learningforward
THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

ADVANCING OUTCOMES FOR ALL LEARNERS

Standards for Professional Learning

To improve outcomes for each learner, educators integrate multiple components of professional learning, creating a cohesive system. Standards for Professional Learning describe the critical components of that system. When a standard is missing, the system is incomplete and specific challenges arise. This tool lists challenges that develop when standards are missing and the resulting improved outcomes when those standards are addressed.

About this resource

- This resource identifies challenges that result when specific Standards for Professional Learning are missing and compares them to improved outcomes associated with intentionally including the same standard. This chart, although not exhaustive, helps educators identify and address gaps in their systems for professional learning.

Ways to use this resource

- Facilitate team conversations using this resource to reveal the connection between challenges to student outcomes and gaps in professional learning.

- Identify the Standard for Professional Learning missing within a system's approach to professional learning.

- Identify areas of strength in a system and use the associated professional learning as a model for improving the system overall.

- Provide stakeholders with an opportunity to reflect on the importance of a comprehensive approach to professional learning.

Missing standard *leads to these challenges...*	Standards for Professional Learning	Included standard *leads to these improved outcomes...*
• Low expectations • Lack of relevant instruction for each student • Disengaged or disenfranchised students and families	**Equity Practices**	• Students know they are respected and valued • Students and families are included and engaged
• Lack of instructional rigor and relevance in learning • Student learning data doesn't inform instruction • Misaligned or ineffective instructional practices	**Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction**	• Students learn at grade level and beyond • Instruction is informed by student data
• Stagnant or ineffective educator practices • Instructional practice not informed by student content standards or educator performance standards • Reduced educator proficiency, advancement, and retention	**Professional Expertise**	• Students experience research-based instruction • Highly proficient educators at all levels • Educators are motivated and committed to the profession
• Inequitable access to professional learning • Disengaged or disenfranchised educators • Lack of diverse perspectives in discussions	**Equity Drivers**	• Each learner is appropriately supported • Multiple and varied perspectives are recognized and honored • High-quality learning opportunities for all
• Uninformed decision-making • Irrelevant professional learning • Professional learning without impact	**Evidence**	• Informed decision-making • Relevance and focus in professional learning • Professional learning has positive impact
• Misaligned professional learning goals • Lack of educator engagement • One-size-fits-all professional learning	**Learning Designs**	• Professional learning is aligned to student and educator needs • Sustained growth of knowledge, skills, practices, and beliefs
• Resistance to change • Short-term improvement • No sustained change	**Implementation**	• Educators are actively engaged in and committed to change efforts and continuous growth • Improvements are sustained over time
• Inequitable access and opportunity for learning • Low or inconsistent expectations • Distrust and division among staff	**Equity Foundations**	• High expectations for each learner • Shared commitment to successful outcomes for each learner
• Pockets of excellence in teaching and learning • Students falling through the cracks • Ineffective use of collaborative learning time	**Culture of Collaborative Inquiry**	• Shared culture of excellence • Collective responsibility for all learners • Culture of continuous improvement
• No shared commitment to professional learning • Disjointed professional learning efforts • Lack of understanding about why professional learning matters	**Leadership**	• Clear vision for professional learning • Aligned efforts and priorities
• Gaps in support and access to learning • Misalignment between goals and outcomes • No return on investment	**Resources**	• Sustained support for professional learning • Protected time for collaborative learning • Awareness of impact of resources

RIGOROUS CONTENT FOR EACH LEARNER

Equity Practices

Curriculum, Assessment, & Instruction

Equity Foundations

Professional Expertise

Culture of Collaborative Inquiry

Equity Drivers

Leadership

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Evidence

Resources

Learning Designs

Implementation

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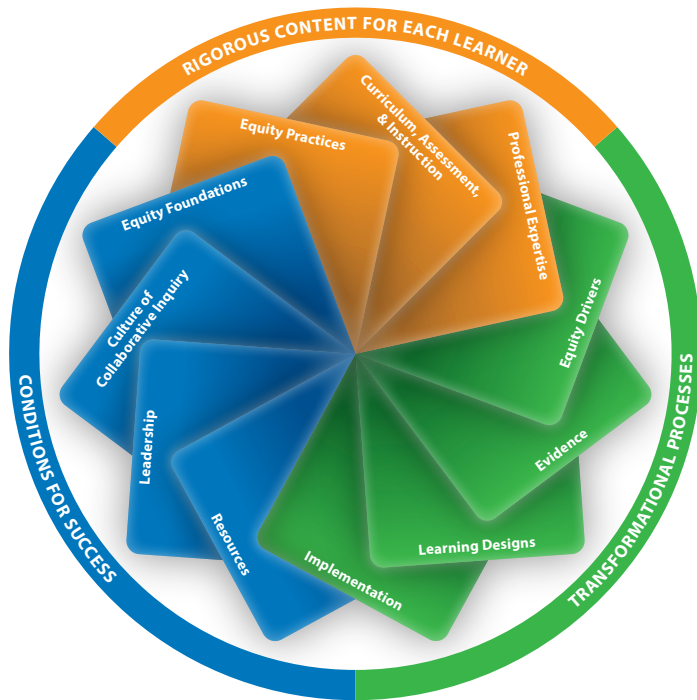
Standards for Professional Learning work within a framework of three categories:

- 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.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do we see successes in our efforts to implement a system of professional learning? What can we learn from these successes?

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

3. What evidence suggests that these challenges should be our priority?

4. What professional learning challenges not listed here do we experience, and how might a standards-based system support us in addressing those challenges?

5. 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 chart, which **frame** is most apparent in the work of our system? Which **frame** presents the greatest opportunity for improvement?

6. What are our potential next actions? Consider the following:

- Study the full narrative of any missing standard in your *Standards for Professional Learning* book or online at standards.learningforward.org.

- Consult role-based Action Guides with Innovation Configuration maps to learn about specific behaviors that lead to fulfillment of the standards.

- List first steps we might take to move the system toward aligning professional learning with the vision of all standards.

- Collaboratively develop a professional learning plan for our school or system.

- Invite teams and appropriate stakeholders to engage in their own reflection, then collectively discuss and prioritize decisions for continuous improvement of the professional learning system.

- Select a time to follow up to monitor progress and modify plans according to new information.

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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

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:

Learning Forward
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Oxford, OH 45056
Telephone: 800-727-7288
Email: office@learningforward.org
www.learningforward.org

Learn more

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

- Role-based Action Guides include Innovation Configuration maps.
- Research resources go deep on the evidence behind standards.
- Policy tools suggest steps to advance adoption and use of standards in a range of contexts.