

How Professional Learning Improves Teacher and Student Outcomes: Examining the Evidence



Webinar
March 2, 2023

If you can see the slide and hear the music, you are all set.

Welcome! We will begin shortly.

All attendees are muted upon entry. Please use the chat feature for comments and questions during the webinar.

Thank you for joining us

The webinar will be recorded and available.

All webinar registrants will receive a follow-up email that will include the webinar slide deck, recording, and other resources mentioned during the presentation.

Please introduce yourselves in the chat box

- Your name
- Your location
- Your role in the educational sector



[@learningforward](https://twitter.com/learningforward)

Let's get started



Elizabeth Foster

Vice President
Research &
Standards

Learning Forward



Participants will ...

- Examine the research on how professional learning leads to improvements in teacher practice and student outcomes
- Learn from district leaders about the ways they use and collect evidence on the impact of professional learning
- Access relevant resources from the panelists and from Learning Forward

Highlighting the evidence



The Research behind Standards for Professional Learning

Learning Forward believes that professional learning investments of time and resources must be guided by evidence of what works for educators and students. To that end, standards are informed by a range of research as well as by input from educators.

[This paper](#) offers an overview of the research used in the revision of standards, references and additional reading, and a snapshot of Learning Forward's future research agenda.

Evidence of how Standards for Professional Learning are associated with improved teacher instruction and student outcomes

The Center on Great Leaders and Teachers at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) conducted a systematic literature review and meta-analysis to understand the relationships among Standards for Professional Learning and teacher and student outcomes.

AIR researchers formally analyzed the available evidence from randomized field trials of teacher professional learning programs that tied features of Standards of Professional Learning to teacher instruction and student learning.



Highlighting the evidence

Common stem

Three components or concepts are included in the narrative

Linkages with other standards suggest how these components work together to create a system

Selected research is listed at the end of each standard

Culture of Collaborative Inquiry



Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators engage in continuous improvement, build collaboration skills and capacity, and share responsibility for improving learning for all students.

Culture of Collaborative Inquiry

When educators at every role, grade level, and content area collaborate for continuous improvement and support their colleagues' ongoing learning and development, they increase learning opportunities for each student. They simultaneously develop individual and collective knowledge and expertise and commit to collective responsibility so together they can better meet student needs.

Educators engage in strategic and consistent processes to develop the habits of mind and practices that make collaboration effective, and they embrace continuous learning as a shared responsibility and privilege. Collaborative learning is more than a particular design or format. Rather, it is a holistic approach to professional learning and a key contributor to a culture of sustained improvement.

Superintendents, principals, and leaders of professional learning establish expectations for collective improvement and protect time and resources that support ongoing learning. Leaders of professional learning become experts in collaborative inquiry and support their colleagues in using continuous improvement approaches and understanding their value. Educators in all roles commit to building their knowledge and skills so learn in concert, remaining open and curious about their students and colleagues, and supporting one another to achieve the goal of improved learning for all students.

Here are the main constructs of the Culture of Collaborative Inquiry standard.

EDUCATORS ENGAGE IN CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

Educators recognize that embedding continuous improvement structures and practices into their day-to-day work strengthens their knowledge and skills, especially related to their ability to collaborate to improve outcomes for all students. Educators use research, school and system goals, and professional expertise to identify the most relevant and promising collaborative continuous improvement approach and engage in professional learning related to the processes, expectations, and tools that will support them as they work toward shared goals and document, analyze, and improve their practices.

In the continuous improvement process, educators develop shared goals and then document, collaboratively analyze, and improve their practices, reflecting together along the way. They recognize that achieving long-term goals takes time, persistence, and trusting relationships as well as regular cycles of planning, learning, testing, data collection, and analysis.

Educators define a shared problem of practice based on relevant data and an understanding of their own context and challenges, such as addressing student learning variability, implementing curriculum, aligning content across courses, or strengthening instruction. Educators identify potential small-scale improvements to implement and test.

Learning from each continuous improvement cycle informs the next, as incremental changes lead to major improvements. Educators are comfortable with some uncertainty about the outcomes of the

test they are about to undertake because they will look at the results together and reflect about success, failure, and any needed adaptations.

As their confidence in the learning process and in each other grows, educators become more transparent about their own learning and increasingly willing to make changes that raise and accelerate student achievement. Educators recognize that improvements are multiplied when they deprivatize their practice by sharing information about the results of any strategies they test. They open their doors locally and figuratively to invite observations by peers and constructive feedback dialogues about successes and challenges.

Educators understand that, individually and collectively, they influence student growth, and they believe that each improvement in their mindset, knowledge, or skills leads to an improvement in student outcomes. They trust their colleagues will support them when they risk failure to test a new instructional strategy or acknowledge a blind spot in their approach to student learning. In turn, they support their colleagues as they do the same.

EDUCATORS BUILD COLLABORATION SKILLS AND CAPACITY.

Professional learning increases educators' knowledge about the benefits of collaboration and strengthens their capacity and skills to collaborate.

Together, educators identify, practice, assess, and refine the skills and practices that foster collaboration. They seek opportunities to practice collaborative skills such as active listening, ensuring parity among speakers, respecting diversity of opinions, and shared decision-making.

They increase their knowledge about collaborative professional inquiry and practice skills such as rigorous questioning and discussions about relevant topics such as student work, classroom observations, instructional practice, and patterns in student data. They increase their capacity to engage in and learn from conflict and are intentional about when and how they seek consensus or compromise to determine next actions.

Collaboration varies by educator role. For instance, classroom educators might participate in school-based collaborative inquiry teams to implement, support, and assess evidence-based and inclusive instructional strategies to achieve the goal of academic success for each student. School or district leaders might collaborate in a network to collaboratively analyze which of their collective efforts have an impact and should be continued.

