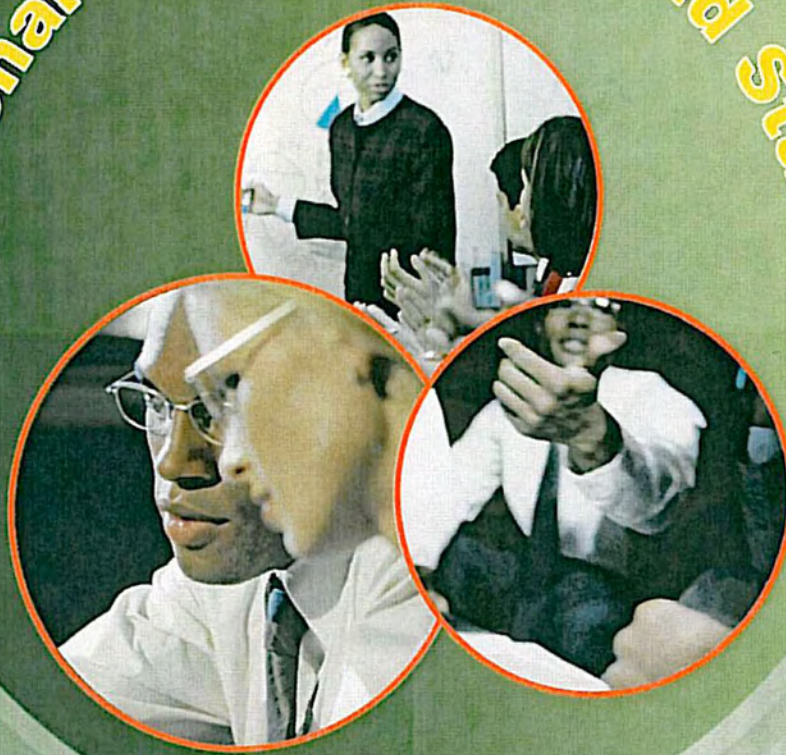


Professional Partnerships and Standards




Stephanie Hirsh
Executive Director




NSDC Purpose:

Every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.



NSDC National Staff Development Council
www.nsd.org

Effective Professional Learning



- Results-driven
- Standards-based
- Job-embedded

NSDC National Staff Development Council
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Results-Driven



What are students expected to know and be able to do?

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

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

DE Delaware Staff Development Council
www.nisd.org

Standards-Based

Content-what knowledge and skills must educators learn to produce higher levels of learning for all students?

Process-how is learning structured to support adult acquisition of new knowledge and skills?

Context- how is the organization structured to support adult learning?


CONTEXT/CULTURE

LEARNING PROCESS

CONTENT

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Content Standards




- 10 Equity
- 11 Quality Teaching
- 12 Family Involvement

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Process Standards


- 4 Data-Driven
- 5 Evaluation
- 6 Research-Based
- 7 Design
- 8 Learning
- 9 Collaboration



Florida Department of Education
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Context Standards

- 1 Learning Communities
- 2 Leadership
- 3 Resources



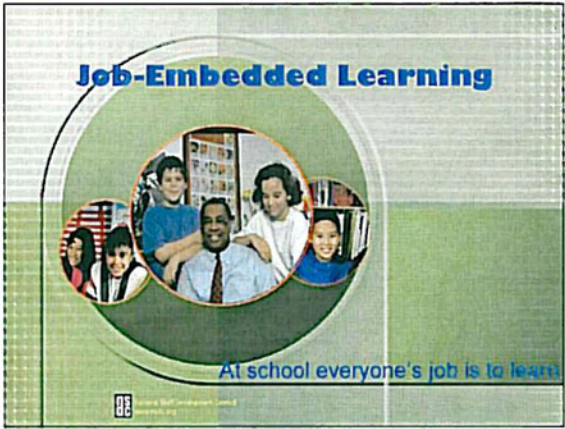
Florida Department of Education
wwwfldoe.org

Learning Teams

- Accept responsibility
- Examine data.
- Clarify learning needs.
- Establish adult learning priorities.
- Establish learning agenda.
- Access appropriate external assistance.
- Design powerful lessons and assessments
- Reflect on the results and recycle



Florida Department of Education
wwwfldoe.org





The Standards

Context Standards

Learning Communities: Staff development that improves the learning of all students organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.

