

Section II. Professional Learning Roles, Responsibilities and Standards



MISSOURI PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GUIDELINES

for student success

Section II: Professional Learning Roles, Responsibilities and Standards

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Introduction

The continuous improvement of educators, schools and districts depends upon the quality of professional learning opportunities that take place within the system. To ensure the successful daily performance of educators, high quality professional learning must be an integral part of every educator's professional career.

The Professional Development Committee (PDC), working in partnership with building leaders and the local school board, utilizes standards for professional learning to guide the efforts of individuals, teams, schools and districts in setting policy, organizing, providing, facilitating, managing, participating in, monitoring and measuring professional learning to increase educator effectiveness and results for all students.

A. Role of Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

The role of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is to provide resources, support and technical assistance to districts. One example of this support is the Missouri Model Teacher and Leader Standards. In June 2010, Senate Bill 291 was passed, directing public school districts in Missouri to adopt teaching standards. While the districts are responsible for actually adopting standards, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education was given the task of offering model standards for districts to use. The Missouri Model Teacher and Leader Standards serve as a resource for educators. The professional continuum for both teachers and leaders describes professional practice developmentally from the candidate preparing to teach or lead to the distinguished level.

The Model Teacher and Leader Standards outline what educators should know and be able to do to ensure that students in Missouri public schools are college and career ready at graduation. The standards describe the basic principles of teaching and leading that represent best-practice for students' academic success. In addition, they articulate expertise and effectiveness for educators through quality indicators across a professional continuum. Since the standards are based on research around effective teaching and leading, they can inform and build the collective capacity needed by educators to continue to grow professionally and develop the knowledge

“Effective professional development is ongoing, intensive, and connected to practice and school initiatives; focuses on the teaching and learning of specific academic content; and builds strong working relationships among teachers...Rigorous scientific studies have shown that when high-quality approaches are sustained by providing teachers with 50 or more hours of support per year, student test scores rise by an average of 21 percentage points.”

and skills to ensure that students are successful. As a result, the standards can guide the formative development of educators and link directly to educator professional learning needs.

In addition to offering model standards, the department offers technical assistance to districts in choosing high-quality approaches to job-embedded professional learning and offers guidance on proper use of professional development funds.

B. Role of School Board

Professional learning cannot be an occasional event teachers must juggle with their other duties and obligations. There must be a comprehensive structure, embedded in the everyday life of school, that ensures teachers can acquire the skill and knowledge they need, practice what they learn, process with colleagues, have ongoing support and feedback, and reflect on the results. This type of professional learning requires an ongoing study of teaching and learning throughout the school year, not just one-shot sessions or separate, unconnected projects or classes. Teachers should meet as whole faculties and in smaller teams. These teams are sometimes called learning communities, communities of practice, study teams or peer coaching teams.

The small teams meet on a regular basis for the purposes of learning, joint lesson planning, studying student data, and problem solving. Time within the regular school day is a key resource for this team problem-solving and learning.

Establishing this model of professional learning in a school district is challenging work. It pushes school leaders to lead in new ways and to learn to support the latest district-wide professional development efforts. Teachers are asked to change habits and traditions in how they approach their own learning. Parents and community members also face challenges. School boards have an important role to play in supporting this change effort.

Community support is essential for creating the professional learning opportunities required to help all students reach higher levels of learning. Parents and community members need to clearly see the tie between professional learning for educators and achievement gains for students. Making a data-driven case for professional learning for educators, defining what that might look like in the building, being prepared to share the research supporting professional learning and then communicating expectations for student achievement gains as a result of the learning will help them realize that the benefits to teachers and students far outweigh any scheduling inconveniences. School boards can make this case for professional learning.

There is also a growing concern across the country that enormous amounts of money are being spent on professional learning with no realized gains in student

achievement. It is critical that professional development monies be used to support only those results-driven, high quality professional development/learning activities that support identified learning gaps for students and educators and which support the school district's current Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

School boards should:

- Send a clear message that the priority for their district's professional development effort is to improve student learning.
- Ensure that the professional learning program is integrally linked to the broader context of school improvement in your district.
- Allocate time for all members of the school staff to meet weekly for sustained, in-depth, collective study of teaching and learning. The built-in weekly time during the school day can be used for the collective study of student learning, training, and for peer coaching teams to meet.
- Ensure that instructional initiatives are selected and implemented because of their potential and documented success for increasing student performance.
- Guarantee the structures exist to support and sustain effective implementation through resources to support and mentor, provide for expert trainers, instructional materials and adequate assessment.
- Help parents and the community understand that altering student schedules so that teachers have time for training and planning improves the quality of instruction for all students.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning efforts by changes in student learning.
- Advocate with state and federal legislators for adequate funding and supports for quality professional learning.

The school board's professional development policy should support the PDC as they plan and provide professional learning opportunities designed to meet objectives of the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. The policy should address the following:

- PDC structure and responsibilities.
- Selection of PDC members and term served.
- PDC role and responsibility in working with beginning and practicing teachers.
- Assessment of teachers' needs and instructional concerns.
- Implementation of plans to meet those needs (time, resources, funding).
- Beginning teacher assistance programs, including providing trained mentors and individual professional growth plans for new teachers.
- Evaluation of district professional development plan to ascertain the impact of the district's investment.

- Expectation that Missouri teacher-training institutions will provide follow-up for beginning teachers.

C. Role of School Leader

PDCs are not intended to replace the role of the school leader, central office staff, or the superintendent in meeting teachers' learning needs and helping to move schools closer to their instructional goals.

