

ACTION GUIDE

for the

STATE COMMISSIONER/ MINISTER OF EDUCATION

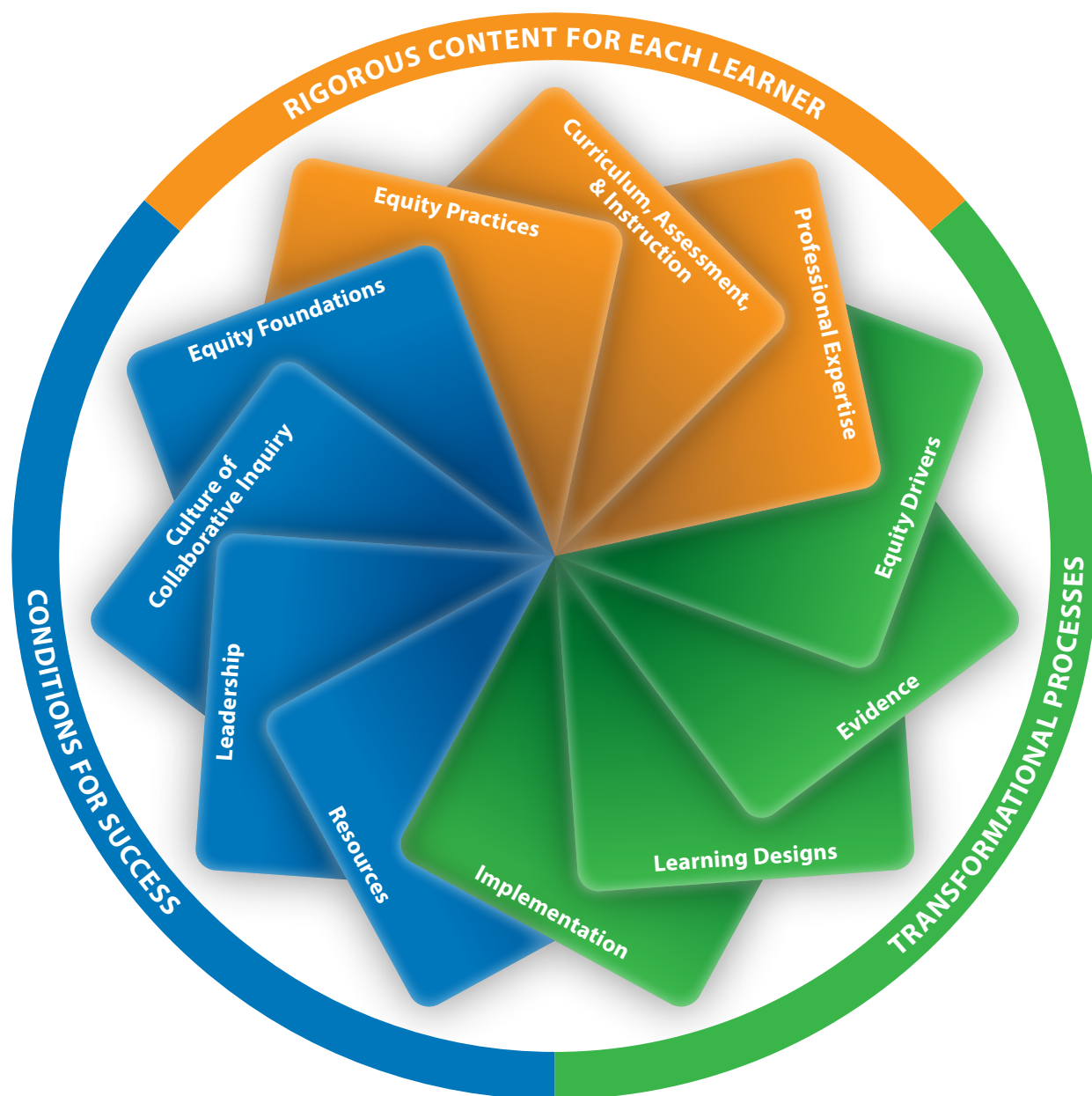
Standards for Professional Learning

State commissioners or ministers of education set the strategic vision for education and professional learning in their state, province, or region. They use Standards for Professional Learning to ensure an integrated, aligned system of evidence-based, high-quality professional learning that leads to improved and equitable outcomes for each and every educator and student.

