Standards for Professional Learning work best together

BY LEARNING FORWARD

Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning are designed to be addressed as a cohesive system. Applying some standards without attending to others reduces the overall effectiveness of any professional learning effort, leading to gaps in educators' learning and, therefore, students' learning.

The tables on the following pages describe what happens when educators neglect one or more of the standards within their professional learning systems. For each of the 11 standards, we have listed the types of challenges that tend to arise when the standard is implemented inadequately, inconsistently, or not at all.

You can use this tool to build your team's understanding of the importance and role of implementing standards collectively. You can also peruse the bulleted statements to find challenges you face in your context and consider how to focus attention on implementing the corresponding standard.

As you identify your challenges and areas for further effort, there is no one right place to start. To achieve full implementation of a professional learning system guided by standards, you can identify areas that are top priorities and action steps to implement now or outline a full-blown strategy to develop a vision and short- and long-term goals. The reflection questions that follow the tables invite conversation to determine a potential entry point.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN STANDARDS AREN'T IMPLEMENTED

RIGOROUS CONTENT FOR EACH LEARNER

Without each standard, schools may see the following challenges:

EQUITY PRACTICES	CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, AND INSTRUCTION	PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE
• Low expectations • Lack of relevant instruction for each student • Disengaged or disenfranchised students and families	• Lack of rigor and relevance • Inadequate use of assessments • Misaligned or ineffective instructional practices	• Stagnant or ineffective educator practices • Neglect of current grade-level or content standards • Reduced educator advancement and retention

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESSES

Without each standard, schools may see the following challenges:

EQUITY DRIVERS	EVIDENCE	LEARNING DESIGNS	IMPLEMENTATION
• Inequitable access to professional learning • Disengaged or disenfranchised educators • Lack of diverse perspectives in discussions	• Uninformed decision-making • Irrelevant professional learning • Professional learning without impact	• Misaligned professional learning goals • Lack of educator engagement • One-size-fits-all professional learning	• Resistance to change • Professional learning without impact • Short-term improvement

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Without each standard, schools may see the following challenges:

EQUITY FOUNDATIONS	CULTURE OF COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY	LEADERSHIP	RESOURCES
• Inequitable access and opportunity for learning • Low and/or inconsistent expectations • Distrust and division among staff	• Pockets of individual excellence • Students falling through the cracks • Ineffective use of team time	• No shared commitment to professional learning • Disjointed professional learning efforts • Lack of understanding about why professional learning matters	• Lack of support • Gaps in access to learning • No return on investment

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where do we see successes in our efforts to implement a system of professional learning, emphasizing multiple elements as represented in Standards for Professional Learning? What can we learn from those successes?

- Scanning the challenges listed on these pages, which do we tend to observe in our settings? Where do we see opportunities for improvement?

- What other professional learning challenges do we experience, and how might a standards-based system support us in addressing those challenges?

- The 11 Standards for Professional Learning live within a framework of Rigorous Content for Each Learner, Transformational Processes, and Conditions for Success. Based on the challenges listed when a standard is neglected, which frames does our team or system tend to overemphasize while neglecting others?

- What are potential implications for our next actions?