COMPREHENSIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SYSTEM:

A WORKBOOK FOR STATES AND DISTRICTS

learningforward
TRANSFORMING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

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Learning Forward's *Transforming Professional Learning to Prepare College- and Career-Ready Students: Implementing the Common Core* is a multidimensional initiative focused on developing a comprehensive system of professional learning that spans the distance from the statehouse to the classroom. The project will reform policy and practice and apply innovative technology solutions to support and enhance professional learning. With an immediate focus on implementing common core state standards and new assessments, the initiative provides resources and tools to assist states, districts, and schools in providing effective professional learning for current and future education reforms.

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Learn more at www.learningforward.org/publications/implementing-common-core

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Table of Contents

Introduction 4

Step 1: Launch the Work 10

Step 2: Collect and Examine Data and Research 23

Step 3: Establish Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definition, and Goals 26

Step 4: Design System Operations 30

Step 5: Revise or Develop Policies 35

Step 6: Plan Short- and Long-term Professional Learning 39

Step 7: Provide Professional Learning for Full Implementation 42

Step 8: Conduct Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation 47

Conclusion 53

Tools 54

Tools 1: Launch the Work 55

Tools 2: Collect and Examine Data and Research 78

Tools 3: Establish Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definition, and Goals 89

Tools 4: Design System Operations 147

Tools 5: Revise or Develop Policies 170

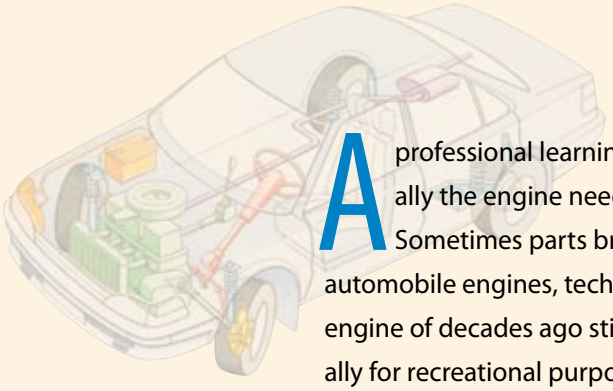
Tools 6: Plan Short- and Long-term Professional Learning 177

Tools 7: Provide Professional Learning for Full Implementation 178

Tools 8: Conduct Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation 195

References 201

Introduction



A professional learning system is like the engine in an automobile. Occasionally the engine needs adjustment so that it works smoothly and reliably. Sometimes parts break or wear out and must be replaced. And as it is with automobile engines, technology is changing. While the sparkplug and flywheel engine of decades ago still drive vehicles that are lovingly maintained today, usually for recreational purposes, most engines are more fuel efficient and environmentally friendly.

Just as an engine propels a vehicle, professional learning drives an education system. Indeed, one might say that learning drives change. Initiatives launched by local schools and school systems, state and federal education agencies, such as Common Core State Standards, new student assessments, and approaches to measuring educator effectiveness have created a new imperative for a different type of professional learning—a new engine to drive teaching for deeper learning.

Changes as significant as those facing educators require a deep examination and tuning or rebuilding the learning engine. Most districts and states have professional learning systems in place, but few are designed to be comprehensive. They were created by opportunity and happenstance, courses and programs added here and there in response to new initiatives. Rather than add on yet again, district and state leaders need to remodel their existing professional learning systems so that each is purposeful, finely tuned, and provides every educator with continuous professional learning. Then, they should conduct periodic maintenance and replacement so their professional learning systems, the engines of education systems, can increase efficiency, effectiveness, and reliability.

This workbook guides a team of thoughtfully selected representatives in reviewing, revising, or replacing an existing professional learning system. The process outlined and the tools included support the team in conducting all aspects of its work, usually done over several months, with continuous progress monitoring and input from research, experts, and constituents. These chapters do not contain the right answer, the perfect system, or absolute guarantees. A comprehensive professional learning system has essential components, but how those components operate in each context will vary. Excluding some of the components or designing them so they are ill fitting may mean that the efficiency and reliability of the system will fail sooner or later.

Introduction

Comprehensive Professional Learning System: A Workbook for States and Districts is designed to be used by leaders in education agencies, including state departments or ministries of education, local school systems, and other governing agencies or organizations that provide professional learning. They can use the workbook to conduct regular maintenance, make needed repairs, and schedule periodic replacement of the whole professional learning system, or parts of it, to meet the dynamic needs of educators and students.

Rationale for a Comprehensive Professional Learning System

The success of nearly all education initiatives depends on the capacity of the people in the education workforce to fully implement the initiatives. To that end, effective professional learning is core to all improvement efforts. Professional learning is defined as the continuous, sustained, and focused engagement of educators in learning to refine, expand, and improve their knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices. In most education agencies, however, what is considered professional learning is a fragmented hodge-podge of practices and policies that have emerged over time as the need arises. While the add-ons work temporarily for the purpose for which they were designed, eventually, these fragmented efforts may lead to dysfunction within a professional learning system.

In addition, school systems, state and federal agencies, external funders, and individual educators are investing significant resources in professional learning. That number continues to grow with each new local, state, and federal reform. To ensure that investments in professional learning produce the intended results and that sufficient professional learning occurs aligned with new initiatives, the very nature of professional learning within an education agency must be focused on increasing student achievement.

Definition of Comprehensive Professional Learning System

A comprehensive professional learning system is the infrastructure for developing individual, school, team, school system capacities needed to ensure success for all educators and their students. A comprehensive professional learning system can be best described as "the way professional learning works." That is, it consists of component parts of the engine that drives educator learning

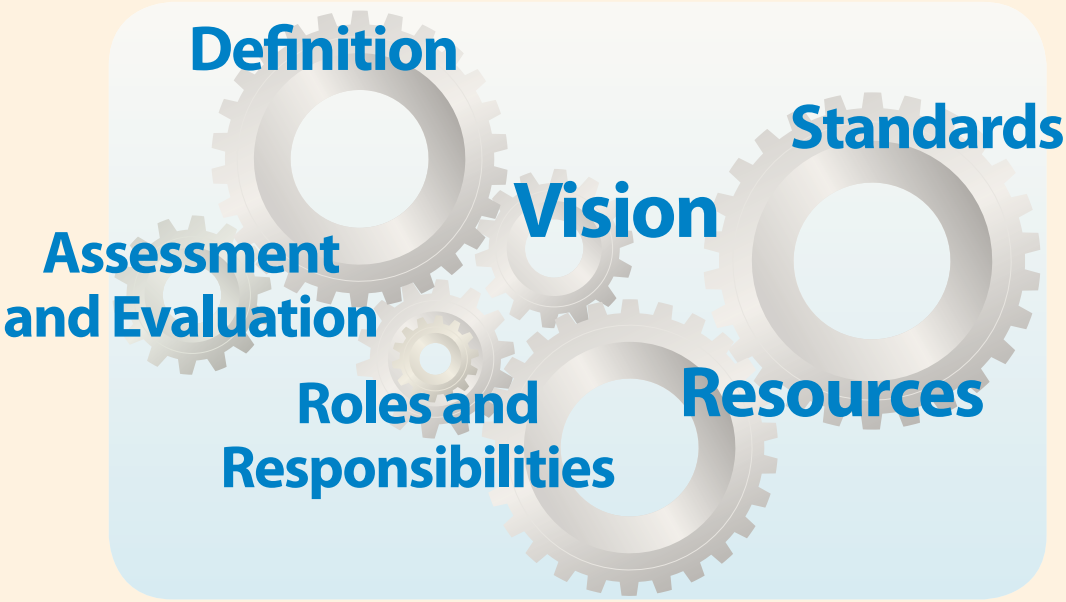


Figure 1. Essential components of the comprehensive professional learning system

designed to increase student learning. (See Figure 1.) Comprehensive systems are comprehensive because they include all the essential components needed for professional learning to meet the demands of educators and their students. They have at least six core components: vision of professional learning system as a part of the education system; definition of professional learning; Standards for Professional Learning to guide quality; stakeholder roles and responsibilities defined and articulated; ongoing assessment and evaluation; and resources including staff, time, funds, and facilities.

Comprehensive professional learning systems operate across state, district or local, and school building levels. While the components are the same at all levels, how they operate may vary across the levels. Typically, at the state level comprehensive professional learning systems establish a framework for the design and development of a school district's professional learning system; the local district or school system shapes how professional learning happens within the schools. In that way, the infrastructure provides for continuous educator learning to occur seamlessly from preparation, recruitment, and induction throughout an educator's career.

Such a system also links professional learning to other education subsystems such as licensure, human capital management, school improvement, data and assessment, and others necessary for student success. A comprehensive professional learning system ensures that policies, practices, resources, and management align to provide equity, efficiency, and effectiveness, and achieve identified results for educator effectiveness and student learning.

Within comprehensive professional learning systems, educators develop single or multiyear individual, team, school, or program-specific professional learning plans to achieve their goals. Each plan specifies expected outcomes of each; the design for professional learning necessary to achieve the outcomes; the benchmarks to monitor and assess progress toward the goals; and the resources required for full implementation of the learning to achieve the intended outcomes. Comprehensive professional learning systems require plans to direct and guide professional learning efforts. Professional learning plans serve as the map to guide educator learning while the comprehensive professional learning system ensures that the infrastructure is in place to support both the learner and the learning.

Development of a Comprehensive Professional Learning System

Developing or redesigning a state's or school system's comprehensive professional learning system can be accomplished in many ways. The steps below provide an overview of a recommended process. The work is complex, yet when done well it can build broad-based understanding of research and practice in professional learning. Knowledge of effective professional learning, in turn, strengthens support for professional learning that builds educator and student success.

Table 1. Developing a Comprehensive Professional Learning System

Step	Task
1. Launch the work.	• Determine purpose and desired results. • Assemble the team. • Collect data and research: • Hold introductory meeting. • Clarify expectations during and between meetings. • Determine communication and reporting process. • Clarify timeframe, work process, roles and responsibilities of team members, benchmarks for progress monitoring, etc.
2. Examine data and research.	• Study research, data, and standards. • Determine current state to identify strengths, areas for growth, needs, challenges. • Summarize findings, strengths, needs, challenges, expectations.
3. Establish vision, assumptions, purpose, definition, goals.	• Write vision with purpose. • Write assumptions/beliefs. • Develop overall theory of change, • Define professional learning. • Develop goals and plan of action. • Vet draft work. • Revise as necessary.
4. Design operations of system.	• Determine processes, decision-making flow, lines of authority and roles and responsibilities. • Establish student, educator, information, and recordkeeping data system interface. • Determine appropriate resource investments. • Develop technology and implement supports. • Assess feasibility of operations. • Design evaluation of processes, inputs, outputs, and outcomes. • Vet work to date with constituents and experts. • Revise as necessary.

Step	Task
5. Revise or develop policies.	• Review existing policies for alignment with revised/replaced system. • Submit the comprehensive professional learning system to decision-making authority for adoption/approval. • Adopt new policies. • Develop guidance to support policy implementation.
6. Develop long- and short-term professional plans to guide professional learning	• Implement plan. • Evaluate plan.
7. Provide professional learning for full implementation.	• Develop professional learning for leaders and decision makers to support implementation of the revised/replaced system. • Provide ongoing support for educators, decision makers, and leaders to refine and improve implementation.
8. Conduct ongoing assessment and evaluation, adjust routinely based on data, and replace periodically.	• Plan evaluation. • Conduct evaluation. • Report results. • Recommend and make improvements through responsible, informed investments in professional learning.

This workbook guides teams through the process of developing a comprehensive professional learning system and offers tools and resources to support their work. There are many ways to complete the process, including using a small work group, a larger team of stakeholder representatives, or some variation of these two options. There is no "right" way to accomplish this work; however, there are more or less appropriate ways depending on the context, the scope of the work, and the preparation of those engaged in the work. Lead decision makers who will oversee this work can use the processes, resources, and tools in Step 1: Launch the Work to help them decide the most appropriate way to proceed given their unique circumstances.

STEP 1

Launch the Work

Step One sets the stage for and launches the development or revision of a comprehensive professional learning system. There are four parts of the first step:

(a) Determine the purpose and desired results;

(b) assemble the team;

(c) prepare to collect data and research; and

(d) hold the first meeting.

Determine Purpose and Desired Results

In this step, policymakers and decision makers in the public and private sectors gain awareness that professional learning is the primary means for improving educator effectiveness and student success. They may use *Tool 1.1: Considerations before launching the development of a comprehensive professional learning system* and *Tool 1.2: Web-based resources on the role of professional learning in improving educator effectiveness and student learning* as resources that demonstrate the importance of developing a comprehensive professional learning system.

Once policy- and decision makers understand the value of a comprehensive professional learning system, they develop a charge statement for the completion of the work that might include analyzing and redesigning the existing system or designing a new system. The charge specifies that the result of the work is a professional learning system that meets the criteria of a comprehensive system and that ensures continuous learning and growth for educators. In addition, having a comprehensive professional learning system will help educators meet the demands of current and future education initiatives.

The charge statement in *Tool 1.3: Sample charge statement to Comprehensive Professional Learning System Team* is an example of a document that leaders might use to set the expectations for a comprehensive professional learning system, establish the parameters for the system, determine how the development work will be completed, and establish a timeline for the work. They may also specify who will be involved in the development of the system, whose input is essential, and what decision-making authority will approve or accept the system when it is designed. Policy- and decision makers give thoughtful attention to crafting the charge statement since it will convey the overall purpose of this work, the urgency for it, and the guidelines for accomplishing it.

Developing a comprehensive professional learning system can be accomplished in several ways. One way is with a larger representative task force; another way is with a small work group. A discussion of method follows.

Convene large stakeholder group. One common process is to convene a large group of stakeholders who represent various constituents with an interest in professional learning. During several months, they will meet eight to ten times to define the various components of the system. Between meetings small groups of members from the larger task force will refine various aspects of the system, and bring their work to the larger task force for feedback and revision. While the team is working, they will also be responsible for providing a feedback loop to their constituents to seek broader engagement and perspectives. *Tool 1.4: Recommended membership for Comprehensive Professional Learning System Task Force* suggests stakeholders who might be invited to serve on the task force.

Convene small work group. Another option for designing a professional learning system is to bring together a small work group to develop the core components of the system. After the group finishes its work, the leadership then engages representatives of various constituencies in reviewing and providing feedback on the proposed system.

Each approach, and possible combinations from both, has merits. The primary benefit of engaging a larger task force is that it generates broader interest in and advocacy for effective professional learning. Through their engagement in the work, task force members become ambassadors for effective professional learning as they deepen their understanding about what effective professional learning is and how it contributes to a successful education system. A leaner, smaller work group is able to accomplish the work more quickly. With fewer people, the work usually moves along more quickly and energy and effort can be expended on seeking feedback from a broader audience of stakeholders.

Context may be the most important factor in determining which approach is most appropriate. The following questions will help policy- and decision makers determine the most appropriate way to accomplish this work:

1. To what degree do educators, parents, students, and community members understand and value the role of professional learning in improving educator effectiveness and student success?
2. To what degree do they understand how professional learning operates throughout the education system, how it contributes to the overall effectiveness of the education system, and what its purpose is?
3. After having completed an analysis of the current state of professional learning, how significant are the changes needed to the existing system in order to meet the recommended criteria of a comprehensive professional learning system?
4. How much is invested in professional learning, and what returns are realized from those investments?
5. What evidence exists that the current professional learning system contributes to educator effectiveness and student success?

After considering these questions, policy- and decision makers may decide whether a task force with broad representation or a smaller work group is preferred. It is important to keep in mind that how the system is designed is likely to influence its overall effectiveness.

In addition to establishing parameters for how the work is accomplished, policy- and decision makers decide on the results they expect from a comprehensive professional learning system. The goals or results of professional learning are important to specify because they will guide the work. Too often, those goals fall short of the intended outcome and focus only on the program's activities—what it does, rather than what it accomplishes.

Outcomes of a program occur in levels over time. These levels represent degrees of learning. Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick (2006) referred to them as levels for evaluating training. They describe four levels beginning with participant satisfaction and ending with impact on clients. For professional learning, however, outcomes are changes that occur, first in educators and then in students. Short-term outcomes are the changes that occur as a result of a program activity, such as educators knowing about differentiated instruction. Certainly, knowing about differentiation and how to differentiate are important steps toward actually differentiating instruction, but they are not the same. Professional learning often stops at the "knowing about" or "knowing how" levels and fails to push through to the application and impact levels. Knowing what differentiation is and how to design differentiated lessons, however, are second-level outcomes. A third-level outcome is applying differentiation within one's routine practice. Increased student learning is the intended result of professional learning on differentiation. Ultimately, the second-level outcomes lead to the third-level outcome of student success. Figure 2 depicts the movement from effective professional learning to student success.

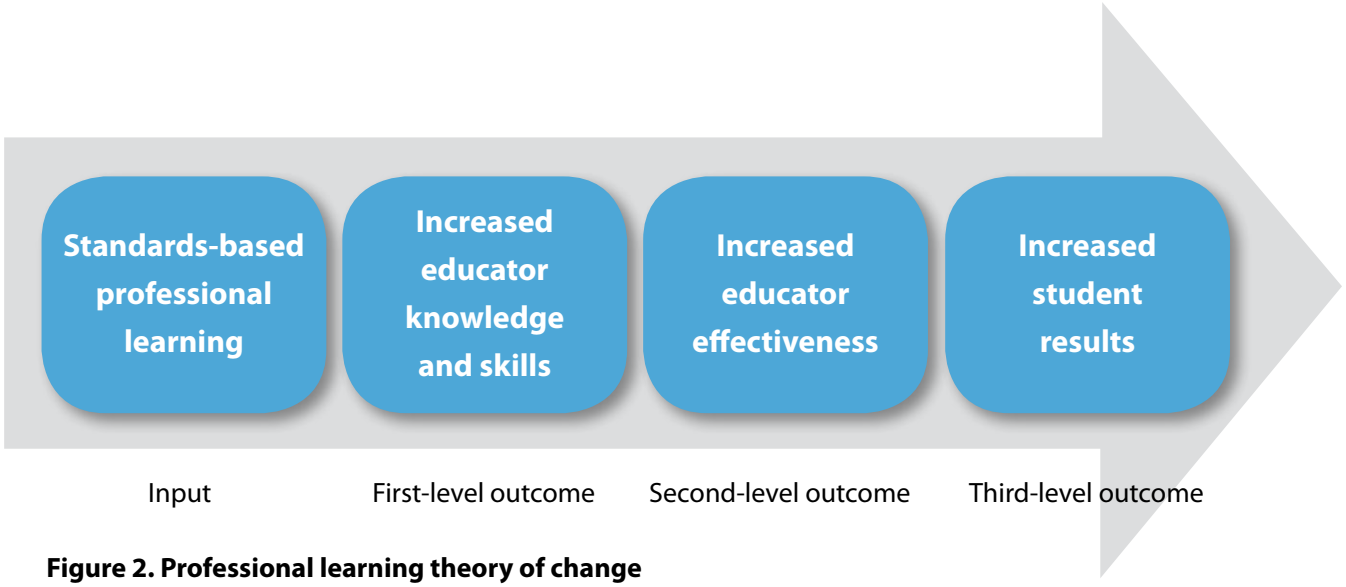


Figure 2. Professional learning theory of change

Educator effectiveness is part of the pathway to achieve the intended outcome of professional learning, student success. The value of increasing educator effectiveness is measured in terms of educator practice, their engagement as professionals in continuous learning, and student success. If planners and implementers fail to distinguish between activities and various levels of outcomes when they begin this work, they will cause the system to fall short of the outcome that matters most—student learning. In fact, if the only outcome of professional learning is educator effectiveness, professional learning falls short of its intended outcome. Professional learning must give educators opportunities and support for the deep learning that transforms their practice and produces results for students. Policy- and decision makers must make clear that the professional learning system produces educator effectiveness as a means to achieve greater success for students.

Assemble the Team

Once policy- and decision makers complete the charge statement, the work transitions to a lead staff member or external facilitator who will coordinate the work and report periodically to the designated decision makers or an oversight team of representatives. Selecting the lead staff member or external facilitator to guide this work is an important step. At the state level, the decision might fall to an assistant commissioner with authority or responsibility for educator effectiveness and student achievement. In a school system, the superintendent or assistant superintendent might make the decision. In selecting the lead person, the decision makers might consider the following questions:

- How will the person's current work responsibilities to be altered to afford the necessary time to lead this work?
- How deep is the person's knowledge and understanding about research-based professional learning?
- To what degree does the person have the facilitation and organization skills to lead a major development initiative, communicate clearly about the work as it is being accomplished and receive and use feedback, and build relationships with task force members?
- How well respected is the person in the agency as a knowledgeable leader in professional learning?

Decision makers, with the identified lead staff member, may consider using an external facilitator for the task force. There are advantages and disadvantages of such an approach. Sometimes when a knowledgeable leader assumes the role of facilitator, the voice of the task force members is minimized. On the other hand, if task force members have limited understanding of current research and practice, a knowledgeable leader develops that understanding through the process. Team size may vary depending on the size of the education agency or district; however, a task force of approximately 30 members is ideal.

One advantage of having an external facilitator is that the lead staff member can serve as a member of the task force and bring his or her perspective, knowledge, and expertise to the task force as a member. Another advantage is that an external facilitator can attend to the operation of the task force such as the

relationships within the task force, organization and sequencing of the work, adherence to the parameters specified, and time management. An external facilitator may bring processes and strategies that build cohesiveness within the task force, accelerate the work, and improve the product. Occasionally, agencies have internal staff members who are able to act in the role of external facilitator for task forces.

The questions below may guide decision makers and the lead staff member in determining if an external facilitator would be advantageous:

1. To what degree is the lead staff member skillful and respected as a facilitator?
2. To what degree will stakeholders view the work as a genuine collaborative process if the lead staff member facilitates the work?
3. Are funds available to hire an external facilitator?
4. What might an external facilitator contribute that the lead staff member might not be able to bring to the process?
5. What advantages might be gained if the lead staff member serves as a member of the task force?

If an external facilitator leads this work, it is important for that person to work closely with a lead staff member or small steering committee that will continuously monitor the progress of the task force and provide ongoing feedback about the work. From this point, the person or persons who lead the work with the task force are called *facilitator* whether this is the lead staff member, an internal or an external facilitator.

In addition to designating the staff leader and facilitator(s) of the task force, another crucial and early decision is determining membership of the task force. When considering membership, it is crucial to consider those who will commit the time and effort to the work, who have a strong interest in the success of the work, and who are committed to accomplishing work during the meetings of the task force and between meetings of the group. Generating a list of potential members using *Tool 1.4: Potential representatives to Comprehensive Professional Learning System Team* and reviewing the list against established criteria are important to do before inviting any member. Occasionally, enthusiastic leaders may invite members too early before the full scope of membership is considered. The framework in Table 2 offers one way to propose membership for the task force.

Table 2. Framework for Considering Task Force Membership

Name	Represents (Which stakeholder group does this person belong to or represent?)	Level of commitment to effective professional learning (high, medium, low)	Depth of understanding about effective professional learning (high, medium, low)	Demonstrated commitment to other similar task forces (strong, moderate, low)	Unique contribution (What does this person bring that others might not?)
Person A					
Person B					
Person C					
Etc.					

After designated leaders or facilitators have identified potential members, they issue invitations. To indicate the importance of the work, invitations, ideally, should come from a member of top-level leadership. At the state level, the commissioner, assistant commissioner, or state board of education chairman issues the invitation; at the district level, the superintendent or the superintendent with the board of education chairman does. Invitations include the charge statement that will specify the scope of the work, required time commitment, and intended product.

Prepare to Collect Data and Research

Initially, the lead staff member assembles background reading to help develop a common understanding of effective professional learning among members of the task force. Two important resources are needed to accomplish this task and to prepare task force members to undertake this work: *Standards for Professional Learning* and *The Learning Educator: New Era of Professional Learning.* Both are relatively brief, easy to share through jigsaw strategies, and present both the research and fundamental assumptions related to effective professional learning. The facilitator may want to purchase these resources for task force members.

Tool 1.5: Standards windowpane, Tool 1.6: Standards for Professional Learning self-assessment, and *Tool 1.7: Jigsaw exercise for The Learning Educator: A New Era for Professional Learning* recommend strategies for engaging in collaborative reading and discussion of these two texts. In addition to the printed version of *Standards for Professional Learning,* the facilitator and team members can find individual standards and their rationales online at www.learningforward.org/standards.

The website also includes an introductory video that summarizes the standards. It also includes a facilitator's guide for developing in-depth understanding about the standards at www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/facilitatorguide.pdf.

The second resource, *The Learning Educator: A New Era for Professional Learning* is a 100-page book that identifies eight principles that undergird professional learning. It is available for purchase at https://store.learningforward.org/mm5/merchant.mvc?Session_ID=6d113dca8d5b58ecca79be3d46ad6a62&Store_Code=L4W&Screen=PROD&Product_Code=B372&

Tool 1.8: Background readings lists other web-based resources that are useful for building background knowledge as well. The additional reports in *Tool 1.8* include the name, description, and link to a number of excellent resources for developing foundational knowledge. Members have access to all the reports and can go back to read those that pique their interest after hearing about them from colleagues or to use as reference for later work.

The task force facilitator determines how to introduce and share these resources with the task force to develop a deep common understanding about effective professional learning. One reminder is that building background understanding requires more than just sharing the resources. It includes opportunities to discuss and debate the information and identify what is most important to consider as the work progresses. The facilitator may also ask individual members to be responsible for reading and sharing the key points in one or more texts to develop a common understanding among task force members. *Tool 1.8* suggests strategies for engaging task force members in sharing and discussing background readings. *Tool 1.9: Key Ideas note-taking guide* is a guide for summarizing primary ideas in the background reading. *Tool 1.10: The Final Word protocol* is a process task members can use when discussion readings in small groups.

Other data may exist within the state or district about professional learning. The lead staff member compiles any available reports, data, or resources about professional learning. This may include policies, administrative and guidance documents, and samples of current and past annual individual, team, school, district, or state department of education plans and evaluation reports. These resources will be helpful in understanding current professional learning practices.

Convene First Meeting

The first meeting is the last step in launching the work. It occurs after members agree to participate and have research and background information in hand. During the first meeting members learn about each other, gain greater clarity about their roles and responsibilities, establish agreements about how they will operate as a team, begin to build a common understanding of effective professional learning, and learn how the work will progress. Because the team is likely to be together for an extended period of time working on significant issues, the facilitator invests time in developing relationships among members and promoting operational procedures that contribute that contribute to the team's efficiency and effectiveness.

Tool 1.11: First meeting agenda contains a possible agenda for a daylong first meeting of the task force. The agenda serves to elevate the significance of the work, create among members a productive culture for

success, and establish clear parameters and expectations for the task. Holding a daylong meeting allows the team to accomplish some of the fundamental work so that they are able to delve into the work more quickly. If possible, the lead decision maker and a policymaker can attend the first meeting to present the charge, answer questions from task force members, and express appreciation for the task force's service.

Table 3 offers an outline of potential meeting topics over time. While it is a recommended list, it provides an overview of the typical flow of the work.

Table 3. Possible Meeting Topics

Meetings	Possible topics	Possible deliverables
1	• Develop an understanding of the significance of the work ahead. • Establish relationships among task force members. • Clarify purpose, parameters, roles and responsibilities, operational guidelines, and sequence of work. • Begin to build background knowledge.	• Clarification of the purpose of the task force. • Invited task force members. • Deepened understanding of task force's role and responsibility, the expected outcome, and the rationale for the work. • Established agreements and procedures for the task force. • Background knowledge about effective professional learning among task force members.
2	• Deepen background knowledge. • Analyze components of comprehensive professional learning system. • Review data and research about current system to identify existing components and gaps.	• Extended background knowledge about effective professional learning among task force members. • Research-based knowledge of comprehensive professional learning system. • Completed analysis of current state of professional learning system. • Completed "gap analysis" of existing professional learning system and comprehensive professional learning system.

Meetings	Possible topics	Possible deliverables
3	• Discuss standards and principles of effective professional learning. • Draft assumptions to support the comprehensive professional learning system. • Define purpose, vision, and mission of professional learning. • Plan for collecting feedback from constituents. • Organize and charge smaller work groups to address some components of comprehensive system. - Standards. - Roles and responsibilities. - Operations. - Recordkeeping and reporting. - Monitoring and evaluation. - Resources.	• Draft of purpose, vision, mission, goals, and assumptions of professional learning within the organization (school system, agency, state department of education, etc.). • Feedback on the drafted components received from stakeholders and incorporated into revisions.
4	• Review feedback collected from constituents. • Revise documents as needed. • Develop goals for professional learning that align with purpose, vision, mission, and assumptions. • Develop a theory of change for comprehensive system of professional learning. • Plan for collecting feedback on goals. • Engage in smaller work groups. • Share progress of smaller work groups and feedback from larger task force. • Establish expectations for smaller work groups next actions.	• Documents revised based on feedback. • Stated goals for professional learning aligned with purpose, vision, mission, assumptions. • Draft of theory of change. • Evaluation plan. • Established small groups with assigned members.
5	• Review progress of smaller work groups. • Engage in smaller work groups. • Share progress of smaller work groups. • Plan for collecting feedback from constituents on work completed to date.	• Small group reports/ demonstrations. • Whole-task force review of all work. • Identification of areas of improvement. • Plans, schedules, and invitations for conducting stakeholder reviews.

Meetings	Possible topics	Possible deliverables
6	• Share feedback from constituents. • Engage in smaller work groups for revision and continued work. • Pull together all work to date for review by larger task force. • Critique work based on components of comprehensive system. • Identify areas for improvement. • Plan for and schedule review by selected stakeholder groups.	• Constituent feedback. • Focused revision of work within small and large groups. • Improvement targets identified. • Stakeholder meetings planned and scheduled.
7	• Review feedback from selected stakeholder groups • Revise as needed. • Develop an evaluation plan for the comprehensive system. • Finalize draft comprehensive plan for broader feedback. • Engage decision makers in reviewing work to date. • Review existing policies for alignment with draft system. • Identify potential policy revisions needed. • Prepare and present recommended comprehensive professional learning system and implications for full implementation.	• Feedback from selected stakeholder groups. • Revised draft plan of comprehensive professional learning systems based on feedback. • Decision-makers' reviews. • Drafts of proposed professional learning policy revisions. • Drafts of evaluation plans for comprehensive system.
8	• Delineate guidance and resources needed for implementation of comprehensive system. • Design implementation plan that builds capacity of those using the system and responsible for the system's effectiveness. • Design evaluation framework for ongoing review and monitoring of the system.	• Proposed guidance, support, resources needed for implementation. • Implementation plan that includes capacity building. • Draft of evaluation framework for ongoing assessment and monitoring.
9	• Review system implementation. • Analyze data about progress of short-term professional learning plan. • Identify areas for modification. • Adjust plan as needed.	• Proposed or adapted data system that supports ongoing review. • Revised implementation plan for comprehensive professional learning system.

The meetings typically occur over the period of several months to allow time for the task force to accomplish its work and to seek and incorporate feedback from constituents. The task force may continue to meet periodically to review data about the comprehensive professional learning system and make adjustments as needed. Members may serve to ensure equity, efficiency, and effectiveness in the comprehensive professional learning system. Or a new team, such as an oversight committee, may assume the responsibility to monitor and adjust the newly developed comprehensive professional learning system.

After the system is designed and approved, individuals, schools, districts, or state department of education use the comprehensive professional learning system to develop single or multi-year professional learning plans. Those plans are carried out within and supported by the comprehensive system. They follow the established parameters and guidelines to ensure that all professional learning is of the highest quality, accessible to every educator, and achieves the established goals. Details about developing professional learning plans are discussed in *Comprehensive Professional Learning Planning: A Workbook for States and Districts*. Single or multi-year professional learning plans for individuals, teams, schools, districts, or state departments of education are the result of the following series of steps:

- Develop single or multiyear goals for professional learning;
- Develop a logic model for achieving the goals;
- Design an evaluation system;
- Allocate appropriate resources;
- Conduct actions;
- Assess and evaluate the impact of actions; and
- Revise as needed.

At the completion of Step One, the task force will have taken the following actions:

- Clarified the purpose of the task force's convening;
- Identified task force members;
- Held a first meeting in which the task force has developed an deep understanding of its role and responsibility, the expected outcome, and the rationale for the work;
- Established agreements and procedures for the task force; and
- Developed some background knowledge about effective professional learning.

Tools for Launching the Work

Tool	Tool Title	Description
1.1	Considerations before launching the development of a comprehensive professional learning system	This tool lists considerations to explore before launching the development of a comprehensive professional learning system.
1.2	Web-based resources on the role of professional learning in improving educator effectiveness and student learning	The list of resources can be used to inform decision makers about the importance of developing a comprehensive professional learning system that ensures educator learning and supports to increase educator effectiveness and student success.
1.3	Sample charge statement to Comprehensive Professional Learning System Team	This template and suggested language outlines the expectations and parameters for the team charged with developing the comprehensive professional learning system.
1.4	Potential representatives to Comprehensive Professional Learning System Team	This list includes recommendations for membership in a representative team.
1.5	Standards windowpane	This tool will help build foundational understanding of the Standards for Professional Learning.
1.6	Standards for Professional Learning self-assessment	This self-assessment engages state or district staff in the process of examining their current professional learning practices in relationship to the standards.
1.7	Jigsaw exercise for *The Learning Educator: A New Era for Professional Learning*	This 2.5 hour activity develops a fundamental understanding of the beliefs that drive professional learning practices.

