



Poof! Everyone's effective!

Harry Potter and his friends at Hogwarts may be able to wave a wand and cast a few spells, but can they make an entire teaching staff instantly effective? Can they make an entire building of students proficient? If you listen to the rhetoric in the field and analyze the policies in many districts and divisions, you would have no choice but to believe principals possess these magical powers. After all, what else could explain what I'm calling the "instant effectiveness" era, which appears to require the following beliefs:

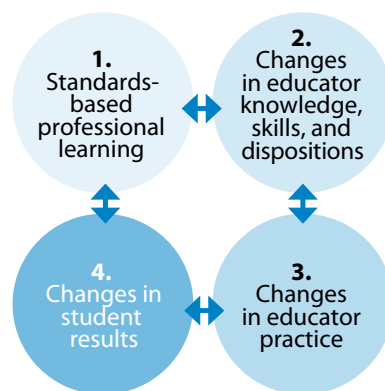
- Students instantly perform well when they have highly effective teachers and leaders.
- If principals hire the right teachers, they will immediately be highly effective.
- If teachers don't immediately perform at these high levels, they can swiftly be evaluated into effectiveness.
- If teachers don't respond immediately, they must be counseled out...and fast! (Don't worry — they'll understand, and new highly effective teachers can be found and hired pretty quickly.)

I'd like to argue for a different view. I'm suggesting an approach I'll call "learned effectiveness," where principals and their teams hire teachers they believe have the capacity to learn to become highly effective. Guiding these

schools: The newly released Standards for Professional Learning. The standards outline the following relationship between professional learning, effective practice, and student results:

- When professional learning is standards-based, it has greater potential to change what educators know, are able to do, and believe.
- 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.
- When educator practice improves, students have a greater likelihood of achieving results.
- When students improve, the cycle repeats for continuous improvement.

For those principals who don't possess a magic wand, I would strongly suggest an exploration of the standards. The standards paint a picture of a highly evolved professional learning system where educators in learning communities are committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility for student success, and goal alignment. These communities would have no tolerance for drive-by trainings where consultants are off to the next school



before ideas have a chance to become knowledge and change practice; workshops and conferences attended by many and remembered by few; or has no follow-up at the building level.

The standards also outline the skills principals need to become *leaders of professional learning*. Instead of waving their wands, these leaders set the agenda for professional learning by aligning it to classroom, school, and school system goals for student and educator learning. They prioritize human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources to support professional learning. Because they use data to monitor and measure the effectiveness of professional learning initiatives, these principals are able to make connections between student results and a host of interim measures they have collected over time. Finally, because they understand the links between educator learning and effectiveness, these leaders of professional learning are advocates for professional learning in their schools, districts and divisions, local communities, and states and provinces.

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Please visit www.learningforward.org/standards for more information regarding the Standards for Professional Learning and how they show the connections among professional learning, educator effectiveness, and student learning.