



Comprehensive Professional Learning System:
A WORKBOOK FOR STATES AND DISTRICTS
Learning Forward, 2013

This workbook guides a team in reviewing, revising, or replacing an existing professional learning system. The process outlined and the tools included support the team in conducting all aspects of its work, usually done over several months, with continuous progress monitoring and input from research, experts, and constituents. The workbook is designed to be used by leaders in education agencies, including state departments or ministries of education, local school systems, and other governing agencies or organizations that provide professional learning.

Available to download free at www.learningforward.org/publications/implementing-common-core.

CONDUCT ONGOING ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Assessment and evaluation have multiple purposes. First, they support continuous improvement. With data collected in formative and summative evaluations, leaders of professional learning systems have evidence to make improvements.

Second, they generate evidence to determine whether the system is working both to support effective professional learning planning, implementation, and evaluation and to improve educator effectiveness and student success.

In addition, an evaluation can inform resource investments. For a comprehensive professional learning system to work smoothly and to meet its many goals, all components of the system must be finely tuned and coherent.

Recommended steps for the evaluation of a comprehensive professional learning system include:

- Plan the evaluation;
- Establish the evaluation framework;
- Conduct the evaluation;
- Report the evaluation; and
- Evaluate the evaluation.

Included here are two tools, [Guide to Evaluation](#) and [Professional Learning Organizing Checklist](#). The first tool summarizes these steps, outlines the questions, and serves as a planning guide for conducting an evaluation of a comprehensive evaluation system.

The second tool offers a guideline for conducting an evaluation of a comprehensive

professional learning system. This checklist, which is adapted from *Doing What Works*, a U.S. Department of Education website devoted to providing research and evidence-supported practices, is a complement to the evaluation of specific professional learning programs contained in short- and long-term professional learning plans, not a replacement for those.

These tools are from *Comprehensive Professional Learning System: A Workbook for States and Districts* (Killion, 2013), which outlines eight steps for developing a comprehensive professional learning system. The eight steps are:

1. Launch the work.
2. Collect and examine data and research.
3. Establish vision, assumptions, purpose, definition, and goals.
4. Design system operations.
5. Revise or develop policies.
6. Plan short- and long-term professional learning.
7. Provide professional learning for full implementation.
8. Conduct ongoing assessment and evaluation.

For more information, visit www.learningforward.org/publications/implementing-common-core.

REFERENCE

Killion, J. (2013). *Comprehensive professional learning system: A workbook for states and districts*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

GUIDE TO EVALUATION

Use this guide to plan, conduct, and report an evaluation of a comprehensive professional learning system.

Purpose	To guide the planning, conduct, and reporting of an evaluation of a comprehensive professional learning system.	
Nonpurpose	To provide a turnkey evaluation plan.	
Step	Question	Responses
Determine the purpose and focus of the evaluation.	What is the reason or purpose for this evaluation?	
Determine the audience for the evaluation.	Who wants this evaluation? What does this particular individual, group, etc. want to know about the comprehensive professional learning system?	

GUIDE TO EVALUATION *continued*

Step	Question	Responses
Design the evaluation questions.	What do we want to know? What questions are we trying to answer? How important is it to answer these questions?	
Determine the need for an external evaluator.	Is an external evaluator needed or can an internal team or person conduct this evaluation? What are the advantages and disadvantages of either approach? Do we have resources for an external evaluator?	
Establish the evaluation framework.	How will we conduct the evaluation? What data do we need to answer the questions? What is the source of the data? How will the data be collected? What is the timeline? How will we analyze the data? Who will be responsible for this process or aspects of it?	
Collect data.	How will we manage, track, and be accountable for accurate data collection?	

GUIDE TO EVALUATION continued

Step	Question	Responses
<p>Analyze data.</p>	<p>Are the planned data analyses appropriate given the data? What changes do we need to make? How can the analyzed data be displayed so that multiple stakeholders can interact with it easily? What additional analyses are possible that had not been planned?</p>	
<p>Interpret analyzed data.</p>	<p>How can we engage stakeholders to add value and meaning to the analyzed data? What information can they add to increase the usefulness of the analyzed data? What conclusions are evident? What recommendations do they suggest for next steps based on the conclusions?</p>	
<p>Report the findings.</p>	<p>To whom do we need to report about the evaluation? What are the best formats or media for reporting to each audience? How do we help those to whom we report understand the value and meaning of the conclusions and recommendations and engender their support?</p>	
<p>Evaluate the evaluation.</p>	<p>What did we learn about the evaluation process and our competencies as evaluators that we can apply to future evaluations? How did this evaluation help us improve our evaluation skills?</p>	

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ORGANIZING CHECKLIST

Use this tool to plan and conduct an evaluation of a comprehensive professional learning system.

