

Maximizing resources

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Inventorying learning resources and maximizing use

Purpose	Leverage available resources to advance the schoolwide and team-based learning agenda. Developing shared awareness and ownership for resources may increase efficient and effective uses as well as identify new opportunities for strategic investments.
Recommended time	1–2 hours across two to three sessions
Materials	<p>Tool 5.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Chapter 5: Maximizing Resources,” <i>The Learning Principal</i>, pages 67-79. • Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning: Resources, pages 4–6 • Resource Inventory, page 7 • Resource Action Plan, page 8
Process: Meeting 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share “Chapter 5: Maximizing Resources” from <i>The Learning Principal</i> with the school leadership team. 2. Share the Standards for Professional Learning: Resource, pages 4–6. 3. Describe your intention to complete an inventory of learning resources to determine whether there are opportunities to realign resources to support school, team, and individual goals. 4. Discuss potential benefits and obstacles to the conducting such a process. 5. Discuss potential reactions from the entire school staff. 6. Review the list of resources and determine whether there are any items to eliminate or add. (NOTE: “Time” as a resource is addressed in Tool 5.3, pages 11–12, but may be combined with this one.) 7. Discuss any changes so there is a consensus in making the list. Review the questions on page 7 that will guide the inventory. Make any changes so there is a consensus about the questions. 8. Conclude the session by developing shared “School definitions” for each resource item on page 7. 9. Divide the group by resource(s) to collect the information required to complete the inventory. Determine a date to meet and discuss the findings. 10. Be available when questions surface during data collection. 11. Collate data before next meeting for further discussion and analysis.

Inventorying resources and maximizing use, continued

Process: Meeting 2	1. Share data.
	2. Provide opportunity for individuals to review and process.
	3. Use the following questions to surface observations and learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you see in the data that you expect to find? • What do you see in the data that surprises you? • What did you learn from the experience that is not reflected in the data? • Are there any trends or patterns that you recognize in the data? • Are there additional questions to be studied? • What did you learn? • What actions do you recommend we consider next?
	4. Encourage participants to continue to reflect on the findings and seek additional information, as necessary.
Process: Meeting 3	1. Develop action plan for leveraging resources. Support individual, team, and schoolwide goals.
	2. See Resource Action Plan on page 8.

Inventorying resources and maximizing use, continued

Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning: Resources

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

Effective professional learning requires human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources to achieve student learning goals. How resources are allocated for professional learning can overcome inequities and achieve results for educators and students. The availability and allocation of resources for professional learning affect its quality and results. Understanding the resources associated with professional learning and actively and accurately tracking them facilitates better decisions about and increased quality and results of professional learning.

Prioritize Human, Fiscal, Material, Technology, And Time Resources

Resources for professional learning include staff, materials, technology, and time, all dependent on available funding. How these resources are prioritized to align with identified professional learning needs affects access to, quality of, and effectiveness of educator learning experiences. Decisions about resources for professional learning require a thorough understanding of student and educator learning needs, clear commitment to ensure equity in resource allocation, and thoughtful consideration of priorities to achieve the intended outcomes for students and educators.

Staff costs are a significant portion of the resource investment in professional learning. Costs in this category include school and school system leaders and other specialized staff who facilitate or support school- or school system-based professional learning, such as instructional coaches, facilitators, and mentors, as well as salary costs for educators when professional learning occurs within their workday. The time leaders commit to professional learning, either their own or for those they supervise, is a cost factor because it is time these leaders are investing in professional learning; managing this time is another area of responsibility for leaders.

Time allocated for professional learning is another significant investment. Education systems worldwide have schedules that provide time in the school day for teacher collaboration and planning to increase student learning. Learning time for educators may extend into after-school meetings, summer extended learning experiences, and occasional times during the workday when students are not present.

Professional learning embedded into educators' workdays increases the opportunity for all educators to receive individual, team, or school-based support within the work setting to promote continuous improvement. Dedicated job-embedded learning time elevates the importance of continuous, careerlong learning as a professional responsibility of all educators and aligns the focus of their learning to the identified needs of students they serve. Including substantive time for professional learning, 15% or more, within the workday shifts some costs for external professional learning to support job-embedded professional learning.