Working in cooperation with their state boards or ministries of education, these leaders use standards to align policies, goals, and programs; establish requirements for the equitable distribution of available funds to schools and districts; inform talent development and retention initiatives; and advocate for a systemic approach to learning for all.

For standards to have their intended impact, state commissioners and ministers of education serve as lead learners, building their own capacity to create a vision and provide resources for a comprehensive professional learning system. In times of constant change, they lead the way to ensure safe, supportive, and rigorous learning for all students, teachers, and leaders.

A systemwide approach to professional learning



Standards for Professional Learning work within a framework of three categories:

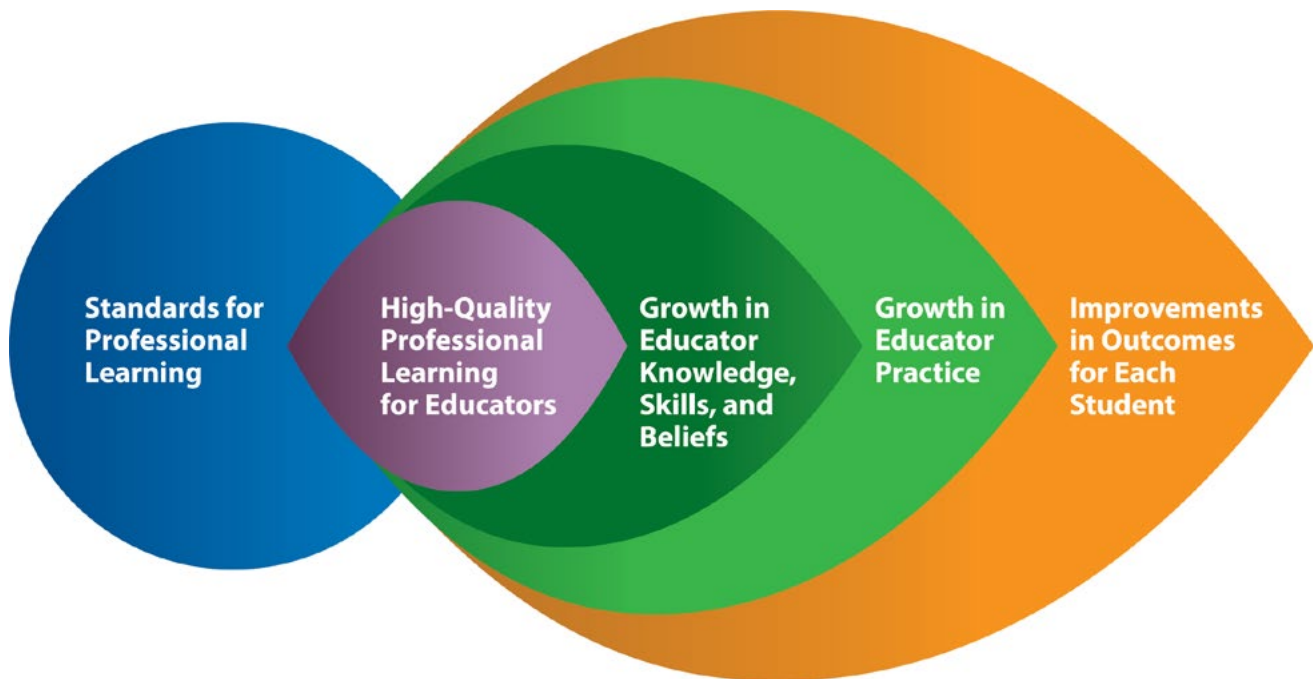
- The **Rigorous Content for Each Learner** standards describe the essential content of adult learning that leads to improved student outcomes.
- The **Transformational Processes** standards describe process elements of professional learning, explaining how educators learn in ways that sustain significant changes in their knowledge, skills, practices, and mindsets.
- The **Conditions for Success** standards describe aspects of the professional learning context, structures, and cultures that undergird high-quality professional learning.