At every level, educators use established

LINKS TO OTHER STANDARDS

Educators use the Standards for Professional Learning together to inspire and drive improvement. Each of the 11 standards connects to the other standards to support a high-functioning learning system. Here are some of the ways the Culture of Collaborative Inquiry standard connects to other standards:

- The **Professional Expertise** standard establishes content and skills essential to particular roles and functions that complement collaborative inquiry knowledge and practices.
- The **Evidence** standard addresses the importance of using research and evidence in selecting intervention and setting goals.
- The **Equity Foundations** standard highlights the role of professional learning in setting expectations, creating structures, and sustaining a productive culture.

frameworks and protocols to ensure that collaboration is directly relevant to their day-to-day work and focused on instruction that improves outcomes for all students.

Educators ensure their collaboration is purposeful, informed by student needs, and tightly focused through frequent team meetings, either in person or virtual, and adherence to shared norms that increase their learning cycle, such as time for reflection and being transparent about goals and data.

Educators align their learning goals across teams as well as to school, district, and system priorities to ensure that collaborative learning is directly tied to improving student outcomes. Educators use protocols, templates, and tools to support the development and use of shared language, engagement of stakeholders and policymakers, and common methods for collecting and analyzing data and evidence.

Educators recognize the importance of establishing trusting relationships to build a culture of collaborative inquiry. They study what contributes to trust and why trust is important among educators as well as with families and caregivers, students, and community members. They recognize that establishing trust among peers

is different from establishing trust among educators with different levels of authority or in those in supervisory positions.

EDUCATORS SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPROVING LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS.

Educators hold themselves and their colleagues responsible for making progress toward the goals they have established, rather than placing responsibility on the students or external actors. Individual educator learning is valuable in improving each teacher's agency and self-efficacy.

That learning is even more valuable when it adds to the knowledge and understanding of a team of colleagues and is leveraged for improvement and collective efficacy—the belief that they as educators are having a positive impact on student outcomes. Educators invest in others' professional growth because it builds trust over time as engagement deepens and improves and ultimately leads to better and more equitable student learning.

Educators assume responsibility for each and every student and are accountable to each other for progress toward shared goals for students. Educators hold themselves accountable through the analysis of data throughout the learning process to ensure each student's access to and opportunity for challenging learning and to identify students who need additional support.

Mutual accountability includes looking closely at whether colleagues provide opportunities to learn for every student and developing strategies to address any inequities. To inform this shared effort, educators observe and are observed by peers and identify opportunities to learn from each other's professional experience and research. These feedback-rich relationships extend across grade levels, teams, and content areas.

Educators commit to engaging in a formative assessment process of their own learning as well as to shared reflection. They also commit to being reliable, constructive colleagues who focus on how their

individual and collaborative contributions improve instruction for all students. They reflect on evidence of their shared impact as a way to build collective efficacy and celebrate their positive influence on student outcomes.

Honoring this shared commitment, educators try to view questions and even conflict as productive, leading to a better shared understanding of how they work cooperatively to improve teaching and learning. Educators value the ways in which shared responsibility and mutual respect for expertise creates opportunities for meaningful educator agency for both formal and informal leadership.

SELECTED RESEARCH

Campbell, C., Osmond-Johanson, P., Fushner, B., Zeichner, K., & Hobbs-Johnson, A. (with Brown, S., DaCosta, P., Hales, A., Kuchta, L., Sohn, J., & Steffensen, K.). (2017). *The state of educators' professional learning in Canada: Final research report*. Learning Forward.

Donohoo, J. (2013). *Collaborative inquiry for educators: A facilitator's guide to school improvement*. Corwin.

Donohoo, J., Hattie, J., & Eells, R. (2018, March 1). *The power of collective efficacy*. ASCD. www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar18vol75num06/The-Power-of-Collective-Efficacy.aspx

Goddard, Y.L., & Minjung, K. (2018). Examining connections between teacher perceptions of collaboration, differentiated instruction, and teacher efficacy. *Teachers College Record*, 120(1), 1-24.

Hargreaves, A. & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. Teachers College Press.

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible Learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. Routledge.

Jensen, B., Sonnemann, J., Roberts-Hull, K., & Hunter, A. (2016). *Royal P.D.: Teacher professional learning in high-performing systems*. National Center on Education and the Economy.

Highlighting the evidence

POWERED by TITLE II

Supporting Research



Attending to students' and educators' backgrounds in professional learning leads to better outcomes.

Visit the website at poweredbytitleii.com



Research shows that culturally responsive teaching has a positive impact on student engagement and learning, especially for students “whose experiences and cultures are traditionally excluded from mainstream settings”. Professional learning at the system, school or individual level can expand beliefs and strengthen skills related to the teacher-student relationship, instructional language and routines, classroom climate and expectations, and assessments.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). [*Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: AKA the remix*](#). *Harvard Educational Review*, (84)1, 74–84.



“... by **academic success** I refer to the intellectual growth that students experience as a result of classroom instruction and learning experiences. **Cultural competence** refers to the ability to help students appreciate and celebrate their cultures of origin while gaining knowledge of and fluency in at least one other culture. **Sociopolitical consciousness** is the ability to take learning beyond the confines of the classroom using school knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems.”