Inventorying resources and maximizing use, continued

Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning: Resources, continued

Technology and material resources for professional learning create opportunities to access information that enriches practice. Use of high-speed broadband, web-based and other technologies, professional journals and books, software, and a comprehensive learning management system is essential to support individual and collaborative professional learning. Access to just-in-time learning resources and participation in local or global communities or networks available to individuals or teams of educators during their workday expand opportunities for job-embedded professional learning.

Investments in professional learning outside the school or workplace supplement and advance job-embedded professional learning. To increase alignment and coherence between job-embedded and external professional learning, both must address the individual, school, and school system goals for educator and student learning.

When economic challenges emerge, schools and school systems often reduce investments in professional learning. In high-performing countries, professional learning is valued so highly as a key intervention to improve schools that reducing it is not an option. Top-performing businesses frequently increase training and development in challenging times. In lean times, professional learning is especially important to prepare members of the workforce for the changes they will experience, maintain and increase student achievement, develop flexibility to detect and adapt to new economic conditions and opportunities, and sustain employee morale, retention, commitment, and expertise.

Monitor Resources

Resources for professional learning come from many sources, including government allocations, public and private agencies, and educators themselves. Tracking and monitoring these resources is challenging, yet essential. Some costs, such as those for staff, registrations, consultants, materials, stipends for mentor teachers, and relief teachers, are relatively easy to track. Others, such as the portion of time educators are engaged in job-embedded professional learning and technology used for professional learning, are more difficult to monitor. Yet without a consistent and comprehensive process to track and monitor resources, it is difficult to evaluate the appropriateness or effectiveness of their allocation and use.

The level of funding for professional learning in schools varies tremendously. Some studies on professional learning in public schools have suggested that the investments range from less than 1% of total operating expenses to as high as 12%. In the highest-performing countries, investments in professional learning for educators, particularly teachers and principals, are much higher. Decisions about funding must specifically address inequities in learning needs and opportunities to learn and be given highest priority so that all students and the educators who serve them have the resources to achieve at the highest levels.

Inventorying resources and maximizing use, continued

Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning: Resources, continued

Coordinate Resources

The coordination of resources for professional learning is essential to their appropriate and effective use. With funding for professional learning, school improvement, and other reform initiatives coming from multiple sources and for multiple purposes, ensuring alignment and effectiveness in resource use is paramount to ensuring success. School and school system leaders are primarily responsible for coordinating resources. However, all educators have a shared responsibility to understand and contribute to decisions about and monitor the effectiveness of resources allocated for professional learning.

To make certain that resources invested in professional learning achieve their intended results, school system leaders regularly convene representatives of all stakeholders to examine and recommend changes to policies, regulations, and agreements related to professional learning.

Related Research

Abdal-Haqq, I. (1996). *Making time for teacher professional development*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 400259).

Chambers, J.G., Lam, I., & Mahitivanichcha, K. (2008, September). *Examining context and challenges in measuring investment in professional development: A case study of six school districts in the Southwest region* (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2008-No. 037). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest.

Haslam, M.B. (1997, Fall). How to rebuild a local professional development infrastructure. *NAS Getting Better by Design*. Arlington, VA: New American Schools.

Odden, A., Archibald, S., Fermanich, M., & Gallagher, H.A. (2002). A cost framework for professional development. *Journal of Education Finance*, 28(1), 51-74.

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Inventorying resources and maximizing use, continued

Resource Inventory

Resource	School definition	Personnel count	Funding source(s) and projected \$\$\$ value	Level of or potential for influence or authority	Focus/Use aligned to school priorities	Notes
School-based support for teachers and others (e.g. administrators, coaches, media specialists)						
Instructional and supplementary materials						
Technology						
District personnel support						
External experts						
Funding for conferences, school visits						
Substitutes for professional learning						
Funding for courses, webinars						

Inventorying resources and maximizing use, continued

Resource Action Plan

How?	Why?	Who?	By When?	What?
Actions to take	Expected outcomes to achieve	Persons responsible for leading effort(s)	Deadlines for completing tasks	Actual outcomes achieved

