

STANDARDS ASSESSMENT INVENTORY (SAI) INFORMATION PACKET

The Standards Assessment Inventory (SAI), available online, is a valid and reliable survey aligned to the Standards for Professional Learning. The SAI measures teachers' perceptions to provide important data on the quality of professional learning at the school or system level.

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INTRODUCTION

Ensuring that professional learning systems offer all educators the support they need to improve their practices and increase student achievement requires a sophisticated instrument. State, provincial, regional, and local school systems can use the Standards Assessment Inventory2 (SAI) to assess the quality of their professional learning, sometimes referred to as professional development, staff development, inservice, or training. The SAI is intended to:

- Provide information to systems that need to understand teachers' perceptions of professional learning;
- Reveal the degree of success or challenges systems face with professional learning practices and implementation; and
- Provide decision-makers with data on the quality of professional learning as defined by the Standards for Professional Learning, a system's alignment of professional learning to the standards, and the relationship of the standards to improvements in educator effectiveness and student achievement.

The SAI is a valid and reliable instrument that measures the alignment of professional learning to the 2011 Standards for Professional Learning. The standards make explicit that the purpose of professional learning is for educators to develop the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions they need to help students perform at higher levels. Drawn from research and based on evidence-based practice, they describe a set of expectations for effective professional learning to ensure equity and excellence in educator learning.

Taking the SAI to understand the quality of a system's professional learning is just the first step. Learning Forward guides educators through data interpretation and action planning. Systems can leverage data from the SAI to guide the planning, facilitation, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning to maximize its impact and investment.

What can the SAI do for you?

- Elicit extensive collegial conversations among teachers and administrators about the qualities of professional learning that produce results for students;
- Connect Standards for Professional Learning (vision) with Standards Innovation Configurations (planning and implementation);
- Help schools focus on particular actions that contribute to higher-quality professional learning as guided by the questions on the assessment;
- Identify schools that are strong in certain areas and may have lessons to share with other schools;
- Organize and convene schools with similar needs and priorities for technical assistance; and
- Recognize and celebrate schools for the quality of their professional learning.

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

Education scholars and practitioners alike have long recognized the importance of professional learning for improving student learning outcomes. Emerging from and contributing to the recognized importance of professional learning is a growing body of scholarship, theory, and data on practices in professional learning.

This growth has provided the foundation for establishing standards for professional learning. In response to the evolving scholarship on professional learning, Learning Forward recently published its third iteration of Standards for Professional Learning. The standards are based on best practice research with an emphasis on the importance of educators, individually and collectively, taking an active role in the continuous improvement of their professional learning to ensure student achievement.

These standards reflect acquired knowledge and prevailing changes in theory on the characteristics of quality professional learning since the release of the first Standards for Staff Development in 2001. Given the extent of these changes, the release of new standards necessitated a redesign of Learning Forward's Standards Assessment Inventory (SAI), a self-report instrument aimed at measuring alignment between a school's professional learning program and the new Standards for Professional Learning.

The newly designed SAI is aligned to the Standards for Professional Learning that outline the characteristics that lead to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results. The standards make explicit that the purpose of professional learning is for educators to develop the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions they need to help students perform at higher levels.

Standards for Professional Learning

Learning Communities: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

Leadership: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.

Resources: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

Data: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

Learning Designs: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

Implementation: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

Outcomes: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

PREVIEW

What is the SAI?

- Fifty-item, web-enabled survey to assess the presence of behaviors at the school level associated with the seven Standards for Professional Learning;
- Designed to collect teacher perceptions of their experiences with professional learning;
- Average completion time: 20 minutes;
- Can be taken from any computer with Internet access, at school or home;
- Technical assistance is provided by the developers of the assessment.

STANDARDS ASSESSMENT INVENTORY - SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Directions: Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. It is best to complete this survey alone. When marking your responses, please fill in the bubbles completely. You may use either a pen or pencil. Completing this survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes.

Please mark the responses that most accurately reflect your experience at your school.