POWERED by TITLE II

Supporting Research

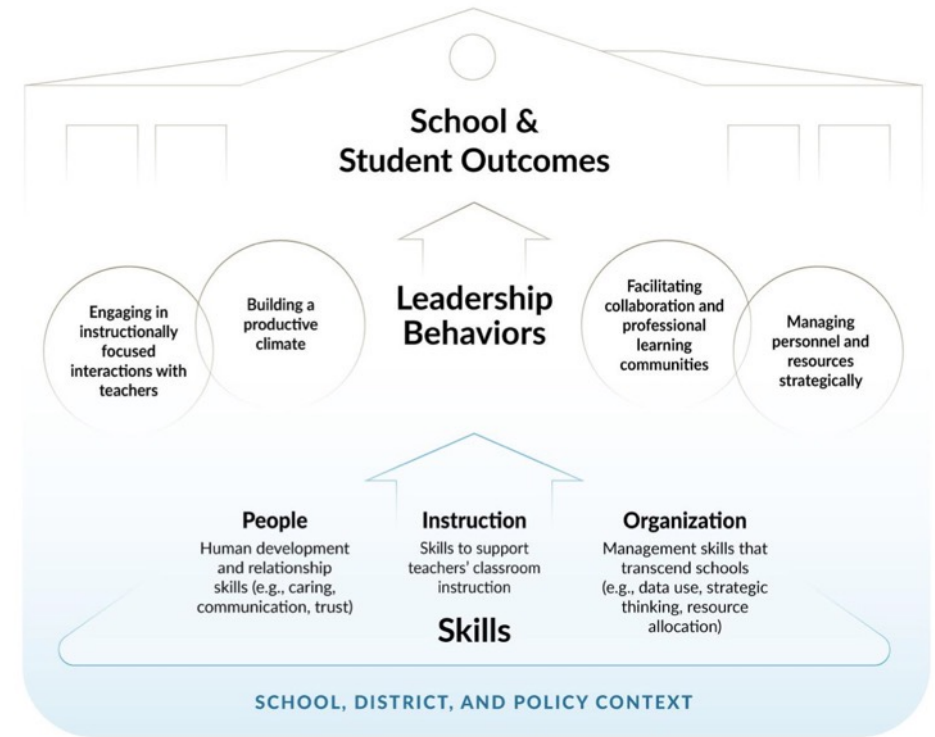


Investments in school leaders and future school leaders improve teaching and learning.



Research shows a strong correlation between investing in effective principals and student achievement and teacher retention. New research sponsored by The Wallace Foundation reviewed of two decades of evidence including six quantitative, longitudinal studies involving 22,000 principals — found that principals have large positive effects on student learning.

Grissom, J.A., Egalite, A.J., & Lindsay, C.A. (2021, February). How principals affect students and schools: A systematic synthesis of two decades of research. The Wallace Foundation. www.wallacefoundation.org/principalsynthesis



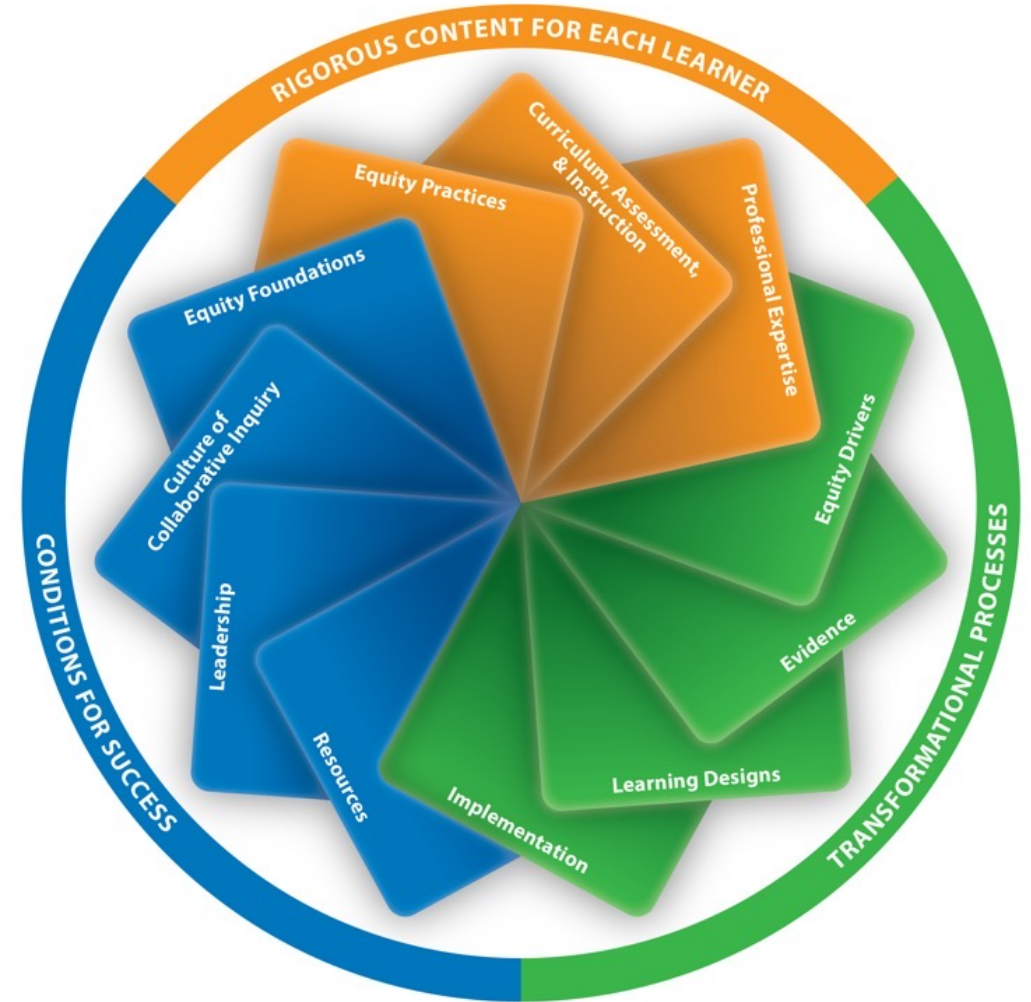
Visit the website at poweredbytitleii.com

Evidence standard

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators create expectations and build capacity for use of evidence, leverage evidence, data, and research from multiple sources to plan educator learning, and measure and report the impact of professional learning.

Educators turn to evidence at all stages of planning, monitoring, and assessing professional learning. They use a combination of relevant data and research findings as well as data from evaluations of their own system's professional learning to make decisions about professional learning policies, resources, plans, and goals. The use of data, evidence, and research is a recursive process; their use informs decisions about planning professional learning, and impact results inform the next planning decisions.