Leadership: Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.

Resources: Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

Process Standards

Data-Driven: Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.

Evaluation: Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.

Research-Based: Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to apply research to decision making.

Design: Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.

Learning: Staff development that improves the learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change.

Collaboration: Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.

Content

Equity: Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.

Quality Teaching: Staff development that improves the learning of all students deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.

Family Involvement: Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

DATA-DRIVEN: *Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.*

RATIONALE

Data from various sources can serve a number of important staff development purposes. First, data on student learning gathered from standardized tests, district-made tests, student work samples, portfolios, and other sources provide important input to the selection of school or district improvement goals and provide focus for staff development efforts. This process of data analysis and goal development typically determines the content of teachers' professional learning in the areas of instruction, curriculum, and assessment.

Helpful data are typically drawn from other sources, including norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests, grade retention, high school completion, reports of disciplinary actions, school vandalism costs, enrollment in advanced courses, performance tasks, and participation in post-secondary education. Data on individual tests can be analyzed to learn how much students advanced in one year as well as particular strengths and weaknesses associated with the focus of the test. These data are typically disaggregated to reveal differences in learning among subgroups of students. The most common forms of disaggregation include gender, socioeconomic status, native language, and race.

A second use of data is in the design and evaluation of staff development efforts, both for formative and summative purposes. Early in a staff development effort, educational leaders must decide what adults will learn and be able to do and which types of evidence will be accepted as indicators of success. They also determine ways to gather that evidence throughout the change process to help make midcourse corrections to strengthen the work of leaders and providers. Data can also indicate to policy makers and funders the impact of staff development on teacher practice and student learning.

A third use of data occurs at the classroom level as teachers gather evidence of improvements in student learning to determine the effects of their professional learning on their own students. Teacher-made tests, assignments, portfolios, and other evidence of student learning are used by teachers to assess whether staff development is having desired effects in their classrooms. Because improvements in student learning are a powerful motivator for teachers, evidence of such improvements as a result of staff development experiences helps sustain teacher momentum during the inevitable frustrations and setbacks that accompany complex change efforts. Another benefit of data analysis, particularly the examination of student work, is that the study of such evidence is itself a potent means of staff development. Teachers who use one of several group processes available for the study of student work report that the ensuing discussions of the assignment, the link between the work and content standards, their expectations for student learning, and the use of scoring rubrics improve their teaching and student learning.

If data are to provide meaningful guidance in the process of continuous improvement, teachers and administrators require professional development regarding data analysis, designing assessment instruments, implementing various forms of assessment, and understanding which assessment to use to provide the desired information. Because the preservice preparation of teachers and administrators in assessment and data analysis has been weak or nonexistent, educators must have generous opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills related to formative classroom assessment, data collection, data analysis, and data-driven planning and evaluation.



CASE STUDY

A series of ten individually administered diagnostic tests gives teachers at an urban elementary school the data they need to track the progress of pupils in kindergarten through grade three. The data, in turn, help shape the school's staff development program.

Each of the STEP (Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress) Tests, developed by the Center for School Improvement at the University of Chicago, covers a specific group of primary-level reading skills. The tests are also aligned with state-mandated standardized tests and school textbooks.

The STEP Tests form the core of the school's literary assessment program. Pupils new to the school (virtually all African-American and many at risk of doing poorly in school) are tested when they enroll. All pupils in kindergarten through third grade are tested – with the help of university volunteers – in January and May.

Student instruction and staff development are driven by the assessment results. Teachers meet twice a month to review test data as well as student work and other informal assessments. Students are grouped and regrouped as their reading levels change. Based on their students' needs, the teachers seek out, evaluate, and share various intervention strategies designed to address specific weaknesses. Working together they also help each other re-evaluate their teaching practices and search out new instructional materials.

In one case, after identifying a group of third grade students who are having difficulty comparing and contrasting information, teachers decide to group the students together for a series of extra lessons on similarities and differences. With another small group of first graders, they review decoding skills such as masking words or using picture clues.

Meanwhile, standardized test scores are increasing – up eight percent the first year the assessment program was put in place, and continuing to climb.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the various forms of data that are available in your school or district to assist with professional development and instructional decision making? Are some forms more useful than others?
2. What are benefits and potential costs of disaggregating data in the way suggested by the standard?
3. What strengths and weaknesses do educators in your school or district have with regard to using data in the way recommended by the standard?