Tool	Tool Title	Description
1.8	Background readings	The annotated list of background readings suggests web-based readings to build foundational knowledge of task force members.
1.9	Key Ideas note-taking guide	This tool is a worksheet for recording key ideas from the background readings.
1.10	Final Word protocol	This tool, drawn from the *Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook for States and Districts* describes a process for task force members to use in discussing background readings with one another in small groups.
1.11	First meeting agenda	This proposed agenda details what might occur in the first meeting of the task force and delineates the focus of subsequent meetings.

STEP 2

Collect and Examine Data and Research

Step Two engages the task force in collecting data, analyzing the data collected, and studying research collected. Task force members have read and discussed documents about effective professional learning. After developing foundational knowledge about effective professional learning, the task force collects and analyzes data, formulates conclusions about the current state of professional learning, and uses this information to identify the strengths and gaps in the existing professional learning system. Before the facilitator engages the task force in first examining the existing system, the task force may use that time to determine what data it wishes to examine, how to collect those data, and from whom to collect the data. Leaders and facilitators of the task force can use *Professional Learning Initiative Analysis: A Workbook for States and Districts* to help prepare for determining what data to collect and where to find the best data sources. The workbook is available at www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/commoncore/professional-learning-initiative-analysis.pdf. The workbook is designed to guide users through a five-step process of understanding what professional learning is available in their system; what is known about it; how it contributes to achieving the system's goals; and what actions leaders might consider to increase the overall effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of professional learning.

Data Collection About Existing Professional Learning System

The effectiveness of the work of the task force depends on the depth of analysis of the current state and research and background information available to task force members. Before or during the task force's first meeting, the lead staff member gathers pertinent documents, policies, guidelines, data, and other resources that will provide an understanding of the current state of the professional learning system. This includes assembling federal, state, and local school system requirements for professional learning. Federal requirements for professional learning, for example, are incorporated into many of the federal regular, preschool, special, migrant, career and technical education programs, special grant or funding programs such as school improvement grants, state NCLB waivers, and other specialized programs. While some of the requirements may be malleable, it is best that the task force has access to information about the requirements and is able to discern which are flexible.

Other data about professional learning may exist within the state or district. The lead staff member assembles available and relevant reports, data, or resources (e.g. policies, administrative and guidance documents; sample reports, samples of current and past individual, team, school, district, or state department of education annual plans and evaluation reports.) Such resources will be help build understanding of current professional learning practices.

Another resource for collecting data about the current state of professional learning is the Standards Assessment Inventory 2 (SAI2). This 50-item, online survey provides information about the degree to which school-based professional learning meets the Standards for Professional Learning. It is designed specifically for collecting teachers' perceptions about their professional learning experiences. The results of the survey or other similar instruments provide both a baseline to use to evaluate the effectiveness of the comprehensive professional learning system and for monitoring effectiveness of the system over time. Information about the SAI2 is available at www.learningforward.org/standards/standards-assessment-inventory-sai.

Finally, new data about the current state of professional learning may also be collected using methods such as focus groups of those responsible for, or who participate in, professional learning. Questions for focus groups appear in *Tool 2.1: Focus group questions*.

Data Analysis of Existing Professional Learning System

After collecting data and information, the task force begins analysis to understand the current state of professional learning in the district or state. Data from the SAI2, other surveys or evaluations, focus groups, or other means may be used for this analysis. The facilitator shares data collected so the task force understands what is available and has an opportunity to request additional data. *Tool 2.2: Data table* might be helpful in understanding the range of data available for analysis. *Tool 2.3: Current practice and policy* is a recommended data analysis protocol to gather information about 22 components of a comprehensive system. *Tool 2.4: Professional learning data analysis protocol* is an audit of the existing professional learning system to determine which components exist, which are missing, and which need revision. *Tool 2.5: Summary of data analysis* may be used to summarize findings.

At the completion of Step Two, the task force will have accomplished the following:

- Developed a common understanding about research-based professional learning;
- Analyzed data about current professional learning to understand its strengths and areas for improvement; and
- Identified the components that are current, missing, and in need of revision within the existing professional learning system.

Tools for Collecting and Examining Data and Research

Tool	Tool Title	Description
2.1	**Focus group questions**	The questions provided might be useful for focus groups to gather information about the current state of professional learning.
2.2	**Data table**	This template provides an overview of the types of data available about professional learning.
2.3	**Current practice and policy**	This tool, drawn from the *Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook for States and Districts,* outlines a process for identifying and assessing the strength of current professional learning policies and practices around 22 elements of a comprehensive system.
2.4	**Professional learning data analysis protocol**	This tool offers a protocol for analyzing professional learning data, drawing conclusions or generalizations from the data, identifying contributing factors, and considering implications from the data analysis.
2.5	**Summary of data analysis**	This tool provides a template for summarizing the findings from the data analysis.

STEP 3

Establish Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definition, and Goals

Beginning with Step Three, task force members generate and refine ideas, vet them with constituents, make decisions, and develop clear, concise text to explain their decisions. This phase requires continuous collaboration and consensus building. It requires members to be focused on the outcome of student success through educator effectiveness and the role professional learning plays in that. Working through Step Three may cause disagreements along the way, yet when task force members stay focused on continuous improvement for the benefit of students, they will resolve. The work also requires the use of feedback loops with constituents to check their perceptions, to engage them in the process, and address their issues and meet their needs. It also means that task forces members must be willing to share what they have learned about effective professional learning with constituents so that the result of their work is focused on the future and aligned with research and evidence.

Addressing Core Components of the System

In Step One, members develop a shared foundational knowledge about professional learning based on research and individual past experiences. Step Three requires task force members to use that knowledge to create the fundamental components of the comprehensive professional learning system. These six core components, recognized both by Learning Forward and Council of Chief State School Officers as mandatory professional learning policies, identify the minimum components for an effective professional learning system. The core components that should be adopted into both state and local professional learning policy are:

- Vision/function of professional learning as a part of education system;
- Definition of professional learning to establish common understanding and practice that blends formal and job-embedded, collaborative professional learning to increase educator effectiveness and student achievement;
- Standards for Professional Learning to establish quality indicators;
- Ongoing assessment and evaluation with data to measure the quality, effectiveness, and impact of professional learning for accountability and improvement processes;
- Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders including teachers, principals, central office, regional agencies, state agency; and
- Resources (time, staff, technology, funding, and materials) for ensuring effective professional learning. (Learning Forward, 2013, p.2)

These components create the foundation upon which operational decisions will rest.

Facilitators and team members can use *Tool 3.1: Resources for developing a comprehensive professional learning system* to conduct background reading about the six core elements and 22 related elements that comprise a comprehensive professional learning system. These elements will be referred to throughout all steps of the system development or redesign.

During Step Three challenges most often occur because task force members have more experience with traditional forms of professional learning and more limited experiences with research-, evidence-, and standards-based professional learning. As a result, task force members may be unwilling to move too far away from what is familiar to them. This step engages task force members in a visioning process designed to help them apply what they learned about research-, evidence-, and standards-based professional learning and be innovative, creative, and transformational as they design a comprehensive professional learning system. To guide this work, it is helpful to share examples, to unpack their own powerful professional learning, and to identify where common challenges lie. Several activities used alone or in combination will help task force members envision what is possible and reach beyond what they know.

Several major decisions are a part of Step Three. Each contributes to the overall quality of comprehensive professional learning system that supports educator learning and growth. Thus, Step Three is process rich with a series of activities that will take considerable time because the decisions are vital to the success of the comprehensive system. While working through the process outlined in *Tool 3.2: Recommended process for Step Three,* team members can use tools for different stages of work. For exercises to help build team cohesiveness and develop a shared base of knowledge about definitions, assumptions, and beliefs related to professional learning, task force members can use *Tool 3.3: Fears and hopes, Tool 3.4: What's in a name?, Tool 3.5: Powerful professional learning, Tool 3.6: Definition of professional learning,* and *Tool 3.7: Beliefs, principles, and assumptions about professional learning.* They may turn to *Tool 3.8: Purposes of professional learning, Tool 3.9: Vision and mission of professional learning, Tool 3.10: Linking systems for success,* and *Tool 3. 11: Standards for professional learning* before they begin developing drafts of the core components of the comprehensive professional learning system.

As they work through the various tasks within this step, team members should keep in mind that the components are interdependent. That means that when they reach a point of consensus on one component, they may want to go back and consider whether language about previous components requires some modification. Such recursion is a natural part of engaging in such wide-ranging, systemic work, so team members should not be discouraged if it seems, temporarily, that they have taken two steps forward and one step backward. Each task and decision brings the team greater clarity about the shape of a comprehensive professional learning system. Their persistence and increased clarity will bring the components to life.

STEP 3

Establish Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definition, and Goals

After completing selected activities to examine and understand each of the core components of a comprehensive professional learning system addressed in Step Three, task force members clarify their tasks and begin drafting. One process to consider during this early drafting stage is to work with phrases rather than sentences to prevent devoting too much time prematurely on editing that might interrupt idea development. The work at this stage is generative; task force members create ideas rather than finalize them. After generating ideas, task force members select and refine them. At that point, they construct text to explain the ideas.

At the completion of Step Three, task force members will have drafted language describing the following components and a plan to share with constituents:

- Vision and mission;
- Assumptions;
- Purposes;
- Definition; and
- Standards for Professional Learning.

Tools for Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definition and Goals

Tool	Tool Title	Description
3.1	Resources for developing a comprehensive professional learning system	This chart is a crosswalk between the elements of a comprehensive professional learning system and Learning Forward professional learning system resources available to help teams design or refine the system.
3.2	Recommended process for Step Three	This table summarizes processes and tools to use in Step Three.
3.3	Fears and hopes	This process contributes to team building, helps team members enter into the work they will be doing, and generate ideas that will influence their decisions.
3.4	What's in a name?	This series of short articles builds a foundational understanding about the term professional learning.
3.5	Powerful professional learning	This tool engages team members in identifying their personal experience with professional learning.
3.6	Definition of professional learning	This tool facilitates team members in an exploration of the Learning Forward definition of professional learning.
3.7	Beliefs, principles, and assumptions about professional learning	This tool builds a common set of beliefs about professional learning that will influence decisions.
3.8	Purposes of professional learning	This brief reading explains the three distinct purposes of professional learning, and outlines a process for discussing the balance among the three in the current and desired state.
3.9	Vision and mission of professional learning	This tool describes a process for guiding team members in the development of a vision and mission statement for professional learning.
3.10	Linking systems for success	This tool describes a process for considering how professional learning connects with and supports other systems within an education agency or school district.
3.11	Standards for professional learning	This tool outlines several processes for establishing Standards for Professional Learning.

STEP 4

Design System Operations

A comprehensive professional learning system must operate transparently, efficiently, effectively, equitably, and responsively. Each quality is required for the system to support educator learning for student success.

- **Transparent:** Members of the education workforce and public know how the system operates and educators know how to engage in it to achieve individual, team, school, school system, or state goals; transparency ensures equity and focus on core outcomes.
- **Efficient:** The system has an intuitive and logical flow so that decisions and operations happen without interruption or delay and without expending unnecessary resources. It must take advantage of technology to automate appropriate components. Tapping internal expertise and other resources are two methods for efficient resource investment.
- **Effective:** The system achieves the identified outcomes in a reasonable time with the maximum benefit and adherence to indicators of quality.
- **Equitable:** The system reaches all members of the education workforce and directs resources to areas of greatest student need.
- **Responsive:** The system encourages refocusing goals, resources, and efforts to achieve high-priority needs.

Critical Decision Making

The work of developing or refining a comprehensive professional learning system requires a transparent process that allows for multiple stakeholders to provide input and feedback. The process in Table 4 outlines recommended steps for making the many decisions that go into a comprehensive professional learning system.

Table 4. Recommended Process for Designing or Refining Components of the Comprehensive Professional Learning System

Step	Task
Step 1	Form work group of approximately three to eight people and assign each group one or more components of the system on which to work. Invite work-group members to read text of *Tool 4.1: The bottom line on excellence* in preparation for the design work.
Step 2	Provide guidance to each work group to respond to the questions in *Tool 4.2: Guide to designing the 22 components of a professional learning system.*
Step 3	Provide resources to support each work group as it considers possible responses to the questions.
Step 4	Encourage work groups to seek input from experts and stakeholders and to examine models in other districts and states as they develop their proposal.

Step	Task
Step 5	Set a timeline for each work group to bring its best proposal about the design of their assigned components to the larger task force.
Step 6	Coordinate a meeting in which all work groups give feedback to each small work group about their proposal.
Step 7	Discuss as a whole task force how the proposals of the various work groups align and support one another; take particular notice where there are variations that are out of sync.
Step 8	Invite proposals from the task force about how to revise the components so that they all align and contribute to a fully functional system.
Step 9	Using *Tool 4.3: Systems design recommendations summary table* as a model, compile all recommendations with their rationales and any explanations into a single document.
Step 10	Use *Tool 4.4: Example invitation to gather feedback on work group recommendations* to share document with stakeholders and invite them to provide input about the proposed components.
Step 11	Make revisions in the individual components as needed.
Step 12	Review each component for coherence within the whole system.
Step 13	Use *Tool 4.5: Template for submitting recommendations to decision makers* to develop a synthesis of the comprehensive professional learning system with rationale and explanation to share with stakeholders and decision makers.
Step 14	Submit the proposal for the comprehensive professional learning system with rationale and explanation to the decision-making authority.

During this step as in Step Three, the task force makes numerous decisions. For a while, as the task force moves into Step Four, it will seem that everything is undecided and nothing is clear. This is because the engine is taking shape. Its component parts are being assembled. It won't work reliably to drive the vehicle until all parts are in place. It is possible that it may move the vehicle forward only a short distance; it may sputter and stop. The real test is in the operation of all aspects of the system. Facilitators and task force members are reminded to be patient. Their efforts will come together into a whole, comprehensive system with hard work, thoughtful decision-making, and mindfulness of the intended outcomes.

The facilitator may distribute some decisions to smaller work groups comprised of task force members and invited experts. These work groups will explore possible structures, draft recommendations for various, specific components of the system, and submit recommendations to the task force for review. For example, one group may investigate learning management systems for records management and communication. Another reviews job descriptions of individuals with some responsibility for professional learning. Then, they would identify all key stakeholders, define their role and responsibilities in professional learning, and recommend changes in job descriptions. Another work group might study resources for professional learning and formulate a recommendation for resource allocation.

Each of the core component areas included on the list below is crucial to a fully functioning and effective comprehensive professional learning system:

- Vision and function of a professional learning system;
- Definition of professional learning;
- Standards for Professional Learning;
- Ongoing assessment and evaluation;
- Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders; and
- Resources for effective professional learning.

Each component affects the others, so it is important to maintain frequent communication among small work groups and to align the recommendations with outcomes of the visioning work accomplished in Step Three.

Charge to Each Task Force

Sample expectation statements and charges are offered below as models applicable to the small work groups that the larger task force establishes.

- **Expectations for ALL work groups:** The work groups will **prepare and present** to the full task force their initial DRAFT work for feedback during the <**insert date**> meeting. Each work group will prepare a **written summary** of its work to date to share prior to the meeting for all task force members to review in advance and develop questions and feedback to bring to the meeting.

  During the <**insert date**> meeting, each work group will make a 20-minute presentation to the full task force, sharing its recommendations, seeking input from other task force members, asking questions, presenting challenges they face, etc. Following the presentation, the full task force will have 20 minutes to share feedback, ask questions, or make suggestions to the presenting.
- **Mentoring and induction:** In order to help districts think about how to tailor their current mentoring and induction programs to more deeply prepare novice teachers or new-to-the-district or state teachers to implement Common Core standards, this team will generate recommendations to share with districts. This task force will NOT propose revisions to any existing policies or regulations related to mentoring and induction. They will offer their best thinking about what districts and schools might do within their current programs to incorporate support for implementation of Common Core Standards.
- **Evaluating professional learning:** This work group will generate a description of what data should be collected for policy and decision makers at the school, district, regional, and state levels to both improve and evaluate professional learning. This work group will recommend the types of data that will be most useful to various policy and decision makers. It will NOT design the evaluation, but rather set the expectations for it.

- **Third-party provider task force:** This work group will establish a quality assurance protocol for recommending or endorsing third-party professional learning providers. The team will recommend how <**state department of education**> and districts can ensure that all <**name of state**> educators experience effective professional learning by helping districts screen, select, and work with providers of professional learning. The task force will identify the attributes or expectations of all providers of professional learning in <**name of state**>, determine how to improve districts', schools', and individuals' access to, choice of, and results from third-party provider services, and the responsibilities of schools, districts, and individuals in selecting and participating in services from third-party providers. The task force will consider recommendations to policies, procedures, practices, or information sources to support the goal of providing effective professional learning to all <**name of state**> educators.

Work groups may use *Tool 4.2: Guide to designing the 22 components of a professional learning system* and *Tool 4.3: Systems design recommendations summary table* as resources to guide their work in considering design choices to make relative to the 22 components of a comprehensive professional learning system. It is important, however, that work group members consider their own context. What is appropriate in one district or state may not be appropriate in another because state education laws and state and local education regulations may differ. One important reminder for work groups in this step is to use a healthy balance of pushing the envelope to transform current practice while acknowledging the context in which the system will exist.

After refining the drafts and vetting them among members of other work groups, the task force will invite stakeholder feedback on their proposals. They can use *Tool 4.4: Example invitation to gather feedback on work group recommendations* to accomplish that task. *Tool 4.5: Template for submitting recommendations to decision makers* is helpful in developing recommendations to a designated decision-making authority about any combination of the six core components with the other 16 components of a comprehensive professional learning system.

At the completion of Step Four, the work group will have accomplished the following:

- Reached consensus about core operational features of a comprehensive professional learning system;
- Vetted their work with a broad base of stakeholders for feedback;
- Incorporated feedback into revision; and
- Developed recommendations, rationale, and implications of the operational features of comprehensive professional learning to submit to decision-making authority.

Tools for Designing System Operations

Tool	Tool Title	Description
4.1	**The bottom line on excellence**	This handout is adapted from an article from *JSD* that work groups can use to prepare for designing a comprehensive professional learning system.
4.2	**Guide to designing the 22 components of a professional learning system**	This tool helps work groups address questions about decisions to be made in designing a comprehensive professional learning system.
4.3	**Systems design recommendations summary table**	This tool helps work groups consider recommendations and revisions to professional learning system designs.
4.4	**Example invitation to gather feedback on work group recommendations**	This handout gives a model that small work groups can use to gather feedback from a larger constituent group.
4.5	**Template for submitting recommendations to decision makers**	This tool provides a template for summarizing the recommended components of the comprehensive professional learning system to decision makers.

STEP 5

Revise or Develop Policies

A comprehensive professional learning system *requires* a supportive policy context. Typically, when new systems are designed or existing ones are dramatically revised, professional learning policies need to be revisited as well. In this case, policy includes statutes, regulations, contract language, memoranda of agreement, guidance manuals, and established procedures. when policies align with and support the newly designed comprehensive professional learning system, educators have greater clarity and the system has more significance and influence. Alignment between or among policies may also result in more available resources because of efficiencies or deliberately funded mandates to support implementation and ongoing refinement for improvement. Table 5. Revising or Developing Professional Learning Policies describes the tasks that are carried out to review, revise, or develop policies that have an impact on professional learning.

In some cases the lead staff or task force members complete a review of existing policies in Step Two as a basis for informing the system development process. In other cases policy and decision makers, along with lead staff, delay analysis of policies until the comprehensive professional learning system is developed or revised. Then, they propose policy changes as needed when they accept or adopt the comprehensive system. Occasionally, the work of analyzing existing policies and developing new ones to align with the comprehensive system falls to another task force or staff members.

When beginning to analyze professional learning policies, it is important to begin this work with a wide brushstroke. Professional learning policies are frequently embedded into many diverse policy areas such as curriculum and instruction, school improvement, initial licensure and continuing licensure, educator effectiveness systems, personnel, and roles and responsibilities for professional learning and resources, just to name some.

Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook for States and Districts (www.learningforward.org/docs/commoncore/professionallearningpolicyreview.pdf) provides a detailed description and resources to support the analysis and revision of professional learning policies so that they align with the 22 components of a comprehensive professional learning system. Table 5 describes the policy review process outlined in that resource and suggests steps and tools from both this workbook and the policy review workbook.

Table 5. Revising or Developing Professional Learning Policies

Steps	Revise or develop policies related to professional learning	Task
Step 1	Initiate policy review.	• Convene working group. • Develop foundation of shared knowledge about effective professional learning.
Step 2	Discover policies for future analysis.	• Identify existing policies including legislation, regulations, memoranda of agreements, contracts, and administrative guidelines. Use *Tool 2.1: Professional learning policy discovery worksheet* in *Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook for States and Districts.*
Step 3	Analyze policies discovered according to criteria.	• Analyze according to first set of criteria: Standards of Professional Learning. Use *Tool 3.1.3: Professional learning policy discovery worksheet* in *Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook for States and Districts.* • Analyze according to second set of criteria: Attributes of effective policy. Use *Tool 5. 1: Policy attributes rubric* and *Tool 5.2: Components analysis tool* reprinted in this workbook. • Interpret results of analyses. *Tool 3.3: Policy analysis questions* in *Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook for States and Districts.* • Formulate and record conclusions. Use *Tool 3.4: Cbservations and evidence table* and *Tool 3.5: Conclusions summary table* in *Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook for States and Districts.*
Step 4	Recommend changes that will leverage policies to increase effectiveness of professional learning.	• Review sample or recommended policies. • Determine appropriate level of policy authority. Use *Tool 4.2: Recommended levels of policy authority* in *Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook* • Develop revisions to existing policies. • Vet recommendations with stakeholders. • Recommend proposed revisions. Use *Tool 4.4: Summary of recommendations for policy revisions* in *Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook.*
Step 5	Report and disseminate results of policy review process and recommendations.	• Consider audience and most appropriate format of report. • Report final policy review. Use *Tool 5.2: Final presentation on policy review report* in *Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook for States and Districts.* • Conduct stakeholder focus groups as appropriate. Use *Tool 5.3: Questions for study group on policy review report* in *Professional Learning Policy Review: A Workbook for States and Districts.*
Step 6	Follow-up on final report and subsequent actions.	• Give periodic updates to task force members and stakeholders about policy refinements and revisions.

Task force members must be aware that different types of policy instruments developed under the purview of various departments or offices affect professional learning. Consequently, policies may interact with one another in a counterproductive way. This interaction is likely influenced by the nature of the policy attributes of policies from different policy arenas. Task forces or desing work groups may use *Tool 5.1: Policy attributes rubric* to determine the nature of different policies. In fact, an analysis of state and local policies and collective bargaining language, which was conducted as part of national study, revealed that professional learning policies are often fragmented, sometimes contradictory, and wholly inadequate to realize the full potential of professional learning to elevate educator effectiveness and increase student success (Jaquith, Mindich, Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010). Where policies are inadequate or in conflict with the proposed system, the task force develops and proposes new policy language. It is important to look across all possible policy sectors to check for coherence and alignment. Small or large work groups may use Tool *5.2: Components analysis tool* to support examination of policies.

Whether or not the same task force that is responsible for developing the comprehensive system also undertakes the policy review or revision, it is essential for planners to make sure that specific policies address the six core components of the comprehensive system:

- Vision and function of a professional learning system;
- Definition of professional learning;
- Standards for Professional Learning;
- Ongoing assessment and evaluation;
- Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders; and
- Resources for effective professional learning.

At the completion of Step Five, the task force will have accomplished the following:

- Analyzed existing policies, including legislation, regulation, collective bargaining agreements, association agreements, memoranda of understanding, administrative guidelines, and guidance documents, for alignment with the recommended comprehensive professional learning system;
- Recommended revisions including deletions and additions where needed to align the policies with the new system and to support and ensure effectiveness of the system;
- Prepared rationale and implications for decision-making authorities to accompany the recommendations;
- Provided information about and advocated necessary policy revisions to align the comprehensive system and policies; and
- Developed needed guidance documents to support implementation.

Tools for Revising or Developing Policies

Tool	Tool Title	Description
5.1	Policy attributes rubric	This rubric helps task force members assess existing policies by the five policy attributes.
5.2	Components analysis tool	This tool guides task force members to analyze existing policies by the 22 identified components for effective professional learning.

STEP 6

Plan Short- and Long-term Professional Learning

A comprehensive professional learning system includes short- and long-term plans for professional learning and implementation of those plans. Some educators frequently confuse developing a professional learning plan, such as is required for individual, school, district, or state improvement, with developing a comprehensive professional learning system. While some steps in the development of professional learning plans seem parallel to those needed to develop a comprehensive professional learning system, they differ in that the plan focuses on the specific content, learning designs, implementation support, and evaluation of the professional learning. The comprehensive professional learning system establishes the overall infrastructure, conditions, and operations that support effective professional learning. With a strong comprehensive professional learning system in place, any short- and long-term professional learning plan is far more likely to succeed.

The processes of planning and providing professional learning are significant responsibilities that frequently fall to those who have not been involved in developing the comprehensive professional learning system. The tools and guidance for that work are provided in a separate workbook, *Professional Learning Planning: A Workbook for States and Districts,* so that developers of the comprehensive system can transfer responsibility to the most appropriate person or persons.

The comprehensive professional learning system makes the process for developing the professional learning plan clear and typically includes guidance about the following questions:

- Who is responsible for developing, reviewing, approving, and evaluating professional learning plans?
- What is the timeline for developing, reviewing, and revising professional learning plans?
- What are the expectations of individual educators and supervisors in relationship to professional learning as a component of educator evaluation systems?
- What are the expectations for aligning the content of professional learning to high-priority needs or new initiatives?

Table 4 details a seven-step process for developing short- and long-term professional development plans. The process is based on the results-based model in *Tool 6.1: Backmapping model.*

Table 6. Developing Short- and Long-term Professional Learning Plans

Step	Task
1. Analyze student learning needs.	• Gather multiple forms of student data. • Analyze the data to identify trends, patterns, and areas of needed improvement.
2. Identify characteristics of community, district, school, department and staff.	• Gather data about the learning context. • Identify the features of the context that influence student and educator learning. • Identify potential factors contributing to the current state of student learning.
3. Develop improvement goals and specific student outcomes.	• Write SMART goals for student learning.
4. Identify educator learning needs and develop goals and objectives.	• Gather data about educators. • Develop educator SMART objectives
5. Study research for specific professional learning programs, strategies, or interventions.	• Review research and evidence on successful professional learning programs or practices. • Identify those relevant to the current goals and objectives.
6. Plan professional learning implementation and evaluation, including establishing a logic model for specific professional learning programs.	• Develop theory of change with assumptions. • Develop KASABs. • Develop logic model. • Develop the evaluation framework. • Draft evaluation questions. • Conduct evaluation. • Analyze data; interpret data with stakeholder input. • Report findings. • Review action; evaluate the evaluation.
7. Implement, evaluate, and sustain the professional learning.	• Enact the plan. • Monitor progress and adjust as needed. • Evaluate progress and results. • Sustain support to achieve deep implementation over time.

STEP 6

Plan Short- and Long-term Professional Learning

At the completion of Step Six, the task force will have accomplished the following:

- Developed a professional learning plan based on student, educator, and system data that includes student learning goals, educator learning goals, learning designs, implementation supports, resources needed, timeline, formative and summative evaluation strategies, and persons responsible;
- Implemented the professional learning plan; and
- Monitored and evaluated the learning processes and the results of the plan.

Tools for Planning Short- and Long-term Professional Learning

Tool	Tool Title	Description
6.1	Backmapping model	Backmapping is a tool for planning results-based professional learning.

STEP 7

Provide Professional Learning for Full Implementation

After developing a comprehensive professional learning system, including drafting a professional learning plan (either a short-term or multiyear plan), the real test of the effectiveness of the professional learning system begins. A comprehensive professional learning system is more than the professional learning plan. It is the entire system that supports effective professional learning. If any one aspect of the system is not working at its peak, it is likely that the entire system is weaker than intended. Step Seven is a step of routine maintenance and periodic system checks to ensure that all aspects of the system are working at their prime for full implementation of the comprehensive professional learning system.

- Are we doing what we planned?
- Is it working as we had hoped? How do we know?
- What isn't working as we had hoped? How do we know?
- What changes, modifications, revisions, or total redesign do we need to do to improve the system so that we achieve our goals?

Step Seven, then, is about monitoring implementation to assess the effectiveness of the overall professional learning system. There are multiple ways to approach this work; some are informal and others are more formal. Informal approaches work if the degree of collaboration between and among those responsible for any component of the system is high and there is an openness to identify successes and challenges and problem solve together. More formal processes are required when territorial issues persist or when individuals or departments are less focused on the system as a whole, and more concerned about individual components for which they are responsible.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Step Seven is to set specific benchmark times for conducting the maintenance rather than wait until a problem arises or persists. This does not suggest, for example, that the learning management software is modified for each request or that the school year calendar is altered every time a problem is noted. It does mean that the issues, challenges, problems, questions, and successes are recorded, reviewed, and prioritized for action.

The following are several areas in which challenges are likely to arise. Considering these during the planning phase and being open to them might circumvent them or ensure that particular care is given to them in the implementation phase.

Communication. Communication is complex regardless of the initiative. If one considers the number of people in different roles who have responsibility for, or engage in, professional learning, it is easy to understand how complex this issue can become. *Tool 7.1: Communication review* contains a list of questions to consider about the effectiveness of communication about the comprehensive professional learning system.

Technology. Just as with communication, technology will both support and challenge the comprehensive professional learning system. In most cases, issues with technology are communication based, such as when someone doesn't know who to ask or the messaging is unclear. Yet there are times when the technology itself presents a challenge with system interruptions or equipment breakdowns. Implementing routine maintenance of technology systems is one way to prevent many of these issues. Handling them with honesty and consideration is another. Imagine the novice teacher at midnight after he has planned the week's lessons. He discovers upon a quick review of the week's calendar that he has a conference the very next morning with his supervisor to review his individual professional growth plan. He wants to print a few examples showing how he implemented the new assessment strategies he has been learning. All his evidence is stored in his personal data folder, but when he tries to access the folder, he discovers the system is not responding. *Tool 7.2: Technology support for comprehensive professional learning system* contains a list of questions to use for periodic review of the technology that supports the comprehensive professional learning system.

Leadership. Another common challenge is leadership. This is not about the leaders themselves, but rather about the leadership for the comprehensive professional learning system. When systems are thoughtfully developed, there is an expectation that they work as planned. Yet, this expectation rarely becomes reality. Systems require persistent and vigilant nurturing, fine-tuning, and management. They need advocates, managers, and overseers who commit to effective and efficient operation of the system. This is the role of leadership.

Leadership for the comprehensive professional learning system is not a single person, but most likely a team of people each with differing areas of expertise and unique perspectives. This team blends together its expertise and perspective to work as a single unit to ensure that the comprehensive professional learning system works smoothly. *Tool 7.3: Leadership for comprehensive professional learning system* offers some guiding questions a leadership team might use to hold periodic, preferably semi-annual conversations about the comprehensive professional learning system.

Continuous improvement. Systems, like everything else, require continuous improvement. Failure to invest in continuous improvements leads to outdated systems. Often when systems are developed, those who invest so much in their design expect them to be in place for a significant period of time. Today, especially when technology is involved, change, improvement, and updating are continual. All systems deserve sustained improvement efforts to maintain top-level efficiency and effectiveness. In most cases, guidance

for improvements will emerge from the use of *Tool 7.4: Continuous improvement of comprehensive professional learning system* is a set of questions to guide education leaders in assigning priorities and making decisions about their investments for improvement.

Educator capacity. A comprehensive professional learning system is designed to support educators' continuous learning to increase their effectiveness and, ultimately, student success. When educators know how the system works, how to take advantage of it to achieve their individual, team, school, school system, and state goals, then the system is serving its purpose well. However, occasionally educators do not know how the system works to support them. For example, teachers may not know how to access professional learning aligned to their individual improvement goals. Principals might not know that district office staff is available to support the effective work of learning communities within their schools. District office staff might not know that the state department of education has recommended strategies for evaluating professional learning.

Some of the examples above may be communication or leadership issues. In some cases, however, the issues reach beyond *not knowing* to *not doing*. Effective professional learning is a mindset of continuous learning and growth. When educators lack the belief that their learning contributes to students' learning or when their understanding about effective professional learning is inadequate or incomplete, the comprehensive professional learning system will not work. For example, if time is available for job-embedded, collaborative professional learning but educators have no guidance, support, or skillfulness to use this time for their own learning, the professional learning system is failing. A comprehensive professional learning system depends on the capacity of those engaged in it and supporting it.