Educators understand that data are information points, while evidence is the collection of data assembled to contribute to a better understanding of a situation or inform a decision. Data can be quantitative (counts and percentages), qualitative (interview responses and written artifacts), formative, and summative. Educators use research about professional learning, including evaluation studies, to better understand the components of any professional learning and its potential impacts.



Panel discussion



Rachel Garrett
Principal Researcher
American Institutes for
Research
Chicago, IL



**Tauheedah
Baker-Jones**
Chief Equity and Social
Justice Officer
Atlanta Public Schools
Atlanta, GA



Larry W. Johnson
Leadership Development
Facilitator
Akron Public Schools
Akron, OH

Current research — SIM PD

SIM PD is an innovative professional learning program for teachers to

1. Learn **questioning and discussion facilitation strategies** that promote student engagement and understanding of math concepts
2. **Collaboratively practice** the strategies with fellow teachers using a **simulated classroom** where avatar students respond to teachers in real time
3. Receive **support from a coach** trained by AIR to lead the SIM PD activities



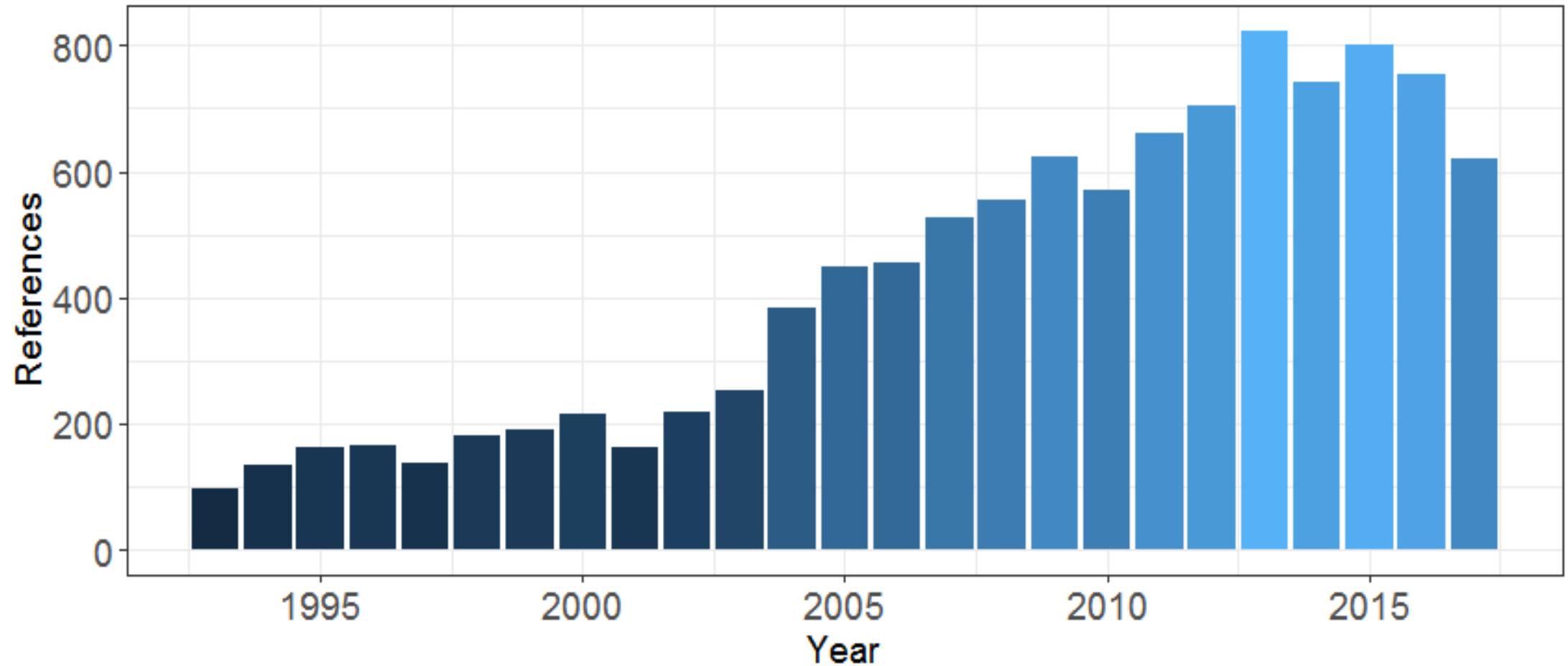
Current research — Write to succeed

The *Write to Succeed* professional learning program provides opportunities for Grades 4–8 teachers in New Mexico to:

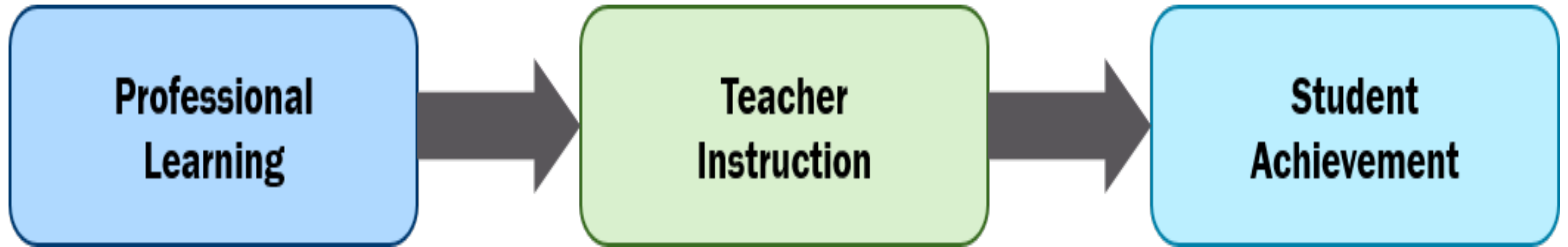
- Engage in collaborative professional learning on **evidence-based literacy practices** to effectively scaffold **writing instruction**—in any content area
- Foster all students' writing skills with **language and cultural supports** for English learner students of all backgrounds across New Mexico
- Receive **ongoing support** from a coach and from their colleagues **to elevate their existing instructional units**



Rigorous research on improving instruction has been growing



The overarching Theory of Action



What is meta-analysis?