Foundations for standards

Several foundations underlie Standards for Professional Learning. Understanding these foundations is critical to understanding the standards as well as the contexts and support within which they can flourish.

- High-quality professional learning improves educator practice and student results.
- Professional learning systems drive high-quality professional learning.
- Equity is both an outcome of and focus threaded throughout learning.
- High-quality curriculum and instructional materials are a critical priority for professional learning.
- Educators are responsible for leading learning for self and others.
- Policy guides practice.
- Research informs revised Standards for Professional Learning.

How standards lead to improvement for all learners



As the graphic above illustrates, Standards for Professional Learning lead to high-quality professional learning, which leads to positive changes in educator knowledge, skills, and dispositions, which lead to improvements in educator practice, which in turn

lead to accelerated student results. Monitoring progress at each step contributes to continued improvement throughout the system, with student and educator data providing evidence about how professional learning evolves to lead to excellence and equity.

Standards for Professional Learning

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators ...

EQUITY PRACTICES

... understand their students' historical, cultural, and societal contexts, embrace student assets through instruction, and foster relationships with students, families, and communities.

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, AND INSTRUCTION

... prioritize high-quality curriculum and instructional materials for students, assess student learning, and understand curriculum and implement through instruction.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

... apply standards and research to their work, develop the expertise essential to their roles, and prioritize coherence and alignment in their learning.

RIGOROUS CONTENT FOR EACH LEARNER

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators ...

EQUITY DRIVERS

... prioritize equity in professional learning practices, identify and address their own biases and beliefs, and collaborate with diverse colleagues.

EVIDENCE

... 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.

LEARNING DESIGNS

... set relevant and contextualized learning goals, ground their work in research and theories about learning, and implement evidence-based learning designs.

IMPLEMENTATION

... understand and apply research on change management, engage in feedback processes, and implement and sustain professional learning.

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESSES

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators ...

EQUITY FOUNDATIONS

... establish expectations for equity, create structures to ensure equitable access to learning, and sustain a culture of support for all staff.

CULTURE OF COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY

... engage in continuous improvement, build collaboration skills and capacity, and share responsibility for improving learning for all students.

LEADERSHIP

... establish a compelling and inclusive vision for professional learning, sustain coherent support to build educator capacity, and advocate for professional learning by sharing the importance and evidence of impact of professional learning.

RESOURCES

... allocate resources for professional learning, prioritize equity in their resource decisions, and monitor the use and impact of resource investments.

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Key roles and responsibilities for state commissioners/ministers of education

These key roles and responsibilities, aligned to each frame within the standards, are not meant to be used as an all-inclusive checklist but rather to drive critical actions to achieve system goals and priorities. They complement and support the responsibilities of educators in other roles. Collaboration with other educators is embedded in many of these responsibilities. Learning Forward recognizes that leaders of state, provincial, or regional education systems may carry a range of titles, including ministers, commissioners, superintendent, secretary of education, and director, among others.

