TOOL 3.3

Linking systems for success

PURPOSE
Examine how a learning system connects with other systems.

NONPURPOSE
Develop a professional development plan.

TIME
1 hour or more each of two sessions

MATERIALS
• Copies of sections of *Comprehensive Professional Learning System: A Workbook for States and Districts* (attached) for each participant

SESSION I	
STEPS	**TIME**
1. Share these sections of the workbook: Rationale for Comprehensive Professional Learning System and Definition of Comprehensive Professional Learning System.	10 minutes
2. Consider these questions: • What is a comprehensive professional learning system? • What is its purpose? • What does it contribute to a successful education program? • How does professional learning link to other education systems in a state or district (e.g. human resources, curriculum and instruction, data and assessment, student services, federal programs, etc.)? What does professional learning contribute to these systems and vice versa?	10 minutes
3. Map the relationship among the systems. • Identify the major systems that operate within a state or district in tandem with professional learning. • List them on a chart for all to see. • Invite small groups to create a nonlinguistic representation of how the systems interact. • After 15 to 20 minutes, post the nonlinguistic representations and ask team members to take a gallery walk with a partner. Make notes on how the representations are alike and different.	30 minutes

TOOL 3.3 *cont'd*

STEPS		TIME
4.	Return to the large group and discuss: • What are the themes that emerge across the representations? • How do we leverage professional learning to increase the effectiveness of other systems and vice versa? • What might be the benefits of strengthening the connections among the systems? • What might be challenges to strengthening connections among systems? • How do we formalize the connections among the systems if this is a desire? • How will these connections influence the design of our professional learning system? What do we want to be cognizant of as we move ahead?	10 minutes
5.	Next, reach consensus on the Standards that establish the criteria for effective professional learning.	

SESSION II
PURPOSE
To adopt, adapt, or create a set of standards that guide professional learning.
TIME
Varies from 1 hour to several hours depending on the level of agreement within the team.
MATERIALS
• A copy of Standards Background for each group member
STEPS

1.	Choose Option I or Option II, and follow the steps for either choice.
2.	Review the Standards Background with all before following the steps for either Option.

TOOL 3.3 *cont'd*

STANDARDS BACKGROUND

There are several ways to address establishing standards that guide professional learning. A standard sets the mark, defines what is expected for all, and provides guidelines to ensure that every educator, not just some, has access to the highest quality professional learning. Standards also provide a basis for ongoing improvement of professional learning practices and set clear criteria for evaluation.

Working in partnership with more than 20 other professional associations, education organizations, and agencies, Learning Forward has set Standards for Professional Learning for nearly 20 years. The latest revision, published in 2011, as previous editions, reflects the most current research and evidence-based practices about professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and student achievement.

For more information on how the Standards were developed, please read pp. 12–20 of *Standards for Professional Learning*. Pages 8–10 list the collaborators who contributed to the newly revised standards.

Thirty-five states and school systems adopted or adapted the earlier version of the Standards. Several have already begun to update their regulation and legislation to adopt the new standards. More are in the process of doing so.

One way to establish standards is to review the established Standards for Professional Learning and adopt them. This tool outlines three options for setting standards. The first is reviewing and adopting the established Standards. The second is modifying or adapting the standards. The third is postponing a decision about the Standards until Step 4 is completed.

Because tremendous effort, research, and consensus work has already been invested in the Standards for Professional Learning, the first process is strongly recommended. Yet occasionally, because of local context or language, there is a need to adapt the language. For example, in some situations a more familiar phrase to describe student success is student achievement. The Standards use the phrase "results for all students" as a way to indicate the student success is academic, behavioral, emotional, and social. Some who have adopted the Standards have opted to replace the term "results for all students" with different words that are more aligned with other policies. Still some education agencies or school systems continue to use the phrase "professional development" and have opted to replace "professional learning" with "professional development." These variations reflect the local context and allow educators to better understand the Standards.

Learning Forward encourages adoption of the Standards, yet recognizes that adaptations are necessary. All education agencies and school systems have permission to adopt and adapt the Standards.

TOOL 3.3 *cont'd*

Option One

PURPOSE
To review the Standards to adopt or adapt them as the criteria for all professional learning within the education agency or school system.

TIME
Varies from 1 hour to several hours depending on the background understanding of members

MATERIALS
A copy of Standards Windowpane for each participant

STEPS		TIME
1.	Review the Standards Windowpane.	5 minutes
2.	Identify the Standards with which there is a high level of agreement.	5 minutes
3.	Identify the Standards team members have questions about. Use the text of *Standards for Professional Learning* or the eight *JSD* issues published between August 2011 and December 2012, each of which focuses on one Standard, to answer the questions in the Standards Windowpane for each Standard about which there are questions.	1–2 hours

Date	Standard
August 2011	Overview of new standards
October 2011	Learning Designs
February 2012	Resources
April 2012	Implementation
June 2012	Learning Communities
August 2012	Data
October 2012	Outcomes
December 2012	Leadership

TOOL 3.3 *cont'd*

4.	Identify the Standards about which there is disagreement. Determine the reasons for the disagreement. Discuss those reasons within the team. Modify the Standard to address the understanding if the change is a simple one, or invest in deeper research and reading about the Standard and the research-based reason it is included as a Standard. The Learning Forward website provides a list of useful resources for each Standard, including a reading list, brief videos introducing each, and a view from practitioners about each Standard.	1–2 hours
5.	Summarize the Standards that set the standard for all professional learning.	10 minutes
6.	Develop a recommended set of standards that guide professional learning and submit to stakeholders for review.	20 minutes
7.	Based on feedback, modify the recommended Standards for Professional Learning.	10 minutes
8.	Submit the recommended standards that guide professional learning to the appropriate decision-making authority for approval, adoption, etc.	5 minutes

TOOL 3.3 *cont'd*

Option Two

For teams or team members who have a limited knowledge or who want a deep review of the standards.