- Meta-analysis involves statistical analysis using data combined across multiple studies.
- Outcome results using different measures across different studies are first standardized into **effect sizes** so that they can be analyzed together.
- This allows us to build knowledge by analyzing results over multiple studies, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of research findings.

Findings from an initial meta-analysis



Professional learning was associated with large, positive impacts on instruction.



The study did not look at student achievement.

Certain approaches may be particularly effective



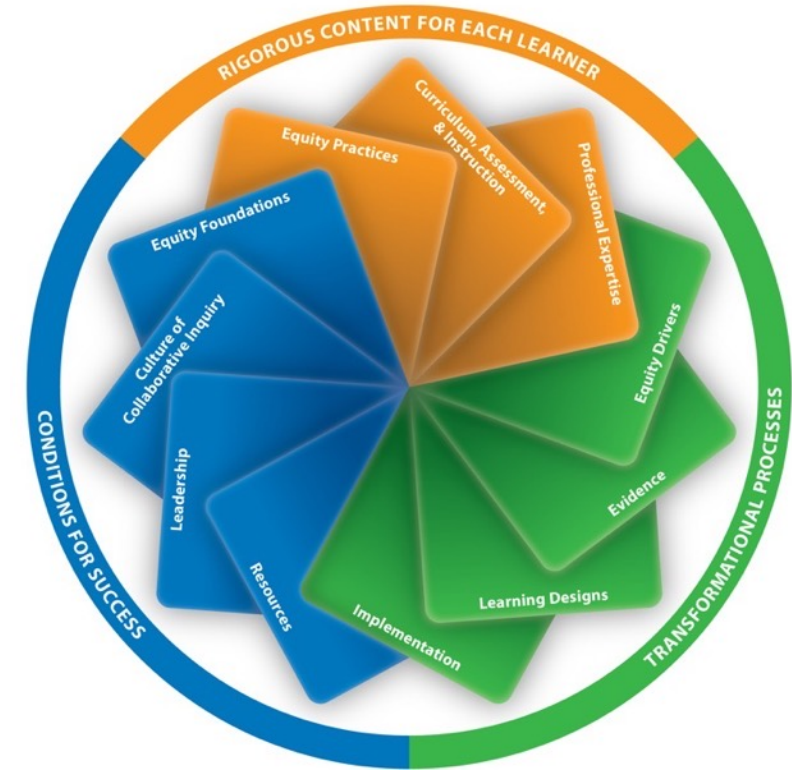
- Individualized coaching
- Active practice
- Using data to inform instruction



- More hours or weeks
- Teachers having fewer or more years of experience

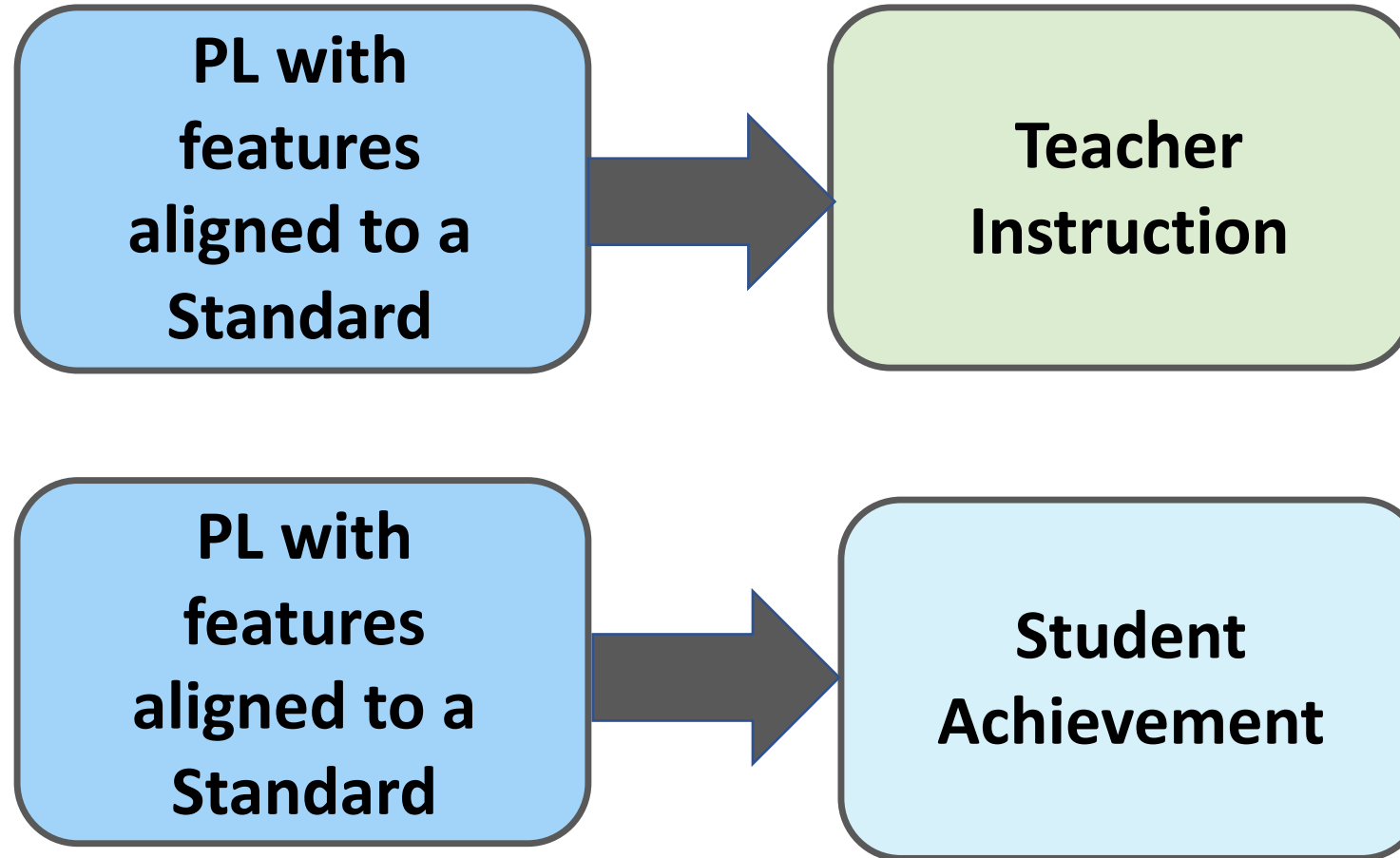
We revisited the research in support of the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning revision process

