A discussion protocol

INTEGRATING

INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
INTO COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING SYSTEMS

When individual professional learning is introduced as a component of reformed teacher evaluation systems, it simultaneously becomes a part of a district professional learning plan. As a result, it is important that leaders consider the linkages between teacher evaluation systems and the individual professional learning as well as connections among individual professional learning and the other parts of the professional learning system. Leaders have a responsibility to ensure all professional learning connects and supports the achievement of district and school goals for educators and students.

The tools that follow offer suggestions for examining and discussing professional learning within and beyond the context of teacher evaluation systems.

- **Start the discussion.** Connecting teacher evaluation and individual professional learning, *pp. 54-55*.
- **Continue to examine.** Examining professional learning comprehensively, *pp. 56-58*.

Student learning needs should drive professional learning

Hayes Mizell, Learning Forward's distinguished senior fellow, commenting recently on the topic of teacher evaluation, noted:

The fact that many districts will now add a new dimension to their professional development agenda called targeted professional development seems to implicitly raise the issue of what should be the priority use of what are currently limited professional development resources.

One big question is whether teacher evaluation, and the professional development dimensions of it, will swamp attention to and resource allocations for other worthy professional development roles. One possibility is that school systems will spread professional resources among all possible professional development functions.

Mizell

Both scenarios surface the real problem — that people are not thinking about professional development in a coherent way, and that leads to it lurching from one purpose to another. There is no anchor philosophy or beliefs or use of professional development, so everyone seizes on professional development as a response to whatever they perceive as a particular problem. It is important to remember that student learning needs should drive professional development.

Start the discussion

CONNECTING TEACHER EVALUATION AND INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

A s districts begin to implement new evaluation systems and expand their current professional learning system to provide for individual support, stakeholders will benefit from answering several questions related to both processes. Use the questions below and on p. 55 to guide a preliminary discussion as new systems are implemented. Seek clarity about the intersection of these systems and think about how these systems support the district's broader goals for professional learning and student learning.

INTEGRATING INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING INTO COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING SYSTEMS

Use the questions below and on p. 55 to guide a preliminary discussion

	TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM	INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
What principles, beliefs, or assumptions guide our systems?		
What is its purpose?		
What are the core processes?		
What are roles and responsibilities for those being evaluated?		

	TEACHER EVALUATION SYSTEM	INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
What are roles and responsibilities for those conducting evaluation?		
What are possible roles and contributions for central office administrators?		
Are there contributions, roles, or responsibilities for other support staff, i.e. coaches, resource staff, mentors, etc.?		
What is the timeline?		
What resources (human, fiscal, physical) are needed and available?		
What are the measures for success?		

Continue to examine

EXAMINING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMPREHENSIVELY

To clarify the roles and purposes of all professional learning in the district, districts might consider convening stakeholders in professional development (including teachers, teacher leaders, principals, district office administrators, and professional development providers) to discuss potential responses to the questions posed on pp. 57-58 and add other questions relevant to its unique teacher evaluation and professional development systems.

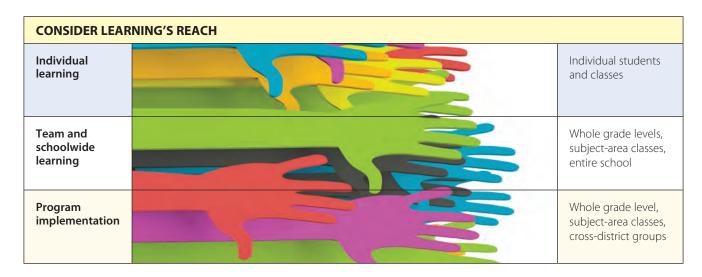It will be useful in the discussion to identify common expectations and responses across items and to continue the conversation even when there may be disagreements across the various groups. Clear and consistent expectations for each professional development component contribute to the strength and success of the overall plan. In addition, as stakeholders engage others in these conversations, they will find new opportunities for increasing the impact from individual classrooms to teams to schools to systems and to communities so that these efforts accelerate investment and produce widespread, deep changes in student learning.

INTEGRATING INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING INTO COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING SYSTEMS

As a final stage in the discussion, stakeholders might consider the principles, beliefs, or assumptions that underlie all the answers and the goals the district sets out to achieve with its professional development. Write a vision statement and guiding principles as a result of this conversation.

Source: Garet, M.S., Ludwig, M., Yoon, K., Wayne, A., Birman, B., & Milanowski, A. (2011). *Making professional development more strategic: A conceptual model for district decisionmakers.* Paper presented at AERA, April 2011. New Orleans, LA.

Professional learning serves three purposes

1. **Individual learning** to enhance individual competencies related to performance standards and individual results.

2. **School and team-based** (grade level, subject area, vertical) to ensure consistency and quality in instruction, curriculum implementation, assessment, and student results and alignment with improvement plans.

3. **Program implementation** to ensure high fidelity of implementation with district programs such as curriculum, social skills, etc.

CONSIDER LEARNING'S REACH		
Individual learning		Individual students and classes
Team and schoolwide learning		Whole grade levels, subject-area classes, entire school
Program implementation		Whole grade level, subject-area classes, cross-district groups

EXAMINING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMPREHENSIVELY

QUESTIONS	Individual targeted professional learning	Team-based/schoolwide professional learning	Program implementation professional learning
What are district examples of professional learning?			
What data inform learning goals?			
How are learning designs determined?			
What is the role of collaboration?			
How is success measured?			

EXAMINING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMPREHENSIVELY, *continued*

QUESTIONS	Individual targeted professional learning	Team-based/schoolwide professional learning	Program implementation professional learning
Who is responsible for measuring success?			
How is progress monitored?			
Who is responsible for monitoring progress?			
What are typical artifacts used as evidence of change in teacher practice?			
What are typical artifacts used as evidence of change in student learning?			