NEXT STEPS

1. Delineate the goals for students and adults that have been set by your school and/or district. Review the sources for these goals.
2. Clarify the kinds of data available to measure school or district success in achieving its goals for students and educators.
3. Determine the kinds of data most useful in assessing the effectiveness of the school or district in attaining each goal.
4. Establish periodic benchmarks to assess progress toward your school improvement goals and identify the types of evidence needed at each benchmark.

SELECTED REFERENCES

- Bernhardt, V. (1998). *Data analysis for comprehensive schoolwide improvement*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education, Inc.
- Johnson, R. (1996). *Setting our sights: Measuring equity in school change*. Los Angeles, CA: The Achievement Council.
- Schmoker, M. (1996). *Results: The key to continuous school improvement*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



SAI - Data-Driven

12. Teachers at our school learn how to use data to assess student learning needs.
26. Teachers at our school determine the effectiveness of our professional development by using data on student improvement.
39. Teachers use student data to plan professional development programs.
46. Teachers use student data when discussing instruction and curriculum.
50. Teachers analyze classroom data with each other to improve student learning.

Central Office Staff Members



CONTEXT

DESIRED OUTCOME 4.1: Use disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities.					
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Prepare school improvement teams to analyze disaggregated student data to determine student and adult learning needs within the school.	Work with school improvement teams to analyze disaggregated student data to determine student and adult learning needs within the school.	Work with a representative group of administrators and teachers to analyze disaggregated student achievement data to determine student and adult learning needs for the district and the schools.	Analyze disaggregated student data and report the results and needs to schools. Write the district-based school improvement and staff development goals.	Use personal experience and priorities to determine program and staff development goals.	
DESIRED OUTCOME 4.2: Use a variety of student data when making program decisions.					
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Analyze disaggregated student learning results from a wide variety of data sources such as norm-referenced tests, student work samples, student portfolios, and district designed tests to determine student and adult learning needs.	Analyze disaggregated student achievement data—norm-referenced and criterion-referenced results. Highlight the differences by gender, SES, ethnicity, income, etc.	Analyze disaggregated student data mandated by state or federal grants. Disaggregate data by gender, SES, ethnicity, income, etc.	Analyze aggregate school and district averages when making instructional decisions within the district.		

DESIRED OUTCOME 4.3: Provide opportunities for administrators & teachers to learn how to use data for instructional decision making.					
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Expect all staff to know how and use data for instructional decision making. Provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to learn to analyze student data for instructional decision making.	Provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to learn to analyze student data for instructional decision making.	Provide opportunities for school improvement teams and a small number of principals to learn to analyze student data for instructional decision making.	Provide an opportunity for a small number of principals to learn to analyze student data for instructional decision making.	Do not provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to learn to analyze student data to make classroom or school instructional decisions.	
DESIRED OUTCOME 4.4: Support administrator and teacher analysis of data.					
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Respond to requests for assistance from school staffs and administrators concerning analysis and data-driven decision making. Create charts and graphs of data in order to help school staffs and administrators analyze data for decision making. Collect pertinent data for school staffs and administrators to use.	Create charts and graphs of data to help school staffs and administrators analyze data and make decisions using data. Collect pertinent data for school staffs and administrators to use.	Collect pertinent data for school staffs and administrators to use.	Deny principals and teachers access to student data.		

DATA-DRIVEN: CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF MEMBERS

DESIRED OUTCOME 4.5: Use student data to monitor and support continuous improvement.					
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Use student data multiple times a year to monitor continuous improvement of schools and the district. Use baseline data to monitor improvements across the school year.	Use student data at the beginning and end of the school year to monitor the results of school and district activities.	Use end-of-year student data to monitor the results of school and district activities.	Do not use any student data to monitor the results of district activities.		
DESIRED OUTCOME 4.6: Use staff data to design districtwide professional development experiences.					
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Use data about participant level of use and concerns about implementation of innovations when designing district professional development experiences.	Use data about participant concerns related to implementation of innovations when designing district professional development experiences.	Use data about participant satisfaction with training when designing district professional development experiences.	Do not use data when designing district professional development experiences.		

THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY

Data-Driven

Staff development that improves the learning of all students
uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.