- Refresh with the newest research
- Examine student achievement
- Examine evidence related to the 2022 Standards

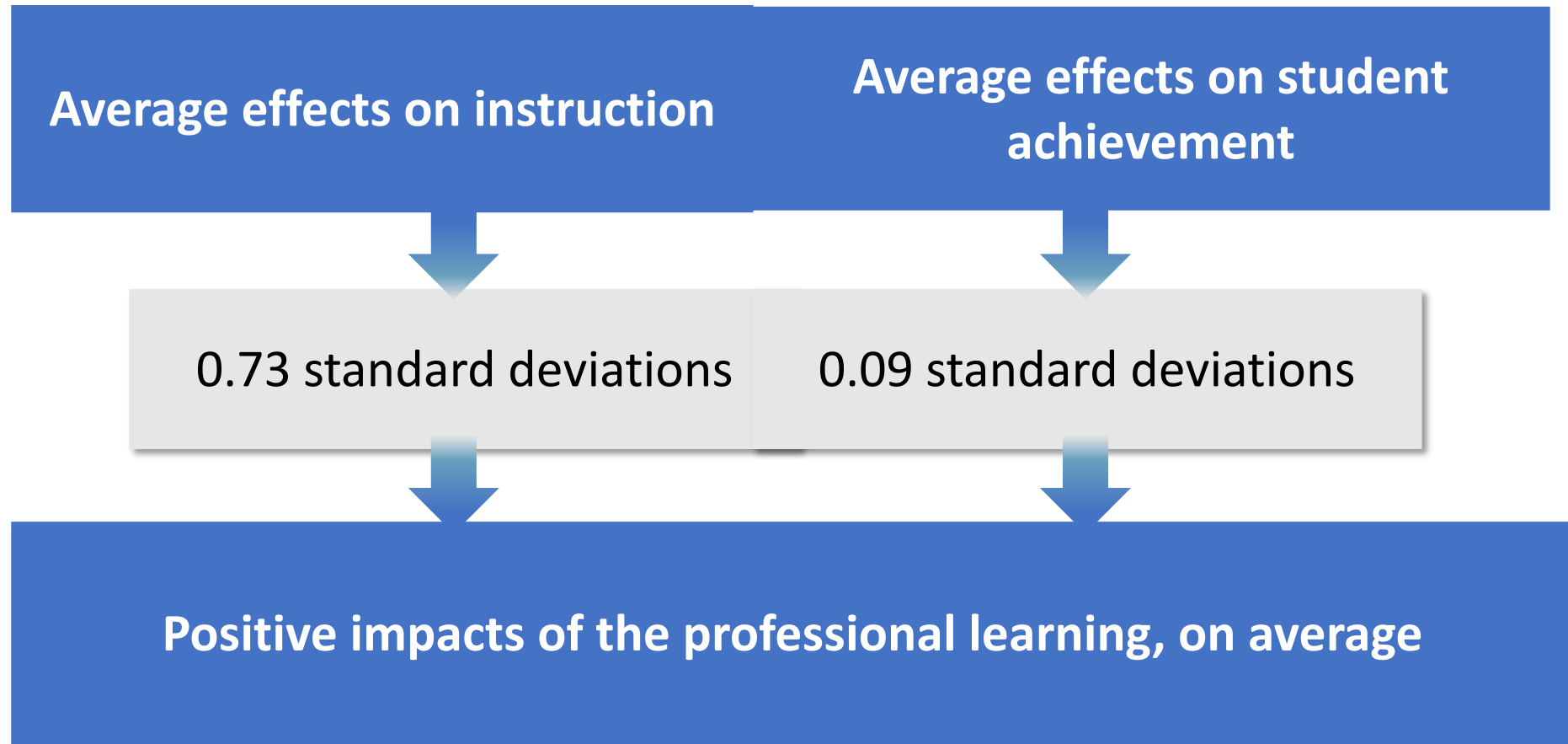


An overview of the research process, references, and links to the AIR meta-analysis are available at standards.learningforward.org.

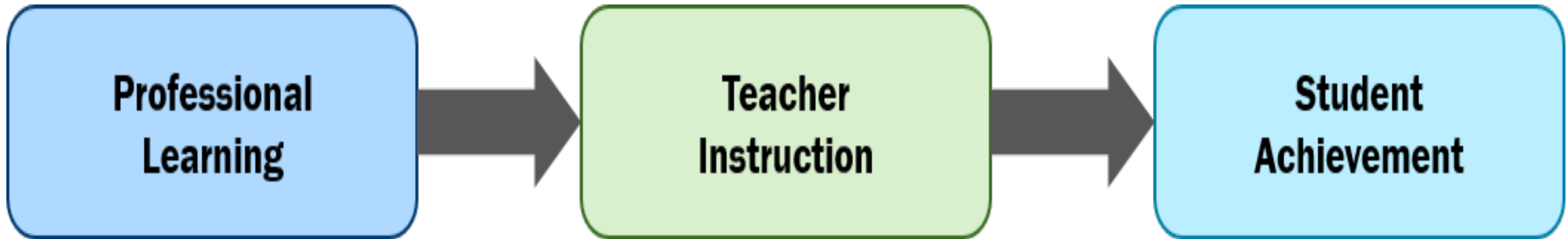
The association of standards — Aligned PL with instruction and achievement






The analyses found positive, significant effects of PL on instruction and student achievement



A mediation meta-analysis showed support for the overarching Theory of Action



The 2022 standards have significant, positive associations with teacher instruction and student achievement

-  Large, positive impacts on instruction
-  Modest but meaningful positive impacts on student achievement
-  Careful interpretation for promising — but only early — evidence in support of standards with less research available



What is the APS Strategic Equity Framework?