The Missouri Model Standards for School Leaders, Standard 2 states: "Education leaders have the knowledge and ability to ensure the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program that applies best practice to student learning and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff."

Learning Forward's *Standards for Professional Learning* states that: "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." According to the standards, leaders:

- Recognize learning as a top priority for students, staff and themselves.
- Have high expectations for all students.
- Understand that improvements require effective professional learning to expand educators' knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions.
- Are culturally responsive to the community they serve.
- Embed professional learning as a core function for school improvement.
- Ensure that professional learning is aligned to classroom, school, and district goals for student and educator learning; use data to monitor and measure its effects on educator and student performance.
- Give frequent, constructive feedback to teachers.
- Collaboratively cultivate a culture based on norms of high expectations, shared responsibility, mutual respect, and relational trust; ensure that all educators engage in effective job-embedded professional learning.

"School leaders are instrumental in fostering an organizational culture of continuous learning and teamwork through venues such as professional learning communities and professional norms, including, for example, open-door policies for observing each other's classrooms."

- Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers and Killion. *Job-Embedded Professional Development*, 2010 Issue Brief, National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality

- Work collaboratively with others to communicate the critical link between increased student learning and educator professional learning.
- Thoughtfully create the conditions, resources, and other supports necessary to support professional learning.
- Engage parents and other caretakers in the education of their children and establish partnerships with key community organizations to promote student success.
- Communicate the importance of professional learning to parents, community and business leaders.
- Ensure equitable distribution of resources to accomplish individual, team, school, and school system learning goals.
- Actively engage with policy and decision makers so that resources, policies, annual calendars, daily schedules, and structures support professional learning to increase student achievement.
- Work within national, regional, and local agencies to adopt standards, monitor implementation, and evaluate professional learning's effectiveness and results.

The importance of school leaders in the professional learning process cannot be overlooked. School leaders can be the key to creating optimal conditions for both educator and student learning. According to Ann Lieberman (1995), school leaders should collaborate with teachers as partners, support teachers and “create opportunities for them to grow.” Professional learning leaders at all levels recommend that teachers and school leaders work together on PDCs to determine the needs of teachers and school leaders alike.

A professional development/learning program cannot be effective without active involvement of school leaders. A 2010 research report, *Learning from Leadership*, produced by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvements, reported that “when principals and teachers share leadership, teachers’ working relationships with one another are stronger and student achievement is higher.

"Reform in the U.S. education system is both lively and messy but, as educators grapple with emerging demands, we found that leadership matters at all levels. Leaders in education provide direction for, and exercise influence over, policy and practice. Their contributions are crucial, our evidence shows, to initiatives aimed at improving student learning, and of course ultimately to the future in which we all share.

Learning from Leadership, 2010
Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement

District support for shared leadership fosters the development of professional learning communities.” The report went on to say that in higher-performing schools, there is generally more engagement opportunities for a wide variety of stakeholders and for teacher teams, parents and community members to be highly invested in the education of students. This only occurs with a strong collaborative leader.

High-performing schools, teachers and school leaders pay attention to multiple measures of student success. Effective professional learning is only as effective as the outcomes it intends to produce. It is driven by student learning needs rather than what adults think they want. It is based on student and educator data and implementation is facilitated by school leaders and teacher leaders. As Stephanie Hirsh stated in the 2011 document, *Components of Effective Professional Development*, “A coherent plan with measures for success puts professional development on the correct track.”

Facilitating a collaborative planning process that includes teachers, school leaders, administrators and other stakeholders is essential to achieving maximum results. All educators must be active learners in the effort to improve student achievement.

D. Role of Professional Development Committee

Structure and Membership

The [Excellence in Education Act](#) requires each school district to have a Professional Development Committee (PDC). The PDC must work in collaboration with teachers and leaders for continuous school improvement. The legislation does not stipulate a required number of members for the building or district committee. The number of members will vary according to the size of school and district. Ideally, it is desirable to have representatives from various grade levels and content areas.

Although the law does not specify qualifications for committee members, criteria for PDC membership can be included in the district’s professional development plan or guidelines. However, the law is clear in its designation of how the committee is chosen: “The members of each PDC shall be selected by the teachers employed by the school district.”

Members can be chosen by the faculty as a whole, nominated and elected by colleagues within specific levels and/or disciplines, or selected by teachers in another way. Since the law does not specify the term of service for PDC members, it will be up to the district to design policy that addresses this issue. In some districts, committee members serve three-year, staggered terms. Other districts recommend that committee members serve at least two years and no more than three in staggered terms. New members could be elected in December or January, trained in February or March, and could begin service in April. This allows time for PDC

orientation and training prior to the decision making process that will determine the Professional Development Plan for the summer and following school year.

Since the law does not specify exactly how the PDC is to be structured, it becomes important for the committee to develop organizational procedures. Consider the following:

- The number of members on the committee.
- When members should be elected.
- Whether membership is to be proportional/ representational of the certificated staff in the district, building and/or grade levels.
- The process to be used to nominate and elect PDC members.
- The length of term members will serve.
- Whether there will be a term limit on any level of participation.
- When and how the election process for teacher representatives will occur.
- Whether a building-level PDC will be needed to determine specific building needs; if so, how membership on those committees will be established.