	<i>Always</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
1. My school's learning communities are structures for teachers to engage in the continuous improvement cycle (i.e., data analysis, planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation).	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. My school's leaders consider all staff members capable of being professional learning leaders.	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. In my school, time is available for teachers during the school day for professional learning.	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. My school uses a variety of student achievement data to plan professional learning that focuses on school improvement.	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. In my school, teachers have opportunities to observe each other as one type of job-embedded professional learning.	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. A primary goal for professional learning in my school is to enhance teaching practices to improve student performance.	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Professional learning experiences in my school connect with teacher performance standards (e.g. teacher preparation standards, licensing standards, etc.).	5	4	3	2	1	0

SCHOOL PROFILE

5 ways schools can use the SAI:

1. **For school improvement planning.** As schools accept the Standards for Professional Learning as a guide for effective professional learning and gain a deeper understanding of essential elements, they can begin to inform their schoolwide practices and guide decisions to reach the outcomes they desire.
2. **For identifying clear expectations and actions.** Results from the SAI combined with information from the Innovation Configurations in *Moving standards into practice: School-based roles: Teacher, coach, principal, school leadership team*, will help schools focus on the particular actions that contribute to higher-quality professional learning as guided by the questions on the assessment.
3. **For benchmark data.** The SAI can be used to help schools get a clear picture of what is working and where to focus their resources for improvement.
4. **For dialogue and reflection.** Results initiate and guide deep, on-going reflection and conversations among school staff on professional learning as an integral, job-embedded process within schools and the relationship between those practices and student success.
5. **For program evaluation.** Results can be used to assess whether a particular improvement effort has contributed to the quality of professional learning within a school. *Read how schools in the NJ PLC Lab School Project used the SAI on the next page.*

PLC Lab School Project

SAI Administered: 2009-12

Participation: 33 New Jersey public schools involved in a state-sponsored professional learning communities program

Ways the results were used:

- To assess the effectiveness of implementation of professional learning communities and inform lab schools' needs assessment.
- To determine how New Jersey Department of Education could best support schools.
- To collect data as part of the project's external evaluation, which contributed to evaluation conclusions and changes in state policy and guidance decisions on standards-based professional learning.

The greatest value in assessing the quality of professional learning was the specificity of the instrument, which provides educators with a clear picture of a PLC culture and the components of full implementation. The generated reports permit educators to get a detailed, well-constructed report without straining their limited resources. –Gerald Woehr, PLC Lab Schools Project

SCHOOL SYSTEMS/STATE/PROVINCES/REGIONAL SERVICE CENTERS

5 ways systems can use the SAI:

1. As a requirement for most federal programs (e.g. Title I, Title II, Title III, Gifted, ECE, Math and Science Partnerships) the SAI can be used as a needs assessment for professional learning and thus inform school improvement plans.
2. School systems can use school results to organize schools with similar needs and priorities for technical assistance. States and provinces can identify systems with similar needs.
3. School systems can identify schools that are strong in certain areas and may have successes and exemplary practices to share with other schools.
4. Over time, states, provinces, school systems and regional service centers can assess whether a particular improvement effort has contributed to the quality of professional learning across several schools or school systems. *Read about the Arizona Department of Education below.*
5. The SAI can also serve as a source of data to recognize schools for quality professional learning.

Arizona Department of Education

SAI Administered: 2008- 12

Participation: 225 districts; 2,200+ schools

Ways the results were used:

- To engage in professional conversations about the quality of professional learning.
- To provide support services and technical assistance, align program implementation, and inform decisions for professional learning support and funding.
- To create a common language and culture across multiple Arizona Dept. of Education departments to obtain and discuss data about school improvement.

“The greatest value in assessing the quality of professional learning has been the depth of engagement and conversations that have developed over time within the department of education and districts and schools across the state.” –Harold Frederick, Education Program Specialist, Arizona Department of Education

Duval County (Fla.) Public Schools

SAI Administered: 2007- 12

Participation: 187 schools

Ways the results were used:

- To examine the degree of alignment with Standards for Staff Development and Learning Forward's definition of quality staff development;
- To make recommendations and assist in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating effective professional learning for school improvement plans and district comprehensive professional development plans; and
- To link data with teacher and principal individual professional development plans.