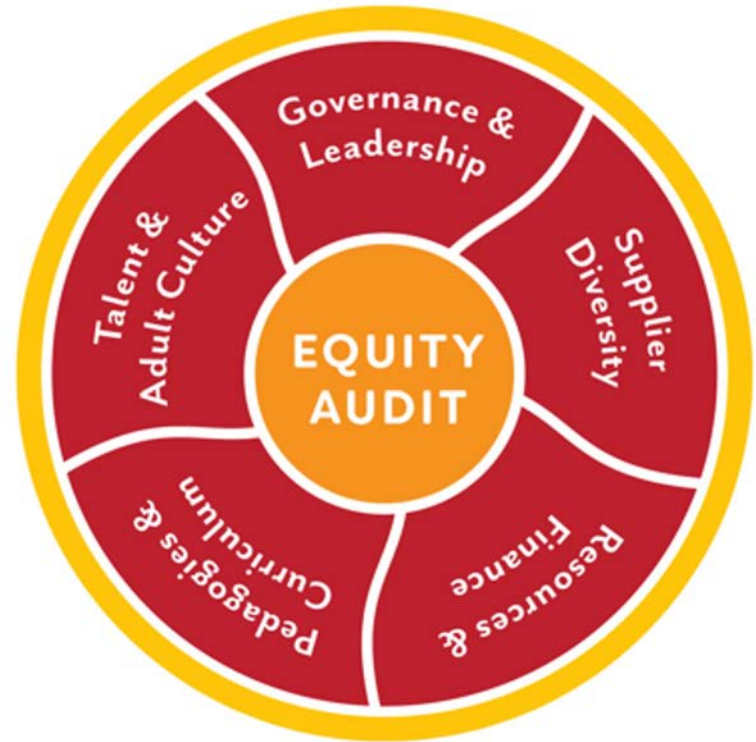
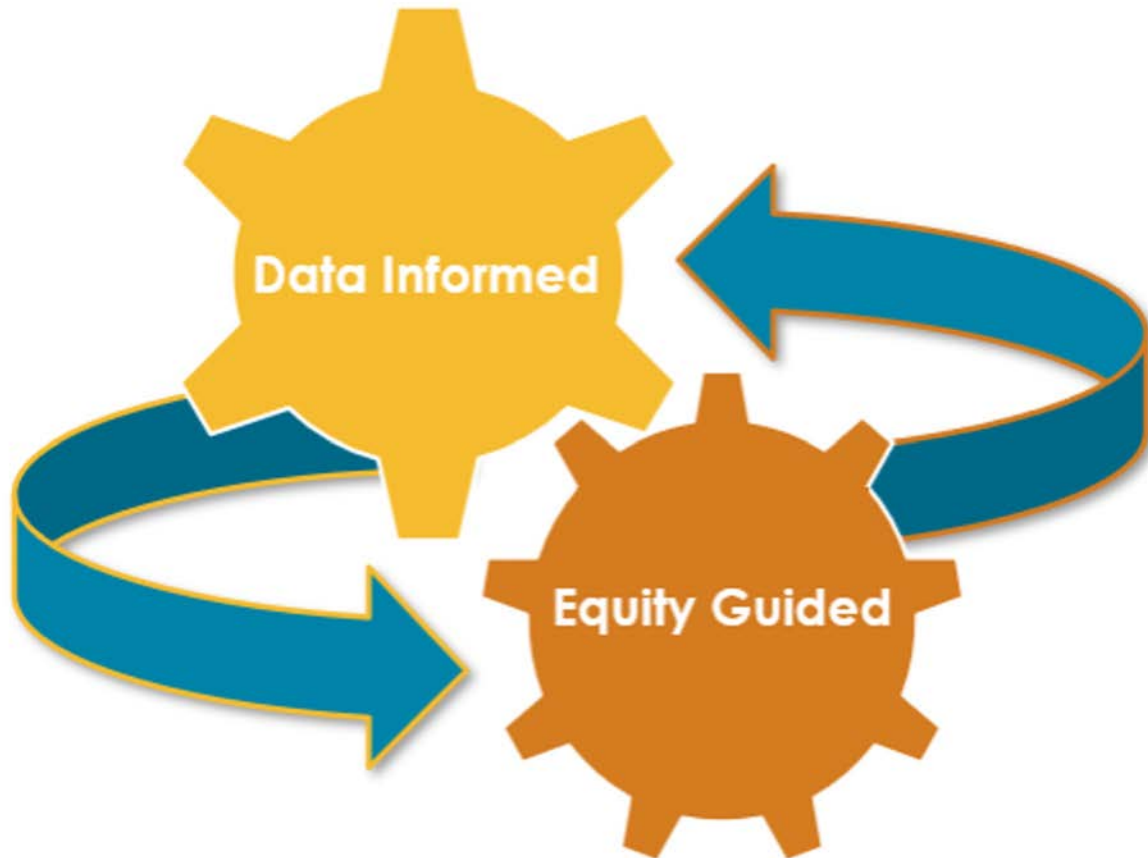
The **APS Strategic Equity Framework** outlines our path **toward transformational change** and serves as a foundation for our understanding and building out change ideas.

The **APS Strategic Equity Framework** is a **source of guidance, tools, evidence-based ideas, and resources** for APS staff, partners, and community members addressing complex equity issues.

The **APS Strategic Equity Framework** was **shaped using data and feedback from, teachers, staff, students, administrators, families, and partners** who generously contributed insights and perspectives during our Equity Audits, Equity TEAs, Equity Design Team Convenings, etc.