Leveraging internal expertise

Purpose	Explore ways to leverage internal expertise to accelerate the learning agenda. Tap school leadership team or other group of teacher leaders to evaluate ideas presented in chapter and build an appropriate plan for the school.
Recommended time	1–2 hours
Materials	Tool 5.2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tapping Internal Expertise, page 10
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convene the school leadership team or another group of teacher leaders. 2. Share “Chapter 6: Maximizing Resources” and discuss the assumption that expertise within the school can be leveraged more or in new ways to accelerate improvement efforts. 3. Distribute Tapping Internal Expertise, page 10, or modify with examples that are appropriate for the school. 4. Use the following questions to guide a discussion and determine appropriate next steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your reactions to the article? • Are there ideas worth considering? • What do you think about the idea of shifting dollars from consultants to key staff members? What are strengths and weaknesses of such an idea? • Are there other ways to tap expertise to add to the chart? • What are the potential benefits of those? • Are there actions to consider taking as a result of this examination?

Leveraging internal expertise, continued

Tapping Internal Expertise

Shifts		Potential Benefits
Moving from	to	Results in
Elected school leadership team composition	Combination of elected and appointed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of the representation essential for buy-in for a given change. Opportunity to bring in voices that offer identified expertise.
External consultants to lead professional learning	Teacher leaders with demonstrated expertise and results in identified areas of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing immediate credibility. Opportunity to use resources to compensate internal staff, a move that may also help retain experts within the school.
Hiring external coaches to provide classroom-based support	Identification of coaches from existing staff members who have demonstrated success in the priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing, again, immediate credibility. Opportunity to use resources to compensate internal staff that may, again, help retain experts within the school. Establishing a coach position that could be itinerant with different individuals serving each year, based on chosen focus areas. A coach who returns to classroom returns as a stronger teacher.
Grade level and subject/department leads assigned by seniority	Grade level and subject/department leads recruited deliberately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of leadership opportunities and career ladders that contribute to retention. Additional leadership training that builds internal capacity for the work completed in teams. A pipeline for other key in-school leadership opportunities.
Mentor assignments for student teachers, residents, and first-year teachers made based on teacher volunteers	Mentors identified based on careful screening criteria including interviews by teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of leadership opportunities and career ladders that, again, contribute to retention. Additional leadership training that builds internal capacity for the work completed in teams. Contribution to pipeline for other key in-school leadership opportunities. Teacher leaders are available and accessible to teaching staff to provide additional educator learning experiences; this practice creates a pipeline for future teacher-leader candidates.

Finding time for professional learning

Purpose	Identify options for adding or refocusing time for professional learning.
Recommended time	1 hour; required time may vary as work continues
Materials	<p>Tool 5.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning: Resources, pages 4–6 <p>Tool 5.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time Review, page 12
Process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine appropriate group with whom to hold this discussion. 2. Convene the team and ask everyone to read Tool 5.1: Standards for Professional Learning, pages 4–6. 3. Indicate the focus of the conversation is to consider current ways time is allocated/used for professional learning and to consider if there are reasons/ways to increase and/or reallocate current uses. 4. Use the Time Review, page 12, to record time used for professional learning and how it is used. 5. Use the following questions to guide a discussion of the data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average, how much time do teachers, coaches, principals, and others have for individual planning and reflection? • On average, how much time do teachers, coaches, principals, and others have for team learning? • On average, how much time do teachers, coaches, principals, and others spend on schoolwide learning? • Do teachers, coaches, principals, and others have adequate time for professional learning? • What are priorities for using additional time if it were identified? • What are considerations for creating new time or reallocating current time? 6. Debrief the discussion. Determine whether any actions may be taken to address the findings. 7. Identify next three actions to take: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Action . . . b. Action . . . c. Action . . . 8. Over time, collect evidence of impact of the actions and determine whether additional actions are necessary.

Finding time for professional learning, continued

Time Review

	Used for professional learning? Y/N	Participants	Goals/Focus for professional learning time	Evidence of impact collected
Before school				
During lunch				
Scheduled time during school day				
Specific professional learning days				
District meetings				
Late-start days				
Early-release days				
Substitute coverage				
Team planning time				
After school				
Teacher planning time				
Summer				