Teachers may elect the district staff development director and/or other school leader to serve on the committee. In such cases, the staff development director or leader would be voting members. Otherwise, the school leader should serve on the committee as an ex-officio member with no voting privileges. It is important to remember that active involvement of school leaders is important to the implementation of successful professional learning/ development programs. Since educator evaluation drives educator learning, and educator learning is driven by student learning needs, it is important that the planning of professional learning be a collaborative process that meets individual educator, building and district improvement targets. This practice promotes communication and should expedite the work of the committee. Consideration in the district level plan needs to be given to the following:

- How will the PDC maximize collaboration opportunities with school leaders?
- Will there be ex-officio members on the PDC?
- How will ex-officio members be selected?
- What role will ex-officio members play on the committee?

The PDC and subcommittee members should elect a chairperson. In addition, the committee may also choose to elect a vice chairperson and record keeper. The PDC should meet as often as needed. The following questions should be considered:

- What will be the PDC structure-specific roles and responsibilities? (chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, treasurer, etc.)
- How often will the PDC meet?
- Where will the PDC meet?
- Will there be a standing elections sub-committee?

- Will the district have building level PDCs to determine specific building needs? If so, how will membership be established at the building level?
- Will PDC funds be allocated to individual buildings?

Member Training

If PDCs are to be effective, they must plan, implement and evaluate their professional development programs. Committee members should be trained in their roles and responsibilities. State statute and district policy defines their role in assisting both beginning and practicing teachers. The PDC's role in implementing a professional development program that is a job-embedded systemic approach, begins with members who understand high quality staff development and adult learning theory that is data-driven and focused on improving student learning. Committees seeking training and support can consider the following support services: the Regional Professional Development Centers, The Leadership Academy, the Show Me Professional Development Conference, associations and organizations.

In addition, Learning Forward's [*Standards for Professional Learning*](#) contributes to educators' expertise and the quality of their professional practice. The standards are centered on evidence-based best-practice and set expectations for effective professional learning tied to student learning outcomes. The study of the standards will provide a foundational knowledge about effective professional learning for new and veteran committee members. A closer look at the standards is provided in Section F.

E. Responsibilities of Professional Development Committee

Responsibilities Mandated by Law

The roles and responsibilities of committee members concerning the assistance of both beginning and practicing teachers have evolved over time in district policy, but some forms of assistance are defined by state statute. PDCs were first created through the [Excellence in Education Act of 1985 \(Sections 168.400.4\(1\) \(2\) & f. RSMo.\)](#).

School districts' PDCs were charged with four major responsibilities in this law:

- Identify instructional concerns and remedies for beginning and experienced teachers.
- Serve as a confidential consultant upon a teacher's request.
- Assess faculty needs and develop in-service opportunities for certified school staff.
- Present to the proper authority, faculty suggestions, ideas, and recommendations pertaining to classroom instruction within the school district. The "proper authority" to approach with suggestions, ideas, and

recommendations on instruction varies from district to district depending on who coordinates curriculum

With the passage of the [Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 \(SB380\)](#), PDC responsibilities changed from an emphasis on meeting individual teacher needs to meeting districts needs as identified in the district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. Also, rather than presenting suggestions, ideas and recommendations to the proper authority, this bill specifically directs the PDC to consult with the administrator(s) and then obtain board approval.

The PDC has significant financial responsibility in Missouri schools as mandated by law. According to the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 some of the responsibilities of PDCs regarding the expenditure of 1 percent of designated state aide received by the district include:

- Consulting with administrators.
- Determining purposes for expending professional development monies.
- Securing school board approval for expenditures that meet district's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan objectives.
- Expending at least 75 percent of the annually allotted money for professional development no later than June 30 of the current fiscal year.

In 2010, [House Bill 1543](#) passed suspending the dedicated 1percent professional development funds and the 75 percent funding and fund placement requirements for teacher salaries in fiscal years 2011 through 2013 for years in which the governor withheld funds for the school funding formula basic apportionment under section 163.031. No new legislation was enacted to continue this 1 percent suspension and House Bill 1543 sunset on July 31, 2013. For districts, this means Missouri is back under the umbrella of the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993.

Responsibilities for Practicing Teachers

Both the Excellence in Education Act of 1985 and the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 recognized the importance of educator development and its direct link to improved learning for students. Clearly the authors believed teachers should play a significant role in defining the context, content and process of their own learning as is seen in the creation of a PDC in every district.

Since the enactment of this key legislation, Missouri educators, like others across the country, have been using professional learning to blaze a trail to improved student learning, much like wagon trains on their journey west. Like the early settlers and explorers, educators had no maps, roads or navigation systems to guide them and no clear understanding of what would be needed to be successful on this journey.

Sometimes the mountains were too high; trails too narrow or steep; the rivers too wide; the resources too scarce; and the conditions too harsh.

Educators, like the early settlers, found that expectations were often unrealistic; the identified direction or focus often incorrect; the tools/strategies mismatched for the learning and target outcomes; the culture and climate inhospitable due to a lack of trust, vision, values, and goals; the leadership incapable or unknowledgeable about leading change efforts; colleagues non-collaborative and incapable or unwilling to share, participate in, or implement new learning; and resources (time, staff, materials, technology, mentors/coaches) limited or nonexistent. They also found that community, school board and district leadership – "the wagon train support team" – hadn't signed on for the journey. Most of these early professional learning opportunities failed to lead to higher levels of learning for students.

It is important for PDCs to understand this professional development journey and learn from it. Like the early settlers who "blazed the trail west" and established the context, process and content necessary to successfully reach their destination, early professional development efforts provided valuable data and research that helped define effective professional learning today. *Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning* (see Section F) describes, in detail, the elements necessary for effective professional learning focused on student achievement.