Purpose	Determine readiness and thoroughness in planning an evaluation.				
Nonpurpose	Describe best practices for evaluating a comprehensive professional learning system.				
Evaluation organizer					
This organizer supports the following four primary parts of program or system evaluation:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning the evaluation; • Collecting implementation and educator and student performance data; • Analyzing and interpreting data; and • Sharing and using evaluation findings to improve quality and results. 					
Person(s) responsible for evaluation: _____					
Purpose of evaluation: _____					
Evaluation questions: _____					

Evaluation organizer checklist					
Indicate the current status of each action and note the expected date of completion.					
Action steps	Completed	In progress	Under consideration	Not applicable	Expected date of completion
A. PLAN THE EVALUATION					
1. The evaluation purpose is clearly defined (e.g. system improvement, system effectiveness, system efficiency).					
2. Key stakeholders (e.g. teachers, parents, community members, school and district administrators, third-party providers, institutions of higher education, education agencies, education advocacy groups, technical assistance providers) are involved in or informed about, as appropriate, the evaluation plan.					

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ORGANIZING CHECKLIST continued

Action steps	Completed	In progress	Under consideration	Not applicable	Expected date of completion
3. The evaluation plan has the following components:					
a. Purpose;					
b. Evaluation questions based on identified outcomes and indicators of success;					
c. Evaluation design (e.g. descriptive, qualitative, quantitative, quasi-experimental, control group, case study);					
d. Data and/or evidence needed to answer the evaluation questions;					
e. Data sources, or who or what will provide the data or evidence needed (e.g. educators, system data, resource utilization, impact data);					
f. Data collection methodology appropriate to data sources (e.g. gather existing data, conduct surveys, interviews, observations; collect artifacts, documents, records);					
g. Plans to ensure confidentiality and anonymity in data collection and reporting;					
h. Plans to meet the standards for education program evaluation standards;					
i. Plans to protect the rights of participants (e.g. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, institutional review board, when required or desired);					
j. Data analysis plans;					
k. Dissemination of final report plans;					
l. Timeline for carrying out each evaluation activity.					

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ORGANIZING CHECKLIST continued

Action steps	Completed	In progress	Under consideration	Not applicable	Expected date of completion
4. Determine the need for an external evaluator.					
5. Develop strategies for maintaining integrity, objectivity, reliability, and validity in the evaluation.					
6. Get required permissions and support from authority and stakeholders.					
7. Define roles for stakeholders engaged in the evaluation (e.g. data collection or transmission, interpretation of analyzed data, development of recommended next actions, reporting findings).					
8. Assign oversight and/or leadership for evaluation with appropriate level of authority designated.					
B. COLLECT DATA					
9. Obtain appropriate permissions or consents after informing participants about the evaluation and their rights as human subjects before data collection begins.					
10. Collect appropriate data (e.g. process, impact, implementation).					
11. Minimize data burden with the use of extant data, or using what is available when possible.					
12. Collect data from multiple stakeholders to support triangulation.					
13. Identify gaps between what the system is designed to do and how it is implemented.					
14. Analyze data to reveal information of system impact on specific educator groups (e.g. teachers, principals, district staff) or work environments (e.g. school, district, outside of school or district).					

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ORGANIZING CHECKLIST *continued*

Action steps	Completed	In progress	Under consideration	Not applicable	Expected date of completion
15. Analyze data to identify patterns, trends, etc., of successes and problem areas.					
16. Analyze data to suggest contributing factors for findings.					
17. Propose recommendations for next actions based on findings.					
18. Plan broad-based dissemination.					
19. Plan multiple dissemination media and formats as appropriate to stakeholder groups.					
20. Engage stakeholders in using findings to identify improvements.					
21. Leadership team, in collaboration with stakeholders, plans improvement actions and timeline.					
22. Improvement plan components included:					
a. Goals;					
b. Strategies for achieving goals;					
c. Roles and responsibilities for implementing the strategies;					
d. Timelines for implementing and achieving the goals;					
e. Resources for implementing the plan;					
f. Monitoring the implementation of the plan;					
g. Indicators and measurements for success.					

Source: Killion, J. (2013). *Comprehensive professional learning system: A workbook for states and districts*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.