For a comprehensive professional learning system to be effective those engaged in it must understand what effective professional learning is and how it influences educator effectiveness and student learning. They also need to know how to support effective professional learning, use the Standards for Professional Learning to ensure quality and results, and how the system components work interdependently to ensure continuous learning for educators.

This depth of understanding about effective professional learning requires opportunities to learn about it and to receive coaching and support for it. Learning Forward's *Standards into Practice,* a series of Innovation Configuration maps for 12 roles that support effective professional learning, define the specific behaviors of these roles.

The Innovation Configuration maps are organized into three books as follows:

- School-based roles includes teacher, teacher leaders/coach, school leadership team, and principal.
- School system roles includes local school board, superintendent, director of professional learning, and central office staff.
- External support roles include education agencies, external partners, institutes of higher education, and professional associations.

Each set of Innovation Configuration maps details what individuals in the roles listed do to support effective professional learning. See the crosswalks highlighting the Innovation Configurations for the Outcomes standard for those in school- and system-based roles for a high-level description of the actions of educators in different roles related to one standard (see school-based and system-based roles). A complete version of the teacher Innovation Configuration map is available at www.learningforward.org/standards/innovation-configurations.

Designing an effective comprehensive professional learning system is only the beginning. Implementation of the comprehensive professional learning system is what contributes to its value for educators and students. *Tool 7.7: Implementation: Learning builds the bridge between research and practice* discusses implementation and how important it is to the success of any initiative or, in this case, on the comprehensive professional learning system. For the entire system to work smoothly and interdependently with other systems, implementation requires persistent and thoughtful attention, consistent monitoring, willingness to use data to refine and adjust along the way, and assess for efficiency, effectiveness, and equity.

At the completion of Step Seven, the task force will have accomplished the following:

- Implementation of the comprehensive professional learning system and plan;
- Monitoring the components of the comprehensive professional learning system; and
- Planning for and implementing continuous improvement of the comprehensive professional learning system based on regular analysis of data.

Tools for Providing Professional Learning for Full Implementation

Tool	Tool Title	Description
7.1	Communication review	This tool guides a review of communication about and for a comprehensive professional learning system.
7.2	Technology support for comprehensive professional learning system	This tool guides a review of the technology that supports a comprehensive professional learning system.
7.3	Leadership for comprehensive professional learning system	This tool guides the review of leadership responsibilities for a comprehensive professional learning system.
7.4	Continuous improvement of comprehensive professional learning system	This tool guides decisions related to continuous improvement of the comprehensive professional learning system.
7.5	Implementation: Learning builds the bridge between research and practice	This article presents important issues to consider regarding implementation to produce results.
7.6	Implementation of state or district comprehensive professional learning system and professional learning plans	This list of questions asks leaders to consider the changes that may be needed for successful implementation of the comprehensive professional learning system and professional learning plans.

STEP 8

Conduct Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation

Step Seven focuses on the interim assessments that occur as a part of an implementation-monitoring process to fine-tune the system so that it meets its significant goals. The implementation assessment in Step Seven tends to be informal and occurs with some evidence or data, but typically is not a rigorous evaluation. While the implementation refinements and reflections that occur in Step Seven are clearly related to and inform Step Eight, evaluation conducted during Step Eight tends to be more formal and more rigorous. There are a number of considerations as leaders plan the evaluation of the system because they influence the rigor and potentially the scope of the evaluation. Rather than provide a manual on how to evaluate specific professional learning programs, this step looks at the comprehensive system as a whole. It offers some guidelines, processes, and tools to use in planning and conducting an evaluation of the system.

Assessment and evaluation have multiple purposes. First, they support continuous improvement. With data collected in formative and summative evaluations, leaders of the professional learning systems have evidence to make improvements. Second, they generate evidence to determine whether the system is working both to support effective professional learning planning, implementation, and evaluation and to improve educator effectiveness and student success. In addition, an evaluation can inform resource investments. For a comprehensive professional learning system to work smoothly and to meet its many goals, all components of the system must be finely tuned and coherent.

The recommended steps for the evaluation of the comprehensive professional learning system (Killion, 2008) are discussed below. *Tool 8.1: Guide to evaluation* summarizes these steps, outlines the questions, and serves as a planning guide for conducting an evaluation of a comprehensive evaluation system.

Planning the Evaluation

Successful evaluations require thoughtful planning not only to determine the most appropriate and effective design for the evaluation, but also to avoid potential challenges that may occur in the evaluation process itself. The sections below offer some important considerations for planners of evaluations of the comprehensive professional learning system.

Determine the Purpose and Focus of the Evaluation

There are three purposes for evaluations. One is a routinely scheduled evaluation for improving an established comprehensive professional learning system. They may occur on a rotating basis, perhaps every three to five years, across the system to ensure that it remains efficient and effective. These evaluations also provide data on which ongoing improvements are based. The second purpose is close monitoring and evaluation of adjustments in the system. Adjustments may include the introduction of new components, such as new standards or changes in the policy regarding time for professional learning. Monitoring evaluations assess the impact of changes. They occur annually with both formative and summative evaluation processes until there is confidence that the change is achieving its intended goals. Such evaluations help decision makers know whether the changes merit continuation, further adjustment, expansion, or discontinuation. The third purpose for evaluation is follow-up. If a comprehensive professional learning system evaluation has identified significant needs for improvement, then a follow-up evaluation, conducted within a set time period such as one to two years, provides accountability for improvements to the system. That way, evaluations help ensure that all educators engage in professional learning designed to increase their effectiveness and student results.

In most cases, the purpose of the evaluation will be overall improvement of the system. In some cases the purpose will have an additional area of focus such as how to increase the effectiveness of the system to reach all educators. Sometimes there are competing or conflicting purposes. For example, occasionally planners expect an evaluation to identify ineffectiveness in the system in order to eliminate of some or all parts of the system, while other planners or stakeholders expect the evaluation to suggest how to extend, expand, and improve the system. When conflicting purposes exist, it is best for system planners or evaluators to reach consensus on the specific focus or purpose or the evaluation as well as subsequent evaluation questions.

Determine the Audience for the Evaluation

Audiences create diverse demands for evaluations. A state school board may want to know how to provide greater evidence that its new policy about time for teacher collaboration is effective. A superintendent may want to know if sufficient opportunities are readily accessible to support continuous learning as promised in the contractual agreement with the teacher and principal associations. Teachers may want to know how to increase school- and classroom-specific support beyond the summer workshops offered by the district, so they can feel more confident with the new instructional framework. The audience is typically connected to the purpose. It is advisable to combine multiple purposes so every effort is made to use the evaluation to look across the entire system rather than to focus too narrowly on just one aspect of it.

Determine the Need for an External Evaluator

The evaluator role may be filled by staff of research and evaluation departments within a state or local education agency, by a team of people that includes leaders and stakeholders, or by an external evaluator working independently or with an internal team. Each approach offers advantages and disadvantages; moreover, none is appropriate in every situation. For example, if the evaluation is a high-stakes event, such as restructuring within the state or district, or if significant challenges exist, it might be wise to consider an external evaluator. If the professional learning system works fairly well, and the evaluation is routinely scheduled as a part of an overall improvement program within the agency, an internal evaluation team may be appropriate.

The following questions may be helpful in determining the need for an external evaluator:

- Are there concerns, issues, or challenges with the existing comprehensive professional learning systems that are unclear and persistent?
- Does an internal evaluator or evaluation team have the time, credibility, expertise, and resources to conduct the evaluation?
- Are there resources for an external evaluator?
- Are data available to answer the evaluation questions as a routine part of the educator and student data systems?
- Is there need for an external evaluator to lend greater expertise and more objectivity to the evaluation? (Killion, 2008)

Sometimes an internal leadership team invites a program audit or review as a means to evaluate the comprehensive professional learning system. Typically, external teams who conduct such audits or reviews use clear criteria for the review process. Learning Forward's Center for Results provides technical assistance to conduct district and state professional learning audits.

Design the Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions guide the design of the entire evaluation. They determine what data are needed for the evaluation, who or what will be the source of the data, and in some cases how the data will be collected. The questions clarify what leaders, users, decision and policymakers, and others want to know as a result of the evaluation. Evaluation questions fall into several categories. Some samples of questions in each category are below:

> **Need questions:** What does this system need? Where are the problems that need addressing? How are educators affected by the problems that are occurring?

Design questions: Who benefits from the system? Who does not? Is the system flexible, adaptive, responsive to emerging needs or priorities? Is decision making transparent? Is communication reaching those it intends to reach? Are resources available as promised or needed?

Process questions: Is the system fully operational? Are resources available as promised or needed? Are users able to engage with the system to achieve their individual, team, school, district, and/or state professional learning goals? Are staff fully prepared to assume their responsibilities?

Impact questions: Does the system contribute to educator effectiveness? Is the system effective in supporting individuals, teams, schools, districts, and/ or state staff in achieving their professional learning goals? Is there a link between professional learning and increased educator effectiveness and student success?

Establishing the Evaluation Framework

After the questions are clear, the evaluator can determine (a) what types of evidence or data are needed to answer the questions, (b) the source of the evidence or data, and (c) how the evidence will be collected:

- Specific evidence or data to answer each evaluation question;
- Data sources identified;
- Data collection processes delineated;
- Timeline for collecting the evidence or data;
- Data analysis procedures described;
- Overall timeline for completing the phases of the evaluation and producing the final report;
- Persons responsible for various tasks within the evaluation;
- Reporting processes, to whom when, how.

Once the evaluation framework is completed, the evaluator and leaders of the comprehensive professional learning system determine if it is appropriate to submit the evaluation plan for approval to an institutional review board (IRB) or a human subjects panel and confirm that the evaluation adheres to the Joint Commission on Standards for Educational Evaluation.

Conducting the Evaluation

After the evaluation framework is designed, reviewed and approved as needed, the actual conduct of the evaluation follows through data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Collect data. This part of the work focuses on collecting the evidence and data necessary to answer the questions. Evaluators are particularly careful to be accurate in the collection, coding, recording, transcribing, or storing of data.

Analyze data. Data analysis occurs next, and uses the data to identify trends, patterns, and discrepancies. It also informs the development of conclusions that draw from the data to respond to the evaluation questions. Depending on the type of data and the evaluation questions, the analysis can be descriptive or inferential. Usually someone skilled in data analysis contributes to this part of the process. When it is completed the data are displayed in multiple formats to use in the next step.

Interpret analyzed data. Interpretation of the analyzed data typically includes stakeholders who are involved in the comprehensive professional learning system as leaders, managers, users, or supporters. Their engagement adds meaning and value to the interpretation process and makes the data come to life. They have the capacity to provide underlying connections, causes, conditions, and context to the analyzed data that others might not know. They also help identify the recommendations for next actions based on the conclusions.

Reporting the Evaluation

The next step is reporting evaluation conclusions and next steps. Those responsible for reporting will use formats, media and communications channels that are appropriate for various stakeholders for whom the evaluation results are relevant. Evaluators and leaders must be ready to create multiple different types and forms of reports to disseminate the conclusions and recommendations and must be certain to reach all stakeholder groups in their reporting.

Evaluating the Evaluation

Evaluation is complex work. To improve evaluation procedures and the competencies of evaluators, those involved in the evaluation conduct a reflective analysis of their evaluation procedures, competencies, efforts, resources, and adherence to the standards for educational evaluation to improve their skillfulness as evaluators and the usefulness of the evaluation in improving the system.

Tool 8.2: Professional learning organizing checklist, which is adapted from *Doing What Works,* a U.S. Department of Education website devoted to providing research and evidence-supported practices, offers a guideline for conducting an evaluation of a comprehensive professional learning system. This checklist is a complement to the evaluation of specific professional learning programs contained in short and long-term professional learning plans, not a replacement for those.

Ongoing evaluation keeps a comprehensive professional learning system fully operational in support of educator effectiveness and student success for all initiatives.

STEP 8

Conduct Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation

At the completion of Step Eight, the task force will have accomplished the following:

- Assessment and evaluation of the comprehensive professional learning system;
- Report about the evaluation including findings and recommendations; and
- Improvement in evaluator expertise.

Tools for Conducting Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation

Tool	Tool Title	Description
8.1	Guide to evaluation	This tool gives an overview of the processes required to conduct an evaluation of a comprehensive professional learning system.
8.2	Professional learning organizing checklist	This tool is a checklist that lets evaluators determine and monitor the status of each step in the evaluation process.

Conclusion

Professional learning drives improvement. It is vital to the health of most organizations and especially to education, the learning business. Yet, education leaders have given too little attention to ensure that high-quality professional learning exists within a system that is designed to support continuous improvement.

The resources and recommended processes in this guidebook were designed to guide teams though the development of a comprehensive professional learning system. The discussions show that there are many ways to complete the process, from the use of small work groups to large teams of stakeholder representatives, or some variation. What remains critical is that teams embarking on the work consider their contexts, establish feedback loops with constituents, and plan and evaluate and communicate about outcomes. When the learning system for educators is finely tuned, responsive, and supportive to improvement goals across all levels, any initiative is more likely to succeed. When it does, students are the deserving beneficiaries.

Tools

TOOL 1.1 Back to Launching the Work Tools Chart

Considerations before launching the development of a comprehensive professional learning system

Considering the following questions before beginning the steps outlined in Table 1 (See page 8) will help decision makers choose appropriate processes to use in the development of a comprehensive professional learning system and concomitant professional learning plan:

1. Does a comprehensive professional learning system currently exist?
2. If such a system does exist, what evidence shows that it is effective, especially from the perspective of teachers and principals?
3. If a comprehensive system does not exist, meaning that some or all of the 22 components of a comprehensive professional learning system are missing, why do you think that is the case?
4. If a comprehensive system does not exist, is capacity available within the school system or state to facilitate a representative team in developing one? What qualifications do the potential facilitators bring to this work?
5. In the state or school system do the potential representatives have the background knowledge about effective, research-based professional learning to contribute to the development work needed?
6. When an initiative such as this one has occurred in the past, how was that work accomplished?
    a. Did a broad-based group of representatives come together over a period of time to develop a product or set of recommendations or did a smaller group develop the product or recommendations and seek broad-based input?
    b. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of these approaches?
    c. What other approaches to completing the development work might be considered?
7. Who is the ultimate decision maker in the development of the comprehensive professional learning system?
    a. In your policy landscape will the board review and approve the system or will they be informed?
    b. Do they approve other systems within the state or school district?
    c. If it is not customary for the board to approve a system such as this, what are the advantages of seeking their approval?
8. What length of time and resources including personnel can be devoted to this work?

TOOL 1.1, cont.

9. What is driving the desire to develop a new or revamp the existing professional learning system?
10. Who is advocating a comprehensive professional learning system?
11. What are the anticipated benefits of a successful system?
12. What are the potential challenges if one does not exist?
13. What are the greatest barriers to completing this work?
14. How can those barriers be mitigated?
15. What will need to happen to ensure success with this work?
16. Who needs to be involved in the decision to proceed and notified of the outcome of that decision, the process that will be used, the timeline for completion, etc.?

TOOL 1.2 Back to Launching the Work Tools Chart

Web-based resources on the role of professional learning in improving educator effectiveness and student learning

Organization	Web Resource	Description
Learning Forward	www.learningforward.org	For Learning Forward, successful professional learning provides a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement. These learning opportunities must be aligned with state student achievement standards, as well as with local and school needs. Among other characteristics, successful professional learning must use data and ongoing assessments, be continuous, include job-embedded coaching, occur in a variety of formats, foster collective responsibility, and occur several times a week.
National Association of State Boards of Education	www.nasbe.org	This organization shows commitment to professional growth as a means to retention. Important characteristics for successful professional learning include incentives and flexibility of calendars. They cite technology, collaboration, and data management as among the important potential content of teacher learning. NASBE also suggests that evaluation systems need to be based on goals and objectives rather than on punitive measures.
Education Commission of the States	www.ecs.org	In order to remain relevant and effective, teachers need professional development to stay on top of innovations in technology and best practices. This professional development can bring together the benefits of integrating advancements in how people learn and how best to serve diverse populations. The site has a database of fifty states' professional development efforts, entitled "What States are Doing."

TOOL 1.2, cont.

Organization	Web Resource	Description
Council of Chief State School Officers	www.ccsso.org	The Interstate Teacher Assessment Support Consortium (InTASC), a key program of CCSSO, exists on one basic premise: an effective teacher must be able to integrate content knowledge with the specific strengths and needs of students to assure that all students learn and perform at high levels. To help entities do this, InTASC has designed standards for all teachers that include "progression indicators" around which one may design appropriate professional learning opportunities.
National Council of State Legislatures	www.ncsl.org	In "Getting to Excellence: A Legislator's Guide to Educator Effectiveness Policy," the group asserts that the success of teachers' application of sophisticated instructional strategies and the implementation of more challenging assessments of student performance hinge on teachers' and administrators' abilities to fully understand and change educational practice. Within the organization most states have adopted the professional learning standards put forth by Learning Forward. The report offers "Questions for Legislators to Ask" to ensure high-quality professional learning.
National Association for the Education of Young Children	www.naeyc.org	Here one finds a framework with several key principles of an effective professional development system. The group offers two sets of standards: one set is for initial licensure and one set is for ongoing professional development. To choose appropriate growth opportunities, one must consider the needs of the early childhood profession, the kinds of professional development opportunities available, and the possible compensation of participants.
American Association of School Administrators	www.aasa.org	For this group , a key issue is a belief in educating the total child. Schools must address physical and mental health, as well as the development of fundamental lifelong skills. AASA endorses Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning as a means of determining appropriate content for ongoing work.
National Board for Professional Teaching Standards	www.nbpts.org	Numerous studies have shown that students of National Board-certified teachers outperform other students on achievement tests. For this to happen, teachers need articulated career paths and standards for teaching that are connected to performance-based assessments and resources.

TOOL 1.3 Back to Launching the Work Tools Chart

Sample charge statement to Comprehensive Professional Learning System Team

Sample Charge Statements

This tool provides a format and sample of a task force charge statement.

Task Force: Comprehensive Professional Learning System
Completion Date: June 2014

Overall Purpose

To create a comprehensive professional learning system that provides the infrastructure, leadership, resources, and equitable opportunities to ensure that all educators engage in continuous improvement, have multiple, differentiated supports for increasing their effectiveness and for career growth, and support a culture of collective responsibility for student success.

Questions to be addressed

1. What policies, procedures, and resources are needed to ensure seamless, coherent, continuous improvement among all educators?
2. What resources will be committed to professional learning?
3. How will professional learning both support and be supported by other systems within the state/district?
4. How does professional learning support new initiatives?
5. Who is responsible for educators' professional learning?
6. How will decisions about professional learning be made?
7. How all educators engage in standards-based, research-based professional learning?
8. How is professional learning evaluated for its impact and for improvements?

Committee membership

- Teachers
- Teachers on special assignment
- Non-instructional resource staff
- Principals/assistant principals
- Central office staff (curriculum, HR, special education, assessment, business operations)

TOOL 1.3, cont.

- Superintendent's office
- Parent and/or community
- Institutes of higher education
- Business and industry partners

Parameters

- The Comprehensive Professional Learning System task force meets at the discretion of the Commissioner of Education/superintendent.
- Task force members hold the best interests of all students within the state in the forefront of their work.
- The task force makes recommendations to the Leadership Team that determines the next actions related to the recommendations.
- All recommendations are based on best available data and current research in professional learning.
- All recommendations align with high expectations for all students.
- Members of the task force serve as representatives of their constituents and have responsibility for seeking and using input from their constituents in their work.
- Members of the task force commit to attend and participate fully in all meetings, to be prepared for the meetings including completing background reading, gathering input, or other assignments as determined, and to share their efforts on behalf of the task force with fellow task force members.
- Task force members commit to being open to new ideas and innovation and new ways to think about professional development in their deliberations.
- Task force members commit to be positive, informed advocates of transformation in professional learning.
- The task force will make a recommendation to the District/State Leadership Team for their review and decision regarding next steps for the recommendation. The final decision regarding the comprehensive professional learning system will be made by the Cabinet and submitted to the school board for review and acceptance and related regulation or statute changes.
- Any budget implications must be clearly delineated.
- The task force files monthly public updates.

TOOL 1.3, cont.

Level of Decision Making

The task force is an advisory group to the Leadership Team that determines any next actions related to the recommendations. The Leadership Team is convened under the auspices of the _____ and the supervision of _____.

Timeline

September 2013 – Convene the task force.

October 2013 – May 2014 Monthly updates to stakeholder groups, Leadership Team, and Cabinet.

January 2014 – Preliminary recommendation available for stakeholder review.

February 2014 – Revised recommendations available for public review.

March 2014 – Revisions made based on public review data.

April–May 2014 – Develop professional learning plan.

June 2014 – Submit recommendation, implications, and summary of feedback to Leadership Team.

July 2014 – Review and submit recommendations to Cabinet.

August 2014 – Review and acceptance by school board.

Meetings

Scheduled meetings will be held on the following dates. Additional meetings may be scheduled. Most meetings will be three hours in length. Meetings will be held at _____ beginning at _____ and ending at _____.

TOOL 1.4 Back to Launching the Work Tools Chart

Potential representatives to Comprehensive Professional Learning System Team

Below are lists of possible representatives from stakeholder groups to consider for inclusion on the task force.

State policy task force

- Department of education executive staff
- Department of education legislative liaison
- Department of education state board of education liaison
- State school board member
- State legislator
- Local school board member(s)
- Representatives from:
  - Department of education divisions governed by professional learning policies
  - Local school systems (e.g., superintendent from districts that differ in location, student demographics, and size; central office from different roles, principals from schools at all levels, size, and locations, teachers from multiple disciplines and levels, teacher leaders with diverse responsibilities, resource staff with diverse responsibilities
  - State teacher and principal/supervisor associations
  - Support staff with diverse responsibilities from within DOE and regional and local education agencies
  - Regional education agencies
  - Professional associations within the state
  - Community or statewide organizations or advocacy groups with an interest in education
  - Institutions of higher education
  - Business and industry leaders
  - Parent advocacy groups
  - State and local foundations
  - Third-party providers within the state

TOOL 1.4, cont.

Local school system policy task force

Representatives from

- District administrative team
- Local school board
- School system central office staff who lead, facilitate, provide, oversee, monitor, or support professional learning policy
- Local teacher and principal/supervisor associations
- Teachers at multiple levels and disciplines
- Principals from schools with diverse locations, size, and student demographics
- Resource staff with diverse responsibilities
- Support or classified staff with diverse responsibilities
- Age-appropriate students
- Institutions of higher education in partnership with the school system
- Parent advocacy groups
- Local education foundation
- Community foundations
- Community organizations or advocacy groups with interest in education
- Business and industry in local community
- Regional education agency

In some cases, education agencies or school systems may decide to appoint a small work team to develop the initial recommendations and use a broader group of representatives to review and give feedback on the draft. Sometimes this approach expedites the process.

TOOL 1.5 Back to Launching the Work Tools Chart

Standards windowpane

Key Points **What information or ideas are important to know about this standard?**	**Symbol** **What visual representation would help people remember this standard?**
Standards in Practice **Which behaviors are observable when the standard is fully implemented?**	**Next Steps** **What steps are necessary to implement this standard?**

TOOL 1.6 Back to Launching the Work Tools Chart

Standards for Professional Learning self-assessment

Rate how your current professional learning aligns with the Standards for Professional Learning by marking the box that best represents your view. Make a note about the evidence that informs your rating.

	1 Low	2	3	4 High	Evidence
Learning Communities					
• Engage in continuous improvement					
• Develop collective responsibility					
• Create alignment and accountability					
Leadership					
• Develop capacity for learning and leading					
• Advocate for professional learning					
• Create support systems and structures					
Resources					
• Prioritize human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources					
• Monitor resources					
• Coordinate resources					
Data					
• Analyze student, educator, and system data					
• Assess progress					
• Evaluate professional learning					
Learning Designs					
• Apply learning theories, research, and models					
• Select learning designs					
• Promote active engagement					
Implementation					
• Apply change research					
• Sustain implementation					
• Provide constructive feedback					
Outcomes					
• Meet performance standards					
• Address learning outcomes					
• Build coherence					

TOOL 1.7 Back to Launching the Work Tools Chart

Jigsaw exercise for *The Learning Educator: A New Era for Professional Learning*

Rate how your current professional learning aligns with the Standards for Professional Learning by marking the box that best represents your view. Make a note about the evidence that informs your rating.

This activity requires that members have a copy of *The Learning Educator: A New Era for Professional Learning*. The books are available at https://store.learningforward.org/mm5/merchant.mvc?Session_ID=99c39eb04bdb786fbc9a7abf7b72a54d&Store_Code=L4W&Screen=PROD&Product_Code=B372& Special pricing is available for bulk purchases. Call 800-727-7288.

This tool outlines a jigsaw study of the eight principles, or fundamental beliefs, underlying professional learning. By studying these principles, the Comprehensive Professional Learning System team will understand what principles are and how they influence the decisions the team will make, and deepen their understanding of effective professional learning.

Purpose	• To introduce fundamental beliefs underlying effective learning; • To deepen understanding of effective professional learning; and • To explore patterns in beliefs among CPLS team meetings.
Time	150 minutes (may occur over multiple meetings)
Part One	Give each participant several index cards. Ask each participant to generate four or five fundamental beliefs they have that drive their practice in professional learning. Ask them to write one belief per card. In a round-robin process, invite participants to share one belief they wrote. Ask participants to identify patterns in the beliefs they heard.
Part Two	Cluster participants into groups of four and have them share all the beliefs they wrote and group them and label each group by writing the label for each group on a different color index card. Post all labels generated by all groups and discuss: • What are the common areas of belief among us? • How do these areas influence out current practices in professional learning? • What evidence exists that these practices are in place?

TOOL 1.7, cont.

Part Three	Ask each member to select two to three principles they are interested in studying further. Form groups to study principles 2–7, when possible, allowing people to choose one of their preferred principles. In their groups, ask people to complete the following steps: • Read the chapter (introduction, rationale, and conclusion). • Describe examples of practices in your school or district that exemplify this principle in action. • Identify non-examples of this principle. • Describe the greatest barriers to fully implementing this principle. • Identify four or five ways to manage those barriers.
Part Four	This part may occur at a separate meeting. After the teams have had about 45 minutes to read their chapter and to discuss it, bring the large group back together to share the principles and the related information.
Part Five	Ask team members to complete the Principles Survey (see page 68) independently and anonymously. Compile the score to share at a future meeting.

TOOL 1.7, cont.

Principles Survey

Indicate your level of agreement with each statement. Share and compare answers. Consensus is NOT expected; have a conversation about the differences in your opinions.

1. Principles shape our thoughts, words, and actions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	**Strongly Disagree**

2. Diversity strengthens an organization and improves its decisions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	**Strongly Disagree**

3. Leaders are responsible for building the capacity in individuals, teams, and organizations to be leaders and learners.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	**Strongly Disagree**

4. Ambitious goals lead to powerful actions and remarkable results.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	**Strongly Disagree**

5. Maintaining the focus of professional learning on teaching and student learning produces academic success.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	**Strongly Disagree**

6. Evaluation strengthens performance and results.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	**Strongly Disagree**

7. Communities can solve even their most complex problems by tapping internal expertise.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	**Strongly Disagree**

8. Collaboration among educators builds shared responsibility and improves student learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	**Strongly Disagree**

Comments _____

_____

TOOL 1.8 Back to Launching the Work Tools Chart

Background readings

The following processes are ways in which a facilitator might engage Comprehensive Professional Learning System Task Force members in developing background knowledge from the proposed background reading list:

1. Ask task force members to read only one text for each meeting and use the text to structure a warm-up activity for each meeting. Use Tool 1.6 for this option.
2. Ask each task force member to read one or several of the reports and be prepared to share the key ideas from the report with the entire task force. Use Tool 1.8 for this option.
3. Select only a few reports that the entire task force will read and discuss together. Use Tool 1.9 for this option.

List of Background Readings

American Federation of Teachers, Council of Chief State School Officers, National Education Association, & National Staff Development Council (2010). *Advancing high-quality professional learning through collective bargaining and state policy.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council. Available at www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/advancinghighqualityprofessionallearning.pdf

Through collective bargaining agreements and state policies, local school districts and states establish the conditions, resources, and processes for professional learning that strengthen teaching and student learning. Learning Forward, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the National Education Association (NEA) formed a national partnership to share collective bargaining agreements and state policies that support high-quality professional learning for every teacher.

Croft, A., Coggshall, J.G., Powers, E., & Killion, J. (2010). *Job-embedded professional development: What it is, who is responsible, and how to get it done well.* Washington, D.C.: National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality. Available at www.tqsource.org/publications/JEPD%20Issue%20Brief.pdf

This brief defines "job-embedded professional development" and the conditions that are necessary for it to exist. It also provides strategies for leaders at each level of the education system to support job-embedded professional development for teachers.

TOOL 1.8, cont.

Crow, T. (Ed.). (2012, August). Introducing a new approach to standards that can transform teaching and learning in schools. *JSD, 32*(4). Available at www.learningforward.org/publications/jsd/jsd-blog/jsd/2012/06/30/august-2011-vol.-32-no.-4#.UK_Yy6U5F_c

This issue of *JSD* introduces the newly revised Standards for Professional Learning. With articles from leading experts and practitioners in the field of professional learning, the entire issue provides an opportunity for readers to develop a deeper understanding about each of the standards, the research that supports them, and how the standards look in practice. The entire issue is available online and is accompanied by a professional learning guide to facilitate small and large group learning using the articles within the issue.

Darling-Hammond, L., Wei, R.C., Adamson, F., & Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (2010). *Professional learning in the United States: Trends and challenges, Part II of the three-phase study. Executive summary.* Dallas: National Staff Development Council. Available at www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/nsdcstudy2010.pdf

The report from Phase II of this multiyear research initiative examines the status of professional learning in the United States. The findings indicate that the nation is making some progress in providing increased support and mentoring for new teachers. However, the study also reveals that teachers' opportunities for the kind of ongoing, intensive professional learning that research shows has a substantial impact on student learning are decreasing. Researchers examined 2008 data from the federal government's Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and other sources. The report also includes assessments of each state on the quality of their professional development across 11 indicators that comprise a newly developed Professional Development Access Index.

Darling-Hammond, L., Wei, R.C., Andree, A., Richardson, N., Orphanos, S., & The School Redesign Network at Stanford University (2009). *Professional learning in the learning profession: A status report on teacher development in the United States and abroad.* Dallas: National Staff Development Council. Available at www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/nsdcstudy2009.pdf

This report examines what research has revealed about professional learning that improves teachers' practice and student learning. The report describes the availability of such opportunities in the United States and high-achieving nations around the world, which have been making substantial and sustained investments in professional learning for teachers over the last two decades.

TOOL 1.8, cont.

Hirsh, S. (2011). *Building professional development to support new student assessment systems.* Washington, D.C.: Arabella Advisors. Available at www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/stephanie_hirsh-building_professional_development.pdf

Authored by Stephanie Hirsh, this white paper for Arabella Philanthropic Advisors is one of several on school reform topics by noted authors. New assessment systems will provide teachers with significant new opportunities to guide all students toward college and career readiness. To benefit from such assessments, states will need to be more thoughtful than they have been in the past about conceiving, organizing, managing, implementing, and evaluating effective professional development. The paper offers eight recommendations to help rebuild professional development infrastructure to support these systems.

Hirsh, S. & Killion, J. (2007). *The learning educator: A new era of professional learning.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council. Available at www.learningforward.org/bookstore/school-and-system-improvement/2012/06/09/the-learning-educator-a-new-era-for-professional-learning

This book outlines eight principles to guide professional learning during the next era. If professional development decision makers adopt these principles, the authors believe they will contribute to ensuring that professional learning will improve leading, teaching, and learning. This book helps readers understand what qualifies as effective professional learning, enables them to believe that this kind of professional learning is possible to achieve, and provides a blueprint that enables thought leaders, researchers, and practitioners to join together in this crucial work.

Jaquith, A., Mindlich, D., Wei, R.C., Darling-Hammond, L., & Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (2010). *Teacher professional learning in the United States: Case studies of state policies and strategies.* Dallas: Learning Forward. Available at www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/2010phase3report.pdf

TOOL 1.8, cont.

Policy shapes practices, and the increasingly important realm of professional development is no exception. To identify effective professional development policies and strategies, the Stanford University research team examined the policy frameworks supporting high levels of professional development activity in four states in Phase III of the multiyear research study. The states—Colorado, Missouri, New Jersey, and Vermont—were identified as "professionally active" based on evidence of high levels of teacher participation in professional development in the 2008 Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS), administered by the National Center for Education Statistics, and the teacher surveys associated with the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); a reputation in the literature for enacting reforms that are consistent with the research based on "effective" professional development; and improvements in student achievement as measured in the 2009 NAEP.