The focus of the PDC must be on student learning outcomes informed by multiple student and educator data sources aligned with school improvement indicators, the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) standards, and the local board of education goals and objectives. In collaboration with the school leader, leadership team, or district curriculum coordinator, the PDC should prepare a plan to meet the identified educator learning indicators that will lead to improved student learning. Careful consideration should be given to the design of learning opportunities. Knowledge of the learners, the magnitude of the expected change and the comfort of the learners with each other can impact the success of the professional learning experience.

To increase student learning, adult learning needs to move beyond simple comprehension to consistent application. For this to occur, educators must be given ample time and resources to practice the new learning; understand its purpose, meaning and critical attributes and make connections to previous learning; and also have opportunities for assessment and constructive feedback. Equally important is the chance to work collaboratively with colleagues and reflect on the new learning. Research has shown that 49+ hours of professional learning over a six- to 12- month period is needed to move initial learning to consistent application.

Decisions about resources for professional learning will require a thorough understanding of student and educator needs, clear commitment to ensure equity in resource allocation, and thoughtful consideration of priorities to achieve the

intended outcomes for both student and educator. PDCs will want to work closely with school leaders or the leadership team to ensure this occurs.

According to research, if educators are not learning collaboratively as part of a team that is focused on continuous improvement in the context of a system-wide plan, professional learning is less likely to be effective. Effective professional learning is embedded in a culture committed to continuous growth and improvement; informed by data and research on student and educator performance; promotes collective responsibility; and holds each member accountable for increased student achievement and educator learning.

When professional learning is focused on student learning priorities, provides sufficient opportunities for staff differentiated learning and time to practice in their own classrooms with ongoing assessment and constructive feedback, then the goals of school improvement plans, Comprehensive School Improvement Plan and District Professional Development Plans are achievable.

Learning Forward has created a companion document to the *Standards for Professional Learning*, the [Facilitator Guide: Standards for Professional Learning](#). The guide includes an introduction to the standards; a slide show for training; an introductory video; and activities and assessment tools that can be used to train new members, help new PDC members connect the earlier standards to the 2011 version, unpack the standards and use the standards as an assessment tool for districts and schools to look for areas of strength and those needing more development.

Needs Assessment

A Professional Learning Needs Assessment should be considered a continuous, data-driven and ever-changing means of keeping a district responsive to student and educator needs. The frequency, methods and scope of the assessment should be considered within the perspective of need, time, resources and other district initiatives (i.e. new curricula, Missouri School Improvement Program, concerns and reports). A broad, comprehensive process may take as long as six to eight months and should be continuously revised based on student and educator learning indicators. Intervening assessments may be very focused and specific involving considerably less time and collection of information.

Routine, general assessments often have a negative effect on staff and provide minimal value to the PDC's work. Regardless of the scope and breadth of the assessment, the following steps should be considered.

1. Establish domain. What needs areas will be considered?

- Communication/information. Is information available and appropriately communicated among and between administrators, school board members, staff, parents, patrons and students?
- Content/instruction. What do we teach and how do we teach it?
- Student performance/achievement. Are all students learning and achieving?
- Resources and utilization. What quantity and quality of resources are available and how well are they being used?
- Organization. How well are we using time, personnel, space, etc. in our classrooms, schools and district?
- Climate. How do all members of our community feel about their work, roles, and relationships in the district? What level of commitment is evident?

2. Determine the population from which to collect data. Who are the people affected by the results of this needs assessment?

- Certified staff
- Support staff
- Parents
- Students
- Other community members

3. Determine data collection procedures. How will we collect the needed data?

It should be noted here that the charge for this task is the responsibility of the PDC, and as part of that responsibility, the committee should become knowledgeable about the variety of assessment sources and the techniques possible for gathering multiple measures of data as they plan for improved instruction and higher student achievement. It also should be noted that a frequently forgotten area in the collection design is the lack of any “strength” assessment data. It is important to provide this data if a district is to know, celebrate and build on the strengths of its schools, staff, students and community.

- Interviews are key. Individual and interactive groups can be led through this face-to-face question and discussion process.
- Questionnaires/surveys can be designed to offer fixed, well framed questions appropriate to specific groups of stakeholders. These questions must also be appropriate to the scope and focus of the assessment.

- Observations can be made of staff, student or procedural happenings, and specific data can be gathered in such areas as attitude, interrelationships and timing.
 - Archival material can provide already available information on a wide range of targeted areas such as student achievement, discipline and suspension statistics, dropout and transient rates, Missouri School Improvement Program data, resource inventories, personnel accreditations, library checkouts, etc. These data can also support and substantiate information obtained through other methods.
4. Collect, compile and analyze data. How will we make sense of the data?
- By using and connecting a variety of needs assessment instruments, the committee can develop a more accurate and total picture of the district as it is now, including needs and strengths.
 - Both individual and organizational patterns need to be assessed.
5. Identify nature and magnitude of needs. What do we know from the data?
- The importance of the revealed needs should be considered, as well as the discrepancy or “gap” between the existing state and the ideal state. Priority should be given to those needs that most directly correlate to student learning outcomes.
 - The PDC may need more information even after the assessment is conducted.
6. Prioritize needs. Where do we begin?
- Criteria for priority ranking should be set in terms that are consistent and relevant to the contextual criteria and goals of the district. Arbitrary criteria that come from political pressures, lobby groups or special interest groups should not rule the process.
 - While prioritizing needs is a necessary step for program planning and utilization of resources, it does not mean that only those needs “on top” get attention. It is not necessary to completely meet one need before addressing others. Often needs can be addressed without large allocations of time and resources. The committee should seek ways to address as many needs as possible, especially needs related to teaching and learning.
 - Set objectives and desired outcomes. What do we want to see happen?
 - The improvement outcomes and objectives should be linked directly to the assessment data.

