CONNECTING THE STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

As the introduction to the Standards for Professional Learning states, "They are the essential elements of professional learning that function in synergy to enable educators to increase their effectiveness and student learning" (Learning Forward, 2011, p. 14).

STANDARDS →	Learning Communities	Leadership	Resources
QUESTIONS AND LINKS At right are several questions that explore how the Learning Communities standard integrates with the other six standards.	• To what degree are learning communities' professional learning goals aligned with school goals and district priorities? • How cognizant are learning community members of their collective responsibility for the success of all students within the school? • How closely do learning community members follow the cycle of continuous improvement and particularly include learning as a part of their meetings?	• What strategies do school leaders use to develop the capacity of teacher leaders to facilitate learning communities? • How do leaders within schools and districts create the necessary conditions that contribute to the success of learning communities? • What strategies are school leaders using to address barriers to the success of learning communities?	• What resources are available to support the success of learning communities? • How has the school schedule been adjusted to provide time for learning communities to meet within the school day? • What role do teacher leaders and coaches play in supporting learning communities? • How do learning community members work together to conserve resources?

IN THIS ISSUE OF *JSD* THE LEARNING STARTS HERE ▼

ASSESS COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY IN YOUR SCHOOL

One of the key concepts in the Learning Communities standard is collective responsibility. As the standard states, "Collective responsibility brings together the entire education community, including members of the education workforce — teachers, support staff, school system staff, and administrators — as well as families, policymakers, and other stakeholders, to increase effective teaching in every classroom," (Learning Forward, 2011). Researchers have confirmed that collective responsibility contributes to increased student achievement. For example, in a study of more than 800 U.S. high schools, Lee and Smith (1996) found a significant link between collective responsibility and student outcomes. "Considering teachers' collective responsibility for learning, the findings about its effects on adolescents are unequivocal. In schools with high levels of collective responsibility, where these attitudes are also consistent among the faculty, students learn more in all subjects. Equally important, collective responsibility is associated with less internal stratification in these outcomes by social class.

As *JSD* examines each standard individually, we will also demonstrate the key connections between and among all seven standards.

Data	Learning Designs	Implementation	Outcomes
• How do learning communities use student achievement data and educator performance data to set goals and plan their professional learning? • What data do learning community members collect and analyze to measure the effectiveness of learning community processes and results? • How often do learning communities use data to make decisions?	• Which learning designs are learning communities using in their professional learning and collaborative work? • How do learning community members learn about new designs for professional learning? • What factors influence the selection of learning designs for use in the learning community? • What strategies are learning community members using to engage all members?	• To what degree do members of learning communities share responsibility to support one another in implementing professional learning? • How do members of learning communities support one another to implement new learning within their work settings? • What tools are learning communities using to monitor the frequency and fidelity of implementation of professional learning?	• How do members of learning teams integrate individual members' performance standards goals and student achievement goals into the community's learning goals? • How do learning community members align their professional learning with school and district priorities? • What strategies are learning communities using to address long-terms goals and meet interim benchmarks?

Source: **Learning Forward. (2011).** *Standards for Professional Learning.* Oxford, OH: Author.

TO BEGIN an exploration of the level of collective responsibility in your school, discuss the questions in the table below in learning teams or schoolwide. After each team member answers the questions individually, use responses to build a shared understanding of the current state of the school's commitment to collective responsibility. Then determine your next steps for action for improvement.

	Stongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Stongly disagree
Teachers have opportunities to get to know students outside of their classes.				
Teachers meet regularly in teams for collaborative learning and problem solving.				
Teachers have regular access to information about students in classes beyond their own.				
Teachers have frequent opportunities to support their colleagues one-on-one or in teams.				
Learning teams emphasize sharing best practices and examining individual challenges.				
Teachers make an effort to get to know all students in the building.				
Teachers are eager to share helpful information or strategies.				
Teachers know they can turn to their colleagues anytime for support.				
Teachers celebrate the successes of their colleagues.				
Teachers pool their talents to ensure no student falls behind.				

Sources: **Learning Forward. (2011).** *Standards for Professional Learning.* Oxford, OH: Author.
Lee, V.E. & Smith, J.B. (1996, February). Collective responsibility for learning and its effects on gains in achievement for early secondary school students. *American Journal of Education, 104*(2), 103-147.