Killion, J. (2012). *Meet the promise of content standards: Professional learning required.* Oxford, OH: Learning Forward. Available at www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/read-the-brief-(pdf).pdf

The brief outlines a vision for educators supported through high-quality professional learning and calls attention to the urgent need for states, systems and schools to change the way professional learning is delivered. It also describes the elements of a effective professional learning system and provides recommendations for action for educators at the federal, state, system, school, and individual levels. *Meet the Promise of Content Standards: Professional Learning Required* was published as part of Learning Forward's ongoing initiative to develop a comprehensive system of professional learning that spans the distance from the statehouse to the classroom.

Killion, J. & Hirsh, S. (2012). *Meet the promise of content standards: Investing in professional learning.* Oxford, OH: Learning Forward. Available at www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/meetpromiseinvesting.pdf?sfvrsn=2

This brief details the critical attributes of professional learning necessary to achieve the vision of Common Core standards, and addresses the need for long-term commitment and resource investments from the nation and each state to achieve that vision. The brief calls attention to the urgent need for schools, districts, states, regional and national education agencies, and education vendors to change the allocation and application of professional learning resources.

TOOL 1.8, cont.

Mizell, H. (2010). *Why professional development matters.* Oxford, OH: Learning Forward. Available at www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/why_pd_matters_web.pdf

Written for parents, community members, and policymakers by Learning Forward's senior distinguished fellow, this booklet explains in fundamental terms what professional development is and why it is an important school improvement strategy. This series of Q-and-As is useful for helping audiences outside of education to understand this critical topic.

Timperley, H. & Alton-Lee, A. (2008). Reframing teacher professional learning: An alternative policy approach to strengthening valued outcomes for diverse learners. *Review of Research in Education, 32*(1), 328-369. Available at http://rre.sagepub.com/content/32/1/328.full.pdf+html

This paper explores what teachers need to know and be able to do to promote learning for diverse students and examines how to develop that expertise so that more students succeed. The paper provides a synthesis of international, empirical studies on the development of kinds of teacher knowledge that have a positive impact on student outcomes. The authors describe the New Zealand Iterative Best Evidence Programme, a national knowledge-building and knowledge-use strategy. The paper offers both research and policy implications that can be drawn from the proposed framework.

TOOL 1.9 Back to Launching the Work Tools Chart

Key Ideas note-taking guide

As you read, identify what you consider to be the top 10 KEY IDEAS. Note the page numbers where the ideas are discussed in the document. Jot a few notes about why you consider each a KEY IDEA. Be ready to share at least two to three KEY IDEAS with fellow task force members. You might also be asked to share copies of your KEY IDEAS note-taking guide.

Title: _____

Author(s): _____

	Key Ideas	Page number	Reason for selecting this idea
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

TOOL 1.10 Back to Launching the Work Tools Chart

Final Word protocol

A text response protocol adapted from www.nsrfharmony.org/protocol/doc/final_word.pdf

Purpose	To engage team members in discussing a shared reading to deepen their understanding of the text; to gain insight into each other's perspective; and to clarify assumptions of the authors and readers.
Non-purpose	To reach agreement on the meaning of the text; to determine next step actions resulting from reading the text; to determine which perspective is accurate.
Time	Approximately 30–40 minutes, depending on the size of the team; recommended size is five; the protocol takes 8 minutes per person plus an additional 10 minutes.
Recommended roles	Participants, timekeeper, and facilitator; may include a recorder.
Advanced directions	Each member reads the assigned text and notes the most significant ideas within the text. A significant idea may be one the reader finds particularly important, one with which he or she disagrees, one that might be challenging to grasp, etc. Members come prepared to the meeting, ready with several significant ideas notes and an explanation of why those ideas are significant.

The National School Reform Faculty makes the following recommendation regarding the use of protocols: "Protocols are most powerful and effective when used within an ongoing professional learning community such as a Critical Friends Group® and facilitated by a skilled coach. To learn more about professional learning communities and seminars for new or experienced coaches, please visit the National School Reform Faculty website at www.nsrfharmony.org."

TOOL 1.10, cont.

Final Word protocol

1. Sit so that each member is easily able to see and interact with one another.
2. Identify the roles, minimally a facilitator, timekeeper, and participants. The timekeeper and facilitator will take turns as presenter in the protocol while another member substitutes in each of their roles.
3. Facilitator reviews the process and invites the first member to present his or her significant idea, perhaps by reading a short quote or summarizing the idea. Encourage the presenter to point to the section of the text where the idea is presented. For the next two minutes, the presenter shares the reasons this idea is significant to him or her. Other members listen thoughtfully to the presenter without interruption.
4. Next, in turn, each member responds to what the presenter said for no more than a minute. Members are encouraged to use their response to expand on the presenter's thinking about the quote and the issues raised for by the idea; to share a different perspective about the idea; to pose a question that the idea raises for him or her; to reflect on the presenter's assumptions about the idea; or to share his or her own assumptions about the idea. During this time, the presenter listens thoughtfully without responding.
5. After each member responds to the presenter, the presenter has one minute or less to share a *final word* about the idea, what he or she heard, a response to what he or she heard, what he or she is now thinking about the idea, etc.
6. After the presenter finishes his or her final word, the facilitator invites another team member to present his or her big idea, repeating the process for each member until each one has shared.
7. After each member shares his or her significant idea and has heard responses, the facilitator allows another 3–5 minutes for debriefing the protocol. During the debrief, all members share their thoughts about the protocol and how it contributed to their understanding and interpretation of the text.

TOOL 1.11 Back to Launching the Work Tools Chart

First meeting agenda

Meeting date	
Meeting time	
Meeting location	
Meeting outcomes	• Establish the roles, responsibilities, and processes for Comprehensive Professional Learning System Task Force; • Establish the working agreements for task force members; • Map the responsibilities and processes of the task force ; and • Develop a deep understanding of the research on effective professional learning and Standards for Professional Learning.
Time	**Topic**
9:00	Welcome; introduce members; and review outcomes of meeting
9:15	Review the charge to the Comprehensive Professional Learning System Task Force and the expectations
9:25	Develop task force norms and roles
9:45	Study the recommended process for developing a comprehensive professional learning system
10:30	Break
10:45	Develop background knowledge on effective professional learning
11:50	Next steps and wrap up
12:00	Adjourn

Subsequent meetings might focus on the topics below.

Meeting 2: Continue to deepen understanding of effective professional learning and develop an understanding of current practices and review data about current professional learning

Meeting 3: Conduct a review of existing professional learning policies

Meeting 4: Report out findings of review of current policies and practices

Meeting 5: Determine strengths and areas to revise in current professional learning system

Meeting 6–8: Develop recommendations for components of comprehensive professional learning system

Meeting 9–10: Formulate and vet recommendations

Meeting 11–12: Review feedback on recommendations; revise recommendations; plan development and dissemination of task force report

Collect and Examine Data and Research

TOOL 2.1 Back to Collecting and Examining Data and Research Tools Chart

Focus group questions

These suggested questions may be used in development of interview guides for focus groups of staff at state, district, and school levels.

Focus Group Questions: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction, Other Central Office Staff

1. Describe the purpose of professional learning at multiple levels: individual, team/school, district.
2. In what ways are student content standards and educator effectiveness standards used to inform decisions about allocating resources (e.g. time, funds, people, technology, materials) for professional learning?
3. How has the budget and/or teacher association agreement impacted changes in allocation of resources for professional learning based on educator performance and student achievement data?
4. What data are used to prioritize needs for resource investments and to assess results of these investments?
5. What support systems and structures are in place within the district to increase educator effectiveness and student achievement?
6. How is the effectiveness of these support systems and structures monitored and adjustments made as needed?
7. Are formal evaluations of district initiatives conducted to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning in changing practices and increasing student achievement? How are the results disseminated and used for continuous improvement?
8. What are the current policies for professional learning? How do these policies align with expectations for quality professional learning to ensure continuous improvement in educator effectiveness and increase in achievement for ALL students?
9. Describe your vision for developing a comprehensive and cohesive professional learning system that aligns with educator performance standards and student content standards.

TOOL 2.1, cont.

Focus Group Questions: School Administrators

1. Describe the purpose of professional learning at multiple levels: individual, team/school, district.
2. In what ways are student content standards and educator effectiveness standards used to inform decisions about professional learning?
3. What kinds of data do you use to plan schoolwide professional learning?
4. Describe your role as an instructional leader in planning, implementing, coordinating and evaluating professional learning at the school level to increase teacher effectiveness and student achievement.
5. What are your expectations before, during, and after professional learning sessions for both you and your staff?
   a. **Before:** What influences your decisions about when, what, and how often to engage in professional learning experiences?
   b. **During:** What does effective professional learning look like as it relates to your learning and leading? For teachers learning and teaching?
   c. **After:** What happens after you leave a professional learning session? After your teachers leave a professional learning session?
6. What types of systems and structures are in place at your school to support teachers in the transfer of professional learning to their classrooms to improve student achievement? (Probe about learning communities, cycle of continuous improvement.)
7. How do you assess the effectiveness of these support systems and structures to ensure that professional learning is contributing to increase teacher effectiveness and student achievement?
8. What resources (e.g. time, funds, people, materials, technology) are allocated to support professional learning at the school level and to ensure implementation of district/school professional learning in the classrooms?
9. At the school level, who is involved in contributing to and developing the professional learning plan including an evaluation plan to monitor and assess the achievement of intended outcomes for students and educators?
10. What tools are used to monitor the frequency and fidelity of implementation of professional learning at the classroom level?
11. Are changes needed in the current professional learning system? If so, what changes need to occur and why?

TOOL 2.1, cont.

Focus Group Questions: Teachers

1. Describe the purpose of professional learning at multiple levels: individual, team/school, district.
2. How are data from student and educator performance used in determining outcomes for professional learning?
3. What is the decision-making process for selecting professional learning?
4. What data do schools or the district office collect and analyze to assess educators' learning preferences, to promote active engagement, and to differentiate learning experiences?
5. What are your expectations before, during, and after professional learning sessions?
   a. **Before:** What influences your decisions about when, what, and how often to engage in professional learning experiences?
   b. **During:** What does effective professional learning look like as it relates to your learning and teaching?
   c. **After:** What happens after you leave a professional learning session?
6. What types of support systems and structures are in place at your school to support and assist you in implementing new knowledge and skills and increasing student achievement?
7. At your school, how are learning communities organized to support teachers in implementing new learning?
8. What resources (e.g. time, materials, people, funds, technology) are available to support the success of learning communities in your school?
9. How do learning communities use student achievement data and educator performance data to set goals and plan their professional learning?
10. How does learning occurs within learning communities to support, sustain, and refine implementation of professional learning in practice?
11. What data do learning community members collect and analyze to measure the effectiveness of learning community processes and results?
12. How do members of learning communities support each other to implement new learning within their classrooms?
13. What tools are used to monitor the frequency and fidelity of implementation of professional learning in your classroom?
14. Who monitors?
15. What type of feedback are you given?
16. What do you do with that feedback?

Note: Special appreciation goes to Linda Munger who developed the focus group questions that have been adapted here.

TOOL 2.2 Back to Collecting and Examining Data and Research Tools Chart

Data table

When completed, this template provides an overview of different types of available data about professional learning.

Title of data set	What do these data measure?	Data source (what is the source of these data, i.e. staff survey?)	How many respondents contributed to this data set?	When were these data collected?

TOOL 2.3 Back to Collecting and Examining Data and Research Tools Chart

Current practice and policy

Use the open-ended questions in this tool to gather information on stakeholders' perspectives on current professional learning practice. Some questions may not be appropriate for certain stakeholder groups since some stakeholders will have more experience with professional learning than others. Each of the 22 components listed below are components of a comprehensive professional learning system. Not every current professional learning system will have all of the components listed, however it is important to examine if there are practices, policies, or procedures in existence that relate to each component.

The primary purpose of this process is to *understand* current practice, *not* to determine what it *should* be. Focus respondents on what exists and remind them that the overall purpose of this policy review is to strengthen the quality and effects of professional learning. If it is difficult to get answers to all questions, use the goals of the policy review and the nature of the audience as factors to determine which questions take priority.

Purpose	To gather information on the current practices of professional learning.
Non-purpose	To identify the strength and weaknesses of the current practice; to identify problems with the current practice; or to suggest strategies to address the problems with current practice. These purposes will occur later in the analysis phase.
Time	30–45 minutes
Questions/Probes	Use the questions in the table on pages 83–84 to elicit information about current practice. Seek clarification if any response is unclear by simply asking the respondent(s) to provide an example or more information. The following additional probes might be useful: • To how many other educators does this apply? • Which specific educators, e.g. teachers, principals, instructional support staff, etc.? • What is the estimated range of implementation through practice? High? Low? Average? • Give a specific example from your own experience. • What is one example of effective professional learning? • What is one example of ineffective professional learning? • What else is important to know about current practice in professional learning that I haven't asked?

TOOL 2.3, cont.

Components of a Comprehensive Professional Learning Plan	Questions to Elicit Current State
1. Vision, mission, and beliefs for professional learning: Describes the vision, mission, and beliefs for effective professional learning and its relationship to educator effectiveness and student achievement.	• What are the vision, mission, and beliefs for professional learning in the state or district? • What are the current goals for professional learning and its purpose(s)?
2. Definition of professional learning: Defines professional learning and positions it as a comprehensive system of improvement, occurring continuously, and engaging educators in collaborative learning primarily at their worksite with additional opportunities outside their worksite.	• How do you define professional learning? • Who participates in professional learning?
3. Standards for Professional Learning: Delineates research-based standards for professional learning that are used to monitor and measure effectiveness, efficiency, and equity in the professional learning.	• What ensures that professional learning meets standards for high quality?
4. Purposes for professional learning: Specifies three distinct purposes for professional learning including individual growth and development, team and school improvement, and program implementation, all linked to increasing student achievement.	• What are the purposes of professional learning? • How do those purposes influence how professional learning occurs?
5. Governance for professional learning: Delineates lines of authority for professional learning and defines processes for decision making.	• What rules, policies, or expectations govern professional learning? • Who has final authority for professional learning? • Who has primary responsibility for the professional learning program?
6. Roles and responsibilities for professional learning: Delineates the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and other contributors to effective professional learning.	• Who is typically involved in decisions about professional learning? What kinds of decisions do they make? • How is professional learning planned, implemented, coordinated, and evaluated?
7. Requirement for professional learning: Delineates the expectations and/or requirements for professional learning.	• How much professional learning is available and required for teachers? Principals? Central office staff? Other education staff? Support staff? • How much professional learning do educators typically engage in? • Does the amount vary by roles, e.g. teachers, principals, new teachers, central office? What reasons exist for this variation?

TOOL 2.3, cont.

Components of a Comprehensive Professional Learning Plan (cont.)	Questions to Elicit Current State (cont.)
8. Alignment with other systems: Links professional learning with educator (both teacher and administrator), effectiveness or evaluation systems, major reform initiatives, and other learning-focused and operational systems.	• How does professional learning contribute to or interact with other systems such as hiring and retaining educators, curriculum, assessment, and instruction, performance evaluation, student and educator data, educator effectiveness, etc.? • How does professional learning link to major initiatives or goals? • How do those initiatives or goals influence the content, form, and amount of professional learning?
9. Data-informed professional learning: Uses student, educator, and system data to inform decisions about needs, content, designs, and effects.	• What data are typically used to inform decisions about the content, form, and length of professional learning? • What is the most common content of professional learning? • Who determines the content?
10. Leadership for professional learning: Requires leaders and facilitators of professional learning to be well prepared for their leadership roles.	• To what degree are leaders and facilitators of professional learning prepared for their leadership roles?
11. Plans for professional learning: Requires individual, team, school, district, and state professional learning plans that align with individual, team, school, system, and state improvement goals, components of the plans, and process for developing and approving plans.	• Are there plans for professional learning at the state, school system, school, team, and individual levels? • How are these plans developed? • Are they required? Reviewed? Approved? How?
12. Licensure/Certification: Specifies the role of professional learning for initial, additional, and advanced licenses or certificates that prepare educators for their new roles and develops the disposition of continuous learning and development.	• What special programs or certifications earn educators award, additional compensation, or other incentives?
13. Dedicated time for professional learning: Allocates time for professional learning within the workday several times per week and sets aside additional days, approximately 10 per school year, for learning associated with school, system, and state improvement goals.	• Is dedicated time set aside for professional learning within the workday? Outside the workday? • Has time for professional learning increased, decreased, or stayed the same in the last five years? • How is the time allocated? • Who determines when it occurs and how it is used?

TOOL 2.3, cont.

Components of a Comprehensive Professional Learning Plan (cont.)	Questions to Elicit Current State (cont.)
14. Dedicated funding for professional learning: Requires set aside and/or adequate funding to ensure application of learning to achieve full implementation.	• Has funding for professional learning increased, decreased, or stayed the same in the last five years? • Is there a designated amount or percentage of funding specifically set aside for professional learning? • Who determines how much funding and how the funds are used?
15. Other resources: Requires other resources such as staff, technology, and materials to increase access to, efficiency of, and effectiveness of professional learning.	• What other resources (staff, technology, and materials) support professional learning? • How are those resources acquired and allocated? • Where do most of these resources reside?
16. Flexible designs: Supports flexible designs for professional learning to differentiate learning for experience, background, learning preference, and other factors that influence learning.	• What types of professional learning do educators experience?
17. Job-embedded collaboration: Promotes job-embedded collaboration among peers within professional learning and during application and refinement of practice.	• How much time is devoted to collaborative learning? • How does collaboration occur among peers to support professional learning? • What preparation and support do educators have for effective collaborative learning? • Who supervises job-embedded collaboration? • What support effectiveness of collaborative learning time?
18. Mentoring and induction: Provides multi-year mentoring with induction to support novice educators; those assuming new positions; or those with new certifications or licenses as they transition to their new work responsibilities, receive personalized support for success and acculturation. Solidifies the disposition of continuous improvement.	• How are novice educators supported to become highly effective? • How are educators in new roles supported? • How long does mentoring support last? • What is included in the induction program for staff members? • How does mentoring and induction align with both systemwide goals and individual educator needs?

TOOL 2.3, cont.

Components of a Comprehensive Professional Learning Plan (cont.)	Questions to Elicit Current State (cont.)
19. Incentives and recognition for professional learning: Uses application and impact of professional learning as criteria for incentives or recognition for professional learning.	• What incentives exist for participation in professional learning? • How are those incentives awarded or earned? • Are the incentives based on application and impact of the learning? • Who determines if the incentives will be awarded?
20. Evaluation of professional learning: Requires formative and summative evaluation of the equity, effectiveness, and efficiency of professional learning for both accountability and improvement.	• How is professional learning evaluated? By whom? How often? • Who uses evaluation results? • How are results used?
21. Third-party providers: Establishes criteria for engaging third-party partners in the professional learning system to maintain effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and alignment with specified outcomes.	• What processes are in place to ensure that third-party providers meet the state's requirements for effective professional learning and provide high quality services and products?
22. Learning management system: Uses a technology solution that links with educator and student databases to manage and increase access to professional learning.	• How is professional learning managed? • Who is responsible for and how is record keeping for professional learning done? • How is technology used to contribute to equitable access, efficiency, and accountability for professional learning?

TOOL 2.4 Back to Collecting and Examining Data and Research Tools Chart

Professional learning data analysis protocol

Steps	
Step 1: Study each data set.	• What do you observe about these data? • What patterns exist among the observations? • What outliers exist?
Step 2: Look across the data sets.	• What themes exist from the observations from various data sets? • What conclusions or generalizations emerge from the themes? Which observations support each conclusion or generalization? • How broadly do these conclusions or generalizations apply given the data available?
Step 3: Propose potential causes.	• What might be potential factors contributing to the conclusions or generalization? • What additional data are needed to confirm the role of the contributing factors?
Step 4: Consider implications.	• What are the potential implications of what the data are revealing? • Who needs to know about the conclusions and contributing factors? • How will we summarize and report the results of this data analysis?

TOOL 2.5 Back to Collecting and Examining Data and Research Tools Chart

Summary of data analysis

Use this tool to record a summary of the professional learning data analysis.

Data analyzed:
Patterns from observations:
Conclusions/Generalizations:
Contributing factors:
Implications from these data:

Establish Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definition, and Goals

TOOL 3.1 Back to Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definitions, and Goals Tools Chart

Resources for developing a comprehensive professional learning system

Use this list as background for the task force members responsible for developing each component of the comprehensive professional learning system.

Component	Title	Source
Vision, mission, and beliefs for professional learning	*Meet the Promise of Content Standards: Professional learning Required*	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/read-the-brief-%28pdf%29.pdf
	Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad, Executive Summary	www.learningforward.org/news/NSDC-study2009.pdf
	The Learning Educator: New Era in Professional Learning	Order from https://store.learningforward.org/mm5/merchant.mvc?Session_ID=8fbba35ffb2e28fc2822aa5141cf01d7&Store_Code=L4W&Screen=PROD&Product_Code=B372&
Definition of professional learning	*Definition of Professional Development*	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/read-the-brief-%28pdf%29.pdf
Standards for professional learning	*Standards for Professional Learning*	www.learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning#.UdgIVRbqzCE
Purposes for professional learning	*Meet the Promise of Content Standards: Professional Learning Required, pp. 13-15 and also list Tool 3.8 and its pages.*	www.learningforward.org/who-we-are/professional-learning-definition#.Ucmq6o7qOV8

TOOL 3.1, cont.

Component	Title	Source
Governance for professional learning	*Professional Learning Policy: A Workbook for States and Districts*	www.learningforward.org/docs/commoncore/professionallearningpolicyreview.pdf
	Teacher Professional Learning in the United States: Case Studies of State Policies and Strategies, Summary Report	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/2010phase3report.pdf?sfvrsn=0
Roles and responsibilities for professional learning	*Michigan Department of Education Professional Learning Policy supporting guidance*	www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/PL_Guidance_Public_Comment_FINAL_111011_368414_7.pdf
	Building Professional Development to Support New Student Assessment Systems	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/stephanie_hirsh-building_professional_development.pdf?sfvrsn=0
	Meet the Promise of Content Standards: The Principal	www.learningforward.org/docs/commoncore/meetpromiseprincipal.pdf
Policies	*Teacher Professional Learning in the United States: Case Studies of State Policies and Strategies, Summary Report*	www.learningforward.org/news/2010Phase3Report.pdf
	Making Effectiveness Matter	www.nctq.org/dmsView/Making_Effectiveness_Matter_NCTQ_Report
Designs	*Job-Embedded Professional Development: What It Is, Who Is Responsible, and How to Get It Done Well*	www.learningforward.org/advancing/JobEmbeddedPDbrief.pdf
	EDge Magazine: May/June 2011—The Changing Face of Professional Development	www.pdkmembers.org/members_online/members/orders.asp?action=view_item&pg=21&%20t=A&%20lname_1=schmoker&id=83770&af=PDK
Requirement for professional learning	*Meet the Promise of Content Standards: Professional learning Required*	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/read-the-brief-%28pdf%29.pdf
Alignment with other systems	Six Overlooked Keys to Organizational Alignment	www.wsa-intl.com/498-six-overlooked-keys-to-organizational-alignment/
Data-informed professional learning	Data standard web page and resources	www.learningforward.org/standards/data#.UejEhxaQvCE

TOOL 3.1, cont.

Component	Title	Source
Leadership for professional learning	*Meet the Promise of Professional Learning: The Principal*	www.learningforward.org/docs/commoncore/meetpromiseprincipal.pdf
Plans for professional learning	Planning workbook—needs a title and a link	
Licensure/ Certification	*Meet the Promise of Content Standards: The Role of Comprehensive Induction*	www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/commoncore/the-role-of-comprehensive-induction.pdf
Dedicated time for professional learning	*Establishing Time for Professional Learning*	www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/commoncore/establishing-time-for-professional-learning.pdf?sfvrsn=6
Dedicated funding for professional learning	*Meet the Promise of Common Standards: Invest in Professional Learning*	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/meetpromiseinvesting.pdf
	"The Bottom Line on Excellence"	www.learningforward.org/blog-landing/jsd/2012/06/30/jsd-february-2012-vol.-33-no.-1#.Uf_QMFO2Cpo
Other resources	*Meet the Promise of Common Standards: Invest in Professional Learning*	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/meetpromiseinvesting.pdf
	"The Bottom Line on Excellence" article	www.learningforward.org/blog-landing/jsd/2012/06/30/jsd-february-2012-vol.-33-no.-1#.Uf_QMFO2Cpo
	Establishing Time for Professional Learning	www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/commoncore/establishing-time-for-professional-learning.pdf?sfvrsn=6
Flexible designs	*Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*	https://store.learningforward.org/mm5/merchant.mvc?Store_Code=L4W&Screen=PROD&Category_Code=LFP&Product_Code=B380
	Meet the Promise of Content Standards: Professional Learning Required	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/read-the-brief-%28pdf%29.pdf
Job-embedded collaboration	*Becoming a Learning School*	https://store.learningforward.org/mm5/merchant.mvc?Store_Code=L4W&Screen=PROD&Category_Code=LFP&Product_Code=B423
	Job-Embedded Professional Development: What It Is, Who Is Responsible, and How to Get It Done Well	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/jobembeddedpdbrief.pdf?sfvrsn=0

TOOL 3.1, cont.

Component	Title	Source
Mentoring and induction	*Meet the Promise of Content Standards: What It Is, Who Is Responsible, and How to Get It Done Well*	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/jobembeddedpdbrief.pdf?sfvrsn=0
	Meet the Promise of Content Standards: The Role of Comprehensive Induction	www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/commoncore/the-role-of-comprehensive-induction.pdf
Incentives and recognition for professional learning	*Advancing High-Quality Professional Learning through Collective Bargaining and State Policy*	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/advancinghighqualityprofessionallearning.pdf?sfvrsn=2
Evaluation of professional learning	*Teacher Professional Development Evaluation Guide*	www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/evaluationguide.pdf?sfvrsn=0
	Assessing Impact: Evaluating Staff Development	https://store.learningforward.org/mm5/merchant.mvc?Session_ID=8fbba35ffb2e28fc2822aa5141cf01d7&Store_Code=L4W&Screen=PROD&Product_Code=B371&
Third-party providers	*Meet the Promise of Common Standards: The Role of Third-Party Providers*	www.learningforward.org/docs/default-source/commoncore/the-role-of-third-party-providers.pdf

TOOL 3.2 Back to Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definitions, and Goals Tools Chart

Recommended process for Step Three

Use this process overview as a map for the decisions to make in Step Three.

Purpose	To manage the process of making a series of significant decisions related to the comprehensive professional learning system.
Non-purpose	To plan a specific professional learning program.
Time	About 10 hours

The following list contains a recommended sequence of decisions for Step Three. Although each decision is interdependent, it is difficult to manage them all simultaneously. When a team is not deeply knowledgeable about professional learning research and practice, it is helpful to move them through this work in sequence.

Each step builds toward the next. It is important to remember, however, that occasionally the work is recursive. That is, it is sometimes necessary to go backwards to make some changes before moving forward again. This shift occurs because with each process, people deepen their understanding of what effective professional learning is and what is required to make it work.

TOOL 3.2, cont.

Recommended process	Date initiated	Draft completed	Reviewed by stakeholders	Completed
Overview of steps				
Fears and hopes				
What's in a name: Understanding terms				
Powerful professional learning experiences				
Definition of professional learning				
Assumptions about professional learning				
Purposes of professional learning				
Vision and mission for professional learning				
Understanding the connection between the professional learning system and other systems				

TOOL 3.3 Back to Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definitions, and Goals Tools Chart

Fears and hopes

Use this tool both to build team cohesiveness and to explore team members' fears and hopes before they begin the significant work of developing the comprehensive professional learning system.

New initiatives mean change. With change naturally comes some worries, concerns, anxieties, or fears. When they go unnoticed or unacknowledged, they can lead to resistance and challenges in the implementation process. Identifying potential fears early in the process of beginning something new will honor human nature AND provide a set of criteria against which to assess work. If, for example, there is a concern about how much time something might take, it is incumbent on leaders to acknowledge that worry and do everything feasible to minimize a waste of time by creating an efficient process that accomplishes the goals. Fears are opportunities. Recognize them first and then use them to guide the work.

The process described below is one way to acknowledge the fears and hopes of task force members as they enter the work of developing a new professional learning plan.

Purpose	• To acknowledge authentic concerns and hopes of task force members as they enter their work together. These concerns help members understand each other better and identify individual and shared areas that are important to each member; • To establish a set of criteria to use to monitor their product and process; • To develop a strong working relationship among team members; and • To prepare members for the work ahead.
Non-purpose	• To create a negative tone to the work; • To find all the barriers to success; and • To identify elements of the professional learning plan.
Time	45 minutes
Materials:	index cards, chart paper, tape

TOOL 3.3, cont.

Steps	**1.** Form small groups of 3–4 people, mixing up members as much as possible so that people have an opportunity to work with those they do not know well. **2.** Ask each small group to identify a facilitator, timekeeper, spokesperson, and recorder. **3.** Give each person a 4 x 6 or larger index card. **4.** Invite people to write on one side what worries, concerns, anxieties, or fears them about having a professional learning plan for the school system, about developing a professional learning plan, and about taking a leadership role in its development. Share one example. (5 minutes) **5.** In their small groups ask members to share their ideas in round-robin fashion while one member charts the fears identified, marking with a check those that are repeated. **6.** Once all members share their individual ideas and the recorder writes them on the chart and posts them (be sure to ask the recorder to label the charts as Worries/Fears), ask members to select two from their collected list to share with the larger group. (2 minutes) **7.** Ask the spokesperson to share their two ideas with the larger group. (5 minutes) **8.** Ask small groups to comment on the pattern of concerns that exist. (3 minutes) **9.** Repeat the process described above with the prompt: **a.** Using the other side of the index card, list your hopes for this work. **b.** What do you hope this task force will accomplish? **c.** What are your hopes for the outcome of this task force's product? **d.** If this task force develops an exceptional plan, what do you hope it will accomplish? **10.** After the process is completed for both fears and hopes, collect the fears and hopes and compile a master list for reference throughout the task force's work. **11.** Bring the compiled list to each meeting and use it to help task force members analyze their work by asking, **a.** To what degree are we doing what we can to avoid the fears and achieve our hopes? **b.** How do these decisions help us avoid the fears we identified and achieve the hopes we want?

TOOL 3.4 Back to Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definitions, and Goals Tools Chart

What's in a name?

Use this tool to help members develop an understanding of terms typically used for *professional learning*.

Purpose	• To develop an understanding of the terms used for professional learning and how the terms convey different meanings; • To decide on a term that is most appropriate to use within the state or district.
Non-purpose	To define professional learning.
Time	90 minutes
Materials	Handout 3.4, Venn diagram or chart paper to create Venn diagrams
Steps	**1.** Ask participants to form triads. Ask each member of the triad to read one of the three brief articles about terminology included in Handout 3.4. **2.** Invite triad members to read their individual articles and to prepare to share the essence of it with his/her triad colleagues. **3.** Ask triad members to share the core ideas gleaned from their individual readings with one another. Following their sharing, ask each triad to summarize, in 10 words or less, the distinction between professional development and professional learning, as they understand it. **4.** Engage in a large group conversation using the following questions to guide the conversation: **a.** How important is it that we adopt a term for educator learning that is consistent and reflects the distinctions you have noted in terms we typically use? **b.** What are the advantages and disadvantages of adopting a single term consistently? **c.** Which term best connotes your vision of this work? What are the reasons for your view? **d.** What might be advantages and disadvantages of adopting a new term now? **e.** If we were forced to make this decision now, and we are not, which term do you prefer?

TOOL 3.4, cont.

Consensus Building

If the team seems to have a strong preference for a term, check the team for consensus on the terms. Three separate ways to check consensus are listed.

Fist of five	Use the fist of five to measure the level of commitment to each term that is given more attention or seems to be a clear preference of some of the team members. Use the fingers on one hand to indicate your level of agreement on a term. **5** = Love it! I fully support it. **4** = I support it. **3** = I am neutral and can go either way. **2** = I am not excited about this, but won't block it if others believe it is best. **1** – I can't live with this. Take note of the level of agreements among members. If there seems to be disagreement, it is advisable to record the votes so that members can see the distribution.
Wall chart	Another way to see the levels of agreement is to create a wall chart with the options recorded on it and a Likert scale with 3–5 levels of agreement, such as Strongly agree; Agree; Neutral; Disagree; and Strongly disagree or Agree; Neutral; and Disagree. Ask individual members to record their level of agreement by placing an x in the box that indicates their level of agreement or by putting a sticker such as a dot or star on the chart. Ask members to take note of the distribution of responses and to discuss in small groups the following questions • What is the mode, mean and range of responses? • What is the percentage of disagree responses? • What are the reasons for agreeing and disagreeing? • Under what conditions will those who disagree agree to temporary use of the term(s) with the greatest level of agreement?

TOOL 3.4, cont.