- The activities should ultimately impact student learning and achievement.
- Design professional learning activities/programs to achieve outcomes. How will we accomplish our desired outcomes?
 - Before designing activities and/or programs, it is critical to consider these questions: Why does this need exist? What are the results we hope to achieve through focused professional learning to meet this need? What follow-up steps are necessary? Without inquiry the activities and program designed may be superficial and ineffective.
 - As the committee designs activities and programs, it should incorporate on-going methods of evaluation. The results will provide important data for the next assessment and will be a means for linking student achievement to professional learning.
 - The committee should consider a variety of professional learning options in its design. Not all outcomes can be accomplished with a workshop.
 - Follow-up activities should be planned and implemented to reinforce teacher learning that can be tied to student learning outcomes.
- Communicate the needs assessment results to all stakeholders, linking those results to the desired outcomes of the recommended professional learning program.

The PDC will disseminate the district's professional learning plan to all staff. A copy should be available in each building. In addition, an ongoing update outlining goals, strategies, assessments, and budget should be made available to district staff.

Responsibilities of Beginning Teacher Assistance

Missouri mandates and teacher certification require professional development programs for beginning teachers who have no prior teaching experience. Collegial support and practical assistance is needed to help beginning teachers improve skills, increase student success, and remain in the profession.

1. Professional Development/Growth Plan

According to the law, school districts must provide a professional development/growth plan for each faculty member who has no teaching experience. A district may delegate this responsibility to the PDC. This plan should be generic in nature, and used as a guide. The mentor will help the beginning teacher develop a specific Individual Professional Growth Plan.

The plan must address the beginning teacher's first two years in the classroom. The goals identified in the plan should relate to the district's evaluation criteria. The plan also may reflect educational research on effective teaching. However, the purpose of the professional growth plan is to assist, not to evaluate, the beginning teacher.

The beginning teacher's mentor should initiate preparation of the plan. A professional learning team or triad consisting of the school leader, the mentor and the beginning teacher will be formed to help the beginning teacher. Subsequent planning between the mentor, the building leader, and the beginning teacher should occur. The plan may include goals in areas such as classroom management, understanding district policies, effective parent communication and use of curriculum guides, equipment, and materials. The plan must respond to individual needs and take into account the fourth-year college assessment, if provided. Copies of the initial plan and revisions should be kept on file. The PDC will want to develop a system to monitor the completion of the plan so proper reporting of progress can be established.

When appropriate, usually at the beginning of the second semester, the beginning teacher should revise the individual professional growth plan, tailoring the new goals to his or her needs. To do this, the mentor will meet with and counsel the beginning teacher as needed. Release time and/or compensation for the mentor is strongly encouraged. The beginning teacher should continue to adjust the plan as experience is gained during the first two years on the job. Continuing teacher certification in Missouri requires a plan until the teacher has completed two of the following requirements: 10 years teaching experience, Master's Degree, and/or National Board Certification (NBPTS). (Information about National Board Certification may be found at <http://www.nbpts.org>.)

Discussions about an individual professional growth plan and mentoring plan applies to all certification areas. All Initial Professional Certificate requirements apply to teachers with provisional certification except the 30 clock hours of professional growth, which cannot begin until the teacher is no longer teaching on a provisional certificate.

2. Mentor Teachers

The Excellence in Education Act of 1985 suggests and the rule for teacher certification (5 CSR 20-800.010) requires that beginning teacher support systems include an entry year mentor program provided by the district. A second-year mentoring program was added as a requirement in the 2003 certification law revision.

[161.375 RSMo](#) charged the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education with developing minimal standards for high-quality mentoring programs. The Missouri Advisory Council of Certification for Educators (MACCE) and the department collaboratively created the Missouri Mentoring Standards. An official copy of the full text of this regulation is contained in the Code of State Regulations published by the Office of Secretary of State. The Mentoring Program Standards list appropriate criteria for selecting mentors. The criteria includes selecting experienced teachers who have demonstrated success in the classroom, are open to continued training, and have a positive attitude towards mentoring. An appropriate mentor would be a faculty member with certification and experience in the same area as the beginning teacher or one teaching at the same grade level as the beginning teacher. Small neighboring districts may consider cooperating to arrange beneficial mentor relationships.

Collaboration should occur between building-level or district-level administrators and the PDC in making mentor assignments. In some districts the school leader identifies and asks teachers to serve as mentors, but it is recommended that the selection be made collaboratively.

A mentor teacher has been described as a “coach, trainer, positive role model, developer of talent [and] opener of doors.” The mentor teacher facilitates learning and professional growth and is not an “evaluator.” Discussions between the mentor and the mentee should remain confidential. Mentors should use either the district Teacher Evaluation Standards or the Missouri Model Teaching Standards and Indicators as discussion starters with beginning teachers to describe student and teacher behavior. These standards and indicators also provide ideas for meaningful action research in the classroom. For more information about teacher evaluation standards, visit dese.mo.gov/eq/documents/TeacherStandards.pdf.