RIGOROUS CONTENT FOR EACH LEARNER

- **Advocate for inclusive learning practices for each learner in any learning environment within the system.**
- **Develop state and system policies to provide high-quality curriculum and instructional materials and aligned assessments.**
- **Establish expectations that professional learning for each educator is aligned to role- and content-specific standards, guidelines, and research.**

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESSES

- **Set expectations for inclusive professional learning practices across the system, removing barriers that result from historical or systemic inequities.**
- **Create expectations that learning theory informs the design of professional learning.**
- **Create expectations and structures that require the use of multiple types of evidence to plan, design, and evaluate professional learning.**
- **Analyze and track the impact of investments in professional learning on teacher and leader growth, retention, and student outcomes.**
- **Ground actions in understanding that professional learning is a change process that requires alignment across the whole system and sustained investment and implementation support.**

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

- **Set expectations that professional learning ensures all students have access to rigorous learning, inclusive of their race, gender, ethnicity, language, ability, and other assets of identity.**
- **Establish a vision for how high-quality professional learning enables educators to achieve system-level goals, priorities, and outcomes.**
- **Advocate for professional learning resources with policymakers at local, state, provincial, regional, and federal levels.**
- **Allocate resources to establish and sustain high-quality professional learning systems as outlined by Standards for Professional Learning.**
- **Require local systems to document the use and impact of professional learning resources.**
- **Advocate for adoption of Standards for Professional Learning.**
- **Model the importance of learning as a leader.**

Identifying the state commissioner's/ minister of education's first actions

Use the reflection questions below and on p. 7 to determine action steps you will prioritize to develop, strengthen, transform, and sustain professional learning. Collaborate with colleagues to complete this table and clarify how you will move forward.

QUESTION	REFLECTIONS	FIRST STEPS
<p>After reviewing the responsibilities on p. 5, what would we say is our highest learning need as a team or individuals?</p>		
<p>How well have we articulated our vision for how professional learning leads to improved teaching and student learning?</p>		
<p>How well do we use data and evidence to inform professional learning priorities, selection, and design?</p>		
<p>What is our vision for how professional learning can lead to increased equity across our system?</p>		

QUESTION	REFLECTIONS	FIRST STEPS
<p>How have we articulated and communicated educators' shared responsibility for all students?</p>		
<p>How does our system encourage and support conversations about bias, inequities, race, power, and privilege?</p>		
<p>How do we ensure all educators understand and know how to support our system's commitment to continuous improvement?</p>		
<p>How do we monitor investments in professional learning to determine whether they are allocated to high-priority needs based on educator input?</p>		
<p>How might we increase our system's commitment to evaluating professional learning and documenting its impact?</p>		

Additional resources

FOR STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Visit standards.learningforward.org to find resources useful for sharing, studying, and implementing Standards for Professional Learning. Resources include:

Standards for Professional Learning

Read the full contents of the standards themselves, with an overview of the three critical constructs in each standard, links to related standards, and references to selected resources.

Role-Based Action Guides

Created for educators in multiple roles, Action Guides are intended to support educators in understanding and fulfilling their responsibilities in putting Standards for Professional Learning into motion in their contexts. Each Action Guide outlines high-level responsibilities and includes a tool to help educators identify the first steps they can take to implement standards. There are Action Guides for the following roles:

- State commissioner
- Superintendent
- System/central office
- Principal
- Coach
- Teacher
- External partner

Action Guides for those in coach, system/central office, principal, and external partner roles also include Innovation Configuration maps, which describe in detail specific behaviors educators undertake in fulfilling their responsibilities related to standards.

Quick-Start Guide

This four-page overview is ideal for sharing Standards for Professional Learning widely with stakeholders and can serve as an introductory piece across schools, systems, and other contexts.

Research Resources

Learn more about the research and evidence foundational to Standards for Professional Learning. Links include a position paper framing Learning Forward's approach to and use of evidence in developing standards and a meta-analysis conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

Policy Tools

Explore how to advance Standards for Professional Learning in policy at any level and why standards in policy matter.

Some resources are available in full to anyone who visits standards.learningforward.org, while others require membership in Learning Forward.

Learning Forward is committed to building every educator's capacity to establish and sustain high-quality professional learning so that every student has access to high-quality teaching and learning.

As the only membership association solely focused on effective professional learning for K-12 educators, Learning Forward serves thousands of members and subscribers while simultaneously influencing the broader education field. Learning Forward works at all levels of the education system.

Information about standards, membership, services, or products is available from:

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