Human bar chart	Yet another way is to physically ask members to form a bar chart by standing under signs indicating their level of agreement. To create the human bar chart, place the numbers, **1** = Strongly disagree; **2** = Disagree; **3** = Neutral; **4** = Agree; and **5** = Strongly agree, on pieces of paper and post them on a wall where members have ample space to line up in front of the numbers. As members cluster near the number that indicates their level of agreement, ask them to line up facing outward from the wall, one in front of the other to create a physical version of a bar chart. This process may need to be repeated several times once for each term under consideration. Once members have indicated their level of agreement with each term and created their bar chart, ask all members to note the following: • What is the range of levels of agreement? • What is the modal response? • What is your best guess about the mean if we were to calculate it? Then ask those standing at each level of agreement (i.e. all the 1s, 3s, etc.) to have a brief conversation about their reasons for selecting this level. Invite one spokesperson from each level to share one or two reasons that were prominent in the discussion.

After checking level of agreement on terms, determine whether there is sufficient consensus to temporarily accept a term until it is better defined, or if sufficient disagreement exists, that consensus does not exist yet.

TOOL 3.4, cont.

Handout 3.4: Reading #1

Why the distinction between "professional learning" and "professional development" is important

Professional development in schools refers to the processes used in promoting professional learning and the context and other resources that support it .

Professional learning refers to the outcomes – what is learned, how deeply it is learned, and how well it is applied in classrooms. It is about changes in what teachers and leaders think, say, and do on a consistent basis.

Discussing professional development without discussing professional learning goals and outcomes is like talking about teaching separate from student learning.

Put another way, *professional development is to professional learning as teaching is to student learning.*

Just as ineffective teaching strategies produce little student learning, ineffective professional development produces little professional learning.

And just as ineffective teachers say, "I taught it, but they didn't learn it," ineffective planners of professional development say, "I developed them, but they didn't learn it."

Unless teachers and leaders professional development is sufficiently robust to improve professional learning—that is, to change what educators think, say, and do—student learning won't improve.

I'll have more to say about that tomorrow.

Source: "Why the distinction between professional learning and professional development is important," by Dennis Sparks, May 7, 2013. Copyright 2013 by Dennis Sparks. Reprinted with permission. Available at http://dennissparks.wordpress.com/2013/05/07/why-the-distinction-between-professional-learning-and-professional-development-is-important/

TOOL 3.4, cont.

Handout 3.4: Reading #2

How understanding the "knowing-doing continuum" can improve the quality of professional learning

I have divided professional learning outcomes into these five levels of the "knowing-doing continuum":

1. **Learning about:** This is the adult version of "covering the content." It is often expressed by the phrase "I had…" [During the 1980s I so often heard "I had Madeline Hunter" that I almost (but not quite) felt honor bound to tell Mr. Hunter about the rumors regarding his wife.]
2. **Shallow understanding:** The best example I can think of was a participant in a cooperative learning workshop who wrote on an evaluation: "I think this is a good idea, but you made us work in groups too much."
3. **Deep understanding:** Learners can explain the idea or practice in some detail. They can also explain its benefits and limitations.
4. **Experimenting with new behaviors/practices:** The learner tries it out in the classroom or other setting to determine its effectiveness, sometimes with the guidance of an instructional coach or more experienced peer.
5. **Developing new habits:** Repetition over many weeks and perhaps months make the new practice routine and under teachers executive control, enabling them to determine when and how to use it.

I am sad to say…

…that based on my observations the vast majority of professional learning for teachers and administrators remains at levels 1 and 2. There are exceptions, of course, but they remain exceptions rather than the rule. (Please see my previous post to better understand the distinction between professional development and professional learning.)

The reason is fairly simple: Those who plan and finance professional learning continue to vastly underestimate the amount of time, energy, and resources that are required for a substantial number of educators to acquire the new habits of mind and behavior necessary to meaningfully improve teaching and learning for all students.

TOOL 3.4, cont.

The solution requires planners of professional learning to take their responsibilities seriously:

- They study professional literature, particularly Learning Forward's *Standards for Professional Learning.*
- They vow to do it right.
- They have hard conversations about current reality.
- They have hard conversations about what will be required to get to deep understanding and the development of new professional habits of mind and practice.
- They assess their progress in changing instructional practice and improving student learning.

Our students—particularly those in our most challenged communities and schools—deserve no less.

Do you agree with my observation and with the solution I propose to the perennial problem of low-quality professional learning?

Source: "Why understanding the knowing-doing continuum is essential to improve the quality of professional learning" by Dennis Sparks, May 8, 2013. Copyright 2013 by Dennis Sparks. Reprinted with permission. Available at http://dennissparks.wordpress.com/2013/05/08/why-understanding-the-knowing-doing-continuum-is-essential-to-improving-the-quality-of-professional-learning/

TOOL 3.4, cont.

Handout 3.4: Reading #3

Improving schools requires a new vision for professional learning

By Learning Forward

Regular readers of *Education Week* know that each issue includes several commentaries in which authors offer their unique perspectives on how schools should change. Of course, *Education Week* is not the only source of what amounts to a running record of proposals for reforming public elementary and secondary schools. Editorials, blogs, and opinion columns abound in print and electronic media. And each month sees the publication of position papers or policy briefs that include recommendations for improving the organization, operation, and results of public schools.

Many of these proposals devote attention to the effectiveness of teachers and principals. There is consensus that improving the performance of these educators is critical to increasing student achievement. Some proposals acknowledge an approach for improving the effectiveness of educators—professional development. This refers to intentional, on-the-job learning by educators currently employed by school systems. If you believe that the learning of students is not likely to increase significantly unless educators become more proficient in their craft, then professional learning is an essential tool—perhaps the only tool—that can simultaneously raise the performance levels of educators and the students they teach and lead.

Professional development can and does occur in many different ways, for many different purposes, but proposals for school reform often cite what researchers and experts now consider critical components of effective professional learning. These include:

- Most learning experiences of educators should occur at their schools, with their professional colleagues.
- Educators' learning should be driven and focused by their analysis and understanding of their students' learning needs.
- Educators should meet, collaborate, and learn in small teams to develop new knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are responsive to their students' learning needs.
- To advance their learning, educators should identify, seek, and utilize appropriate expertise that is internal or external to their school or school system.
- Educators' learning experiences should be deep and sustained.
- Educators should have the support necessary to effectively apply what they learn, and assess its effects on their students.

This is the new vision for professional learning, but it is easier to describe than to bring to fruition. Among

TOOL 3.4, cont.

many people it is a vision dimly perceived. While the professional development organized by some school systems and schools include elements of this vision, they do not characterize the learning experiences of most K–12 educators.

Any serious effort to improve schools, and the learning of students who attend them, must address the need to change professional development as we now know it. Many educators do not seek and apply extant knowledge about how to craft effective professional development because there is a widespread belief that all types of adult learning experiences are equal, and will produce comparable results. There is an assumption that teachers' passive participation in lecture-style professional development is just as valid as teachers' active engagement in small group, collaborative inquiry. Educators can satisfy requirements for professional development by participating in courses and workshops that have no direct application to the critical learning needs of their students. Moreover, the underlying message of many professional development experiences is that entertainment is synonymous with learning, participation equals application, and results don't matter. In other words, most any activity labeled "professional development" is acceptable.

It is not surprising, then, that many educators responsible for professional development choose the path of convenience and superficiality rather than act on what is known about how to conceive, organize, implement, apply, and assess effective professional learning. It is true, of course, that many states and school systems adopted or adapted Learning Forward's (then the National Staff Development Council's) *Standards for Staff Development*. The Standards advanced the thinking and practice of many professional development leaders and had a positive impact on state policy. Some states incorporated the Standards into requirements for funding professional development, but the results are unclear. To what extent, how, and with what results have local school systems and schools used the Standards to significantly improve day-to-day professional development practices? On the other hand, to what extent have states inadvertently compromised the potential impact of the Standards by merely folding them into the states' pro forma, compliance-oriented cultures of administration?

Next month, Learning Forward will publish its new *Standards for Professional Learning*. It will be important to keep a watchful eye on how states and school systems leverage the Standards to improve practice and whether, in fact, practice improves.

Hayes Mizell
Distinguished Senior Fellow, Learning Forward

Source: "Improving schools requires a new vision for professional learning" by Hayes Mizell, June, 2011. Copyright 2011 by *Education Week*. Reprinted with permission. Available at http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_forwards_pd_watch/2011/06/test_4.html

TOOL 3.4, cont.

Handout 3.4: Reading #4

Terms carry meaning

By Learning Forward

Early in the process of developing the revised *Standards for Professional Learning,* the decision was made to name the new document Standards for Professional Development. Within the last decade, the term professional development has become more prevalent both in the research and popular literature as a replacement for the term staff development, or its ancestor, inservice education. The term professional development seemed appropriate since research focused on the continuous development of teachers and principals, with teachers being the primary subjects of research.

Late in the revision process, the Standards Revision Task Force considered using the term professional learning rather than professional development in the name. Task force members overwhelmingly agreed to make this change. The term professional development tends to connote only the formal events in which people gather to learn. The term also conveys more about the design, logistics, and materials needed for learning than the outcomes of the learning for both educators and their students.

In contrast, the term professional learning emphasizes that learning is a process that continues over time, extends into practice, and expects results for students. While this distinction may appear arbitrary for some, the concepts embedded in the meaning of professional learning are fundamental to shaping practice and perception. Changing the name from development to learning holds tremendous promise for engaging educators in a process that is a hallmark of a profession, continuous education and improvement of practice.

Changing the name might contribute to changing both the public's and educators' perception of educator development from one that is a passive process, removed from the daily work in schools, disconnected from student and educator standards, designed by those outside of schools, and done at the expense of students' opportunity to learn. Professional learning connotes a new understanding of this core function within education. Professional learning is continuous improvement that occurs daily in schools. It is facilitated and designed by educators themselves and supported by external assistance providers when necessary. It focuses on educators' everyday work, strengthening their capacity, and increasing student results. It occurs as a part of the normal workday when students are in school. It engages educators as active learners in a process that continues over time. It weaves together acquisition of knowledge, development of skills, critique of, reflection on, and refinement of practice, and analysis of dispositions. It is vital to the success of students.

TOOL 3.4, cont.

The practice of continuous learning is essential for any improvement effort. Without learning, little change is possible. Every major education initiative, past, present, or future, depends on the capacity of educators to implement it fully and with fidelity. Professional learning is the only viable, efficient, and logical process for building the capacity of educators working in schools today.

Professional Learning describes the research-based attributes of professional learning essential to transforming schools for student success.

Joellen Killion
Senior Advisor, Learning Forward

Source: "Terms carry meaning" by Joellen Killion, June 6, 2012. Copyright 2012 by *Education Week*. Reprinted with permission.

TOOL 3.5 Back to Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definitions, and Goals Tools Chart

Powerful professional learning

Sharing personal experiences with powerful professional learning that transformed both practice and results is one way to help task force members develop a deeper understanding of professional learning and prepare them to make bold decisions about the professional learning system.

Purpose	• To develop a deeper understanding of transformative professional learning; • To identify the features of effective professional learning; and • To establish criteria to use for decisions about professional learning system.
Non-purpose	To tell stories about the best or worst professional learning experience.
Time	30 minutes
Materials	Sticky notes, chart paper, markers, tape
Steps	**1.** Ask task force members to grab a marker that produces a bold stroke that can be read from a distance—not a pencil or pen—and a stack of at least 10–15 large sticky notes. **2.** Invite task force members to identify a professional learning experience that was *transformative.* A transformative experience is one that deeply affected how they think, act, and speak. It also produced results for their immediate clients whether they are students, teachers, or others. If they have not had what could be considered a transformative experience, ask members to identify one that was *informative* or *effective.* **3.** Using the sticky notes, ask members to write one attribute of the transformative professional learning experience per sticky note. What were the characteristics of this experience? With whom did they participate? How long was it? When did it occur? How did it relate to their work responsibilities? Other recollections?

TOOL 3.6 Back to Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definitions, and Goals Tools Chart

Definition of professional learning

Use this tool to examine several definitions of professional learning, including one offered by Learning Forward.

Purpose	To create a definition of professional learning by exploring several definitions and personal experiences in powerful professional learning.
Non-purpose	To explain how to implement professional learning.
Time	Three to four hours
Materials needed	• Handout 3.5, Definitions of professional learning • Chart paper, markers, tape, sticky notes, index cards
Steps	**1.** Ask each member to write a definition of professional learning on an index card. **2.** In groups of four or five, share individual definitions and note similarities. **3.** Report out similarities and record them on chart paper for future reference. **4.** Use the note-taking guide to record notes while watching Definition video, the first video in right column: www.learningforward.org/who-we-are/professional-learning-definition **5.** Discuss the key lessons that emerged from the definition. **6.** Use the annotated definition of professional learning on pages 109–112 to delve deeper into the Learning Forward definition of professional learning. **7.** Compare the definition to the similarities recorded earlier. Note the similarities and differences. **8.** Review the Alabama, Kentucky, Michigan, Connecticut, and Duval County Public Schools definitions of professional learning. Note the similarities and differences with the Learning Forward definition and team members' own definitions. **9.** Generate key points to include in a definition of professional learning. **10.** Invite a small group to craft the definition using the key points generated and bring it back to the next meeting for review and revision.

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Steps (continued)	**11.** Encourage members to share the definition with stakeholders to seek feedback. It is important to acknowledge that stakeholders will not have the same depth of background knowledge and the opportunity to cultivate an understanding about the different terms that team members have experienced, so the task is not to seek their agreement, but rather to assess if the definition makes sense and to collect the questions it generates. **12.** Ask team members to review their current definition using the following set of questions: • How does this definition reflect the assumptions and beliefs we generated? • How does this definition minimize our fears and elevate the potential of achieving our hopes? • How does this definition ensure that every educator engages in effective professional learning to increase his or her effectiveness and student success? • To what degree does this definition convey a new way of doing the business of professional learning? • What revisions do we want to make in the definition to refine it?

Learning Forward's Definition and Key Points

Learning Forward's Definition	Key Points in the Definition
(34) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT—The term "professional development"means a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement—	Several significant research studies in the last decade have concluded that the length and focus of professional development matter in its impact on teaching quality and student achievement. yoon, Duncan, Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley (2007) found that when teachers have an average of 49 hours of professional development in a single school year focused specifically on the curriculum they teach, student achievement increases 21 percentile points. other researchers, including garet, Birman, Porter, Desimone, & Herman (1999) and Cohen & Hill (2001) found similar results for sustained professional development.

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Learning Forward's Definition	Key Points in the Definition
(a) Professional development fosters collective responsibility for improved student performance and must be comprised of professional learning that: (1) is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards as well as related local educational agency and school improvement goals; (2) is conducted among educators at the school and facilitated by wellprepared school principals and/or school-based professional development coaches, mentors, master teachers, or other teacher leaders;	Because teachers have traditionally worked in isolation and pursued their own professional development, their learning has benefited them individually and the students assigned to their classes. Successful corporations build teams, and all employees feel accountable and responsible for the company's operation and success (Farren, 1999; Gregory, 1999). High-quality professional development that includes teamwork fosters educators' sense of collective responsibility for all students rather than individuals' feelings of responsibility for some students. Professional development conducted in teams creates an environment of shared responsibility.
(3) primarily occurs several times per week among established teams of teachers, principals, and other instructional staff members where the teams of educators engage in a continuous cycle of improvement that— (i) evaluates 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)(3)(ii) by implementing coherent, sustained, and evidencebased learning strategies, such as lesson study and the development of formative assessments, that improve instructional effectiveness and student achievement;	Professionals are responsible for continuously improving their knowledge and practice. high-performing businesses understand this. Randy Nelson, dean of Pixar University, the professional development arm at one of this country's most successful movie production companies, said learning is the secret to the company's success. "We're trying to create a culture of learning, filled with lifelong learners," Nelson said (Taylor & laBarre, 2006). "every employee is encouraged to devote up to four hours a week, every week, to his or her education." Learning is part of everyone's work. In education, continuous improvement requires that districts make time for teachers to learn and improve their practice during the workday. Many schools set regular learning time in before- and after-school meetings, early release days, or other scheduled times. When teacher learning is a priority, schools can find strategies to schedule time for it. American businesses compete for the Baldrige award, which recognizes continuous improvement and associated results. While most schools believe in continuous improvement, they may not practice the process proven to produce results for students, including reviewing performance data, setting goals based on the data, implementing strategies to reach those goals, and then beginning the cycle again.

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Learning Forward's Definition	Key Points in the Definition
(iv) provides job-embedded coaching or other forms of assistance to support the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the classroom;	A preponderance of research in both business and education shows that adults exposed to new practices in workshops and team meetings need on-the-job support to make new ideas part of their daily routines (Joyce & Calhoun, 1996; Joyce & Showers, 2002). Odden et al. (2007) conclude that states that invest in classroom-based coaches who provide such support reap greater benefits in student achievement as opposed to those implementing more costly and less effective innovations, including smaller class sizes or full-day kindergarten. In addition, when experienced employees with a system-level understanding regularly share their individual insights about their company's processes and problems, they successfully build employees' knowledge (Leonard & Swap, 2004).
(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;	Continually assessing professional practice and student learning can be challenging. Using formative assessments requires technical knowledge. gaining this knowledge and using it effectively is essential to ensuring continuous improvement. School improvement specialist Mike Schmoker (2002) said substantial evidence shows that results are virtually inevitable when teachers work in teams to: • Focus substantially, though not exclusively, on assessed standards. • Review simple, readily available achievement data to set a limited number of measurable achievement goals in the lowest-scoring subjects or courses. • Work regularly together to design, adapt, and assess instructional strategies targeted directly at specific standards that students are not achieving according to assessment data (e.g. "measurement" in math; "voice" in writing; "sight reading" in music). Professional development and team-based learning must improve educators'practice and student learning. educators must use ongoing assessments of their practices and their students' learning to determine the effect of learning teams'decisions. They then can determine whether the lessons they planned, the new strategies they used, and the explanations they devised helped students achieve what the teachers intended.

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Learning Forward's Definition	Key Points in the Definition
(vi) informs ongoing improvements in teaching and student learning; and	Michael Fullan (2000) said successful schools are places where teachers regularly focus their efforts on student work through assessment and then adjust their instructional practice to get better results. Few initiatives are backed by evidence that they raise achievement. Formative assessment is one of the few approaches proven to make a difference. Continuously identifying areas to improve, however, can occur only when teachers and principals have information about how instruction is affecting students. To have the information they need to determine where they have succeeded, where they may need slight modifications, or where they must completely change plans, educators need continuous evaluation. Continually evaluating practice and outcomes produces actions that lead to sustained improvement as opposed to incremental improvement or no improvement.
(vii) that may be supported by external assistance.	Educators who are guided by data on their students and school are in the best position to identify what help they need to address their most important challenges. Occasionally, the school may not have answers and must seek assistance from outside experts. King and Newmann (2000) found that "ensuring the constant interaction of great ideas inside and outside an organization promotes improvement for all." When GE wanted to boost its leadership practices, CEO Jack Welch sought help from an outside expert, Noel Tichy. The result: an organizational culture developed in which employees embraced teaching and learning, emphasized results, and were able to adapt and change (Rothenberg, 2003). The company achieved its goals under Tichy's skillful guidance. Any organization that enlists external assistance, however, must ensure that the assistance aligns with the organization's internal goals.

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Learning Forward's Definition	Key Points in the Definition
(B) The process outlined in (a) may be supported 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 nonprofit entities outside the school such as universities, education service agencies, technical assistance providers, networks of content-area specialists, and other education organizations and associations.	Teachers often criticize professional development for not addressing their students' specific needs. Principals' criticism is that professional development rarely addresses the school's specific needs. Traditionally, central office administrators plan principals' and teachers' professional development although they have limited capacity to specifically address the needs identified in each teacher's or school's student data. as a result, they design professional learning that may impact some, but not all, teachers. Some districts have allowed teachers to plan their own professional development, primarily by having teachers choose workshops or conferences to attend. This approach, too, leads to impact for some teachers and their students as opposed to more powerful approaches designed to improve the practices of all teachers to affect all students. Traditional professional development relies almost exclusively on outside experts and materials without integrating these resources into existing systems of peer collaboration. The intent of the new definition is to leverage outside expertise to inform and improve the practice of educators inside schools. The definition suggests that outside experts make important contributions, but the tremendous expertise of teachers within the school is required to determine their specific learning needs and then to seek others'help to address these needs. King and Newmann (2000) found that teachers are most likely to learn when they collaborate with colleagues both within and outside of their schools and when they access external researchers and program developers. Under this scenario, schools and teams become continuous improvement organizations, and, as Brandt (2003) states, true learning organizations exchange information frequently with relevant external sources.

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Kentucky: Definition of Professional Learning

(704 KAR 3:035. Annual professional development plan)

Section 1. Definitions.

(1) "Professional development" means professional learning that is an individual and collective responsibility that fosters shared accountability among the entire education workforce for student achievement, and

(a) aligns with Kentucky's Core Academic Standards in 704 KAR 3:303, educator effectiveness standards, individual professional growth goals, and school, school district, and state goals for student achievement;

(b) focuses on content and pedagogy, as specified in certification requirements, and other related job-specific performance standards and expectations;

(c) occurs among educators who share accountability for student growth;

(d) is facilitated by school and district leaders, including curriculum specialists, principals, instructional coaches, mentors, teachers or teacher leaders;

(e) Focuses on individual improvement, school improvement, and program implementation;

(f) occurs several times per week.

"Professional development program" means a sustained and coherent professional learning process that is measurable by indicators and includes professional learning and ongoing support to transfer that learning to practice.

(2) Professional development shall:

(a) Be related to the teacher's instructional assignments and the administrator's professional responsibilities.

(b) Be aligned with the school or district improvement plan or the individual professional growth plans of teachers;

(c) Occur within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment;

(d) Be facilitated by skillful leaders who develop capacity and [,] advocate and create support systems for professional learning;

(e) Be prioritized and monitored by the district;

TOOL 3.6, cont.

(f) Use a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning;

(g) Integrate theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes;

(h) Apply current research on systems change and sustain support for implementation of professional learning for long-term instructional improvement as evidenced by student growth;

(i) Align its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards; and

(j) Focus resources on areas of identified need.

Connecticut: Definition of Professional Learning

(Professional Development Defined in PA 12-116)

Connecticut's Education Reform Act of 2012, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) must ensure that Local Boards of Education provide each certified employee the guidance and resources to participate in a program of *professional development* which shall:

(1) Be a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving teacher and administrator effectiveness in increasing student knowledge achievement;

(2) Focus on refining and improving various effective teaching methods that are shared between and among educators;

(3) Foster collective responsibility for improved student performance; and

(4) Comprise professional learning that

(a) aligns with rigorous state student academic achievement standards;

(b) is conducted among educators at the school and is facilitated by principals, coaches, mentors, distinguished educators, or other appropriate teachers;

(c) occurs frequently on an individual basis or among groups of teachers in a job-embedded process of continuous improvement; and

(d) includes a repository of best practices for teaching methods developed by educators within each school that is continuously available to such educators for comment and updating" (PA 12-116, Section 138 (a).

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Michigan: Definition of Professional Learning

Professional learning is a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving educators' effectiveness in raising student achievement. Professional learning provides opportunities for professional discourse, analysis, application, and reflection. It is relevant learning that is essential to ongoing improvements in professional practice and job effectiveness.

Systemic design, development, and implementation of effective professional learning must meet the following quality indicators:

- Build upon learning goals and objectives identified and developed throughout the educator's career, beginning in pre-service preparation, and aligned to the educator certification process;
- Align with Michigan's Standards for Professional Learning, rigorous student content standards, and educator performance standards and with local school improvement plans to improve job performance and student growth and proficiency;
- Engage personnel in a process of continuous improvement in which evidence and data are used to assess needs, define learning goals, design learning opportunities, and evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning on job performance and student growth and proficiency;
- Facilitate sustained, collaborative, job embedded professional learning, including opportunities to participate in communities of practice
- Provide continuous learning to support and sustain the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the work place;
- Provide increased opportunities among stakeholder organizations for collaboration and collective support for the learning of children, youth, and adults; and
- Utilize and leverage the necessary resources for continuous professional learning, ensuring that local, state, and federal funds are aligned and in compliance with professional learning policy.

The State Board of Education recommends that each Michigan school and district establish sustained, job embedded, relevant professional learning opportunities that meet the above criteria for all school and district staff based on this Professional Learning Policy. (Michigan's Professional Learning Policy, 2012).

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Alabama: Definition of Professional Learning

Education **Chapter 290-4-3**

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

CHAPTER 29043
EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

290-4-3.01 Inservice Education And Educator Development
290-4-3.02 Office Of Instructional Development

290-4-3.01 Inservice Education And Educator Development.

(1) **Alabama Definition of Professional Development.**
Professional development means a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving all educators' effectiveness in raising student achievement.

(a) Professional development fosters collective responsibility for improved student performance and shall be comprised of professional learning that:

1. Is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards, as well as related local educational agency and school improvement goals;

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

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

4. Occurs primarily several times per week or the equivalent of three 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;

Supp. 6/30/09 **4-3-1**

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Education **Chapter 290-4-3**

(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(1)(a)(ii) of this rule 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 external assistance.

(b) The process outlined in section (1) of this rule may be supported and strengthened by activities such as courses, workshops, institutes, networks, and conferences that:

1. 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 nonprofit entities outside the school such as universities, education service agencies, technical assistance providers, networks of contentarea specialists, and other education organizations and associations.

(2) Alabama Standards for Professional Development.

Approved Professional Development shall:

(a) Organize adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school, the district, and the state.

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Education **Chapter 290-4-3**

(b) Require knowledgeable and skillful school and district leaders who actively participate in and guide continuous instructional improvement.

(c) Provide resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

(d) Use disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.

(e) Use multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.

(f) Prepare educators to apply research to decision making.

(g) Use learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.

(h) Apply knowledge about human learning and change.

(i) Provide educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.

(j) Prepare educators to understand and appreciate all students; create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments; and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.

(k) Deepen educators' content knowledge, provide them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepare them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.

(l) Provide educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

Author: Dr. Joseph B. Morton
Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§16316, 16232, 16237, 16238, 162312 through 13.
History: New Rule: June 14, 1978. **Amended:** April 5, 1979, July 14, 1981. **Repealed:** December 13, 1994. **New Rule:** Filed: December 13, 1994; effective January 27, 1995. **Amended:** Filed August 12, 2004; effective September 16, 2004. **Repealed and New Rule:** Filed September 14, 2006; effective October 19, 2006. **Repealed and New Rule:** Filed April 10, 2009; effective May 15, 2009.

Supp. 6/30/09 **4-3-3**

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Education **Chapter 290-4-3**

290-4-3-.02 Office of Leadership Development

(1) The Office of Leadership Development shall establish the Alabama Council for Leadership Development. The Alabama Council for Leadership Development will, with entities both inside and outside of the State Department of Education (SDE), provide advisement for a seamless system of professional development for Alabama instructional leaders.

(a) Members of the Alabama Council for Leadership Development will be appointed by the State Superintendent of Education, using nominations received from State Board of Education members, education organizations, and other entities, and will serve a three-year staggered term.

(b) Members of the Alabama Council for Leadership Development will include, but not be limited to, the following active practitioners: local superintendents, local education agency director of instruction or equivalent position, elementary principal, middle school principal, high school principal, assistant principal, teacher leader, and aspiring principal who have distinguished themselves by leading sustained student achievement in their schools or local education agencies (LEAs). Membership of the Alabama Council for Leadership Development shall not exceed 15 members.

(2) **Responsibilities of the Office of Leadership Development and the Alabama Council for Leadership Development.**

(a) The Office of Leadership Development and the Alabama Council for Leadership Development shall define the criteria for the approval of all professional development activities and programs used to meet requirements of instructional leader certification renewal which shall be called Professional Learning Units (PLUs). Criteria will align with the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders and the Alabama Standards for Professional Development. (Refer to Code of Ala. 1975, §§16237, 16238, and 162312 through 13.1, and AAC Rule 29033.48).

(b) Unless otherwise specifically provided by law, the rules referenced above shall be the sole authority by which the criteria for effective professional development is determined for the activities and programs used to meet any of the requirements referenced above. The State Superintendent of Education shall be the only authority who can make exceptions to these rules. A request for an exception, accepted only from a local superintendent, must reflect possible improvements in student achievement in the public school(s) of Alabama. (Refer to AAC Rule 290010010.10.1)

Supp. 6/30/09 **4-3-4**

TOOL 3.6, cont.

(c) The Office of Leadership Development and the Alabama Council for Leadership Development shall also provide assistance to local city and county school systems in designing and evaluating professional development activities and programs that meet the needs of local educators and are aligned with the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders and the Alabama Standards for Professional Development.

(d) The Office of Leadership Development and the Alabama Council for Leadership Development shall also facilitate the development of professional development activities and programs for needs identified by practitioners or LEAs.

(3) **Approved Professional Development Activities and Programs for Instructional Leaders.**

(a) Instructional Leader shall be defined as:

1. Superintendent
2. Local Education Agency Central Office Instructional Administrators
3. Principal
4. Assistant Principal
5. Aspiring Principal
6. Teacher Leader

(b) Approved professional development shall be defined as educational experiences meeting therequirements of the Alabama Professional Development Standards and aligning the practice of instructional leaders with the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders.

(c) Only the proposed activities and/or programs which meet the criteria prescribed in subsequent sections of this document shall be approved for meeting the:

1. Renewal requirements for instructional leader certification which relate to professional development. (Refer to AAC Rule 29032.04)
2. Professional development requirements which are a result of the administrative component of the Professional Education Personnel Evaluation Program of Alabama.

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Education **Chapter 290-4-3**

(4) **Approval Process for Professional Development Used for Instructional Leaders Certification Renewal.**

(a) The Office of Leadership Development and the Alabama Council for Leadership Development with assistance from appropriate sections of the State Department of Education will design the Alabama Continuum of Leadership Development in support of the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders. The Alabama Continuum of Leadership Development will reflect the needs of each leader constituent group at all career phases and shall have improved student achievement through improved leadership as its primary goal.

(b) The Office of Leadership Development and the Alabama Council for Leadership Development shall design, and modify as needed, an evaluation matrix for assigning the value of professional development activities and programs that would meet approval for Professional Learning Units (PLUs) required for LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT certification renewal.

(c) The professional development content sanctioned by the Alabama Council for Leadership Development will constitute the Professional Learning Units required for LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT certification renewal.

(d) Approval for up to one-half of the PLUs required for certification renewal shall be granted by the employing superintendent or headmaster. All PLUs must meet the Alabama Professional Development Standards and the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders.

(e) Approval for at least one-half of the PLUs required for certification renewal shall be granted by the Office of Leadership Development. All PLUs must meet the Alabama Professional Development Standards and the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders.

(f) The Alabama Council for Leadership Development will meet a minimum of 4 times per year to ensure the approval of professional development content aligned with the Alabama Standards for Professional Development and the Alabama Continuum of Professional Development and that when implemented, create a seamless system of support for instructional leaders.

(g) Professional development content granted Professional Learning Unit status shall have an evaluation component outlined in a request for proposals that indicates how the effectiveness of the professional development will be evaluated. The focus of the evaluation must be the professional development content's impact on leadership that will improve student achievement.

Supp. 6/30/09 **4-3-6**

TOOL 3.6, cont.

(h) The Alabama Council for Leadership Development will sanction professional development content to support the Alabama Continuum of Leadership Development and to be used for certification renewal. Professional development content sanctioned by the Alabama Council of Leadership Development will reflect the Alabama Professional Development Standards and will support the alignment of instructional leaders' practice with the Alabama Standards for Instructional Leaders.

(i) The Alabama Council for Leadership Development will review the Continuum annually.

(j) The Alabama Council for Leadership Development will seek to minimize the time school leaders are away from their schools or offices, while maximizing the effect of researchbased quality professional development to ensure improved student achievement.

(5) **Coordination and Communication of Professional Development Opportunities.**

(a) The Leadership Development Office shall prepare, and the Alabama Council for Leadership Development approve, a menu of professional development granted Professional Learning Units using a timetable that allows for development and announcement of approved professional development.

(b) A calendar shall be prepared that indicates windows of opportunity for professional development content to be developed and offered, but which also indicates times when certain audiences are not available to attend, i.e. during state testing, traditional dates for state meetings, etc.

(c) The Office of Leadership Development shall work with LEAs to ensure that opportunities for professional development are equally available throughout the state.

(d) The Office of Leadership Development and Alabama Council of Leadership Development shall collaborate with university schools of education to ensure that the Alabama Continuum of Leadership Development begins with content for preservice education and is comprehensive enough to create the seamless system of professional development for instructional leaders supporting them throughout their career.

(6) **Facilitating the development of Professional Development Activities and Programs.**

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Education **Chapter 290-4-3**

(a) The Office of Leadership Development, with assistance from appropriate sections of the State Department of Education, will develop, issue, and review requests for proposals (RFPs) to solicit professional development content that addresses the needs on the Alabama Continuum of Leadership Development and may be approved for Professional Learning Units (PLUs) required for LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT certification renewal.

(7) **Technology Professional Development Topics for Teachers and Administrators.** Technology training shall be offered to professional personnel in the area of technology integration, use, and technology instructional leadership. The purpose of these professional development experiences will be to improve teaching, learning, leading, and enhancing Alabama's workforce skills.