After selection, the PDC has the responsibility to train mentors in order to help them meet the needs of new teachers. PDC members will want to be familiar with [Appendix A](#) of the Mentoring Standards, as it describes roles and responsibilities for mentoring. Release time and/or compensation for mentors are strongly encouraged. Thorough, consistent development and continuing support of mentor teachers is very important to the success of

the program. A district's PDC, in cooperation with the district's administration, should design, implement and evaluate the mentor program. The program for mentors should address the [Mentoring Standards](#).

In certain cases, it may be advisable to reassign mentor teachers. For example, if a new teacher wants to work in a second area of certification, a new mentor in the area could be assigned. More importantly, major personality differences or disagreements between a beginning teacher and mentor warrant assignment of a new mentor. This is addressed in the Mentoring Standards. In such cases, the school leader and the PDC must work together to protect the dignity of those involved.

Refer to Regional Professional Development Centers (RPDC) and professional organizations for assistance and resources for mentors and mentor training.

3. Higher Education Assistance

According to the Excellence in Education Act of 1985, beginning teachers' assistance program "shall include assistance from the teacher education program which provided the teacher's training if such training was provided in a Missouri college or university." However, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education certification procedures will accept the provision of assistance from any teacher education program at a Missouri college or university regardless of whether or not the teacher graduated from that institution. Often Missouri colleges and universities

Professional Development Committee members should know:

- The roles and responsibilities of the PDC in the district.
- The correct protocol to use to contact key district personnel having a role in the professional development process and plan.
- How to use communication skills, conflict resolution skills and collaboration strategies effectively.
- How to make data-driven decisions to assess, prioritize and align the professional learning needs of educators based on student learning outcomes.
- How to design effective learning opportunities for educators.
- How to access high-quality resources to provide services and information to the district.
- How to provide sustained support and ongoing learning opportunities for effective learning and implementation.
- How to monitor and assess progress against established benchmarks for educator learning and implementation and student achievement.

partner with a professional association or Regional Professional Development Center to offer beginning teacher assistance programs throughout the state.

The school district and the teacher involved should work together to select an acceptable beginning teacher assistance program. Missouri's certification renewal and upgrade forms require a local district administrator to "sign off" that the candidate completed an acceptable Beginning Teacher Assistance Program.

F. Learning Forward's *Standards for Professional Learning*

The following information is from Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning, 2011. To read the Standards for Professional Learning in its entirety, visit learningforward.org/standards/index.cfm

The new *Standards for Professional Learning* are based on a holistic view. The seven standards work in partnership to ensure effective professional learning. It is important for committee members to realize that focusing on some of the standards, while ignoring others, can lead to failure in achieving the desired outcomes from professional learning activities.

For PDCs that utilized the previous edition of Learning Forward's standards, the context, process and content organizer is not prominent but still is an important part of the standards. The Standards for Professional Learning each describe the context, processes and content for effective professional learning and the revised stem confirms and makes evident the direct tie between student learning and professional learning.

Embedded within the stem, are four core concepts:

1. Educator – means both professional and support staff who contribute to student learning.
2. Effectiveness – refers to educators' ability to meet performance expectations – utilize evidence-based strategies, create the conditions for learning and increase student learning.
3. Results – refers to all aspects of student learning and growth- academic, social and emotional.
4. Students – means "all" students regardless of where they come from and that "all" are the responsibility of the entire school faculty.

Professional Learning Commitment (the context)

1. **Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students** occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
 - Learning communities apply a cycle of continuous improvement to engage in inquiry, action research, data analysis, planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation.
 - Learning communities share collective responsibility for the learning of all students within the school or school system.
 - Learning communities provide an ongoing system of support for continuous improvement and implementation.

2. **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.
 - Skillful leaders recognize that high expectations for students, requires effective professional learning to expand educator's knowledge, skills, practices and dispositions.
 - Skillful leaders demand effective professional learning focused on results for educators and students.
 - Skillful leaders have a deep understanding of and cultural responsiveness to the community they serve.
 - Skillful leaders embed professional learning into the organization's vision by communicating that it is a core function to realizing results for students.
 - Skillful leaders align professional learning to classroom, school, and school-system goals for student and educator learning, using data to monitor and measure its effect on educator and student performance.
 - Skillful leaders clearly articulate the critical link between increased student achievement and educator professional learning.
 - Skillful leaders apply understanding of organizational and human changes to create the conditions, provide for the resources, and support professional learning and change.
 - Skillful leaders make their own learning very visible.
 - Skillful leader's model attitudes and behavior they expect of all educators.
 - Skillful leader's engage with all stakeholders within the educational community, with parents, business personnel and community organizations to communicate the importance of professional learning to promote the success of all students.

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

- Decisions about resources for professional learning require a thorough understanding of student and educator learning needs, clear commitment to ensure equity in resource allocation, and thoughtful consideration of priorities to achieve the intended outcomes for students and educators.
- Effective professional learning requires a significant investment in time (15 percent). Education systems worldwide have schedules that provide time in the school day for teacher collaboration and planning to increase student learning.
- Use of high-speed broadband, web-based and other technologies, professional journals and books, software, and a comprehensive learning management system is essential to support individual and collaborative professional learning.
- Access to just-in-time learning resources and participation in local or global communities or networks available to individuals or teams during the workday expand opportunities for job-embedded professional learning.
- Investments in professional learning outside the school or workplace supplement and advance job-embedded professional learning.
- Tracking and monitoring resources used for professional learning is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of their allocation and use.
- Decisions about funding must specifically address inequities in learning needs and opportunities to learn.
- Coordination of resources is essential to their appropriate and effective use.

