

THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDE FOR DISTRICT TEAMS



Thank you for being a district member with Learning Forward. To help you spread the learning and engagement with your colleagues, we have designed this supplemental guide exclusively for district members.

This guide will help you take your teams through a deep dive into the latest issue of [The Learning Professional](#).

By reading the issue and using this guide, both of which are focused on the role of technology in professional learning, teams will:

- Discover strategies for incorporating student voice in the classroom, especially during remote, hybrid, and distanced learning;
- Plan how to go beyond normal efforts to provide extra support to colleagues during stressful times; and

- Consider how to strengthen teams by building understanding of team dynamics and needs.

We have designed the learning opportunities in this guide to facilitate discussion among your teams via videoconference or through asynchronous communication. You may wish to send this guide, or portions of it, to your team members to help everyone engage in the activities. Alternatively, you may wish to use it as a facilitation guide and walk your team through the activities yourself. We invite you to share the learning opportunities however they will work best for you.

Be sure to give us feedback about whether you found this useful, and, if you post on social media, tag us [#LearnFwdTLP](#) [@LearningForward](#) so we can share your good work.

NEED HELP LOGGING IN?

If you or your colleagues have questions about logging in with your district membership to access the articles, call **800-727-7288** or email christy.colclasure@learningforward.org.

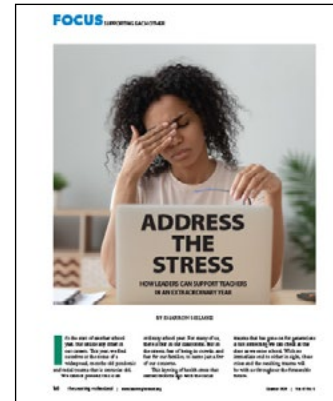
GET STARTED

Support your staff

Leaders model how to respect and care for colleagues. Although we do this all the time in our interactions with others, now is a time to be even more intentional in letting teachers know that their presence is not taken for granted and they are valued for more just their ability to produce strong student outcomes. This activity is designed for leaders of all levels and roles, including district and school leaders as well as coaches, mentors, facilitators, and others.

ACTIONS:

1. Share the article [“Address the stress”](#) and instruct participants to focus on the introduction and the section titled “Go beyond the normal efforts.”
2. Ask participants to respond individually in writing to the following question: How do you typically show respect for your teachers and staff? Make a list of things you typically do with the intention of showing respect and care.
3. Invite participants to share their lists with a partner or in small groups. Instruct participants to add interesting ideas that are new to them but which they believe might be valuable now and would fit with their own leadership style and personality.
4. Even a good strategy, if done too routinely, will lose its feeling of sincerity. Using the planning tool below, invite participants to develop a plan for implementing sequenced outreach over time. Remind participants to ensure that they have a mix of private or one-to-one actions and actions that are more collective and visible. This helps ensure that we are recognizing both the community and the individuals who make up the community. Examples are included here in green.



Strategy	Private or public?	Anytime/always	Over the next 2 months	Jan.-March	March to the end of school year
Hold community PPE drives.	Public		✓		
Send handwritten notes to teachers acknowledging their unique strengths.	Private	✓			
Teacher “Spotlight” announcements to showcase successes.	Private				✓

5. Ask each participant to create a document or other tool to keep track of his or her outreach efforts. Take time at your next meeting for participants to review this document and reflect privately on their steps so far as well as next steps.

NEXT STEPS

Enhance student voice throughout the day

Students need support from educators and peers, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic is challenging us to build and maintain our relationships during remote, hybrid, and modified learning models. Prioritizing student voice is an important way for educators to empower students to connect with each other and class content.

Incorporating student voice means encouraging students to share their ideas, opinions, and input on instruction and their learning community. In the article [“When teachers listen, students learn,”](#) Liesel Carlson writes that keeping student voice at the center of teaching boosts engagement, motivation, achievement, and equity.



ACTIONS:

1. Ask your team to read the article. During a team meeting, ask participants to brainstorm in-person practices they have used that were successful in creating opportunities for students to share their thoughts and voices in an online setting. Use a collaborative platform such as Google Jamboard (virtual sticky notes) for brainstorming and creating a reference artifact of effective practices. Give participants a few minutes to review the virtual sticky notes. Ask each participant to write down at least one strategy (other than their own) that resonated with them and why.
2. Assign participants to video breakout rooms to discuss the remote/distanced strategies. Facilitate a conversation around the following questions:
 - What practices have you tried for incorporating student voice in remote or distanced learning? How did they work, and why were they successful or unsuccessful?
 - What practices did you hear or see in the brainstorming session that you would like to try or learn more about?
3. In the same breakout groups, ask each participant to choose one new remote/distanced student voice strategy that he or she would like to try for the next month until your next meeting. Ask each participant to complete the first three columns.

Practice I would like to try

Intended outcome

Potential barriers

Strategies to overcome barriers

Bring participants back to the full group setting. As a group, discuss each participant’s chosen strategy and potential barriers. Share ideas for overcoming barriers and, if applicable, other participants’ experiences with the strategy.

4. Make a plan for each participant to check in weekly with a peer, coach, or leader about the student voice practice, and revisit them at the next meeting.

DEEP DIVE

Strengthen team connections

In the article [“Connections bring us closer to equity and justice,”](#) authors Ellie Drago-Severson, Jessica Blum-DeStefano, and Deborah Brooks-Lawrence offer key developmental strategies for helping teams deepen connections and understandings — virtually or in person — to honor diversity and enhance collaboration. We recommend that you ask participants to read the article and think about ideas, questions, or connections that stand out to them.

ACTIONS:

1. During a team meeting, provide participants with a few quiet minutes to reflect privately or journal about the “Questions to consider” on p. 33 and printed below. If you are on multiple teams, we encourage you to focus on one team for now.



What is one thing you value about your team?

What is one thing **you'd** like to get better at as you collaborate with your team?

What is one thing **you'd like your team** to get better at?

How has the shift to virtual team meetings been for you?

What is one insight or takeaway from the article that could help you improve the work of your team?

What is your next step?

2. Divide the group into pairs or small groups to share their thoughts on how virtual team meetings are going and how they can be improved. Use a whiteboard, Google Slides, or virtual tool to share and collect ideas.
3. Come back to the large group and facilitate a discussion about the concept of ways of knowing, as presented in the article. What did you find helpful? What questions do you have? How might you implement what you've learned about?

DEEP DIVE, continued

4. After going over the concept and reviewing the different ways of knowing, give participants time to fill out the following information for themselves, a close supervisor, and a supervisee or colleague. This information will not be shared.

Person	Type of knower (instrumental, socializing, self-authoring, self-transforming)	Example that demonstrates this type of knowing	Implications for current team work
Self			
Supervisor			
Supervisee/colleague			

5. With these understandings of self and other in mind, engage in a whole-group discussion about ideas for improving team dynamics. As a group, come up with three concrete ideas, action steps, and follow-up plans.

Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3
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