(a) The Teacher shall learn to effectively:

1. Identify and evaluate technology resources and technical assistance, i.e. those available online and onsite within a school and district setting.

2. Assess advantages and limitations of current and emerging technologies, and online software content to facilitate teaching and student learning.

3. Develop and implement a classroom management plan to ensure equitable and effective student access to available technology resources.

4. Model safe, responsible, legal, and ethical use of technology and implement school and district acceptable use policies including fair use and copyright guidelines and Internet user protection policies.

5. Design, implement, and assess learner-centered lessons and units that use appropriate and effective practices in teaching and learning with technology.

6. Use technology tools (including, but not limited to, spreadsheets, web page development, digital video, the Internet, and email) for instruction, student assessment, management, reporting purposes and communication with parents/guardians of students.

7. Facilitate students' individual and collaborative use of technologies (including, but not limited to spreadsheets, web page development, digital video, the Internet, and email) to locate, collect, create, produce, communicate, and present information.

Supp. 6/30/09 **4-3-8**

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Education **Chapter 290-4-3**

8. Design, manage, and facilitate learning experiences incorporating technologies that are responsive to diversity of learners, learning styles and special needs of all students (e.g. assistive technologies for students with special needs).

9. Evaluate students' technology proficiency and students' technology-based products within curricular areas.

10. Use technology to enhance professional growth (e.g. through accessing web-based information, online collaboration with other educators and experts, and online professional courses).

(b) The Administrator shall learn to effectively:

1. Describe mechanisms for creating a shared vision for the comprehensive integration of technology, communicating that vision, and facilitating a process that fosters and nurtures a culture to achieve the vision.

2. Develop a technology plan including resource alignment (e.g. funding, staff and time, hardware/software, total cost of ownership), and demonstrate leadership skills necessary to integrate technology to support effective learning and administration.

3. Facilitate the selection and use of technologies appropriate for curriculum areas, instructional strategies, and student-centered learning environments to maximized learning and teaching to meet the individual needs of all learners.

4. Apply and model technology applications and professional practices that demonstrate knowledge of available technologies; existing Alabama and national technology standards for students, teachers, and administrators; related trends and issues; current research; and professional development resources in order to enhance professional practices of educational leaders, increase job-related technology use, and improve the productivity of self and other school personnel.

5. Use prevalent technology-based managerial, financial, and operational systems used in Alabama schools.

6. Use technology to facilitate effective assessment and evaluation, including the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and communication of findings to improve instructional practice

TOOL 3.6, cont.

Education **Chapter 290-4-3**

and student learning; the use of assessment of staff knowledge, skills, and performance in using technology to facilitate quality professional development and guide personnel decisions; the use of technology to assess and evaluate managerial and operational systems; the use of multiple methods to evaluate the efficacy of technology resources for the purposes of improving learning, communication, and productivity.

7. Demonstrate responsible decision making that reflects understanding of social, legal, and ethical issues related to technology.

Author: Dr. Joseph B. Morton
Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§16316, 16232, 16237, 16238, 162312 through 13.
History: New Rule: Filed April 10, 2009; effective May 15, 2009.

Supp. 6/30/09 **4-3-10**

TOOL 3.7 Back to Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definitions, and Goals Tools Chart

Beliefs, principles, and assumptions about professional learning

Use this tool and the conversation about *The Learning Educator: A New Era in Professional Learning* to generate the assumptions or beliefs that will underlie the definition of professional learning. The term *assumptions* will be used throughout, however the team may want to select one of the other terms to use.

Purpose	To generate consensus about the assumptions, beliefs, or principles that support professional learning.
Non-purpose	To define professional learning or describe how to implement it.
Time	Depends on option selected.
Introduction	There are several options for developing assumptions. In Option A teams generate original assumption statements and vet the assumptions with stakeholder groups for feedback. In Option B teams examine assumption statements to determine which ideas align with the team's assumptions, to modify them so they reflect the team's assumptions, and to vet the assumptions with stakeholder groups for feedback. There are multiple alternatives to these two processes that team members may consider as well.
Option A	120 minutes
Steps	**1.** Read *Principles We Live By* (Handout 3.7a) to review the concept of assumptions. **2.** Review the survey data from the principles survey. **3.** Develop individual beliefs in the areas recommended in Handout 3.7b. Add other areas as desired or invite individuals to add their own areas. **4.** Share individual assumptions in small groups. Find the overlaps and the outliers. **5.** Combine two small groups to share overlaps and outliers. **6.** Bring the large group back together to report out the overlaps and outliers. Record the overlaps and outliers on a chart. Invite members to inquire about overlap areas to seek clarity. Invite those with outliers to advocate for them. Invite others to inquire about them.

TOOL 3.7, cont.

Steps (continued)	**7.** Seek consensus on the assumption areas. **8.** Invite a small group to develop assumption statements. **9.** Review the statements and revise as necessary for public review and feedback. **10.** Seek feedback from stakeholders on the assumptions. The feedback is for clarity of the statement and level of agreement with the assumption. **11.** Bring the feedback to the team for review and revision of the assumptions.
Option B	120 minutes
Steps	**1.** Read *Principles We Live By* (Handout 3.7a) to review the concept of assumptions. **2.** Review the survey data from the principles survey. **3.** Review the assumption statements on Handout 3.7c and identify those with which team members have strong agreement. **4.** Assign several statements to small groups of team members to revise so they reflect the team's assumptions, use language that is appropriate for their own context. Post the revised statements on chart paper, one per page. Post them around the room. **5.** Ask pairs to walk from chart to chart with a pad of sticky notes and a writing instrument, read the assumption statement, and post their joint comment and/or question on each chart. **6.** Ask the small groups to retrieve their charts and notes, consider the feedback, and revise their statement incorporating the feedback. **7.** Share the revised statements with the large group. **8.** Publish the DRAFT assumptions for feedback from stakeholder groups. **9.** Use feedback to review the assumption statements. **10.** Seek consensus among team members on the assumption statements.

TOOL 3.7, cont.

Handout 3.7a

Principles we live by

Principles shape our thoughts, words, and actions. They influence our decisions. They guide us in problem solving. They serve as touchstones that we continually return to when we face conflict, dilemmas, or challenges. They set a common foundation shared by members of a community. Members of the community are also challenged to uphold and protect the principles because they shape what the community stands for.

Each person lives by a set of principles. Some of our principles are unquestioned and fundamental to the ways in which we define who we are. Some are new to us and through our experiences and dialogue we continue to clarify and deepen our understanding of them. Our principles guide our work, thoughts, goals, actions, and decisions.

Principles are underlying assumptions required in a system of thought and are often spoken of as laws for moral or ethical decision making. We frequently hear, "It's the principle of it."

"Principles endure over time. They supersede time, programs, strategies, and current practices. They serve as the driver behind programs, strategies, and practice. Principles shape and drive what we say, think, and do. What we say, think, and do conversely serve as the symbolic indicators to others of our principles. Our words and actions convey how deeply we hold our principles. Our principles also can create dissonance within ourselves if we act and speak in a way that is incongruent with them. They can be the source of deep conflict between people or the source of strong alliances among people. "

Source: *The Learning Educator: A New Vision for Professional Learning* by S. Hirsh & J. Killion, pp. 11–12. Copyright 2007 Learning Forward. Reprinted with permission.

TOOL 3.7, cont.

Handout 3.7b

Professional learning beliefs that underlie assumptions

Area	My beliefs	Others' beliefs
The role of continuous improvement among professionals		
The purpose of professional learning in education		
The responsibilities of individuals and organizations in relationship to supporting continuous improvement		
The vision of professional learning		

TOOL 3.7, cont.

Handout 3.7c

Professional learning assumptions

Read each assumption statement. Indicate your level of agreement and make any notes about the statement you wish to record. Particularly note changes you would make to the statement.

Level of agreement **5** = strongly agree **4** = agree **3** = neutral **3** = disagree **1** = strongly disagree	**Sample professional learning assumptions**	**Notes**
	1. Diversity strengthens an organization and improves its decisions.	
	2. Leaders are responsible for building the capacity in individuals, teams, and organizations to be leaders and learners.	
	3. Ambitious goals lead to powerful actions and remarkable results.	
	4. Maintaining the focus of professional learning on teaching and student learning produces academic success.	
	5. Evaluation strengthens performance and results.	
	6. Communities can solve even their most complex problems by tapping internal expertise.	
	7. Collaboration among educators builds shared responsibility and improves student learning.	
	8. Educator effectiveness is a significant factor in student success.	
	9. Professional learning is a significant vehicle for increasing educator effectiveness.	

TOOL 3.7, cont.

Level of agreement **5** = strongly agree **4** = agree **3** = neutral **3** = disagree **1** = strongly disagree	**Sample professional learning assumptions**	**Notes**
	10. Professional learning is a shared responsibility of individual members of the education workforce, schools, school districts, state department of education, and other education and non-education agencies, providers, institutions, and organizations.	
	11. Collaborative, job-embedded professional learning aligned with student content standards and educator effectiveness standards ensures that all Kentucky students engage in effective learning every day.	
	12. The success of professional learning is measured in terms of its impact on educator effectiveness and student achievement.	
	13. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of professional learning improves its quality and results.	
	14. Professional learning is one system of support that works in coherent partnership with other state, district, and school systems (e.g., certification, recertification, personnel, curriculum, assessment) to support educator effectiveness and student achievement.	
	15. Leaders, including teachers and administrators, support a culture of continuous professional learning to refine and expand professional practice and support student growth and development.	

TOOL 3.7, cont.

Level of agreement **5** = strongly agree **4** = agree **3** = neutral **3** = disagree **1** = strongly disagree	**Sample professional learning assumptions**	**Notes**
	16. Educators are responsible for contributing to their own and colleagues' professional effectiveness.	
	17. Change requires learning.	
	18. Professional development balances the learning educators need to achieve individual, team, school, district, and state goals.	
	19. Effective professional learning is fundamental to student learning.	
	20. All educators have an obligation to improve their practice.	
	21. More students achieve when educators assume collective responsibility for student learning.	
	22. Successful leaders create and sustain a culture of learning.	
	23. Improving student learning and professional practice requires ongoing systemic and organizational change.	

TOOL 3.8 Back to Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definitions, and Goals Tools Chart

Purposes of professional learning

Use this tool to explore the three purposes of professional learning.

Purpose	To develop an understanding of the three distinct, yet related purposes of professional learning.
Non-purpose	To determine which purpose is most important.
Time	75 minutes
Steps	**1.** Ask participants to talk with a partner about the purposes for professional learning. Invite a few to share their ideas with the whole team. **2.** Ask participants to look at the descriptions of purposes for professional learning in Handout 3.8 and discuss which are similar and which are different. **3.** Invite participants to share their clusters. **4.** Read an except from the paper by Garet, Ludwig, Yoon et al, 2011. **5.** Ask team members to identify a personal example of each purpose. **6.** Ask members to estimate the percentage of state or district professional learning investment is allocated to each purpose. **7.** Engage the team in discussing the ideal balance among the three purposes.

TOOL 3.8, cont.

Handout 3.8: Purposes of professional learning

Read the following statements about various purposes for professional learning. Discuss how the purposes are similar and different. Categorize them and explain why they are categorized that way.	**1.** Janice Jones needs to earn credits for license renewal. **2.** The science department needs to understand the new curriculum and know how to implement it. **3.** The school faculty wants to promote broader use of critical thinking skills in all disciplines. **4.** The district has adopted a new educator evaluation system. **5.** Peter Franks is striving to become a teacher leader. **6.** The district has implemented an instructional framework. **7.** A teacher who has been on parental leave is returning to teaching and wants to brush up on reading strategies. **8.** The seventh-grade team wants to learn how to increase the rigor of student assignments to raise expectations and increase student learning. **9.** High school teachers want to promote the application of literacy skills in all disciplines to align with the Common Core standards. **10.** The goal of the school improvement plan is increasing student academic success in reading and math. The staff will learn about formative assessments to focus instruction on student learning needs.

The following excerpts are from:

Garet, M., Ludwig, M., Yoon, K., Wayne, A., Birman, B., & Milanowski, A. *Making professional development more strategic: A conceptual model for district decisionmakers.* A paper presented at the annual meeting of the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 10, 2011, New Orleans, Louisiana

"One approach a district may include in its overall strategy for PD is to focus PD activities on improving individual teacher effectiveness—a strategy sometimes called "performance management" (Odden & Kelly, 2008). This strategic approach places particular emphasis on aligning PD with the teacher evaluation and compensation system. The term *performance management* emerges from the private sector and connotes "the fact that the system not only will evaluate employees, but also use the data flowing out of the evaluation system to develop the employee's competencies, improve future performance, and promote them

TOOL 3.8, cont.

into new roles" (Odden & Kelly, 2008, p. 20). This strategic approach requires evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the performance of individual teachers, identifying PD opportunities to address weaknesses or build on strengths, and monitoring the results to determine whether expected improvements occur" (p. 16).

"A second approach a district may include in its overall strategy for PD is to focus PD activities at the school level. This strategic PD approach stresses improving each school's capacity to use data to identify areas of weakness and to build each school's capacity to provide school wide support to improve performance in identified areas. The approach requires the school to be active in the development and use of data and to be a partner with the district, working within the overall district plan for PD and improvement. The practice of improvement at the school level involves identifying the knowledge and skills needed by students and teachers, providing incentives to encourage improvement, and establishing the type and extent of materials needed to support improvement efforts (Elmore, 2002). The essential assumption underlying this strategy is that improvement operates "one school at a time." In this view, school improvement requires a coherent, school wide approach to reform, in which teachers work together to identify problems of teaching and learning, craft strategies to solve them, and monitor their success. In this strategic approach, PD is "rooted in the institutional structure of schools" (Elmore, 2002, p. 11)" (p. 20).

"A third strategy for deploying PD emphasizes the role of PD in supporting the implementation of specific curricula, instructional approaches, school reform programs, assessments, or technologies. This is also known as "improvement by design" (Rowan et al., 2009). From this perspective, the focus is on instructional or curricular materials being implemented district or school wide and on the instructional strategies underlying these materials, under the assumption that the materials will support improved student achievement. In this approach, PD is a strategy designed to facilitate high quality and consistent implementation of the adopted programs, curricula, or materials across adopting schools and teachers within the schools" (p. 24).

Discuss:

- How are these purposes different?
- What label would you give to each purpose?
- What do you estimate is the percentage of state or district professional learning investment in each area?
- What is the appropriate and/or ideal balance of investment in each area?
- How will knowing these purposes influence our work?

TOOL 3.9 Back to Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definitions, and Goals Tools Chart

Vision and mission of professional learning

Use this tool to create a vision statement for professional learning.

Purpose	To develop a vision statement for the professional learning system.
Non-purpose	To develop an operational guide.
Time	120 minutes
Materials:	Handout 3.9, tape, sticky notes, chart paper
The following steps outline the process for developing a vision and mission statement. Use Handout 3.9 to provide team members information to engage in this process.	
Steps	**1.** Share the quote. Ask members to comment on the statement. **2.** Review the definition of a vision and mission statement. **3.** Discuss how the vision statements convey aspiration and inspiration. **4.** Develop key ideas to put in a vision statement, conduct an affinity process to cluster ideas, draft a vision statement, review it, and revise it. **5.** Repeat step 4 for the mission statement. **6.** Consider the vision and mission statement together. Ask the following set of questions: • To what degree do they reflect fully our vision and mission? • What words may be confusing to others who don't understand fully what we do about professional learning? • How well do these statements convey to all stakeholders and our community our vision and mission? • What modifications do we want to make based on our discussion?

TOOL 3.9, cont.

Handout 3.9

Vision and mission

"Healthy schools and organizations hold a vision for themselves of how they wish to operate in the world. This is a vision of values and goals in action. Such a vision is informed by real-world measures of student achievement and other goal accomplishments" (Garmston & Wellman, 1999, p. 20–21).

Vision Statements

A vision statement is sometimes called a picture of the future. It is both aspirational and inspirational. It guides decision making, strategic planning, and course of action. A vision answers the questions, Who are we? Why do we do what we do? Vision statements can be very brief, just a few words, or they can be longer, a paragraph or so.

Mission statements describe the organization's purpose and its main objectives. Read Learning Forward's vision and mission statements below. Apply the definitions to each and discuss how they differ.

Learning Forward Vision: Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.

Learning Forward Mission: Learning Forward advances educator effectiveness and student results through standards-based professional learning.

Read the vision statements below. Describe how they are constructed and how they align with the definition.

Duval County Public Schools Professional Development: All Duval County Public School stakeholders share a collective responsibility to participate in continuous professional learning resulting in increased and sustained achievement for all students.

Habitat for Humanity: A world where everyone has a decent place to live.

Make-A-Wish: Our vision is that people everywhere will share the power of a wish.

San Diego Zoo: To become a world leader at connecting people to wildlife and conservation.

Smithsonian: Shaping the future by preserving our heritage, discovering new knowledge, and sharing

TOOL 3.9, cont.

our resources with the world.

Special Olympics: To transform communities by inspiring people throughout the world to open their minds, accept and include people with intellectual disabilities and thereby anyone who is perceived as different.

Mission Statements

Read the mission statements below. Discuss how they are constructed and how they convey what an organization does.

Duval County Public Schools Professional Development Mission: The Duval County Public School system is committed to investing in continuous professional learning that is standards-based, results-driven, relevant, and improves administrative leadership, teaching quality, and student achievement.

Habitat for Humanity International: Seeking to put God's love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope.

Make-A-Wish: We grant the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions to enrich the human experience with hope, strength and joy.

San Diego Zoo is a conservation, education, and recreation organization dedicated to the reproduction, protection, and exhibition of animals, plants, and their habitats.

Save the Children: To inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

Smithsonian: The increase and diffusion of knowledge.

Wounded Warrior Project: To honor and empower wounded warriors.

TOOL 3.10 Back to Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definitions, and Goals Tools Chart

Linking systems for success

Use this tool to explore how the professional learning system connects with other systems.

Purpose	To examine how the professional learning system relates to other systems within an education agency or school system.
Non-purpose	To develop a professional development plan.
Time	45 minutes
Steps	**1.** Share the sections of the workbook Rationale for Comprehensive Professional Learning System and Definition of Comprehensive Professional Learning System. **2.** Consider these questions: • What is a comprehensive professional learning system? • What is its purpose? • What does it contribute to a successful education program? • How does professional learning link to other education systems in a state or district (e.g. human resources, curriculum and instruction, data and assessment, student services, federal programs, etc.)? What does professional learning contribute to these systems and vice versa? **3.** Map the relationship among the systems. • Identify the major systems that operate within a state or district in tandem with professional learning. • List them on a chart for all to see. • Invite small groups to create a non-linguistic representation of how the systems interact. • After 15–20 minutes, post the non-linguistic representations and ask team members to take a gallery walk with a partner. Make notes on how the representations are alike and different.

TOOL 3.10, cont.

Steps (continued)	**4.** Return to the large group and discuss: • What are the themes that emerge across the representations? • How do we leverage professional learning to increase the effectiveness of other systems and vice versa? • What might be the benefits of strengthening the connections among the systems? • What might be challenges to strengthening connections among systems? • How do we formalize the connections among the systems if this is a desire? • How will these connections influence the design of our professional learning system? What do we want to be cognizant of as we move ahead?

TOOL 3.11 Back to Establishing Vision, Assumptions, Purpose, Definitions, and Goals Tools Chart

Standards for professional learning

Use this tool to reach consensus on the standards that establish the criteria for effective professional learning.

Purpose	To adopt, adapt, or create a set of standards that guide professional learning.
Non-purpose	To develop a professional learning plan.
Time	Varies from one hour to several hours depending on the level of agreement within the team.
Materials	Copies of *Standards for Professional Learning,* either electronic version or in printed form. Printed booklets are available from Learning Forward at https://store.learningforward.org/mm5/merchant.mvc?Session_ID=03de5795ff5384b0b087bbc67948ff1c&Store_Code=L4W&Screen=PROD&Product_Code=B512&. Bulk orders at a special discounted price are available by calling 800-727-7288.
Standards Background	There are several ways to address establishing standards that guide professional learning. A standard sets the mark, defines what is expected for all, and provides guidelines for ensure that every educator, not just some, has access to the highest quality professional learning. Standards also provide a basis for ongoing improvement of professional learning practices and set clear criteria for evaluation. Working in partnership with over 20 other professional associations and education organizations and agency, Learning Forward has set Standards for Professional Learning for nearly 20 years. The latest revision, published in 2011, as previous editions, reflects the most current research and evidence-based practices about professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and student achievement. For more information on how the standards were developed, please read pages 12–20 of *Standards for Professional Learning.* Pages 8–10 list the collaborators who contributed to the newly revised standards. Thirty-five states and school systems adopted or adapted the earlier version of the standards. Several have already begun to update their regulation and legislation to adopt the new standards. More are in the process of doing so.

TOOL 3.11, cont.

Establishing standards	One way to establish standards is to review the established Standards for Professional Learning and adopt them. This tool outlines three options for setting standards. The first is reviewing and adopting the established standards. The second is modifying or adapting the standards. The third is postponing a decision about the standards until Step 4 is completed. Because tremendous effort, research, and consensus work has already been invested in the Standards for Professional Learning, the first process is strongly recommended. Yet, occasionally, because of local context or language, there is a need to adapt the language. For example, in some situations a more familiar phrase to describe student success is student achievement. The standards use the phrase "results for all students" as a way to indicate the student success is academic, behavioral, emotional, and social. Some who have adopted the standards have opted to replace the term "results for all students" with different words that are more aligned with other policies. Still some education agencies or school systems continue to use the phrase professional development and have opted to replace professional learning with professional development. These variations reflect the local context and allow educators to better understand the standards. Learning Forward encourages adoption of the standards, yet recognizes that adaptations are necessary. All education agencies and school systems have permission to adopt and adapt the standards.

TOOL 3.11, cont.

Option One

Purpose	To review the standards to adopt or adapt them as the criteria for all professional learning within the education agency or school system.
Non-purpose	To determine a professional learning plan.
Time	Varies from one hour to several hours depending on the background understanding of members.
Steps	**1.** Review the standards windowpane from Step 2 of this workbook. **2.** Identify the standards with which there is a high level of agreement. **3.** Identify the standards about which team members have questions. Use the text of *Standards for Professional Learning* or the eight *JSD* magazines published between August 2011 and December 2012, each of which focuses on one standard, to answer the questions.

JSD Themes	
Date	**Standard**
August 2011	**Overview of new standards**
October 2011	**Learning designs**
February 2012	**Resources**
April 2012	**Implementation**
June 2012	**Learning communities**
August 2012	**Data**
October 2012	**Outcomes**
December 2012	**Leadership**

4. Identify the standards about which there is disagreement. Determine the reasons for the disagreement. Discuss those reasons within the team. Modify the standard to address the understanding if the change is a simple one, or invest in deeper research and reading about the standard and the research-based reason it is included as a standard. On the Learning Forward website is a list of useful resources for each standard, including a reading list, brief videos introducing each standard, and the view from practitioners about each standard.

5. Summarize the standards that set the standard for all professional learning.

TOOL 3.11, cont.

	6. Develop a recommended set of standards that guide professional learning and submit to stakeholders for review. **7.** Based on feedback, modify the recommended standards for professional learning. **8.** Submit the recommended standards that guide professional learning to the appropriate decision-making authority for approval, adoption, etc.

Option Two

For teams or team members who have a limited knowledge or who want a deep review of the standards.

Purpose	To review the standards to adopt or adapt them as the criteria for all professional learning within the education agency or school system.
Non-purpose	To determine a professional learning plan.
Time	Varies from one hour to several hours depending on the background understanding of members. This process provides more information for team members who have a more limited understanding of the standards.
Steps	**1.** Review the standards windowpane from Step 2 of this workbook. **2.** Watch the introductory video on the standards available on Learning Forward's website at www.learningforward.org/standards#.Uc7jxxaS7CE **3.** Discuss the rationale for the standards. **4.** Use *Facilitator Guide: Standards for Professional Learning* to plan a deeper learning experience on the standards, available at www.learningforward.org/docs/pdf/facilitatorguide.pdf?sfvrsn=2 Units 4–8 of the Facilitator Guide will deepen team members' understanding of the standards and their role in ensuring effective professional learning for all educators. **5.** Review the existing Standards for Professional Learning again and invite team members to indicate their level of agreement with each by creating a wall chart such as the one below to collect information. **6.** Use the information from this process as an introduction to steps 2–8 from Option One.

TOOL 3.11, cont.

Standard	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Learning communities					
Leadership					
Resources					
Data					
Learning designs					
Implementation					
Outcomes					

TOOLS 4

Design System Operations

TOOL 4.1 Back to Designing System Operations Tools Chart

The bottom line on excellence

A guide to investing in professional learning that increases educator performance and student results

By Joellen Killion and Stephanie Hirsh

What percentage of their budgets should schools and districts invest in professional learning? To answer that question, schools and districts must first know how much they are spending on professional learning and be able to connect that spending to student achievement.

While researchers identify various ways of accounting for expenditures in professional learning (Miles, Odden, Fermanich, & Archibald, 2004; Odden, Archibald, Fermanich, & Gallagher, 2002; Killeen, Monk, & Plecki, 2002), the continuing challenge is that many school systems cannot yet identify what they invest in professional learning and do not link investments in professional learning to student achievement.

Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning include the Resources standard, which focuses on the need to prioritize, monitor, and coordinate resources for educator learning. An important aspect of this need is to ensure that expenditures focus on increasing educators' performance and student results. After examining research and exploring how high-performing districts and companies invest in professional learning, Learning Forward is increasingly aware that what matters most is how funds are invested. With the current challenges to school funding, it is even more crucial that education agencies carefully examine what investments they are making.

What Districts Spend

What districts spend on professional learning varies greatly because of a lack of consensus about what constitutes investments in professional learning. Available examples and research on spending in professional learning report that districts spend between 1% and 8% of their operating budget on professional learning (Miles, Odden, Fermanich, & Archibald, 2004; Killeen, Monk, & Plecki, 2002; Barber & Mourshed, 2007: Chicago Public Education Fund, 2002). Kieran Killeen, David Monk, and Margaret Plecki (2002; Sawchuck, 2010) report that "U.S. school districts do devote approximately 3% of total general expenditures to teacher professional development, which equates to an annual sum of approximately $200 per pupil" (p. 26). … In sum, [studies of average level of spending] demonstrate that teacher professional development expenditures are likely to be well under 10% of overall education expenditures at the school district level" (p. 30).

TOOL 4.1, cont.

They add that the studies also point to intra and interdistrict variability as well as rural and urban variability in spending. Variations are due to how expenditures are defined, calculated, and reported. As noted in a study of professional development practices, what districts report spending on professional development typically accounts for less than two-thirds of actual expenditures (Killion & Colton, 2007). Accounting for investments in professional learning requires more sophisticated accounting and greater vigilance than are currently in place in many school systems.

Some analysis of investments in professional learning in countries outside the U.S. points to variations as well, although comparisons are difficult because of reporting and accounting differences. Singapore provides 100 hours of fully paid professional learning to its teachers annually. When the United Kingdom implemented national curriculum in numeracy and literacy, education policymakers recognized the importance of substantive professional learning to support implementation. Because resources were not abundant, the ministry repurposed human and financial resources to provide literacy and numeracy coaches, teacher training, and regional directors (Barber & Mourshed, 2007).

In addition to human and financial resources, top-performing countries such as Finland, South Korea, and Japan build time into daily schedules for teacher collaborative planning, professional learning, observing each others' teaching, and reflecting on their practice. Time in the schedule is a resource that supports professional learning, yet it is not often calculated as a cost factor in many U.S. or international school systems.

Top-performing businesses demonstrate the importance of increasing investments in learning and development. Because the methods for calculating investments vary between education and business, direct comparison is difficult. Spending on workforce learning is increasing rather than decreasing, as reported in ASTD's 2011 analysis of workplace learning and development (Green & McGill, 2011). Findings from this report reflect how companies value learning and development as a means to stay competitive in a challenging economic climate and to prepare employees and the company to meet the next phase of business opportunity.

In order to prioritize, coordinate, and monitor resources for professional learning, as required by the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011), those responsible and accountable for professional learning have three core tasks to accomplish. First, they must know what they invest in professional learning. Second, they must know how decisions about investments in professional learning are made. Third, they assess if their investments are producing the returns they expect in terms of results for educators and students. Each of these core tasks is complex and requires coordination of budgeting, decision making, and evaluation. For many school systems, these complex tasks are insufficiently managed or disparately managed by so many different divisions, departments, or people that looking comprehensively across multiple areas is challenging. School systems are not intentionally mismanaging resources,

TOOL 4.1, cont.

but rather doing their best to meet the multiple demands for accountability when the budgets come from many different sources.

Technology is rapidly growing as a resource schools and districts tap to support professional learning. When used wisely, technology has the potential to increase collaboration among educators, access to learning opportunities and materials, variety of learning designs, personalization, and management efficiency. Decisions to invest in technology to support professional learning require careful deliberation to ensure that the technology actively engages learners through interactive learning processes to acquire knowledge, acquire skills, refine practice, and develop dispositions.

Funding Sources

Knowing what is invested in professional learning requires understanding the multiple sources of funding for professional learning, how those funds are dispersed, how the funds are coded, and who manages the expenditures.

Resources for professional learning primarily come from four sources. These sources include federal government, state/provincial/regional government, local government, and external agencies. (See table on p. 152 for details about federal funding.) In countries other than the U.S., ministries of education establish both categorical and special funding for innovations such as the Literacy and Numeracy Initiative in United Kingdom primarily by reallocating resources from other initiatives.

States, provinces, or regions provide the second source of funding for professional learning either through per-pupil, employee, or district categorical, noncategorical, or grant funding. States also provide funding through their own discretionary funding. In the U.S., a third source of funding for professional learning is locally raised tax dollars. A fourth source of funding for professional learning comes from external agencies, including private, public, and corporate foundations as well as other nonprofits. These dollars are typically awarded to support a particular initiative and may not be available for reallocation to other priority areas.

To understand fully what schools and school systems invest in professional learning, it is crucial to know the source of funds invested in professional learning and the parameters for expending those funds.

Categorizing Expenses

Understanding what is invested in professional learning requires consensus on what constitutes an expense, consistency in coding expenditures, and sophisticated accounting systems that can aggregate and analyze expense categories across multiple income areas by program, school, or income source. Adequate accounting systems increase districts' and schools' ability to analyze, prioritize, coordinate, and monitor resources for professional learning.

TOOL 4.1, cont.

Allan Odden and his colleagues (2002) provide one example of categorizing expenditures in professional learning. While their descriptions of expenditures may not be universally applicable, improving the return on investments in professional learning requires districts and even federal, regional, or grant-making agencies to reach consensus about what constitutes an expense in professional learning and how to account for those expenses. For example, Odden et al. recommend structuring costs for professional learning into these five categories.

1. **Teacher time used for professional learning:** Includes both time within and outside the normal school day for collaborative and individual planning, days set aside for professional learning, and time outside the contract for professional learning.
2. **Training and coaching:** Includes the costs for staff for professional learning, school and district coaches, consultants, registration fees, tuition, and stipends for master teachers, team facilitators, grade or department chairs when their primary purpose is to facilitate professional learning.
3. **Administration of professional development:** Includes district or school staff responsible for supervising or administering programs for professional learning, learning management, and other support staff who manage the professional learning.
4. **Material, equipment, and facilities:** Includes equipment such as technology, maintenance, or rental of facilities used for professional learning, subscriptions, books, or other materials needed for professional learning.
5. **Travel and transportation:** Includes staff and consultant travel for professional learning both within and outside the district.

Since time is the greatest portion of investment in professional learning, understanding what time is currently available for professional learning and analyzing its use and effectiveness are first steps in increasing the effectiveness and results associated with time available. This analysis can lead to recommendations on how to leverage and improve the use of time for professional learning and common guidelines for coding time expenditures to increase comparability across districts and schools.

TOOL 4.1, cont.

Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide districts and schools in allocating and assessing resources in professional learning. For many districts and schools, these principles require a shift from how they have traditionally supported professional learning to emphasize structures and policies that lead to practices linking educator learning to student learning.

- **Build individual and collective expertise.**

  Higher-performing countries tout their commitments to prioritizing collective expertise. They are clear that equity demands educators share collective responsibility for the success of all students. This is translated in the form of higher standards for membership in the profession and accountability to peers and results for all students. Companies, too, recognize the importance of building internal expertise and collaborative environments to support collaboration among employees. A core competency of high-performing educators at the school and system levels shows a commitment to building colleagues' expertise to minimize classroom-to-classroom and school-to-school variance in instruction and learning. Placing the development of collective as well as individual expertise as a criterion for decisions about resources for professional learning will lead to broad-based improvement efforts that will cultivate ongoing improvement among teams of colleagues.