Professional Learning Practice (the process)

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

- Data from multiple sources inform decisions about professional learning that leads to increases in student and educator learning.
- Multiple sources of data could include: common formative and summative assessments, performance assessments, observations, work-samples, performance metrics, portfolios, and reflections (student, educator, and system)
- Educator support in the effective analysis and use of data to make informed decisions.

- Other forms of data are useful in understanding student needs (demographics, engagement, attendance, student perceptions behavior and discipline, extracurricular activities, etc.)
- Knowing student learning needs helps guide decisions about educator professional learning.
- School leaders and/or system administrators engage in data collection and analysis to determine changes in policy, procedures, fiscal resources, human resources, time, or technology, needed to support school- and team-based learning.
- Data is used to monitor and assess progress against established benchmarks.
- School teams use data to monitor implementation of professional learning and its effect on educator practice and student learning.
- Frequent and on-going collection and use of data about inputs, outputs and outcomes of professional learning reinforce the cycle of continuous improvement by allowing for ongoing adjustments in the learning process to increase results for students, educators and systems.
- Well-designed, ongoing evaluation of professional learning addresses its worth, merit and effectiveness.

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

- Integrating theories, research, and models of human learning into the planning and design of professional learning contributes to its effectiveness.
- Learning designs are influenced by goals of learning, characteristics of learners, the comfort level with the learning process and with each other, their familiarity with the content, the magnitude of the expected change, work environment, and resources available to support the learning.
- The design of professional learning affects its quality and effectiveness.
- Common design features are: active engagement, modeling, reflection, metacognition, application, feedback, ongoing support, and formative and summative assessment, that support change in knowledge, skills, dispositions and practice.
- Professional learning occurs in face-to-face, online and hybrid settings.
- Most professional learning occurs as a part of the workday, while other forms occur outside the school day.
- Some professional learning designs require team members or

external experts as facilitators.

- Learning designs use synchronous or asynchronous interactions, live or simulated models and experiences, and print and non-print resources to present information, model skills and procedures, provide low-risk practice, and support transfer to the workplace.
- Job-embedded learning designs engage individuals, pairs, or teams of educators in professional learning during the workday.
- Job-embedded learning opportunities include: analyzing student data, case studies, peer observations or visitations, simulations, co-teaching, action research, peer and expert coaching, observing and analyzing demonstrations of practice, problem-based learning, inquiry into practice, student observation, study groups, data analysis, constructing and scoring assessments, examining student or educator work, lesson study, video clubs, professional reading, or book studies.
- Technology exponentially increases possibilities for personalizing, differentiating, and deepening learning, especially for educators who have limited access to on-site professional learning.
- Educators choosing designs for professional learning, must consider:
 - All phases of the learning process – knowledge and skill acquisition, application, reflection, refinement, assessment and evaluation.
 - The intended outcome drawn from student and educator learning needs
 - Level of educator engagement required to move beyond comprehension to implementation
 - Educators' learning characteristics and preferences
 - Research around adult learning theory
 - Educator professional learning must provide many opportunities (+50 hours) for educators to practice new learning with ongoing assessment, feedback, and coaching

"Evidence of ongoing increases in student learning is a powerful motivator for teachers during the inevitable setbacks that accompany complex change efforts."

Standards for Professional Learning, 2011

so the learning becomes fully integrated into routine behavior.

6. 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.

- Those responsible for professional learning use change process research to support long-term change in practice by extending learning over time. They:
 - Commit to long-term change by setting clear goals and maintaining high expectations for implementation with fidelity
 - Provide and align resources, including time, staff, materials, and technology
 - Use metrics to gather evidence to monitor and assess implementation
 - Model salient practices and maintain a sustained focus on the goals and strategies for achieving them
 - Create and maintain a culture of support
 - Engender community support for implementation by communicating incremental successes, reiterating goals, and discussing the complexities of deep change
- Sustained support for implementation over-time produces changes in educator practice and student learning. It may be formalized through:
 - Ongoing workshops designed to deepen understanding and refine educator practice. Sustained coaching, reflection, or reviewing of results. Educators planning, implementing,

"Job-embedded professional development refers to teacher learning that is grounded in day-to-day teaching practice and is designed to enhance teachers' content-specific instructional practices with the intent of improving student learning (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995; Hirsh, 2009). It is primarily school or classroom based and is integrated into the workday, consisting of teachers assessing and finding solutions for authentic and immediate problems of practice as part of a cycle of continuous improvement (Hawley and Valli, 1999).