DESIRED OUTCOME 4.1: Communicates the need to use data for staff development decision making.					
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Uses a variety of communication strategies (e.g. print publications, conferences, meetings, and electronic communication) to inform higher education, superintendents, principals, and school improvement teams about the rationale for using data for staff development decision making, and how it contributes to improving student achievement.	Uses a variety of communication strategies (e.g. print publications, conferences, meetings, and electronic communications) to inform superintendents, principals, and school improvement teams about the rationale for using data for staff development decision making and how it contributes to improving student achievement.	Uses a variety of communication strategies (e.g. print publications, conferences, meetings, and electronic communications) to inform superintendents, principals, or school improvement teams about the rationale for using data for staff development decision making and how it contributes to improving student achievement.	Uses a single communication strategy to communicate a rationale for using data for staff development decision making in schools and districts and how it contributes to improving student achievement.	Does not communicate the importance of using data for staff development decision making.	

DESIRED OUTCOME 4.2: Requires use of disaggregated data for school improvement and staff development plans.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Requires that school improvement and staff development plans address disaggregated data for staff and students.	Requires that school improvement or staff development plans address disaggregated data for staff and students.	Requires that school improvement or staff development plans address disaggregated data for staff or students.	Does not require using disaggregated data in school improvement and staff development plans.		

DESIRED OUTCOME 4.3: Develops capacity of educational leaders to analyze, understand, and interpret data for staff development decision making.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Conducts staff development programs for superintendents, principals, and school improvement teams on using data for staff development decision making that results in improved student achievement.	Conducts staff development programs for superintendents and principals on using data for making staff development decisions that results in improved student achievement.	Conducts staff development programs for superintendents on using data for staff development decision making and instructional practice.	Conducts staff development programs for any interested school and district personnel on analyzing and interpreting data for decision making.	Does not conduct staff development programs on analyzing and interpreting data.	



NSDC Definition

NSDC Proposed Amendments to Section 9101 (34) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* as reauthorized by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.

(34) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT- The term 'professional development' means a comprehensive approach to professional learning designed to improve teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement and to accomplish other important school goals—

- (A) Professional development fosters collective accountability for improved student performance and is comprised of professional learning that —
 - (1) primarily occurs several times per week among established teams of teachers, principals, and other instructional staff members;
 - (2) is facilitated primarily by teachers with the structured support of school principals and school-based professional development coach, mentors, or master teachers;
 - (3) is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards as well as related local educational agency and school improvement goals; and
 - (4) includes 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)(4)(ii) by implementing coherent, sustained, and evidenced-based learning strategies, such as lesson study and the development of formative assessments, that improve instructional effectiveness and student achievement;
 - (iv) 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; and
 - (v) informs ongoing improvements in teaching and student learning; and
- (B) Professional development includes supplemental activities such as courses, workshops, institutes, and conferences that must support the learning goals and objectives established for professional development at the school level and are provided by for profit and non-profit entities outside the school such as universities, education service agencies, providers of training, networks of content area specialist, and other education organizations.



Hayes Mizell
is NSDC's
Distinguished
Senior Fellow

Read the writing on the wall, and then act accordingly

“That’s an interesting poster you have there.” His deputy could tell by the way the superintendent said “interesting” that he wasn’t being entirely complimentary.

“Provocative, isn’t it?” the deputy said as he turned and looked at the poster. (See box below.)

“Well, that’s one way to describe it. Where did you get it?”

“At that national conference I attended last week.”

“Why did you put it on your wall?”

“I’ve been thinking,” the deputy said.

“Oh, no, not again. Haven’t I warned you about that?”

The deputy knew that in spite of the superintendent’s smile, he was only half kidding. “Yes, but I’m incorrigible,” he replied.

“Tell me something I don’t know,” the superintendent said.

“What I mean is that I’ve been reviewing our approach to professional development, and I’m not sure we’re getting the most bang for our buck. We keep providing training but there doesn’t seem to be as much change in student performance as we would like. I wonder if we should consider another approach.”

The superintendent’s brow furrowed. “You mean something like the poster describes? That seems pretty radical. Won’t we lose control?

Won’t the schools and the teachers start going off in all kinds of different directions?”

“Not necessarily; we would still set the big agenda. But as it stands now we don’t seem to be very good at translating what we know into what teachers do. Maybe they never really ‘get it’ because the knowledge is ours, or that of some consultant, not theirs.”

