Promoting Powerful Professional Learning to Advance Student Achievement

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Examine the vision and definition for professional development advocated by the National Staff Development Council.

Connect *NSDC’s Standards for Staff Development* to the professional development planning process.

Consider leadership strategies and identify next steps for advancing effective professional development to increase student success.

Recognize new resources beneficial to your efforts in dropout prevention.
NSDC Purpose

Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.
Results-driven
Standards-based
Job-embedded
What are students expected to know and be able to do?

What must educators know and be able to do to ensure student success?

What professional development must be offered to enable educators to develop the knowledge and skills needed to produce the results they want for students?
Content

Equity
Do the data indicate staff needs related to culturally responsive teaching, safe and orderly classrooms, and high expectations for all students?

Teaching Quality
Do the data indicate staff needs with regard to teachers’ content knowledge, research-based instruction, and assessment literacy?

Family Involvement
What role will families play and how will educators support them?
“I know I don’t have to remind you of the value I place on education.”
Data-driven

What do the data imply regarding learning needs?

Evaluation

What data will be used to monitor and document the progress toward achieving the goals and vision?

Researched-based

What research will be consulted as the team selects strategies and programs for improvement?
Process

Design
What learning options will educators have so they are able to gain knowledge and skills?

Learning
What additional support will be offered to staff members based on individual needs and/or career stages?

Collaboration
How will staff collaboration contribute to the desired outcomes?
“I’d like you to meet my substitute teacher.”
Context

Learning Communities
What role will schoolwide and team learning play in achieving the school goals and vision?

Leadership
What specific knowledge and skills must the principal and teacher leaders develop?

Resources
How should time and money be allocated?
"Okay, guys - time to get back into shape!"
NSDC Definition

Proposal to amend: Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Title IX. Section 9101(34)

- SB 1979 (2008)
- State and Local Adoptions
- Professional Organizations
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - The term 'professional development' means a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement –

(A) Professional development fosters collective responsibility for improved student performance and must be comprised of professional learning that –
is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards, as well as related local educational agency and school improvement goals;

is conducted among learning teams of educators, including teachers, paraprofessionals, and other instructional staff at the school;

is facilitated by well-prepared school principals and, or, school-based professional development coaches, mentors, master teachers, or other teacher leaders;

occurs primarily multiple times per week or the equivalent of several hours per week; and
(5) engages established learning teams of educators in a continuous cycle of improvement that –

(i) analyzes student, teacher, and school learning needs through a thorough review of data on teacher and student performance;

(ii) defines a clear set of educator learning goals based on the rigorous analysis of the data;

(iii) achieves the educator learning goals identified in subsection (A)(5)(ii) by implementing coherent, sustained, and evidence-based learning strategies that improve instructional effectiveness and student achievement, such as lesson study and the examining of student work;
(iv) provides classroom-based coaching or other forms of assistance to support the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the classroom;

(v) regularly assesses the effectiveness of the professional development in achieving identified learning goals, improving teaching, and assisting all students in meeting challenging state academic achievement standards;

(vi) informs ongoing improvements in teaching and student learning; and

(vii) may be facilitated and strengthened by the local educational agency or other external assistance providers.
(B) The process outlined in subsection (34)(A) may be supported and strengthened by activities such as courses, workshops, institutes, networks, and conferences that:

1. must address the learning goals and objectives established for professional development by educators at the school level;

2. advance the ongoing school-based professional development; and

3. are provided by for-profit and non-profit entities outside the school such as local education agencies, universities, education service agencies, technical assistance providers, networks of content-area specialists, and other education organizations and associations.
“Taken together, these findings are promising and provide researchers and educators more confidence that the SAI measure, when aggregated as a total school-level summary variable, is a reliable and valid measure that has demonstrated significant associations with student academic achievement.”

(Vaden-Kiernan, Jones, McCann. Et al. p. 4)
Both staff and students benefit from the effects of professional learning communities in schools: teachers are less isolated, share in the collective responsibility for student success . . . and show smaller achievement gaps between students of different backgrounds.

“Not yet, Miss Latham. Don’t worry, I’ll let you know when summer vacation gets here.”
Use Standards

There are no shortcuts to high quality staff development and perhaps that is why we have seen so little of it.

“The principal would like another look at your diploma.”
“We must be thinking more rigorously, realistically, and precisely about why we do what we do, what ends we hope to accomplish, and how we can document our successes in achieving those ends.”

Reexamine Existing Paradigms

If everyone is equally good at what they do, then no one has anything to teach anyone else about how to do it better.

Leading by example is perhaps the purest form of leadership and the one over which each of us has the most control.

“Just think - a teacher goes to school and never gets out!”
Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead
“My life is my message.”

-Gandhi
Leadership in the future will be about the creation and maintenance of relationships: the relationships of children to learning, children to children, children to adults, adults to adults, and school to community.

Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children.

Sitting Bull, 1877
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