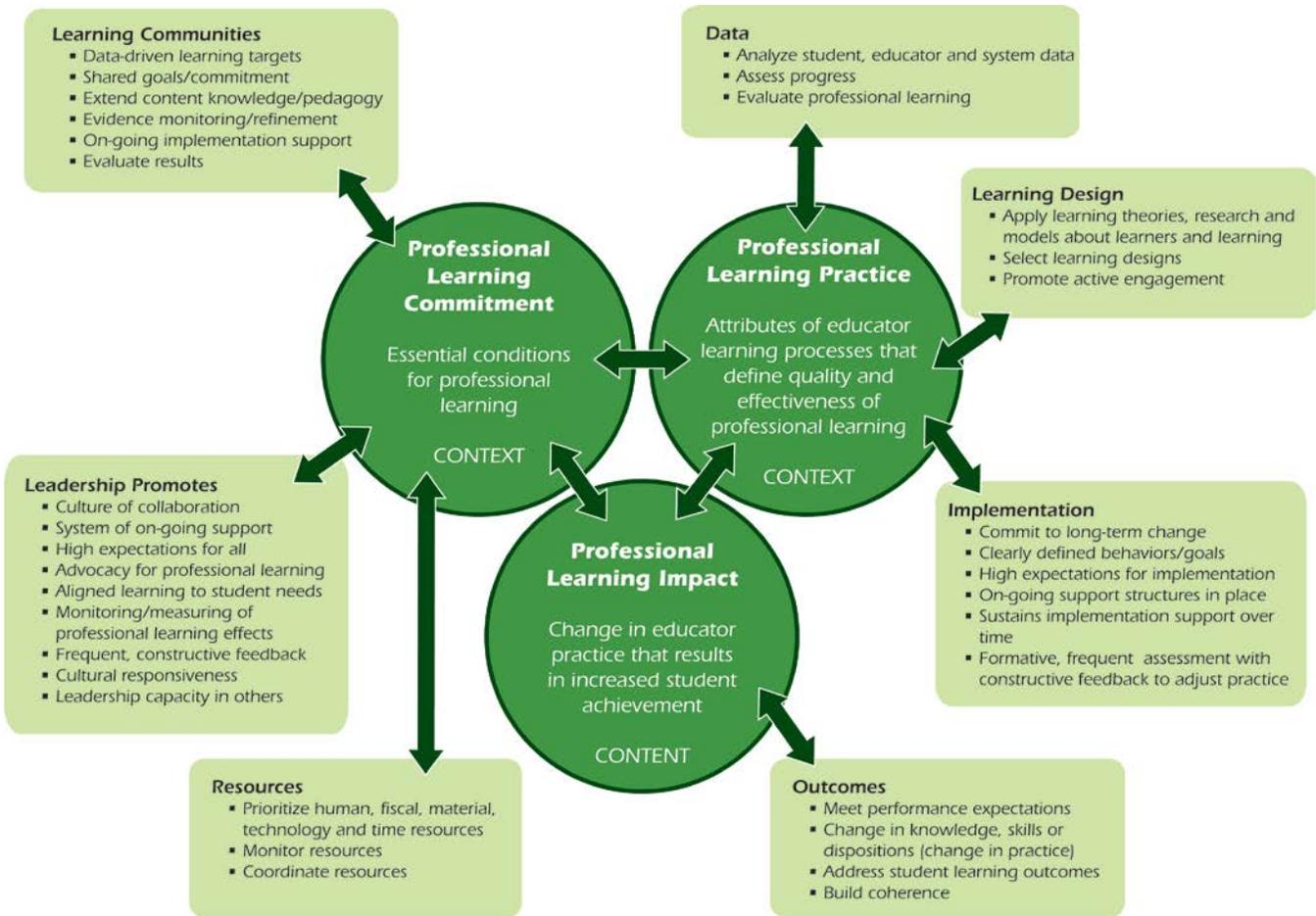
- analyzing, reflecting and evaluating the integration of professional learning into their practice.
 - Professional learning communities that meet to learn or refine instructional strategies, plan lessons, share experiences in implementation, analyze student work, reflect on results, and assess progress toward goals.
 - School and system-based coaches who provide extended learning opportunities, implementation resources or demonstrations of the practices.
 - Peer support groups, study groups, peer observations, co-teaching and co-planning opportunities to extend support for implementation.
- Effective constructive feedback accelerates implementation by providing formative assessment through learning and the implementation process. Effective constructive feedback:
- Assesses practice in relation to established expectations.
 - Allows educators to adjust or refine practice.
 - Is based on clearly defined expected behaviors.
 - Acknowledges progress toward expectations.
 - Provides guidance for achieving full implementation.
 - Is focused, objective, relevant, valid and purposeful.

Professional Learning Impact (the content)

7. **Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students** aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.
- Effective professional learning is aligned to educator performance standards which define expectations for an effective workforce, guide career-long professional learning, and set fair and reliable indicators of effectiveness for measuring educator performance.
 - Effective professional learning deepens educators' content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and understanding of how students learn the specific discipline.
 - Effective professional learning uses student learning outcomes as its outcomes and models and engages educators in practices they can expect to implement within their classrooms and workplaces.
 - Effective professional learning is coherent and builds on what educators already know; focuses on learning outcomes and pedagogy aligned with national or local curriculum and assessments

for educator and student learning; aligns with educator performance standards; and supports educators in developing sustained ongoing professional communication with other educators who are engaged in similar changes in their practice.

The Professional Learning Standards, like Missouri's Model Educator Standards, can be described by the following professional frames:



For PDCs that have utilized *Moving NSDC's Staff Development Standards into Practice: Innovation Configurations (ICs)* (2003) to set expectations and for possible training for members, Learning Forward now has the [new ICs](#) available.

Questions and Answers

In collecting data to assess professional learning needs, would it be appropriate to include discipline reports, drop out information, attendance (both teacher and student), resource inventories, transfers in and out of the district, library circulation, building inventories, etc.?

Yes. This would all fall under the category of archival material. This information could help the PDC (PDC) examine trends which may need addressing through their work.

The district obligates the required 1 percent of its budget for professional development. The district determines they will only budget the required 75 percent of the 1 percent for professional development. They plan to use the remaining money for capital improvements. Is this acceptable?

No. All of the 1 percent professional development monies must be spent for professional learning.

Can a school leader serve as a mentor?

Yes, but only in extreme circumstances. For example, the school leader is the only one with a physics background who can mentor the teacher. In such cases, evaluation must be separated from mentoring. This mentoring relationship is not recommended; rather, a qualified teacher from a neighboring district might better serve as a mentor.