“Well, what that poster describes is a pretty big leap.”

“Oh, I agree, but we don’t have to do it all overnight. I’m just worried that our professional development seems stagnant. We keep doing the same old thing because we know how to do it well and we’re comfortable with it, even though we don’t see many long-term results. Teachers and principals participate because they have to, not because they want to. They are resistant to learning even before they walk into the room. I wonder if it isn’t time to rethink our whole rationale and approach. Maybe we need to start moving in a more productive direction.”

“It seems pretty far out to me,” the superintendent said. “I want to know the practical implications of the phrases on that poster, and how we would apply them to ‘professional learning’ in *our* schools. I’m not agreeing this is the way to go, but it might stimulate some new thinking. Why don’t you make some copies of the poster’s text and use it to lead a discussion at the next cabinet meeting?”

The deputy had been down this road before. “Sure, I’d like to do that,” he replied, “but how will you introduce the discussion? People won’t speak up unless they know you want their honest thinking.”

“OK, I’ll stir the pot,” the superintendent said as he turned towards the door. He paused. “By the way, you might want to take that poster down before our school board member from the university sees it.”

MOST HIGH-QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:

- takes place at school, not away from school;
- occurs daily, not occasionally;
- engages teams, not individuals;
- relies on discussion, not presentation;
- requires initiative, not passivity;
- stimulates thinking, not inattention;
- emphasizes creation, not replication;
- sparks investigation, not transmission;
- generates understanding, not confusion;
- produces ownership, not compliance;
- improves practice, not deception.



What is high-quality, effective professional learning?

Does it make a difference for all students?

The National Staff Development Council believes that the best route to improving student achievement is by focusing on improving the quality of teaching and leadership in every school in America.

Effective professional learning is more akin to a timed-release capsule than a magic bullet. High-quality, effective professional learning for teachers occurs when they are able to work with colleagues on issues that relate directly to the students in their own classrooms and tied to the learning goals for their own schools and districts. High-quality professional learning focuses on these questions:

- What do **students** need to know and be able to do?
- What do **educators** need to know and be able to do to ensure student success?
- What **professional learning** is necessary to support the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will produce the desired results for students?

Teachers are not the only educators who need to continue learning. Administrators and central office supervisors also must continue to learn in order to improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes as instructional leaders. Just as for teachers, the most valuable learning for administrators occurs when they learn in teams or networks with others who are addressing similar challenges.

High-quality, effective professional learning is always planned according to student, teacher, leadership, and professional development standards of good practice.

Hundreds of schools and districts in the United States have already experienced the results of such effective professional learning. NSDC wants those good practices to spread to every school in the United States so every educator engages in effective professional learning every day so every student achieves.

To learn more about NSDC's proposals, please contact NSDC's Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh, stephanie.hirsh@nsdc.org or NSDC's Policy Consultant Rene Islas, rene.islas@nsdc.org.



Does the quality of professional learning make a difference in suburban schools and districts?

Consider these examples:

Adlai Stevenson High School / Lincolnshire, Illinois

Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois is widely recognized as a standard bearer of excellence among American high schools. The suburban giant has nearly 4,500 students and about 350 teachers. But Stevenson is a sleek educational operation in spite of its size. Teachers in the school are organized into teams according to the courses they teach and those teams meet once a week for deep discussions about curriculum and instruction. They identify SMART goals (Strategic and specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, and Time-bound) for student achievement and plan their own learning in order to help students achieve those goals. Teachers work together to write common assessments to ensure that students have consistent content and instruction regardless of who is teaching their section of a course.

Do Stevenson students achieve more? Yes. Stevenson's performance on the ACT test has steadily risen every year since 1996. That continued even after the state of Illinois mandated that all students take the ACT. In 2006, Stevenson's ACT score was 25.6, the highest in the school's history and significantly ahead of both the state and the national average. In addition, nearly three-quarters of Stevenson students take at least one AP course. In 2006, Stevenson students took a combined 3,085 AP exams with an average score of 3.85. Stevenson has been recognized by Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Service as an outstanding performer. The school has received four national Blue Ribbon awards and has twice been named an Academic Excellence School by the state of Illinois.



Source: Pushing the capacity for growth, by Joan Richardson. *Results*, May 2004.

