in mathematics. Through collaboration in professional learning teams, data analysis, analysis of student work, and the support of an instructional facilitator, the percentage of Clinton students performing below basic on the state English language arts test dropped 52% between 2009 and 2011.

Learning Forward's annual awards program recognizes individuals for their commitment to improving student achievement through effective professional learning. The Shirley Hord Learning Team Award honors the research Hord has conducted on the attributes and effects of successful professional learning communities. Learning teams from schools across the United States and Canada submitted nominations for the award, including videos of their teams at work.

Corwin sponsored the award, which included funds to support three representatives of the winning 3rd-grade team from Clinton Elementary to participate in Learning Forward's 2011 Summer Conference. Clinton Elementary School will also receive a \$2,500 gift to the school to support collaborative professional learning, and a gift of Corwin books for the school's professional library.

### LEARNING FORWARD CALENDAR

- September:** Members will be asked to participate in the Board of Trustees election throughout the month.
- Sept. 16:** Proposal deadline for Learning Forward's 2012 Summer Conference in Denver, Colo.
- Oct. 15:** Last day to save \$50 on registration for Learning Forward's 2011 Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif.
- Dec. 3-7:** Learning Forward's 2011 Annual Conference in Anaheim, Calif.
- March 15, 2012:** Deadline to apply to join Academy Class of 2014.



## LEARNING FORWARD'S IMPACT

**[www.learningforward.org/advancing/recentresearch.cfm](http://www.learningforward.org/advancing/recentresearch.cfm)**

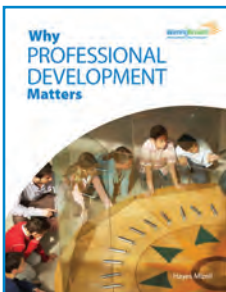
Explore the impact of Learning Forward's work in a new report, *Evidence of Effectiveness*. Learning Forward has accumulated a body of evidence that its programs and services are linked to improved professional learning policy and practice at state, district, and school levels. Read about the organization's theory of action and products and services, and understand the organization's in-depth work

through case studies at the state and district levels.

## INFLUENCE THE FIELD

**[www.learningforward.org/getinvolved/](http://www.learningforward.org/getinvolved/)**

Learning Forward members are an active, powerful force for the transformation of schools. Discover opportunities for direct involvement in Learning Forward initiatives and activities. Support critical work to improve learning for teachers and students by engaging with policymakers, advocating for high-quality professional learning within your community, donating to the foundation, or joining a state or provincial affiliate organization.



## REACH OUT TO YOUR COMMUNITY

**[www.learningforward.org/advancing/Why\\_PD\\_Matters\\_Web.pdf](http://www.learningforward.org/advancing/Why_PD_Matters_Web.pdf)**

Download the booklet *Why Professional Development Matters* to help parents, community members, and policymakers understand what professional development is and why it is an important school improvement strategy.

## SEARCH THE EVIDENCE DATABASE

**[www.learningforward.org/evidence](http://www.learningforward.org/evidence)**

Search Learning Forward's Evidence Database for information about the links between professional learning and student achievement. Resources are drawn from a wide variety of sources including research, peer-reviewed and nonpeer-reviewed journals, occasional reports, firsthand stories of success, news reports, and Learning Forward publications.



## JOIN THE CONVERSATION

**[www.learningforward.org/blog](http://www.learningforward.org/blog)**

Share your thoughts and insights with Learning Forward's leaders as they discuss current events and the organization's perspective. Learning Forward's PD Watch is hosted in partnership with the *Education Week Teacher* website. Recent popular posts include:

- Potential leaders are all around us.
- Good teachers, or great teaching?
- It's the teaching, not the technology.

## STAY IN THE KNOW

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## Districts can take a powerful first step by adopting the new Standards for Professional Learning

We're so proud that we've just released the Standards for Professional Learning. The previous version of standards was adopted or adapted into policy in more than 30 states; however, only four or five districts did the same. We know that most professional learning decisions are made at the local level, and that the standards can influence those decisions.

I'd like to ask you to make a commitment today to determine the steps you can take to see that the standards are adopted into your local policy. Consider the following reasons.

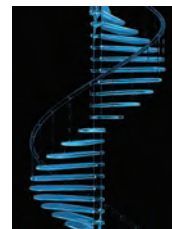
Adopting the standards for professional learning:

- **Informs a community of the importance of professional learning.** School board members get frequent questions about a district's investment in professional learning. The phrase that opens each standard — "Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students" — makes it clear that a district is investing in professional learning with the intention to improve teacher and student performance. The adoption of standards demonstrates an expectation that the district investment will achieve this outcome.

**Stephanie Hirsh (stephanie.hirsh@learningforward.org) is executive director of Learning Forward.**

- **Makes explicit a district's commitment to continuous improvement.** Continuous professional learning throughout an educator's career provides the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to achieve desired results. Adopting standards for professional learning that call for learning communities, leadership, resources, data, learning, implementation, and outcomes signals a district's commitment to effective professional learning. Research has documented and practice has demonstrated the important relationship between high-quality professional learning and improved performance at the individual, school, and system levels.
- **Clarifies expectations for professional learning.** The standards state clearly that professional learning advances educator competencies and student learning. The Outcomes standard indicates that the focus of the professional learning must be on the performance competencies the district sets for its employees and its students. The standards focus professional learning on these competencies. School board members as well as community stakeholders can expect regular evidence on how local learning meets this expectation.

- **Leverages the expertise of researchers and practitioners.** If a school board agrees standards are important, it can have confidence in this revised set of standards. More than 40 educators representing the most prestigious education associations reviewed research and best practices to identify standards appropriate for their own constituencies, including teachers, principals, superintendents, and school board members. Hundreds of practitioners weighed in on draft documents. Rather than developing and debating its own set of standards, a district can devote its energies to implementing quality professional learning and thereby move faster in its improvement efforts.
- **Delineates a powerful role for school board members.** As you advocate for local adoption, school boards are a significant partner and audience. The standards and the subsequent resource documents describe the actions school boards must take to ensure standards-based professional learning. Helping board members understand their roles will be a critical step in underlining the importance of the standards. Adoption alone does not guarantee professional learning will improve overnight, but it is a powerful first step. ■



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# Build In-House Capacity

## Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners PLC Pack

Have your collaborative team members identified the need to expand and refine their repertoires of strategies for working with diverse learners as a priority? Or do you, as a teacher leader or administrator, need to orchestrate discussions on this topic? If so, the **Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners PLC Pack** is just what you need.



## Instruction for All Students PLC Pack

This PLC Pack provides your Professional Learning Community with content to improve student learning. There are 24 one-hour interactive and action-oriented learning experiences included. Based around the work in the book *Instruction for All Students* by Paula Rutherford, the PLC Pack will help you focus on learning and have you working collaboratively in no time!



For more information about Just ASK resources and professional development, please visit our website.

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