

# WHY AND HOW TO ADOPT

## Standards for Professional Learning

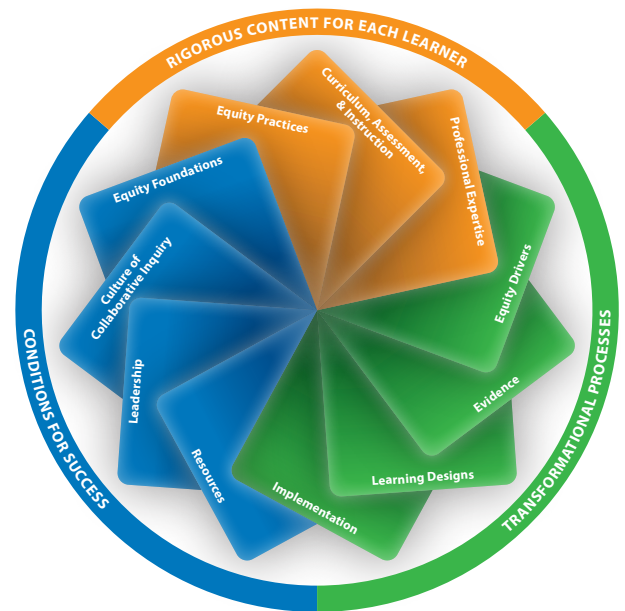
Standards for Professional Learning set the vision for high-quality professional learning by defining the conditions, content, and processes that drive decisions regarding professional learning and are used to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of all educators, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes.

Standards provide language and guidance for policymakers, establish expectations for what to provide or expect in terms of professional learning, and a framework against which to measure the quality of professional learning. Adopting Standards for Professional Learning signals the importance of high-quality professional learning to each and every educator and encourages investments of time, funding, and energy in ensuring the standards are met.

There is no cost to access Standards for Professional Learning online ([standards.learningforward.org](https://standards.learningforward.org)). Learning Forward stands as a willing partner to support adoption of the standards and believes that all educators have a role in advocating for Standards for Professional Learning by using them in their day-to-day work and documenting their use, no matter their role or positional authority.

### ADOPTION

Adoption of Standards for Professional Learning is a long-term, multistakeholder process that requires an investment in learning about the standards, understanding their relevance in the state's context, and supporting widespread implementation. Typically, state departments of education champion the standards adoption process, beginning with an effort to educate and raise awareness about the purpose and usefulness of the standards among key stakeholders and partner organizations, including



teacher, principal, and superintendent associations, community and family groups, and professional learning advocates. Learning Forward Affiliates serve as experts on the standards and how they inform, guide, and add value to a state's or province's efforts to build comprehensive professional learning systems. In the U.S., state boards of education adopt Standards for Professional Learning in formal policy. In some states, the standards are written into state regulations and code, either with the full list of standards or referencing the publication and website.

**Adoption of Standards for Professional Learning creates alignment and coherence across the system and can be used as a catalyst for immediate action, such as:**

- Convene a panel of leaders from education associations to build their understanding of Standards for Professional Learning and endorse their use with their stakeholders.
- Launch a statewide professional learning academy for staff from the state education agency, institutions of higher education, educator associations, and the regional education agencies.

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- Establish a protocol for annual review of professional learning statewide using the standards as the framework, with an opportunity for an open comment period.
- Use the standards as a tool to align the use of federal funds for implementation and monitor high-quality state and district professional learning initiatives.
- Deploy the Standards Assessment Inventory to gather data about how well districts and school activities are aligned to the standards to identify professional learning priorities, successes, gaps, trends, and growth areas.

## STATE AND PROVINCIAL POLICY SUPPORTS

In addition to adopting Standards for Professional Learning as policy, states and provinces can use and embed the standards into policy in other ways, including:

- Align educator and school leader professional standards and evaluation processes to Standards for Professional Learning.
- Ensure that regional service centers map their programs to the standards.
- Use the standards as a framework for grants to districts and schools to incentivize a systematic approach to improving professional learning.
- Use the standards as the framework for a statewide professional learning advisory committee.
- Embed the standards in state recertification requirements or evaluation systems.
- Inform any formal or ad hoc legislative or state agency committees about the importance and impact of the standards.

## DISTRICT- AND SCHOOL-LEVEL POLICY ACTIONS

If Standards for Professional Learning have not been adopted at the state level, there are still many ways to embed the standards within systems. Districts and schools may use the standards to:

- Develop a professional learning plan to delineate how educator capacity building will align to and support the

district or school strategic plan.

- Define how district central office leaders, school leaders, and coaches will build their capacity to lead, facilitate, and monitor professional learning for others.
- Embed standards into all district policy regarding professional learning.
- Focus a collective review of standards by all staff to inform the articulation of short- and long-term school-based professional learning needs and goals.
- Provide common language and expectations across district departments and programs, and ensure consistent ways of designing, implementing, and measuring outcomes across all professional learning.
- Require that external providers align their contracts and services to the standards.
- Design professional learning modules aligned to the standards for school principals and instructional coaches, who in turn build the capacity of all teachers.

## EDUCATORS AS POLICY LEADERS AND ADVOCATES

If formal policy is not within their sphere of influence, educators can still use Standards for Professional Learning as frameworks and guidance in a variety of ways and advocate for their adoption by reaching out to policymakers with documentation of their impact. Classroom educators, team leaders, and coaches can increase the likelihood of standards adoption by familiarizing themselves with the standards, choosing professional learning that aligns to the standards, and demanding that the professional learning they experience reflects an understanding of and alignment to Standards for Professional Learning.

## GETTING STARTED

Visit: [www.standards.learningforward.org](http://www.standards.learningforward.org).

Contact: Elizabeth Foster, vice president, research & standards, [elizabeth.foster@learningforward.org](mailto:elizabeth.foster@learningforward.org)