Simonton Elementary School / Lawrenceville, Georgia

Principal Dot Schoeller has invested heavily in school-based staff developers — teachers who are released from teaching responsibilities in order to provide on-the-job learning for other teachers. Schoeller found money in her building budget to support 19 coaches in math and reading. This enables her 197 teachers to meet regularly with a coach to study curriculum and develop lesson plans. Coaches also present model lessons and offer feedback to teachers after observing them teach.

Did Simonton students achieve more? Yes. Simonton is that rare school that has closed the gap between black and white students in reading. In 2006-07, 86.5% of Simonton's black students were proficient in reading compared to 82.3% of white students. In math, 82.3% of



black students met the standard compared to 83.9% of white students. In addition, students with disabilities and English language learners jumped more than 20 percentage points in both math and reading.

Source: Principal draws up a game plan for school coaches, by Joan Richardson. *The Learning Principal*, Dec/Jan. 2007, plus updated research.



Broad Acres Elementary School / Montgomery County, Maryland

In 2000, the state of Maryland threatened to take over Broad Acres if student achievement did not improve. At the time only 13% of its 3rd graders were proficient in reading and only 5% were proficient in math. The teachers union joined hands with the district to reshape the quality and time for professional development. A fulltime staff development teacher focused professional development, always available to guide teacher learning in the school. The principal created six positions for school-based coaches who worked closely with teachers on math and literacy. The coaches worked with grade-level teams to plan lessons, write lessons, examine student work, study data about student achievement and plan other learning opportunities for teachers.

Did Broad Acres students achieve more? Yes. In 2004, 75% of Broad Acres' 3rd graders were proficient in reading and 67% were proficient in math. The school came off the threatened list the same year.

Source: Charting a new course, by Joan Richardson. *The Learning Principal*, February 2006.

Burleigh Elementary School / Brookfield, Wisconsin

A decade ago, Burleigh Elementary School in suburban Milwaukee was the lowest performing school in the Elmbrook School District. Teachers at Burleigh began working together to carefully review data to determine grade-level goals, then devise a professional learning strategy to help the school achieve those goals. That strategy included having a specialist work with every teacher in key subjects like reading to asking nearby university staff for support and research-based materials. From their own growth, the staff also has learned to empower students by giving them more responsibility for their learning goals.

Do Burleigh students achieve more? Yes. Minority and special education students are achieving more. For example, achievement for 2nd-grade black students grew from 57% proficient on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in language arts in 2000-01 to 76% proficient in 2001-02. District assessments show progress, and more students are improving in their reading, language, math, and writing proficiency on state exams. For example, while 91% of 4th graders achieved proficiency in reading in 2000-01, the school set a target of 96% and achieved that goal in 2002-03.

Source: Teachers learn to set goals with students, by Jan O'Neill. *JSD*, 25(3), 32-37.



Papillion-La Vista Public Schools / Papillion, Nebraska

Papillion-La Vista Public Schools believed that providing teachers with greater opportunities to work with colleagues would enhance teachers' instruction and make a difference in student achievement. Providing time required board approval and work with the teachers' union. The district opted to allocate one day each month for teachers' professional learning, six total days over a school year when students had an extra day of vacation or a long weekend. Regular school days were extended by 10 minutes to make up the instructional time.



District teachers used the time to work in collaborative teams that focused on areas where students are struggling, areas identified through analyzing student data. Teachers then reviewed lessons together, discussed student work samples, analyzed their assessments and student weaknesses and strengths, and outlined new instructional strategies.

Do Papillion-La Vista students achieve more? Yes. The 8,700 students in this district's 16 schools have felt the change. Scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test in reading and math at every level have been increasing between 2002-03 and 2005-06, with a slight dip at senior high in reading in 2005 after two years of improvements. The districtwide writing test shows similar gains at every level, as does the state standardized test over the same time period. The district reading and math exams also showed increased student achievement across the board, with the most notable improvement in senior high math from 63% proficient in 2002 to 91% in 2005.

Source: Finding time for teams, by Jef Johnston, Mary Knight, and Laura Miller. *JSD*, 28(2), 14-18.