“Being able to use results to improve staff performance and student results has been one of the greatest values in assessing our professional learning.” – Dr. Dawn Wilson, Executive Director of Professional Development, Duval County Public Schools

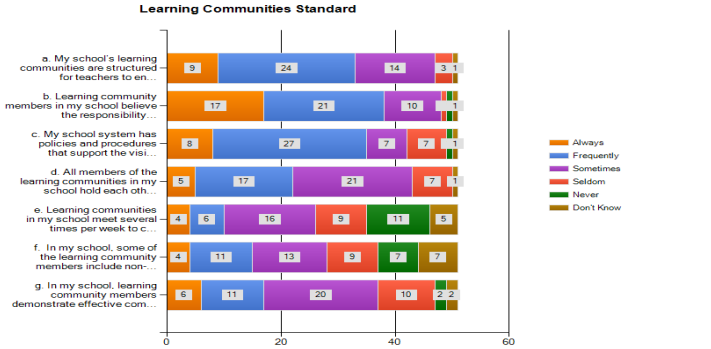
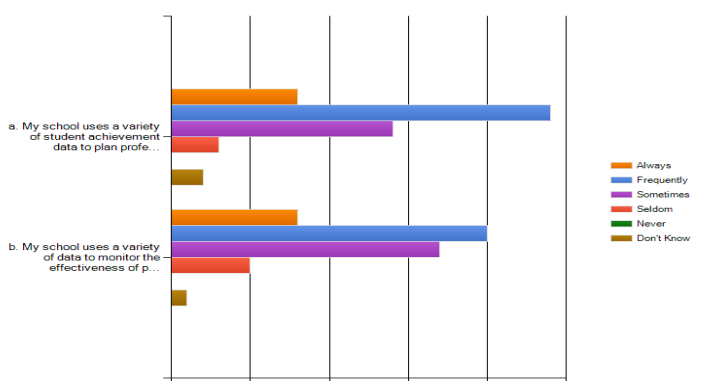
REPORTING

Reports can be accessed as soon as the number of respondents exceeds 10. Reports are updated electronically every time a teacher completes a survey until the window of time for teachers to complete the survey has ended, and reports are finalized on the website.

School Reports: “Standards and Question Averages” and “Frequency Count By Standard Question”

System, Regional Service Agency and State Reports: Same as schools as aggregated averages for the standard **plus** “Standard Averages by School.”

NOTE: Reports only include the following demographic data: teacher role, years of experience, years at current school, school setting, and school governance.

<p>Report 1: Indicator Averages: The chart shows the average indicator values calculated from the question responses. An additional chart accompanies this report that shows the numerical average response value for each question grouped by standards. There are 7-8 questions per standard.</p>	 <p>Learning Communities Standard</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Question</th> <th>Always</th> <th>Frequently</th> <th>Sometimes</th> <th>Seldom</th> <th>Never</th> <th>Don't Know</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>a. My school's learning communities are structured for teachers to en...</td> <td>9</td> <td>24</td> <td>14</td> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. Learning community members in my school believe the responsibility...</td> <td>17</td> <td>21</td> <td>10</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. My school system has policies and procedures that support the visi...</td> <td>8</td> <td>27</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. All members of the learning communities in my school hold each oth...</td> <td>5</td> <td>17</td> <td>21</td> <td>7</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. Learning communities in my school meet several times per week to c...</td> <td>4</td> <td>15</td> <td>15</td> <td>9</td> <td>11</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. In my school, some of the learning community members include non...</td> <td>4</td> <td>11</td> <td>13</td> <td>9</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. In my school, learning community members demonstrate effective com...</td> <td>6</td> <td>11</td> <td>20</td> <td>10</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Question	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Don't Know	a. My school's learning communities are structured for teachers to en...	9	24	14	3	1	1	b. Learning community members in my school believe the responsibility...	17	21	10	1	1	1	c. My school system has policies and procedures that support the visi...	8	27	7	7	1	1	d. All members of the learning communities in my school hold each oth...	5	17	21	7	1	1	e. Learning communities in my school meet several times per week to c...	4	15	15	9	11	3	f. In my school, some of the learning community members include non...	4	11	13	9	7	7	g. In my school, learning community members demonstrate effective com...	6	11	20	10	2	2
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<p>Report 2: Frequency Counts by Indicator: Charts display the frequency of each response by count and percentage for each question. This report is organized by the accompanying standards, and questions are listed by section.</p>																																																									
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RESOURCE BRIEFS

Soon to be made available to everyone who takes the SAI, seven resource briefs – one for each standard -- offer recommendations and tools for next actions as educators continue their improvement journey.

