

TAKING ACTION:

Professional learning challenges

By Stephanie Hirsh and Shirley Hord

This tool, adapted from *A Playbook for Professional Learning: Putting the Standards Into Action* by Stephanie Hirsh and Shirley Hord (Learning Forward, 2012), is one of many activities that offer readers opportunities to engage with each other to expand their understanding and capacity to use the Standards for Professional Learning in everyday work.

The activities in the book progress along levels of engagement from reviewing the standard to digging deeper to taking action. These activities may be led, supported, or guided by a facilitator who may be a lead teacher, instructional coach, principal, or someone from the district office. Two or three learners may undertake these activities informally, or school and team leaders can use the activities in a more formalized setting, helping team members gain new understanding and insights into using the standards.

OUTCOME	Participants will identify data sources essential to responding to questions about professional learning.
OVERVIEW	Educators hear many questions about professional learning and its impact. Data are key to answering many of these questions. Participants explore ways to use data to respond to questions from various stakeholders.
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A copy of the article “A playbook for data: Real-life scenario demonstrates Learning Forward’s standard in action,” by Stephanie Hirsh and Shirley Hord (<i>JSD</i>, August 2012, Vol. 33, No. 4, pp. 10-12, 14, 16) for each participant. • A copy of the tool Professional Learning Challenges for each participant.
OPTIONAL MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data standard rationale, available at www.learningforward.org/standards/data. • Video vignette, available at www.learningforward.org/standards/data. • “Meaningful analysis can rescue schools from drowning in data,” by Douglas B. Reeves and Tony Flach. <i>JSD</i>, August 2011, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 34-40.
TIME	50 minutes.
LEARNING STRUCTURE	Groups of three to four to promote active engagement.

Directions		Time
1	Review the big ideas of the Data standard.	5 minutes
2	Discuss how the Data standard is relevant to professional learning in your setting.	5 minutes
3	Working individually or in small groups organized around the challenges presented, review the tool Professional Learning Challenges. Develop responses to each challenge.	10 minutes
4	Invite participants to share their responses with others and complete the tool with others' input.	5 minutes per challenge
5	Discuss the overall value of this exercise and discussion.	5 minutes

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CHALLENGE	RESPONSES	DATA SOURCES
A PARENT APPROACHES THE PRINCIPAL AND SAYS: I don't understand why we have all these early release days. How do these days benefit students?		
A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER VISITS A SCHOOL AND SAYS: I hear teachers complain about professional development. How do we respond to these concerns?		
A NEW TEACHER SAYS TO HER MENTOR: It seems like new teachers have a lot of required professional development. How will all these programs help me?		
A REPORTER CALLS THE PRINCIPAL AND SAYS: Your school is giving teachers a lot of time out of class for professional learning communities. How will you judge the groups' success?		
A BUSINESS PARTNER ASKS: Why should I give you funding for professional development rather than for new technology for classrooms?		
Source: Hirsh, S. & Hord, S. (2012). A playbook for professional learning: Putting the standards into action. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.		