PURPOSE	
To review the standards to adopt or adapt them as the criteria for all professional learning within the education agency or school system. This process provides more information for team members who have a more limited understanding of the standards.	
TIME	
Varies from1 hour to several hours depending on the background understanding of members	
MATERIALS	
• A copy of the Standards Windowpane for each participant • *Facilitator guide: Standards for Professional Learning*	

STEPS		STEPS
1.	Review the Standards Windowpane.	5 minutes
2.	Watch the introductory video on the Standards available on Learning Forward's website at www.learningforward.org/standards#.Uc7jxxaS7CE	5 minutes
3.	Discuss the rationale for the standards.	10 minutes
4.	Use *Facilitator guide: Standards for Professional Learning* to plan a deeper learning experience on the standards, available at www. learningforward.org/docs/pdf/facilitatorguide.pdf?sfvrsn=2. Units 4–8 of the *Facilitator Guide* will deepen team members' understanding of the Standards and their role in ensuring effective professional learning for all educators.	1 hour
5.	Review the existing Standards for Professional Learning again and invite team members to indicate their level of agreement with each by creating a wall chart such as the Standards Windowpane to collect information.	10 minutes
6.	Use the information from this process as an introduction to steps 2 to 8 from Option One.	10 minutes

TOOL 3.3 *cont'd*

COMPREHENSIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SYSTEM: A WORKBOOK FOR STATES AND DISTRICTS

Introduction

Comprehensive Professional Learning System: A Workbook for Districts and States is designed to be used by leaders in education agencies, including state departments or ministries of education, local school systems, and other governing agencies or organizations that provide professional learning. They can use to conduct regular maintenance, needed repairs, and periodic replacement of the whole professional learning system, or parts of it, to meet the dynamic needs of educators and students.

Rationale for a Comprehensive Professional Learning System

The success of nearly all education initiatives depends on the capacity of the people in the education workforce to fully implement the initiatives. To that end, effective professional learning is core to all improvement efforts. Professional learning is defined as the continuous, sustained, and focused engagement of educators in learning to refine, expand, and improve their knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices, In most education agencies, however, what is considered professional learning is a fragmented hodge-podge of practices and policies that have emerged over time as the need arises. While the add-ons work temporarily for the purpose for which they were designed, eventually, these fragmented efforts may lead to dysfunction within a professional learning system.

In addition, school systems, state and federal agencies, external funders, and individual educators are investing significant resources in professional learning. That number continues to grow with each new local, state, and federal reform. To ensure that investments in professional learning produce the intended results and that sufficient professional learning occurs aligned with new initiatives, the very nature of professional learning within an education agency must be focused on increasing student achievement. Periodic review and revision, even replacement within a professional learning system, then, is necessary to ensure that professional learning serves educators as they undertake the important work of supporting student learning.

Definition of Comprehensive Professional Learning System

A comprehensive professional learning system is the infrastructure for developing individual, school, team, school system capacities needed to ensure success for all educators and their students. A comprehensive professional learning system can be best described as "the way professional learning works."

TOOL 3.3 *cont'd*

Introduction

Figure 1. Components of the Comprehensive Professional Learning System

That is, it consists of component parts of the engine that drives educator learning designed to increase student learning. (See Figure 1.) Comprehensive systems are comprehensive because they include all the essential components needed for professional learning to meet the demands of educators and their students. They have, at least six core components: vision of professional learning system as a part of the education system; definition of professional learning; standards of professional learning to guide quality; stakeholder roles and responsibilities defined and articulated; ongoing assessment and evaluation; and resources including staff, time, funds and facilities.

Comprehensive professional learning systems operate across state, district or local, and school building levels. While the components are the same at all levels, how they operate may vary across the levels. Typically, at the state level comprehensive professional learning systems establish a framework for the design and development of a school system's professional learning system; the local district or school system shapes how professional learning happens within the schools. In that way, the infrastructure provides for continuous educator learning to occur seamlessly from preparation, recruitment, and induction throughout an educator's career.

TOOL 3.3 *cont'd*

Introduction

Such a system also links professional learning to other education subsystems such as licensure, human capital management, school improvement, data and assessment, and others necessary for student success. A comprehensive professional learning system ensures that policies, practices, resources, and management align to provide equity, efficiency, and effectiveness, and achieve identified results for educator effectiveness and student learning.

Within comprehensive professional learning systems, educators develop single or multiyear individual, team, school, or program-specific professional learning plans to achieve their goals. These plans specify expected outcomes, actions required to facilitate learning aligned with those outcomes, meet benchmarks for monitoring and assessing progress toward the goals, and provide resources and ongoing support needed to achieve full implementation and intended outcomes. Comprehensive professional learning systems require plans to direct and guide professional learning efforts. Professional learning plans serve as the map to guide educator learning while the comprehensive professional learning system ensures that the infrastructure is in place to support both the learner and the learning.

Development of a Comprehensive Professional Learning System

Developing or redesigning a state's or school system's comprehensive professional learning system can be accomplished in many ways. The steps below provide an overview of a recommended process. The work is complex, yet when done well it can build broad-based understanding of research and practice in professional learning. Knowledge of effective professional learning, in turn, strengthens support for professional learning that builds educator and student success.

TOOL 3.3 *cont'd*

Standards windowpane

STANDARD	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Learning Communities					
Leadership					
Resources					
Data					
Learning Designs					
Implementation					
Outcomes					

Source: Killion, J. (2013). *Comprehensive professional learning system: A workbook for states and districts,* pp. 140-146.
Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.