Each brief begins with an overview of the standard, with examples and explanations that help educators build their understanding of the standard in practice. For example, the resource brief for the Learning Designs standard starts with this explanation to orient readers to the key elements of the standard:

One of the most visible components of professional learning is the design of the learning experience. Learning design is the “how” of professional learning. It is the way educators gain knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices and translate new practices into their daily work. Professional learning research helps inform decisions about which learning designs are most effective for different kinds of learning outcomes, learners, and situations. For example, a book study is effective for gaining new knowledge, yet it is not particularly effective when that knowledge needs to be transferred into new classroom practices.

As educators look to improve in specific areas after analyzing their SAI results, the briefs then highlight next steps for continuous improvement in three categories: (1) **Developing**—Ideas for a school to begin identifying and implementing a variety of professional learning designs, (2) **Strengthening**—ideas for a school to strengthen or enhance the current use of professional learning designs, and (3) **Comprehensive**—ideas that might be helpful to all schools concerning their designs for professional learning.

Under each category, the brief offers concrete suggestions along with tools and resources that would help a team or individual undertake those actions. As one example, the Developing category for Learning Designs includes this suggestion, with details and articles to take first steps in this direction: Develop a school leadership team or a professional learning committee with representatives from all departments or grade levels. In the same brief supporting Learning Designs, one suggested action for the Comprehensive category is to use external providers wisely, with guidelines and resources for doing so. The differentiated actions recognize that those taking the SAI have a range of results and needs and will need to plan their learning accordingly.

For support, Learning Forward can provide national consultants with experience in using the SAI for planning purposes at all levels from the school to the state/province. These experts can guide schools and system staff through application of the instrument, interpretation of the results and translation into action plans for professional learning and school improvement.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SAI PRICING

State/Provinces with 30% of all schools participating	\$25 <i>per school</i>
States/Provinces with less than 30% of all schools participating	\$1000 plus \$35 <i>per school</i>
Regional Service Centers	\$1000 plus \$35 <i>per school</i>
School systems with more than 10 schools participating	\$1000 plus \$35 <i>per school</i>
School systems with 10 or less schools participating	\$500 plus \$35 <i>per school</i>
One School	\$200

NOTE: Projects that do not fit into the categories above will be priced on an individual basis. Prices includes standard reports, resource briefs, and support materials. All contracts will be for one school year, with the option to administer in the fall and the spring.

Q. Can this survey be used to evaluate my school or individual teachers and administrators?

A. No. Survey results are confidential. Even though the principal/leadership team can see the number of respondents there is no way to identify individual respondents. Further, the SAI is solely a planning tool, and is not designed as a performance evaluation. If used longitudinally, as recommended, school progress can be monitored over time.

Q. How is this approach to improving staff learning different from anything else we have done in the past?

A. There has been a great deal of research in the past 10 years and many schools and systems have begun to transform their ideas of the purpose and role of professional learning in schools. This is not just theory; it is in practice all across the country.

Q. Our staff doesn't even know the Standards for Professional Learning. They have never seen them. How can this survey tell us about the implementation of these standards in our school?

A. When you first administer the SAI, results will serve as baseline data about the extent to which behaviors are present in your school as perceived by your teachers. The next step would then include studying the standards to plan ways to implement new practices.

Q. If this in an "opinion" survey how can it accurately describe what is actually being done in my school? Results would only include teacher perception data.

A. Perception drives reality, and perceptions about critical aspects of schools' systems and structures, leadership, and practices are a great place to initiate reflection and teacher conversation and serve as a basis for plans to improve those practices based on a deeper and broader understanding of survey results.