- **Advance school and system vision and goals.**

  Higher-performing school systems and countries have powerful alignment between school and system vision and goals. Resources for professional learning are allocated in a coordinated way to increase effectiveness and efficiency in attaining both a school system's and an individual school's vision and goals. District central office staff coordinates cross-school collaboration and professional learning when individuals, teams, or whole-school faculties share common needs and goals. Professional learning disconnected from school system and school goals is given secondary status and even eliminated when funding for professional learning is lean.

- **Tap expertise of internal and external experts.**

  High-performing companies and school systems rely on both internal and external experts for success. Relying too heavily on internal experts minimizes access to research or emerging ideas and competitiveness among peers. Depending too heavily on external experts alone can be costly, increases dependency, minimizes internal capacity building, and is frequently suspended when budgets decrease.

- **Reward contributions, performance, and results.**

  In many school systems, there is a practice of awarding stipends for achievements, such as National Board certification or completion of selected courses. There is considerable debate on the benefit of

TOOL 4.1, cont.

these extra payments to educators. Leveraging these expenditures to ensure they are tied to demonstration and application of new knowledge and skills and impact on classroom performance strengthens the purpose and impact of the investment.

- **Provide comprehensive professional learning.**

  A lack of comprehensive professional learning is the norm in too many school systems. Resorting to introductory or awareness-building sessions in lieu of comprehensive support for learning, implementation, and refinement of new practices diminishes the impact of professional learning. Rather than continuing to address multiple priorities, districts that focus on those priorities closest to student learning and prioritize implementation support maximize resources. Districts would benefit from identifying which awareness-level professional learning efforts are nonessential and can be eliminated, and redesign those that are essential for maximum impact.

- **Invest in teachers, support staff, and administrators.**

  Research has shown that school leadership is second only to classroom teaching in ensuring student achievement. Within port instructional improvement. Yet few districts develop and implement comprehensive professional learning for principals and other key district staff members. A well-prepared and supported principal is one more important resource for professional learning. In addition, districts and schools must ensure that all support staff meet performance expectations and provide top-level service to students, their families, educators, and community members.

- **Support both collaborative and formal learning.**

  In many school systems, what is considered professional learning is only formal or more traditional forms such as training courses, workshops, or conferences, often described as adult pullout programs. Many district and school leaders pay less attention to collaborative learning as formal learning. In studies of workplace learning and of professional learning in high-performing countries, more learning occurs through collaboration with colleagues, just-in-time learning, or modeling in practice. While it is often difficult to quantify less formal learning, it is as important and constitutes a large portion of a school's or district's professional learning program. Collaborative learning occurs during peer observation, instructional rounds, collaborative planning, lesson or book studies, or problem-solving sessions, among other forms. Both formal and collaborative professional learning are necessary to achieve school and district goals for increasing educator effectiveness and student achievement.

- **Differentiate support for educators at various career and performance stages.**

  Professional learning frequently follows the one-size-fits-all formula. Yet over the years as the work of educators became increasingly more sophisticated, this approach to professional learning is no longer viable. Providing different options for achieving professional learning outcomes can accomplish two ends. It meets the needs of participants and reduces the overall cost. For example, if teachers can

TOOL 4.1, cont.

demonstrate mastery of differentiated instruction, why are they required to participate in training on differentiation? Perhaps they provide demonstration classrooms or support to peers as a way of extending their own learning and that of their peers.

There are multiple ways to differentiate learning for educators to align with their career stages, career goals, and performance level, yet many school systems are not providing this level of differentiation as a core part of their comprehensive program for professional learning.

- **Allocate resources to schools and departments based on a weighted formula.**

  School systems typically allocate professional learning funding to central office departments and schools. In many districts, formulas are used to allocate funding rather than need. While a simple formula such as a per-pupil allocation for professional learning may be easy, it is not always equitable if student learning needs differ among schools or because of district program goals. Weighted formulas allocate funds for professional learning to identified need areas such as poverty, English language learners, underperforming students, novice staff or those needing improvement, percentage of special needs students, etc.

- **Expend resources on authentic professional learning.**

  Authentic professional learning is frequently confused with informational meetings, gatherings of specific groups, or routine tasks. For example, the back-to-school convocations and celebratory events are not legitimate expenditures for professional learning. Meetings to update, share, or review procedures, policies, or regulations are not professional learning; rather, they are information sharing frequently required by state or district regulations. Districts might look for alternative ways to conduct information sharing, such as through video streaming or web conferences and pay for celebrations from more appropriate budgets. This will allow districts to reallocate resources toward authentic professional learning focused on substantive improvement of educator performance and student results.

- **Align professional learning to individual, team, school, and system improvement goals.**

  Districts that provide resources to support individual professional learning plans with goals disconnected from school and district goals waste resources. Establishing parameters for individual, team, and school professional learning plans that use the district and school vision and goals as the focus accelerates achievement of the vision and goals. Through careful alignment, individuals, teams, and schools can streamline resources and efforts to achieve a small number of high-priority goals rather than diffusing resources and effort across numerous individual goals.

TOOL 4.1, cont.

- **Employ technology to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and results.**

  Technology solutions for professional learning have emerged rapidly in the last two decades. Early solutions increased the efficiency of knowledge acquisition primarily through passive learning processes. Emerging solutions have the potential to reach well beyond efficiency to increase effectiveness and results as well. To achieve these ends, technology solutions must create dynamic, personalized, and collaborative learning experiences that address needs identified from analyzing student and educator data.

- **Build schedules to include time for ongoing collaborative learning.**

  Time is one of the most significant resources available for professional learning. How time is scheduled reflects a school system's or school's beliefs about professional learning. For example, a few occasional days for professional learning scattered throughout a school year sends a message that professional learning is an occasional rather than ongoing part of an educator's work. Creating a schedule that incorporates district, schoolwide, team, and individual time must begin with establishing parameters and agreements about professional learning. For example, not every school or even every teacher needs to have the same schedule. Novice teachers might have a slightly shorter workday to provide flexibility for more professional learning. Teams of teachers working with students might meet several times per week or weekly based on the learning needs of students, the curriculum, their instructional sophistication, and student results. Building schedules with time for collaboration as an essential rather than add-on condition leads to better results. Time for professional learning does not mean that students are away from school. New and even more effective forms of professional learning, such as coaching and collaboration, can occur while students are learning alongside educators. Altering the structure of the school day, adding time to the school day, using extended learning, scheduling elective classes, differentiating class size, and partnering with community resources open more possibilities to including frequent, ongoing time for professional learning within the school day without diminishing student learning time.

Link Investments to Learning

Accountability for investments in professional learning requires clear accounting, ongoing analysis of data on investments in, quality of, and results from professional learning, and strategic, continuous improvement effort. In the field of professional learning we lack two essential factors to improving accountability for investments in professional learning: consensus on what constitutes an expense and on what level of investment is needed to produce a return. Taking small steps within school systems to determine current investments for adequacy, analyze those investments for returns, and improve accounting systems so that they provide accuracy and cross-funding stream analysis will improve both the effectiveness and results of

TOOL 4.1, cont.

professional learning. District efforts to link learning management systems to educator and student data and investing in rigorous evaluation of initiatives with significant amounts of professional learning are beginning to change how districts think about the role of professional learning in improvement efforts. Without commitment to improve data available about professional learning investments, it will continue to be difficult to answer questions about how much is invested in professional learning and determine whether it is enough to improve student and educator performance.

Using the accounting system recommended by Odden et al. (2002) and the planning resource, "Analyze and plan professional learning investments" (download link here), districts will be better able to connect their investments in professional learning to results for students. Ultimately, as Sawchuk concludes, "The bottom line is that truly focusing professional development requires administrators to figure out where their dollars are spent, whether those patterns align to strategic goals for teacher improvement, and, if not, institute changes to the spending" (2010, p. 16).

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Federal Sources of Funding for Professional Learning

Many federal agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Education, National Science Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, offer grant funding to improve educator effectiveness. Included here are several details about federal funding.

— M. René Islas, Director, Center for Results

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TOOL 4.1, cont.

The U.S. Department of Education offers more than 40 multimillion-dollar formula and discretionary grant programs that fund professional learning for Pre-K–12 educators.	**The two largest federal programs that provide consistent formula funding for states, districts, and schools for professional learning are:** **Title I, Part A — Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, and** **Title II, Part A — Improving Teacher Quality State Grants.**	**The U.S. Department of Education commissions an annual study of how grantees use Title II, Part A funds to improve teacher and leader effectiveness. The 2010–11 study finds:**
• Formula grants go to grantees on the basis of a predetermined formula. State educational agencies usually receive these funds and in turn subgrant them to local educational agencies and schools. These often considered state-administered programs, though the funding is federal. • Discretionary grants are awarded on a competitive basis.	• **Title I, Part A** has provided nearly $14.5 billion per year since 2009 to state and local educational agencies for various activities. Title I, Part A schoolwide and targeted assistance programs stipulate that districts and schools receiving these funds "devote sufficient resources" for professional development. The program also requires that schools that fail to meet adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years must reserve at least 10% of Title I, Part A funds for professional development (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Communications and Outreach, 2011). • **Title II, Part A** is the most direct source of federal funding for professional development. The program has provided states, districts, and schools $20 billion since 2005 for activities that improve educator quality. The average individual Title II, Part A grant award for 2011 was $42 million, with some grantees receiving up to $268 million.	• 97% of school districts received Title II, Part A funding in 2010–11, with the highest-poverty and largest districts receiving the majority of the funds. • There are more than 10 allowable uses of Title II, Part A funds but professional development and class-size reduction are the two most common uses of the funds. • 66% of districts use the funds for professional development with 9% of all districts spending all of their funds for teacher professional development (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

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TOOL 4.2 Back to Designing System Operations Tools Chart

Guide to designing the 22 components of a professional learning system

The list below identifies the topics to consider and decisions to be made in Step Four. Each is accompanied by essential questions to guide the task force's work. Answering the essential questions will help task force members make the critical operational decisions related to designing a comprehensive professional learning system. It is possible that the task force may opt to eliminate some components of the comprehensive professional learning system; however the more complete the system, the more it will support effective professional learning for educator effectiveness and student success.

Component	Explanation	Essential questions	Completed
1. Vision, mission, and beliefs for professional learning	Describes the vision, mission, and beliefs for effective professional learning and its relationship to educator effectiveness and student achievement.	• What are our shared fundamental beliefs, assumptions, or principles about our professional learning system that will guide decisions we make? • What is the purpose or function of professional learning? • How do we describe what our ideal for professional learning is—the kind of professional learning that deeply and intellectually stimulates and challenges educators to grow and learn so that their students grow and learn? • How do we use our description to help all stakeholders know why it is so vital to student and educator success?	
2. Definition of professional learning	Defines professional learning and positions it as a comprehensive system of improvement, occurring continuously, and engaging educators in collaborative learning primarily at their worksite with additional opportunities outside their worksite.	• What is our definition of professional learning? • How do we use the definition to help others understand what professional learning is so they can advocate for it and hold themselves and others accountable for it?	

TOOL 4.2, cont.

Component	Explanation	Essential questions	Completed
3. Standards for Professional Learning	Delineates research-based standards for professional learning that are used to monitor and measure effectiveness, efficiency, and equity in the professional learning system.	• What are the research-based criteria that all professional learning must meet to ensure high-quality learning experiences for educators? • How do we assist those with responsibilities for effective professional learning to know about and act on these attributes? • How do we use the standards to improve the quality of professional learning?	
4. Purposes for professional learning	Specifies three distinct purposes for professional learning including individual growth and development, team and school improvement, and program implementation, all linked to increasing student achievement.	• How do we manage multiple purposes for professional learning to ensure that we can meet individual, team and school, and program or initiative goals? • What do we consider to be an appropriate balance among the three purposes? • How do we monitor professional learning to ensure that we are meeting purposes appropriately?	
5. Governance for professional learning	Delineates lines of authority for professional learning and defines processes for decision making.	• Who holds primary authority for professional learning? • How does authority for professional learning vary at the individual, team, school, district, and state level? • How do those responsible for professional learning actively engage learners so that their needs, preferences, contexts, and goals are fully considered in all decisions related to professional learning? • What policies hold leaders accountable for meeting the professional learning needs of all members of the education workforce? • How are conflicts or disputes regarding professional learning addressed? How frequently are policies and governance agreements reviewed and revised? • What are the elements of the process for review and revision?	

TOOL 4.2, cont.

Component	Explanation	Essential questions	Completed
6. Roles and responsibilities for professional learning	Delineates the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and other contributors to effective professional learning	• Who shares responsibility for professional learning? • How are those responsibilities monitored and supported? • How are the essential knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions to effectively carry out the responsibilities developed and supported? • How do the roles and responsibilities vary at the individual, team, school, school district, and state levels? • Who monitors and supports those with a role in professional learning?	
7. Requirement for professional learning	Requirement for professional learning	• What professional learning are members of the education workforce required to complete, e.g. for various role- or job-specific responsibilities, career advancement, licensure, new initiative implementation, etc.? • How are decisions regarding requirements for professional learning made? • To what degree are educators responsible for the required professional learning engaged in decisions about required learning?	
8. Alignment with other systems	Links professional learning with educator (both teacher and administrator) effectiveness or evaluation systems, major reform initiatives, and other learning-focused and operational systems	• How does professional learning support other core systems within the agency or district such as human capital, curriculum and instruction, assessment and data, licensing/certification, mentoring and induction, etc.? • How do other core systems support the professional learning system?	

TOOL 4.2, cont.

Component	Explanation	Essential questions	Completed
9. Data-informed professional learning	Uses student, educator, and system data to inform decisions about needs, content, designs, and effects.	• What data inform decisions about professional learning? • How well do data represent all educators, students, and systems accurately and fully? • How are data used in professional learning decisions? • To what degree are those responsible for professional learning engaging all stakeholders as appropriate in using data to make individual, team, school, district, and state decisions related to professional learning?	
10. Leadership for professional learning	Requires leaders and facilitators of professional to be well prepared for their leadership roles.	• How well do teacher leaders and administrators understand their roles and responsibilities related to professional learning? • What professional learning is provided to prepare and support them in carrying out their responsibilities? • To what degree are leaders held accountable for effective, efficient, and equitable professional learning for all educators?	
11. Plans for professional learning	Requires individual, team, school, district, and state professional learning plans that align with individual, team, school, system, and state improvement goals, components of the plans, and process for developing and approving plans.	• Who has responsibility for developing and implementing plans for individual, team, school, district, and state professional learning? • What are the essential requirements for professional learning plans? • Who reviews and monitors professional learning plans and their implementation? • How often are professional learning plans developed and reviewed?	
12. Licensure/ Certification	Specifies the role of professional learning for initial, additional, and advanced licenses or certificates that prepare educators for their new roles and develops the disposition of continuous learning and development.	• What role does professional learning play in licensure and relicensure? • What parameters or expectations are there for professional learning required for relicensure? • How does professional learning for relicensure advance the high-priority goals or initiatives of the state or district?	

TOOL 4.2, cont.

Component	Explanation	Essential questions	Completed
13. Dedicated time for professional learning	Allocates time for professional learning within the workday several times per week and sets aside additional days, approximately 10, per school year, for learning associated with school, system, and state improvement goals.	• How much time is available for professional learning within the regular workday and year? • How is the available time used to advance the high-priority goals or initiatives of the state or district? • Who has authority and responsibility for determining how the available time is used? • To what degree are educators who are implementing professional learning engaged in decisions related to the amount of and use of time? • To what degree is the available time commensurate with the expectations for professional growth and student learning? • What accountability requirements exist for monitoring the effective use of time for professional learning?	
14. Dedicated funding for professional learning	Requires set aside and/or adequate funding to ensure application of learning to achieve full implementation.	• How much funding is available for professional learning? • How is the available funding used to advance the high-priority goals or initiatives of the state or district? • Who has authority and responsibility for determining how funding is used? • To what degree are educators who are implementing professional learning engaged in decisions related to the amount of and use of funding? • To what degree is the available funding commensurate with the expectations for professional growth and student learning? • What accountability requirements exist for monitoring the effective use of funding for professional learning?	

TOOL 4.2, cont.

Component	Explanation	Essential questions	Completed
15. Other resources	Requires other resources such as staff, technology, and materials to increase access to, efficiency of, and effectiveness of professional learning.	• What other resources support professional learning, e.g. personnel, technology, materials, space, etc.? • Who determines what resources are available and how these resources are used? • What accountability requirements exist for monitoring the effective use of other resources for professional learning?	
16. Flexible designs	Supports flexible designs for professional learning to differentiate learning for experience, background, learning preference, and other factors that influence learning.	• How are learning designs for professional learning determined? • Who is involved in decisions related to learning designs? • How well do learning designs align with the intended outcomes and match the expected change in practices? • How thoroughly are factors that influence learning such as individual learner needs, learning preferences, background, previous experience and knowledge, time for learning, outcomes, etc. considered in making decisions about learning designs? • To what degree do learning designs employ technology to advance and support individual, team, schoolwide, districtwide, and statewide learning? • How well do learning designs use technology to increase personalization of, access to, effectiveness or, and efficiency of professional learning?	
17. Job-embedded collaboration	Promotes job-embedded collaboration among peers within professional learning and during application and refinement of practice.	• To what degree does professional learning engage peers in collaborative learning as a routine part of their work responsibilities? • How are collaborative learning teams supported in their efforts to strengthen educator performance and student learning?	

TOOL 4.2, cont.

Component	Explanation	Essential questions	Completed
18. Mentoring and induction	Provides multi-year mentoring with induction to support novice educators, those assuming new positions, or those with new certifications or licenses transition to their new work responsibilities, receive personalized support for success and acculturation, and solidifies the disposition of continuous improvement.	• How is professional learning embedded into the comprehensive induction system? • How do mentors leverage their support of educators as a form of personalized professional learning for themselves and those whom they support? • What requirements or expectations are in place for mentors and novice educators to engage in professional learning? • How are dispositions about continuous improvement and professional responsibility cultivated through induction and mentoring? • To what degree are induction and mentoring requirements aligned with high-priority goals and initiatives within the district or state?	
19.Incentives and recognition for professional learning	Uses application and impact of professional learning as criteria for incentives or recognition for professional learning.	• What value is placed on improving professional practice? How is that value conveyed to educators? • What incentives exist for professional learning? • To what degree are changes in educator practice and increased student success used as criteria for recognition or incentive for professional learning?	
20. Evaluation of professional learning	Requires formative and summative evaluation of the equity, effectiveness, and efficiency of professional learning for both accountability and improvement.	• Who is responsible for routine formative assessment and summative evaluation of professional learning? • What are the requirements for the evaluation of professional learning? • What measures are used to evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of professional learning? • How are evaluation findings used to improve professional learning? • How often is professional learning evaluated? • How and to whom are evaluation results reported?	

TOOL 4.2, cont.

Component	Explanation	Essential questions	Completed
21. Third-party providers	Establishes criteria for engaging third-party partners in the professional learning system to maintain effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and alignment with specified outcomes.	• Who is considered a third-party provider? • To what degree are third-party providers responsible for adhering to the same regulations, responsibilities, or expectations that districts are required to meet? • What rules, responsibilities, expectations, or restrictions govern third-party providers? • How are third-party providers regulated, coordinated, and evaluated? • What are the responsibilities of education agencies that contract with third-party providers?	
22. Learning management system	Uses a technology solution that links with educator and student databases to manage and increase access to professional learning.	• What software system manages and increases access to professional learning for educators? • To what degree does the system facilitate registration and recordkeeping, manage documents or artifacts, provide access to a wide variety of learning opportunities, allow access to necessary data, and support ongoing monitoring, assessments and evaluation of professional learning? • To what degree does the system interact with educator and student data systems?	

TOOL 4.3 Back to Designing System Operations Tools Chart

Systems design recommendations summary table

Component	Recommendation
Vision, mission, and beliefs for professional learning	
Definition of professional learning	
Standards for Professional Learning	
Purposes for professional learning	
Governance for professional learning	
Roles and responsibilities for professional learning	
Requirement for professional learning	
Alignment with other systems	
Data-informed professional learning	
Leadership for professional learning	
Plans for professional learning	
Licensure/ Certification	
Dedicated time for professional learning	
Dedicated funding for professional learning	
Other resources	
Flexible designs	
Job-embedded collaboration	
Mentoring and induction	
Incentives and recognition for professional learning	
Evaluation of professional learning	
Third-party providers	
Learning management system	

TOOL 4.4 Back to Designing System Operations Tools Chart

Example invitation to gather feedback on work group recommendations

Feedback on Draft Recommendations for Kentucky's Comprehensive Professional Learning System

Background

The <**Name of State**> Department of Education submitted a proposal to serve as the national demonstration state for Learning Forward's Transforming Professional Learning to Prepare College- and Career-Ready Students: Implementing the Common Core. As a part of its role, <**Name of State**> agreed to review and propose revision in both its professional learning policy and practices. The attached document is the draft recommendations emanating from the work of the Professional Learning Task Force and Teacher Advisory Council. The Task Force used current research in professional learning, a state policy audit conducted for Learning Forward by Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education led by Linda Darling-Hammond, study of current policies and practices in other states, and input from members of the Task Force members, six Critical Friend State representatives, and a cadre of facilitators who serve the Task Force and bring both state- and national-level experience in professional learning.

More information about the initiative is available at <**add web link**>.

Members of the Professional Learning Task Force may be viewed at <**add web link**>

Review

Members of the Professional Learning Task Force and Teacher Advisory Council are seeking feedback on the recommendations included in this document prior to the October 24 meeting of the Professional Learning Task Force and Teacher Advisory Council or to bring feedback to the meeting to inform the respective work group's final revision of the recommendations.

Feedback may be submitted to <**directions**> by October 19.

TOOL 4.4, cont.

Talking Points

In collecting feedback on the proposed recommendations, Professional Learning Task Force and Teacher Advisory Council members will find the following points helpful.

- Policy and not operation document—this document is intended to identify policy and guidance revisions and is not intended to identify all the operational guidelines for each of the recommendations. Development of the operational guidelines will follow and will include representation from stakeholder within the state. It is understandable that many people will have questions about how the proposed policy and guidance recommendation will be put into practice. Input from reviewers will help provide direction for the operational guidelines and are welcome, however the more important work at hand is collecting information about the draft policies and guidance recommendations. This document does not constitute the completion of the overall initiative of which it is a part.
- The charge to the Professional Learning Task Force is below for review. To develop a coherent and comprehensive professional learning system for full and effective implementation of KCAS, new assessments, and future initiatives
- The Professional Learning Task Force is an advisory group to the State Core Team that determines any next actions related to the recommendations of the PL Task Force. The State Core Team is convened under the auspices of the <**Name of State**> and the supervision of Associate Commissioner Felicia Cumings-Smith.
- Input from review process will be used to inform revisions to the recommendations at the Task Force's October 24 meeting.
- The Professional Learning Task Force and Teacher Advisory Council acknowledge that professional learning is a part of an overall state plan to prepare all students for college and careers. It cannot stand alone and must be aligned with other state initiatives such as teacher and principal effectiveness systems, student assessment, data, curriculum, etc., to create a web of fully integrated, coherent support systems for student success.
- Survey link and purpose if they wish to distribute it is available at <**add link to open survey**>. All surveys must be completed by October 19.

TOOL 4.5 Back to Designing System Operations Tools Chart

Template for submitting recommendations to decision makers

Use this template for summarizing the proposed recommended components of the comprehensive professional learning system to decision makers.

Purpose	To develop the final recommendations document to submit to designated decision makers.
Non-purpose	To consider the recommendations as the final decision.
Time	90 minutes
Materials	Final recommendations
Template	The final recommendations, prior to submission to the decision makers, are compiled into a document that describes all components of the comprehensive professional learning system. Because this document is likely to be lengthy and rich with detail, it is helpful to summarize the specific recommendations in a table. The template below presents the recommendations in a table form for quick review by decision makers. A completed summary table similar to this might be submitted with the final recommendations document so that the various recommendations can be considered as parts of the whole education system and as the comprehensive professional learning system.

TOOL 4.5, cont.

Component area	Brief synopsis of recommendations (s)	Supporting rationale/ research	Requires policy revision (statute, regulation, contract language, guidance, procedures, etc.)	Implications (resources, impact on other policy areas, practices, etc.)	Recommended priority (3=high; 2=moderate; 1=low)	Responsible person, department, unit, etc.

Revise or Develop Policies

TOOL 5.1 Back to Revising or Developing Policies Tools Chart

Policy attributes rubric

The following rubric supports the rating of current policies according to key policy attributes.

Policy Attributes	4	3	2	1
Stability The extent to which the policy has been in place a long time	This policy has been in place for five or more years with stable leadership (state chief, elected officials, superintendents, principals, teacher leaders, etc.) with consistent support for implementation.	This policy has been in place for five or more years; however, leadership (state chief, elected officials, superintendents, principals, teacher leaders, etc.) is changing resulting in uneven support for implementation.	This policy has been in place two-four years and leadership is new since the policy was introduced resulting in less emphasis on implementation of the policy.	This policy is less than a year old.
Consistency The extent to which the policy is coherent with other policies and sends a common message to implementers	This policy aligns with other related policies and reinforces and supports other policies to create a coherent, comprehensive education system.	This policy aligns with other related policies.	Aspects of this policy align with other related policies.	This policy is inconsistent with one or more other policies.

TOOL 5.1, cont.

Policy Attributes	4	3	2	1
Specificity The degree to which policy is clear and promotes common understanding of the policy's intent	This policy provides or is accompanied by clear, detailed guidance or specific criteria for guidance about expected practices required for full implementation.	This policy requires that each individual district or school develop guidance for implementation without explicit criteria for full implementation.	This policy requires guidance for implementation; however, one does not yet exist.	This policy provides no or unclear guidance about expected practices associated with full implementation.
Authority The extent to which the policy is accepted by and persuasive to those who are required to implement it	This policy is supported by diverse stakeholder groups including influential institutions, organizations, and individuals and is evident in professional practice and norms.	This policy is supported by influential institutions, organizations, and individuals and is evident in professional practice and norms.	This policy is supported by influential institutions, organizations, or individuals.	This policy lacks diverse stakeholder backing and support.
Power The extent to the policy includes sanctions, consequences, and/or rewards	This policy includes consequences and rewards for compliance, implementation, and accountability.	This policy has increasingly more serious consequences over time for non-compliance.	This policy has consequences for non-compliance.	This policy has neither consequences nor rewards for compliance, implementation, and accountability.

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TOOL 5.2 Back to Revising or Developing Policies Tools Chart

Components analysis tool

Use the template below to assess policies for the inclusion of the policy areas. Use the data collected in the Discover Phase to complete this analysis. If desired, copy the list of discovered policies into this table. Using both considered judgment and evidence, estimate how the policy meets each of the policy attributes. Not all policies will likely meet all attributes at the same level, so be thoughtful about differentiating among them. The rubric for policy attributes will be useful in your analysis. The purpose of this analysis is less about getting the "right" score, and more about understanding how the policies influence practice, effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and results of professional learning.

Policy Areas	**Policy (Yes/No)** (type/where)	**Stability**	**Consistency**	**Specificity**	**Authority**	**Power**	**Evidence** What evidence supports the ratings?	**Impact** What are typical effects for educators and students that result from this policy?	
		4 = high; 1 = low						**Educators**	**Students**
1. Vision, mission, and beliefs for professional learning: Describes the vision, mission, and beliefs for effective professional learning and its relationship to educator effectiveness and student achievement.									
2. Definition of professional learning: Defines professional learning. Positions it as a comprehensive system of improvement occurring continuously, and engaging educators in collaborative learning primarily at their worksites with additional opportunities outside their worksites.									
3. Standards for professional learning: Delineates research-based standards for professional learning that are used to monitor and measure effectiveness, efficiency, and equity in the professional learning system.									

TOOL 5.2, cont.

Policy Areas	**Policy (Yes/No)** (type/where)	**Stability**	**Consistency**	**Specificity**	**Authority**	**Power**	**Evidence** What evidence supports the ratings?	**Impact** What are typical effects for educators and students that result from this policy?	
		4 = high; 1 = low						**Educators**	**Students**
4. Purposes for professional learning: Specifies three distinct purposes for professional learning: (a) individual growth and development, (b) team and school improvement, and (c) program implementation, all linked to increasing student achievement.									
5. Governance for professional learning: Delineates lines of authority for professional learning and defines processes for decision making.									
6. Roles and responsibilities for professional learning: Delineates roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and other contributors to effective professional learning.									
7. Requirement for professional learning: Delineates expectations and/or requirements for professional learning.									
8. Alignment with other systems: Links professional learning with educator (i.e. teacher and administrator) effectiveness or evaluation systems, major reform initiatives, and other learning-focused and operational systems.									
9. Data-informed professional learning: Uses student, educator, and system data to inform decisions about needs, content, designs, and effects.									

TOOL 5.2, cont.

Policy Areas	**Policy (Yes/No)** (type/where)	**Stability**	**Consistency**	**Specificity**	**Authority**	**Power**	**Evidence** What evidence supports the ratings?	**Impact** What are typical effects for educators and students that result from this policy?	
		4 = high; 1 = low						**Educators**	**Students**
10. Leadership for professional learning: Requires leaders and facilitators of professional learning to be well prepared for their leadership roles.									
11. Plans for professional learning: Requires individual, team, school, district, and state professional learning plans that align with individual, team, school, system, and state improvement goals, components of the plans, and process for developing and approving plans.									
12. Licensure/Certification: Specifies the role of professional learning for initial, additional, and advanced licenses or certificates that prepare educators for new roles. Also develops the disposition of continuous learning and development.									
13. Dedicated time for professional learning: Allocates time for professional learning within the workday several times per week and sets aside additional days, approximately 10 per school year, for learning associated with school, system, and state improvement goals.									
14. Dedicated funding for professional learning: Requires set-aside and/or adequate funding to ensure application of learning to achieve full implementation.									

TOOL 5.2, cont.

Policy Areas	Policy (Yes/No) (type/where)	Stability	Consistency	Specificity	Authority	Power	Evidence What evidence supports the ratings?	Impact What are typical effects for educators and students that result from this policy?	
		4 = high; 1 = low						Educators	Students
15. Other resources: Requires other resources such as staff, technology, and materials to increase access to, efficiency of, and effectiveness of professional learning.									
16. Flexible designs: Supports flexible designs for professional learning in order to differentiate learning for experience, background, learning preference, and other factors that influence learning.									
17. Job-embedded collaboration: Promotes job-embedded collaboration among peers within professional learning and during application and refinement of practice.									
18. Mentoring and induction: Provides multi-year mentoring with induction to support novice educators, those assuming new positions, or those with new certifications or licenses as they transition to new work responsibilities. Provides personalized support for success and acculturation, and solidifies the disposition of continuous improvement.									
19. Incentives and recognition for professional learning: Uses application and impact of professional learning as criteria for incentives or recognition for professional learning.									

TOOL 5.2, cont.

