

VSBPE STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

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INTRODUCTION

Adopting high-quality standards to guide educators and leaders across a career-continuum does not by itself address the needs of educators seeking ways to better serve students. If educators are to be successful using standards, we must also establish opportunities for educators to reflect and grow in their professional practice. The following Professional Learning Standards are meant to ensure that both the time and resources we dedicate to this professional learning are well-spent.

The VSBPE last adopted professional development standards on October 15, 2004. These standards were based on the National Staff Development Council (now called Learning Forward) standards for professional development and included additional items identified as areas of concern for Vermont educators. The standards were intended to be used by principals, curriculum coordinators, professional development committees, and others involved with educator professional development to evaluate current professional development structures and offerings and to guide development of new programs.

Increasing the effectiveness of professional learning is the leverage point with the greatest potential for strengthening and refining the day-to-day performance of educators.
Learning Forward, 2011

Since 2004, Learning Forward has updated the standards to reflect current research and experience from the field about professional learning. Research in the last decade on professional learning has strengthened the consensus on the elements of effective professional learning. The seven new standards focus attention on educator learning that relates to successful student learning and require professional learning that is interactive, relevant, sustained and embedded in everyday practice.

The new standards' emphasis on *professional learning over professional development* is perhaps the most significant shift. Traditionally professional development has referred to activities teachers participate in, such as coursework, conferences, workshops, institutes, mentoring, or action research. Professional development is typically led by external experts who provide little follow-up to educators following the event. Professional development also rarely differentiates among teachers or taps their prior knowledge or experience. Professional learning, on the other hand, refers to a planned and organized process where educators are actively engaged in continuous improvement. Professional learning is collaborative, evidence-based, embedded in an educators' day, and sustained across the school year with opportunities to reflect. Educators work to align their professional learning with their professional goals and with school and district improvement goals.

The updated professional learning standards will support educators in adapting their practice in response to the evolving needs of their students. Educators engaged in professional learning will identify a need and then work to adjust their practice to meet student learning needs, increasing the likelihood of student achievement. Systemic support of this cycle of professional growth by using the standards to plan, facilitate, and evaluate professional learning in schools and districts further ensures that improved learning for educators will lead to improved learning for students.

- 1. LEARNING COMMUNITIES:** Professional Learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
- 2. LEADERSHIP:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.
- 3. RESOURCES:** Professional learning that increases teacher effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.
- 4. DATA:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, access, and evaluate professional learning.
- 5. LEARNING DESIGN:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.
- 6. IMPLEMENTATION:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.
- 7. OUTCOMES:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Learning Forward, 2011
For more information, visit www.learningforward.org

References

National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, “*Toward the Effective Teaching of New College- and Career-Ready Standards: Making Professional Learning Systemic*” (May 2012)

Learning Forward. (2011). *Standards for Professional Learning*. Oxford, OH: Author.