Woodlawn Middle School / Long Grove, Illinois

Instead of once-a-year snapshots of students' performance, teachers at Woodlawn Middle School wanted a more useful tool to help students learn more. So they began working together to create similar assignments and using the same tests to compare individuals' performances and class results to glean information about their own instruction. Subject-area teams met monthly after school for an hour to plan common assessments. The school's 54 teachers learned to understand and analyze data, make hypotheses, and set goals from data. The district also provided substitutes so subject-area teams could learn and plan together during the work day. Aides covered assemblies, plays, and other schoolwide events to allow teachers time for professional learning. The district discontinued a standardized, nationally normed test, eliminated underused records, and allowed teachers to consolidate a number of unit and chapter tests into district assessments given quarterly.



Did Woodlawn students achieve more? Yes. With more focused data-driven conversations, teachers have been able to pinpoint student needs and compare student progress on a regular basis with other students against an agreed-upon standard. Nearly 90% of the school's 690 students met state standards in 2005 as a result.

Source: A steadily flowing stream of information gives teachers much-needed data, by Thomas W. Many and Christine Jakicic. *JSD*, 27(1), 46-51.

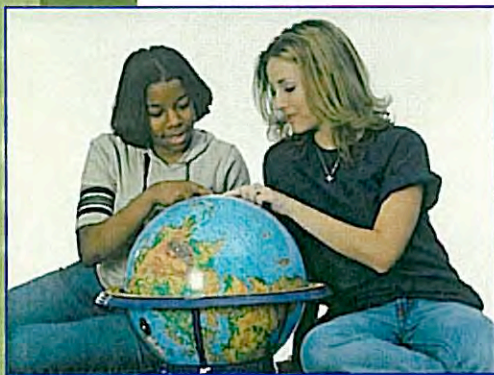
Rockwood School District / Eureka, Missouri

Rockwood schools have clear goals driving the professional learning, and the goals focus on student learning as an outcome. Schools submit annual plans outlining professional learning goals tied to school improvement goals. Teachers work in teams to examine student work, plan common lessons, design common assessments, and share instructional strategies. Teachers take charge of planning their professional learning efforts, supporting their peers as resident experts, coaching colleagues, leading study groups, and sharing with each other. Teachers have time for professional learning during the day, in addition to time set aside during student late-start and early dismissal days that amount to a half-day each month. They continually assess student progress so they can make their instruction more responsive to students' needs.

Do Rockwood students achieve more? Yes. Each of the district's 29 schools can show the link between planned professional learning and higher student achievement on state and national standardized tests. Scores on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) significantly exceeded state and county averages for all content areas in 2006. ACT scores increased from an average of 22.8 in 1997 to 23.2 in 2000 and 23.5 in 2005. The state of Missouri has recognized Rockwood as "Accredited with Distinction in Performance" for three consecutive years. Rockwood also has nine national Blue Ribbon Awards for Excellence from the U.S. Department of Education and 13 Missouri Gold Star Schools of Excellence.

Sources: Tailor-made, by Sue McAdamis. *JSD*, 24(3), 54-56; Principal leadership, by Kathy Peckron. *JSD*, 22(4), 44-48; Teamwork is daily work, by Sue McAdamis. *JSD*, 28(3),

43-47; and Individual paths: Teachers tailor their instruction to meet a variety of student needs, by Sue McAdamis, *JSD*, 22(2), 48-50.



Mountain Brook Schools / Mountain Brook, Alabama

Teachers work in school-based teams during the district's nine professional learning days, analyzing data and outlining specific, measurable goals. They collaborate by grade level or department to design curriculum and instruction to address weaknesses identified by the



data. Elementary teachers spend one staff meeting per month in professional learning activities, and teachers' planning periods are scheduled by grade level to allow additional time to work together.

A districtwide focus is investigating ways to increase students' engagement with their lessons. Professional developers work directly with teachers, and teachers model lessons for each other and talk about their successes and failures. Other forms of professional learning include study groups, peer coaching, mentoring, examining student work, and action research.

Do Mountain Brook students achieve more? Yes. In recent years, four of the district's six schools have earned Blue Ribbon Awards for Excellence from the U.S. Department of Education, the high school twice. *Newsweek* named the high school among the nation's top 100 twice this decade. Among many other examples, 83% of first-time test takers scored at or above grade level on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy in fall 2004, compared with 93% at or above grade level in spring 2005 after teachers spend time focused on improving their instruction in literacy.

For additional examples, please contact NSDC's Executive Director Stephanie Hirsh, stephanie.hirsh@nsdc.org