Policy Areas	**Policy (Yes/No)** (type/where)	**Stability**	**Consistency**	**Specificity**	**Authority**	**Power**	**Evidence** What evidence supports the ratings?	**Impact** What are typical effects for educators and students that result from this policy?	
		4 = high; 1 = low						**Educators**	**Students**
20. Evaluation of professional learning: Requires formative and summative evaluation of the equity, effectiveness, and efficiency of professional learning for both accountability and improvement.									
21. Third-party providers: Establishes criteria for engaging third-party partners in the professional learning system to maintain effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and alignment with specified outcomes.									
22. Learning management system: Uses a technology solution that links with educator and student databases to manage and increase access to professional learning.									
Additional Policy Area									
Additional Policy Area									
Additional Policy Area									

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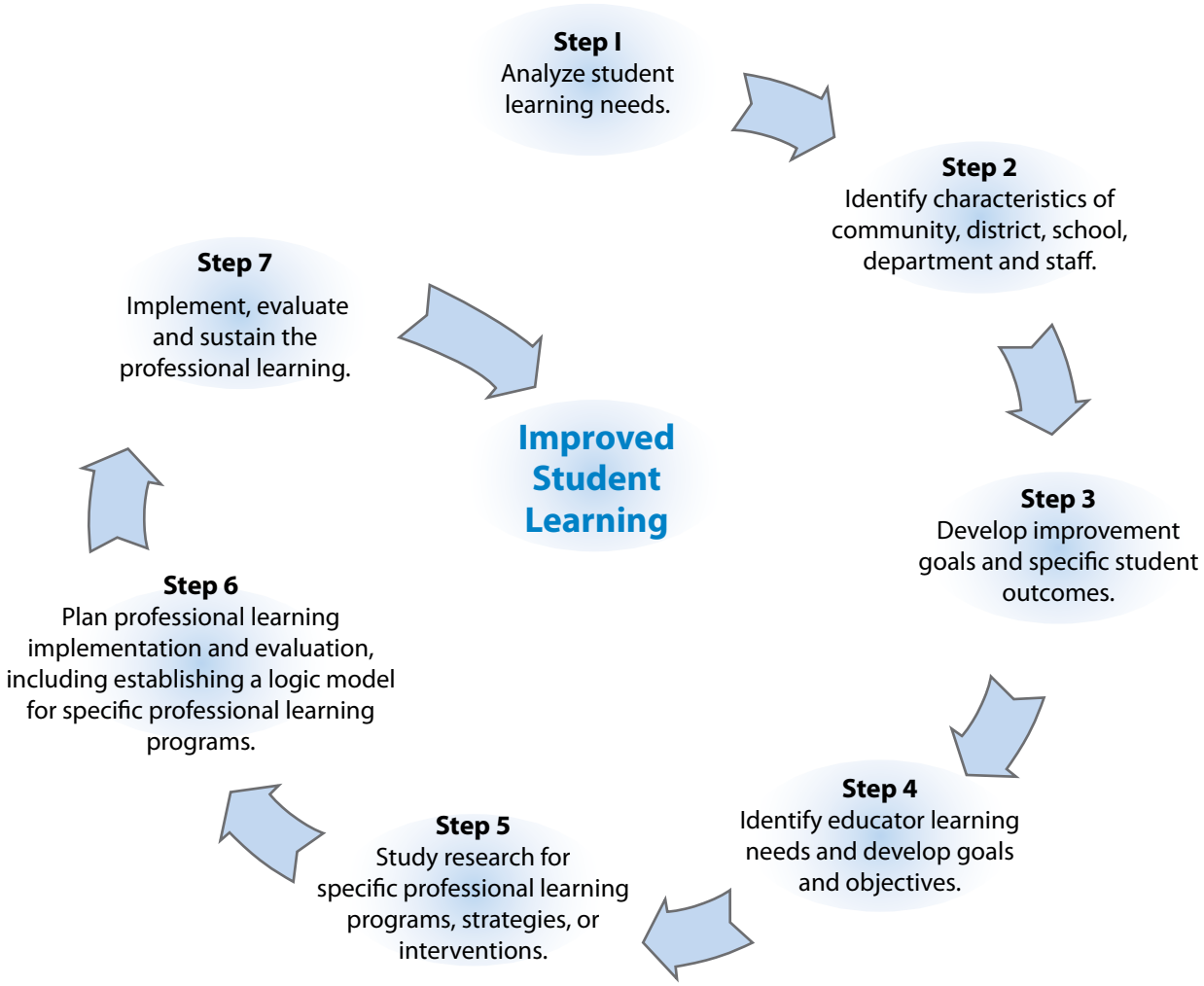
Plan Short- and Long-term Professional Learning

TOOL 6.1 Back to Planning Short- and Long-term Professional Learning Tools Chart

Backmapping model



Provide Professional Learning for Full Implementation

TOOL 7.1 Back to Providing Professional Learning for Full Implementation Tools Chart

Communications review

Use this tool to review communication about the comprehensive professional learning system.

Purpose	Conduct a periodic review of communications about the comprehensive professional learning system.
Non-purpose	Identify strategies to address communication challenges.
Time	45 minutes, on a regular schedule, e.g. annually.
Gather a group of representatives with various levels of responsibility for the comprehensive professional learning system to consider the questions below. The discussion will identify successes and challenges. Summarize information from this discussion and submit it for consideration to the individual or team responsible for the communication that supports the comprehensive professional learning system.	
Questions to consider about communication related to the comprehensive professional learning system:	• How are we communicating to all stakeholders about the various components of the comprehensive professional learning system? • What resources are readily available for stakeholders to access to answer the questions they have? • Who is the primary person or what department or office handles inquiries about the professional learning system? • Looking across the multiple departments or offices that contribute to or support the professional learning system, who are the lead staff in each responsible for professional learning system and do they have a deep understanding of the comprehensive professional learning system and their roles and responsibilities related to it? • How are the lead staff members responsible for the comprehensive professional learning system kept informed and up-to-date? • What happens when staff with any level of responsibility for communicating about the comprehensive professional learning system change? • Who handles challenges, issues, or problems that arise with the comprehensive system?

TOOL 7.1, cont.

Questions to consider about communication related to the comprehensive professional learning system (continued):	• What communications are planned to share the comprehensive professional learning system with key audiences? • How do we know that the planned communications are sufficient, clear, and focused on what each audience both needs and wants to know about the comprehensive professional learning system?
Actions to take for improving comprehensive professional learning system:	• Identify needed improvements in the communications related to the comprehensive professional learning system. • Plan and carry out needed improvements. • Assess the impact of improvements.

TOOL 7.2 Back to Providing Professional Learning for Full Implementation Tools Chart

Technology support for comprehensive professional learning system

Use this tool to review the technology that supports the comprehensive professional learning system.

Purpose	Conduct a periodic review of the technology that supports the comprehensive professional learning system.
Non-purpose	Identify strategies to address technology challenges.
Time	45 minutes, on a regular schedule, e.g. annually.
Gather a group of representatives with various levels of responsibility for the comprehensive professional learning system to consider the questions below. The discussion will identify successes and challenges. Summarize information from this discussion and submit it for consideration to the individual or team responsible for the technology that supports the comprehensive professional learning system.	
Questions to consider about technology related to the comprehensive professional learning system:	• What parts of the system are working better than anticipated? What contributes to that? • What parts of the system are working as anticipated? What contributes to that? • What parts of the system are not working as anticipated? • What are the specific challenges we are facing? • How prevalent are those challenges? • What might be contributing to these challenges? • How significant are these challenges in terms of the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the technology that supports the comprehensive professional learning system? • What is needed to address these challenges so that they do not occur? • Given the list of challenges we have identified, what is the recommended priority for addressing them? What resources are needed to make the changes? • What do we recommend as a workaround if the resources are not currently available? • What else do we need to consider before we take action?
Actions to take for improving comprehensive professional learning system:	• Identify needed improvements in the technology that supports the comprehensive professional learning system. • Plan and carry out needed improvements. • Assess the impact of improvements.

TOOL 7.3 Back to Providing Professional Learning for Full Implementation Tools Chart

Leadership for comprehensive professional learning system

Use this tool to review leadership responsibilities for the comprehensive professional learning system.

Purpose	Conduct a periodic review of leadership responsibilities for the comprehensive professional learning system.
Non-purpose	Identify strategies to address operational challenges.
Time	45 minutes, on a regular schedule, e.g. annually.
Gather a group of representatives with various levels of responsibility for the comprehensive professional learning system to consider the questions below. The discussion will identify successes and challenges. Summarize information from this discussion and submit it for consideration to the individual or team responsible for the leadership that supports the comprehensive professional learning system.	

Gather the leadership team responsible for the comprehensive professional learning system at least twice a year to discuss the questions at right:	• What aspects of the comprehensive professional learning systems are working as planned? What evidence supports this?
	• How are we celebrating these successes?
	• What challenges are we facing? What evidence do we have about these challenges?
	• What might be contributing to these challenges?
	  • Capacity of staff who support the staff and those who use the system
	  • Resources assigned to the system
	  • Efficient, effective, and equitable access
	  • Reporting procedures
	  • System capacity vs. demand
	  • Level of use
	  • Fidelity of implementation
	  • User satisfaction and results
	• How might we understand these challenges better if we lack sufficient information or data to make sense of them?
	• Which of them are assigned top priority?
	• What are our next steps?

Actions to take for leadership for comprehensive professional learning system:	• Identify needed improvements in the technology that supports the leadership for comprehensive professional learning system. • Plan and carry out needed improvements. • Assess the impact of improvements.

TOOL 7.4 Back to Providing Professional Learning for Full Implementation Tools Chart

Continuous improvement of comprehensive professional learning system

Use this tool to make decisions related to continuous improvement to the comprehensive professional learning system.

Purpose	Prioritize continuous improvements to the comprehensive professional learning system.
Non-purpose	Determine whether or not to abandon the system.
Time	60 minutes, on a regular schedule, e.g. annually.

Steps

1. Gather the leadership team responsible for the comprehensive professional learning system at least twice a year to discuss the questions below:
   - What input have we received related to needed improvements in the comprehensive professional learning system?
   - What is the rationale for these improvements?
   - How widespread is the need for the improvements?
2. Create a criteria matrix for prioritizing the needed improvements.
   - Level of effort (LOE) including staff time, contracted services, etc. to make the improvements represented in cost
   - Impact on the system if the changes are not made
   - Impact on the system if the changes are made
   - Impact on educators if the changes are not made
   - Impact on educators if the changes are made
   - Note recommended improvements that fall in the category of "consider it done," because they are relatively easy, logical, can be done without significant effort, and are important to do. Many improvements may fall into this category and they merely need to be scheduled.

2. Estimate impact and represent it as a level of impact for the improvements (**3** = significant impact; **2** = moderate impact; **1** = no impact).

   If needed, a wider range of impact options might be created. Create the matrix and enter the information for each recommended improvement.

TOOL 7.4, cont.

Sample Criteria Matrix

Recommended Improvements to the Comprehensive Professional Learning System

Recommended Improvements	Consider it done	Cost	Impact on system if made	Impact on system if NOT made	Impact on educators if made	Impact on educators if NOT made
Recommendation 1						
Recommendation 2						
Recommendation 3						
Recommendation 4						
Recommendation 5						
Recommendation 6						
Recommendation 7						
Recommendation 8						

TOOL 7.4, cont.

3. An alternative to a full criteria matrix is to use a simple clustering of needed improvements into four categories as depicted below:

	Cost	
Impact		

4. Use the data to prioritize resources to the improvements.

5. Develope a timeline for the improvements.

6. Report back to the leadership team in 30, 60, 90 days, or more if necessary.

TOOL 7.5 Back to Providing Professional Learning for Full Implementation Tools Chart

Implementation: Learning builds the bridge between research and practice

By Gene E. Hall and Shirley M. Hord

One indisputable finding from our years of research on what it takes to conduct successful change in schools and colleges is this: Introducing new practices alone seldom results in new practices being incorporated into ongoing classroom practices.

For example, we were dismayed at the recent release of two substantive studies of professional development (to support school improvement in mathematics and reading) that concluded that the professional development in each case was ineffective (Drummond et al., 2011; Randel et al., 2011). However, in both studies, the researchers did not assess implementation. It is hard to imagine how professional development can be judged if its implementation has not been documented. Such work, it would seem, is "the appraisal of a nonevent" (Charters & Jones, 1973).

We are happy to join with Learning Forward in recognizing the imperative of implementation. The Implementation standard states: 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.

Assuring Professional Learning

It has only been in the last decade that we have come to understand the reality that change is based on learning. The profession, the press, and the public cry for school improvement, in order that all students learn to high levels. For school improvement to be realized, the first task is to identify and delete those programs and practices that are not supporting students in learning well. The next step is to find the best solution having the potential to promote quality teaching and successful student learning. After specifying the new practice(s), teachers and administrators must learn what the new practices are and how to use them, and transfer the new way into classroom practice. See diagram on p. 168.

"Change is learning. It's as simple and complex as that." This is the first principle in our beliefs and assumptions about change (Hall & Hord, 2011, p. 6). Change cannot occur without professional learning. When educators adopt new and more effective practices, the next step is to develop new understandings and acquire new skills. These new practices, in turn, enable students to reach high levels of successful learning. The seven Standards for Professional Learning are intended make high-quality professional learning a reality.

TOOL 7.5, cont.

Applying Change Process Research

Within the Implementation standard is the explicit acknowledgement that findings from change research, including its constructs and measures, can inform efforts to implement the standards. The explicit purpose of the Implementation standard is to ensure that educators address implementation and apply evidence-based strategies. Change research constructs and measures can be used to develop implementation strategies and assess progress.

In many ways, today's innovations and initiatives represent major change. These changes are complex, subtle, and more sophisticated than we think. Symbolically, it is as if implementers were expected to back up, get a running start, and leap across the Grand Canyon. What is needed is an Implementation Bridge (Hall,1999; Hall & Hord, 2011). See diagram on p. 171.

As with real bridges, different change efforts require varying lengths, degrees of stability, and combinations of supports. It takes time to move across a bridge. By assessing how far across the bridge each participant, group, and school has progressed, formative evaluations can inform change leaders of participants' needs. Formative evaluations are important for assessing progress. Summative evaluations, which assess the effectiveness of the innovation, should only include those participants who have made it all the way across the bridge.

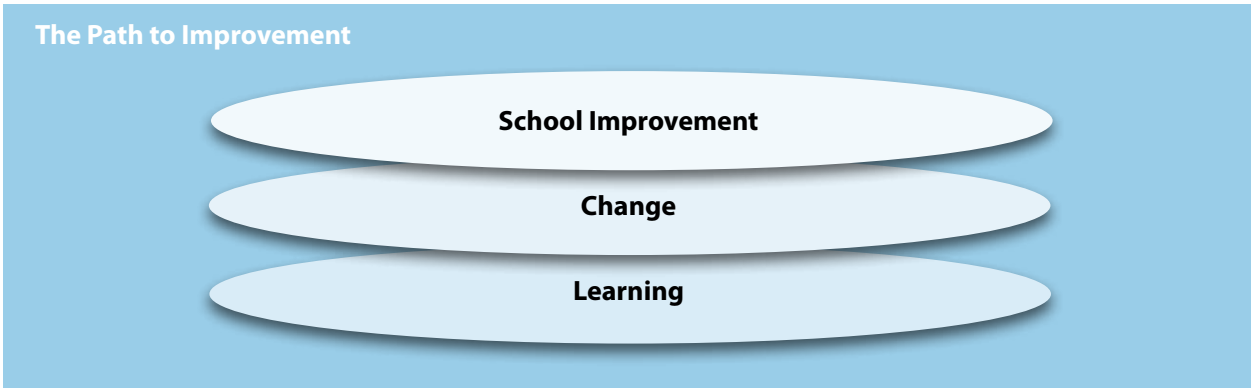
When change is assumed to be an event, there is no bridge. Implicitly, adopters of the new approach are expected to make a giant leap across a chasm. With today's complex innovations, the chasms are likely to be deep and wide. Attempting to jump across these chasms is most likely to result in injury and failure. This is true for individuals, schools, school districts, and larger systems.

The Implementation Bridge is a metaphor for moving from the earlier or less advanced stages to the later or more advanced stages of the three diagnostic dimensions of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM): Stages of Concern, Levels of Use, and Innovation Configurations. Each of these CBAM elements is an evidence-based construct with related measuring tools that can be used to assess how far across the bridge each individual, school and/or district has progressed. Each can be used alone or in various combinations to measure implementation progress and as diagnostic information for planning next action steps to facilitate moving further across the bridge. Each also is important in summative evaluations. These three tools, individually and collectively, can be applied to implementation of the Standards for Professional Learning.

The following are brief descriptions of each of these diagnostic dimensions. More can be learned through the study of key texts (Hall & Hord, 2011), various technical documents, and related training resources.

Stages of Concern addresses the personal/affective aspects of change. There is an array of feelings, perceptions, worries, preoccupations and moments of satisfaction for those engaged with implementing new

TOOL 7.5, cont.



approaches. This personal side of change is important to understand because failing to address concerns can lead to resistance and even rejection of the new way. A set of categories, or "stages," of concern has been identified. As a change process unfolds, these different Stages of Concern can increase and decrease in intensity.

At the very beginning of a change, most participants will be **unconcerned**. Their attention will be on getting through the school year and planning for summer. These participants are not on the bridge. They may be aware that they are approaching a bridge—"I heard something about some sort of new standards, but I am really concerned about …"—but it is not something that needs to be thought about currently. However, the change process leaders should be doing things to address this concerns stage—for example, providing general information about what will be happening.

As participants begin to step out on to the Implementation Bridge, **self** concerns become more intense. "What do these new standards mean for me?" This, too, is a time when more information should be provided. It also is important to be reassuring: "You can do this. We are here to support you."

As implementers move fully onto the bridge, **task** concerns become most intense: "I am spending all my time organizing materials and trying to schedule everything." These concerns should be anticipated and addressed in the implementation plan. How-to supports, including coaching and timeline projections, should reflect the understanding that these concerns can last several years.

When implementers make it across the bridge, self and task concerns should decrease while **impact** concerns should increase. "I am seeing how my use of the these standards is making a big difference in the knowledge and skills of teachers and school leaders. You can now see the results in what students are doing." How leaders address the potential arousal of impact concerns can make all the difference in ultimate implementation success and effectiveness.

TOOL 7.5, cont.

There are two other CBAM constructs and measures that can be applied with the Implementation Bridge metaphor.

Innovation Configurations (IC) address the well-documented fact that each implementer does not necessarily use the same operational form of the change. Those involved may say they are using "it," but what is in operation within each classroom and school can be significantly different. In our first study of this phenomenon, teachers in different states claimed that they were team teaching. But the configurations of teaming were quite different. The number of teachers (two to six), the grouping of students (fixed, heterogeneous, homogenous), and what teachers taught (all subjects, one subject) were components that varied. Each combination of these variations results in a different Innovation Configuration—what the innovation looks like in practice—with different teachers and in different schools.

In recent years researchers have become very interested in fidelity of implementation. Innovation Configurations is a way to describe and contrast different implemented forms of an innovation. With the Implementation Bridge metaphor, there should be increasing fidelity in terms of Innovation Configurations as implementers move further across.

Levels of Use is the third construct from change research to consider. Traditional research and program evaluation designs assume a dichotomous population: treatment group and control group, or users and nonusers. Levels of Use describes a set of behavioral profiles that distinguish different approaches to using an innovation. Three different nonuser profiles have been described and five different user profiles. Each of these has been defined in terms of behaviors and each has implications for how to facilitate change and for evaluating change success and effectiveness.

For example, educators at **Level 0 Nonuse** are not doing anything related to the change, in this case the new professional learning standards. They don't talk about it, they don't check it out on the web, and they do not attend an introductory meeting. This behavioral profile is different from the person at **Level I Orientation**, who asks questions, attends the introductory meeting, and considers use of the innovation. Both of these levels represent people who are not using the change. However, in terms of facilitating a change process, the interventions that should be emphasized for each are quite different.

Among the Levels of Use, one that is particularly important is **Level III Mechanical Use**. This is an approach where the implementer is disjointed in what he or she is doing. Implementers at this level continually check back to the user manual, their scheduling is inefficient, they can't plan beyond tomorrow, or anticipate what will happen next week. We know from research that most first-time implementers will be at Level III Mechanical Use. We also know that many will continue to be at this level through the first two or three years of implementation. If the inefficiencies of Level III use are not addressed, then the Implementation Bridge can become very long, and some implementers will jump off.

TOOL 7.5, cont.

There are many implications of Level III Mechanical Use. One that will be particularly important with the new standards is deciding when and with whom summative evaluation studies should be conducted. Change research has clearly documented that most first-time users will be at Level III Mechanical Use. These are not the implementers who should be included in a summative evaluation study. They are inefficient and have not reached full understanding of how to use the new way. Summative evaluation samples should be comprised of implementers who have made it across the bridge. They have established routines and can predict what will happen next. They have established routines and can predict what will happen next. This behavioral profile is **Level IV—A Routine**. When summative evaluations include many first-time users, it is not surprising that there are no significant differences in outputs.

Providing feedback about how the change process is unfolding is important. Each of the CBAM diagnostic dimensions described here can be used to measure how far across the Implementation Bridge each teacher, school, or district has progressed. The same constructs and data should be used as feedback to leaders and implementers. These data can be used to plan next steps.

Providing Feedback

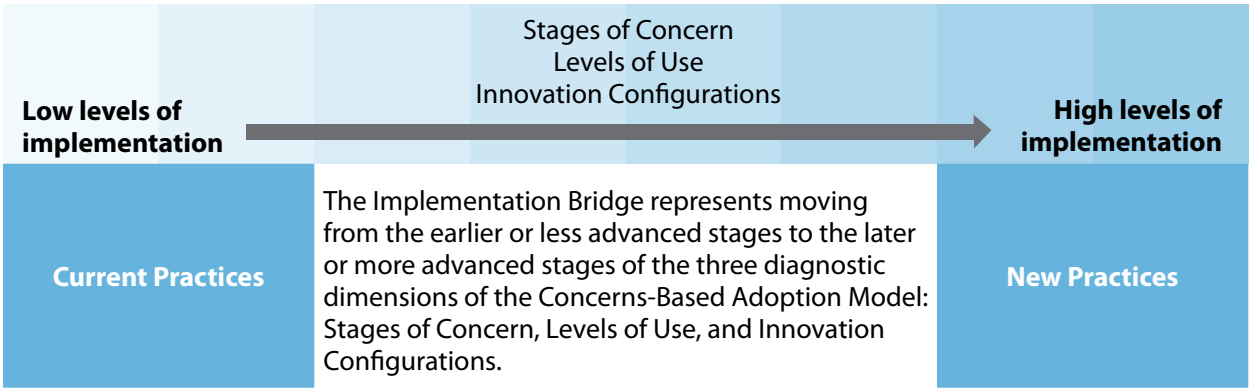
Another key theme in the Implementation standard is providing constructive feedback. Providing feedback about how the change process is unfolding is important. Each of the CBAM diagnostic dimensions described here can be used to measure how far across the Implementation Bridge each teacher, school, or district has progressed. The same constructs and data should be used as feedback to leaders and implementers. These data can be used to plan next steps for making further implementation progress. These data also can be used in reports about implementation progress. In addition, these same data can be used insummative evaluations that relate the extent of implementation to outcomes.

Assessing implementation at regular intervals and providing feedback to all participants are important keys to implementation success.

TOOL 7.5, cont.

Sustaining Changes Beyond Implementation

We know a lot through research, practice, and theory about how to launch a change process, facilitate movement across an Implementation Bridge, and assess implementation progress and evaluate innovations. What we know less about are the essential elements and processes that are necessary to sustain long-term use of an innovation. Getting across the bridge is necessary, but what are the processes and structures that assure continuing use of high-fidelity configurations, in this case, of the standards? How do we prevent abandonment? Addressing the sustainability challenges of the latest standards will need special attention.



One indicator of sustainability will be when the implemented Standards for Professional Learning have a line item in the school or district budget. Another will be when it becomes regular practice for new staff to have access to learning and development. Still another important indicator will be that the process and criteria for succession of principals and relevant staff at the district office includes evidence of their understanding and interest in supporting professional learning through the standards. Above all, school and district leadership will provide continuous attention and direct the attention of others to the standards' value. These leaders become the internal and external champions for sustaining the standards and a continued focus on professional learning.

Supporting and celebrating the standards and their practices are keys to the standards' robust sustainability and the capacity to contribute richly to the ultimate goal—student learning success.

We see this standard as uniquely significant in that the standards revision architects explicitly identified the importance of addressing implementation. A strength of the Implementation standard is its reference to change process research that can be applied to assessing and guiding the implementation of professional-learning. Understanding that change begins with the learning of educational professionals is crucial. Only through increasing adult learning will we increase student learning.

Source: Adapted from "Implementation: Learning Builds the Bridge Between Research and Practice" by Gene E. Hall & Shirley M. Hord, 2011, *JSD, 32*(4), pp. 52-57. Copyright 2011 by Learning Forward. Adapted with permission.

TOOL 7.5, cont.

The key to progress is to stay focused

By Raymond Aguilera and Olivia Zepeda

As told to Valerie von Frank

Our district is committed to supporting teachers with ongoing professional development to enable them to become more effective in the classroom. We provide early release time on Wednesdays to enable teachers to meet in learning teams, but the power is in the classroom in jobembedded learning because the classroom is where we can identify teachers' needs and give teachers assistance during instruction.

We monitor instruction closely and analyze data. We give districtwide benchmark assessments four times a year, along with weekly formative assessments. As we monitor data, we have immediate intervention if we do not see student growth. Every year, we get better. With assistance from SEDL, we use the Concerns-Based Adoption Model to determine how well teachers are implementing new practices in teaching reading and writing.

Consultants and administrators meet monthly to discuss teachers' levels of use of the new practices. This approach helps us to differentiate professional development. After they determine teachers' levels of use, we create individualized plans for teachers' learning. Consultants and coaches work with teachers in their classrooms, providing feedback, coaching, and modeling lessons.

Gadsden Elementary School District #32
San Luis, Ariz.
Number of schools: 9
Enrollment: 5,000
Staff: 260
Racial/ethnic mix:
White: 0%
Black: 0%
Hispanic: 99%
Asian/Pacific Islander: 0%
Native American: 0%
Other: 1%
Limited English proficient: 50%
Free/reduced lunch: 97%
Contact: Raymond Aguilera, superintendent
Email: agui2400@yahoo.com

At our annual data summit, about 100 teachers and administrators reviewed and analyzed student achievement data and developed formal plans for achieving academic goals. We provide three days before the beginning of the school year for teachers to attend district professional development based on individualized plans. The professional learning is supported in a variety of ways, from having a master teacher go into a classroom to help the teacher with materials to having master teachers model lessons.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children has accredited San Luis Preschool and created a video showing the school as a model for the nation. The district has worked hard to demonstrate how preschool teachers can incorporate a research-based curriculum into a play-based philosophy while taking into account factors such as English language learners and children with special needs.

One of our primary areas of focus has been English language learning. We are proud that, over the last two years, more than 1,800 students learning English were reclassified as English-fluent. Over the last 10 years, the percentage of ELL students has decreased in the district from 99% to 50% of our student body. The keys to our progress are job-embedded professional development and our focus. It's critical to stay focused on a few initiatives. The district administration's role is to provide stability.

TOOL 7.5, cont.

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Gene Hall (gene.hall@unlv.edu) is a professor of educational leadership at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His research focuses on understanding, evaluating, and facilitating change processes in organizations.

Shirley Hord (shirley.hord@learningforward.org) is scholar laureate of Learning Forward and former scholar emerita at Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, Austin, Texas. She writes about school-based professional development, leadership, school change and improvement, and professional learning communities.

Source: Adapted from "Implementation: Learning Builds the Bridge Between Research and Practice," by Gene E. Hall and Shirley M. Hord, 20011, *JSD, 32*(4), pp. 52–53; 55–57. Copyright, Learning Forward, 2011.

TOOL 7.6 Back to Providing Professional Learning for Full Implementation Tools Chart

Implementation of state or district comprehensive professional learning system and professional learning plans

Use this list of questions to consider the changes needed for successful implementation of the comprehensive professional learning system and professional learning plans. Careful planning and development of a comprehensive professional learning system will lead to successful implementation of the system only if those responsible for implementation consider in advance and address the potential barriers that might inhibit full implementation.

Purpose	To consider changes that may be needed to ensure success of the newly designed comprehensive professional learning system and plans.
Non-purpose	To avoid any challenges related to implementation of the comprehensive professional learning system and plan.
Time	60 minutes
Considerations	**Intended actions**
What changes are needed in the state/district to support this system?	
What changes are needed in the roles and responsibilities of state/district/school administrators to ensure smooth implementation of this system?	
How will stakeholders including students, parents, community members, educators at the school and district level, state department of education staff, third-party providers, and other education agencies and advocacy groups be engaged to support this system?	

TOOL 7.6, cont.

Considerations	Intended actions
What areas of the system will require particularly close attention to ensure early successes? How will resources be allocated to provide the attention needed?	
What processes are or will be in place to provide continuous monitoring, assessment, and periodic evaluation?	
What are the indicators of success we expect to see in the short- and long-term if the system is successful?	

Conduct Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation

TOOL 8.1 Back to Conducting Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation Tools Chart

Guide to evaluation

Use this tool as a guide for the planning, conduct, and reporting of an evaluation of a comprehensive professional learning system.

Purpose	To guide the planning, conduct, and reporting of an evaluation of a comprehensive professional learning system.	
Non-purpose	To provide a turnkey evaluation plan.	
Step	**Question**	**Responses**
Determine the purpose and focus of the evaluation	What is the reason or purpose for this evaluation?	
Determine the audience for the evaluation	Who wants this evaluation? What does this particular individual, group, etc. want to know about the comprehensive professional learning system?	
Design the evaluation questions	What do we want to know? What questions are we trying to answer? How important is it to answer these questions?	
Determine the need for an external evaluator	Is an external evaluator needed or can an internal team or person conduct this evaluation? What are the advantages and disadvantages of either approach? Do we have resources for an external evaluator?	

TOOL 8.1, cont.

Step	Question	Responses
Establishing the evaluation framework	How will we conduct the evaluation? What data do we need to answer the questions? What is the source of the data? How will the data be collected? What is the timeline? How will we analyze the data? Who will be responsible for this process or aspects of it?	
Collecting data	How will we manage, track, and be accountable for accurate data collection?	
Analyzing data	Are the planned data analyses appropriate given the data? What changes do we need to make? How can the analyzed data be displayed so that multiple stakeholders can interact with it easily? What additional analyses are possible that had not been planned?	
Interpreting analyzed data	How can we engage stakeholders to add value and meaning to the analyzed data? What information can they add to increase the usefulness of the analyzed data? What conclusions are evident? What recommendations do they suggest for next steps based on the conclusions?	
Reporting the findings	To whom do we need to report about the evaluation? What are the best formats or media for reporting to each audience? How do we help those to whom we report understand the value and meaning of the conclusions and recommendations and engender their support?	
Evaluating the evaluation	What did we learn about the evaluation process and our competencies as evaluators that we can apply to future evaluations? How did this evaluation help us improve our evaluation skills?	

TOOL 8.2 Back to Conduct Ongoing Assessment and Evaluation Tools Chart

Comprehensive professional learning system organizing checklist

Use this tool to plan and conduct an evaluation of a comprehensive professional learning system.

Purpose	Determine readiness and thoroughness in planning an evaluation.
Non-purpose	Describe best practices for evaluating a comprehensive professional learning system.

Evaluation Organizer

This organizer supports the following four primary parts of programs or systems evaluation:

- Planning the evaluation;
- Collecting implementation and educator and student performance data;
- Analyzing and interpreting data; and
- Sharing and using evaluation findings to improve quality and results.

Person(s) responsible for evaluation: _____

Purpose of evaluation: _____

Evaluation questions: _____

_____

_____

Evaluation Organizer Checklist

Indicate the current status of each action and note the expected date of completion.

Action Steps	Completed	In Progress	Under Consideration	N/A	Expected date of completion
A. Planning the Evaluation					
1. The evaluation purpose is clearly defined (e.g. system improvement, system effectiveness, system efficiency).					
2. Key stakeholders (e.g. teachers, parents, community members, school and district administrators, third-party providers, institutions of higher education, education agencies, education advocacy groups, technical assistance providers) are involved in or informed about, as appropriate, the evaluation plan.					

TOOL 8.2, cont.

Action Steps	Completed	In Progress	Under Consideration	N/A	Expected date of completion
3. The evaluation plan has the following components:					
a. Purpose;					
b. Evaluation questions based on identified outcomes and indicators of success;					
c. Evaluation design (e.g. descriptive, qualitative, quantitative, quasi-experimental, control group, case study);					
d. Data and/or evidence needed to answer the evaluation questions;					
e. Data sources, or who or what will provide the data or evidence needed (e.g. educators, system data, resource utilization, impact data);					
f. Data collection methodology appropriate to data sources (e.g. gather existing data, conduct surveys, interviews, observations; collect artifacts, documents, records);					
g. Plans to ensure confidentiality and anonymity in data collection and reporting;					
h. Plans to meet the standards for education program evaluation standards;					
i. Plans to protect the rights of participants (e.g. FERPA, IRB, when required or desired);					
j. Data analysis plans;					
k. Dissemination of final report plans;					
l. Timeline for carrying out each evaluation activity.					

TOOL 8.2, cont.

Action Steps	Completed	In Progress	Under Consideration	N/A	Expected date of completion
4. Determination of the need for an external evaluator.					
5. Strategies for maintaining integrity, objectivity, reliability, and validity in the evaluation.					
6. Required permissions and support from authority and stakeholders .					
7. Defined roles for stakeholders engaged in the evaluation (e.g. data collection or transmission, interpretation of analyzed data, development of recommended next actions, reporting findings).					
8. Oversight and/or leadership for evaluation with appropriate level of authority designated.					
B. Collecting Data					
9. Appropriate permissions or consents obtained after informing participants about the evaluation and their rights as human subjects before data collection begins.					
10. Appropriate data collected (e.g. process, impact, implementation).					
11. Data burden minimized with the use of extant data, or using what is available when possible.					
12. Data from multiple stakeholders collected to support triangulation.					
13. Gaps between what the system is designed to do and how it is implemented identified.					
14. Data analyzed to reveal information of system impact on specific educator groups (e.g. teachers, principals, district staff) or work environments (e.g. school, district, outside of school or district).					

TOOL 8.2, cont.

Action Steps	Completed	In Progress	Under Consideration	N/A	Expected date of completion
15. Data analyzed to identify patterns, trends, etc. of successes and problem areas.					
16. Data analyzed to suggest contributing factors for findings.					
17. Recommendations for next actions proposed based on findings.					
18. Broad-based dissemination planned.					
19. Multiple dissemination media and formats planned as appropriate to stakeholder groups.					
20. Stakeholders engaged in using findings to identify improvements.					
21. Leadership team, in collaboration with stakeholders, plans improvement actions and timeline.					
22. Improvement plan components included: **a.** Goals;					
b. Strategies for achieving goals;					
c. Roles and responsibilities for implementing the strategies;					
d. Timelines for implementing and achieving the goals;					
e. Resources for implementing the plan;					
f. Monitoring the implementation of the plan;					
g. Indicators and measurements for success.					

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