EQUITY AUDIT

An Equity Audit allows the district the opportunity to diagnose the current state of equity and to identify strategies and next steps for addressing root causes and making improvements.



OTIS Equity Indexes

The **OTIS** Equity Index Tools track specific measures that impact students' **educational experiences and outcomes** and are meant to support organizational decision-making and resource allocation. Each index has a distinct purpose and tracks specific data.

- **O-** The **Opportunity Index** measures the impact of the investments deployed for **neighborhood revitalization** and better aligns the capital investments made by cross-sector organizations working to advance equity in our neighborhoods.
- **T-** The **Tangible Equity Index** focuses on the inputs from our **11 Equity Commitments** that have been shown to have a **direct positive impact** on student outcomes.
- **I-** The **Intangible Equity Index** focuses on the inputs from our **11 Equity Commitments** that have been shown to have an **indirect positive impact** on student outcomes.
- **S-** The **Systems Index** quantifies the degree of educational equity within Atlanta Public Schools, as defined by our **11 Equity Commitments**.



AMP UP APS!

Districtwide Equity Survey Powered by PANORAMA EDUCATION

Who? Amplify voices of APS students, teachers/
school staff, and families.

Why? Provide a districtwide survey opportunity to
share perspectives that will inform our efforts
to advance equity.

How will the data be used?

- Inform our **culturally and linguistically responsive professional learning** plans, goal development, and student supports plans;
- Provide meaningful **school-level data tools** to guide our **budget development and decision-making on how we allocate resources to advance equity**; and
- Measure **progress on the district's strategic priorities**: ABOE goals/guardrails, Profile of a Graduate, and equity commitments.

Principal Development - Our Why

“According to research, school leadership is second only to teaching among school-related factors in its impact on student learning. Moreover, principals strongly shape the conditions for high-quality teaching and are the prime factor in determining whether teachers stay in high-needs schools. High-quality principals, therefore, are vital to the effectiveness of our nation’s public schools, especially those serving the children with the fewest advantages in life.”

Wallace Foundation, 2021, [How Principals Affect Students and Schools](#)

Student-Centered Leadership Framework

Instructional Leadership: *Is the intentional and strategic efforts to improve achievement outcomes. They help define and promote high expectations; they attack teacher isolation and create professional learning pathways that facilitate improved teacher efficacy, emphasize research-based instructional practices, high expectations for students, and rigorous assessment expectation.*

Communication: *Effective school leaders narrow school success for all students by defining and explaining specific teacher contributions, expectations, and holding teachers accountable.*

Culture: *Ensure that their schools allow both adults and children to put learning at the center of their daily activities. School is a healthy and safe learning environment characterized by foundations such as inclusivity, orderliness, “supportive, responsive” attitude toward the children and a sense by teachers that they are part of a community of professionals focused on good instruction.*

Management/Organizing: *Hold everyone accountable to contribute to student achievement, organize and articulate the expectations, and contributions of all staff members. Are strategic in schedule design to ensure that every students has access to the instructional and intervention resources necessary for success. Are relentless in their practice of equity to ensure access and success for all students.*

Student-Centered Leadership Labs

Strong principal leadership is the catalyst for advancing student learning. We want to build campus leaders through creativity and innovative problem-solving. We believe enhancing our system of learning leaders enhance our focus on student achievement. Our APS Leadership Labs combine school leadership development with community and district engagement, and emphasis on the six principles of improvement science:

- 1. Make the work problem specific**
- 2. Variation**
- 3. See the system and the outcomes it produces**
- 4. Measure and monitor**
- 5. Anchor the work in inquiry**
- 6. Network and share**

Campus principals meet **four** times over the second semester. Practicing school leaders will review current practices, reflect on decisions, and share expertise:

- Leadership labs
- Three-week coaching cycles
- Leadership Sprints
- Learning Walks

Discussion and Questions



Let us hear from you

**Please fill out our
post-webinar
survey**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R2LN3VW>



Mark your calendars

Webinars:

**Thursday, March 9
3-4 pm ET**

**Defining and Growing
your Leadership Style**

**Thursday, March 16
3-4 pm ET**

Focus on Equity

Deadline:

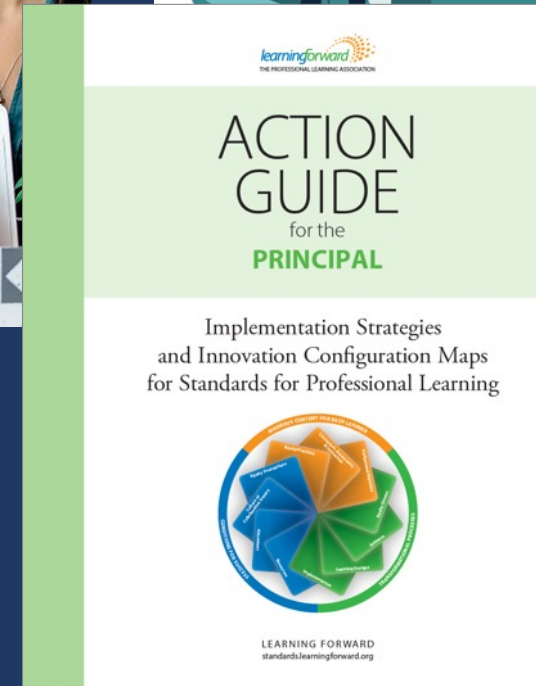


**Learning Forward Academy
Class of 2025 [Applications](#) due
March 15**

Online resources

Look for follow-up resources, including a recording of this webinar and slides:

- Read latest issue of [The Learning Professional](#)
- Check out the [Learning Forward blog](#)
- Use the [Action Guide for Principals](#)



POWERED by TITLE II

A website designed to provide:

- Background facts and data on Title II
- Tools to support your advocacy
- The latest news on Title II
- Research on the effectiveness of professional learning

poweredbytitleii.com

Use the *Powered by Title II* website to raise awareness in your own community and to develop your personal advocacy plan.



Thank you!

