Equity Drivers

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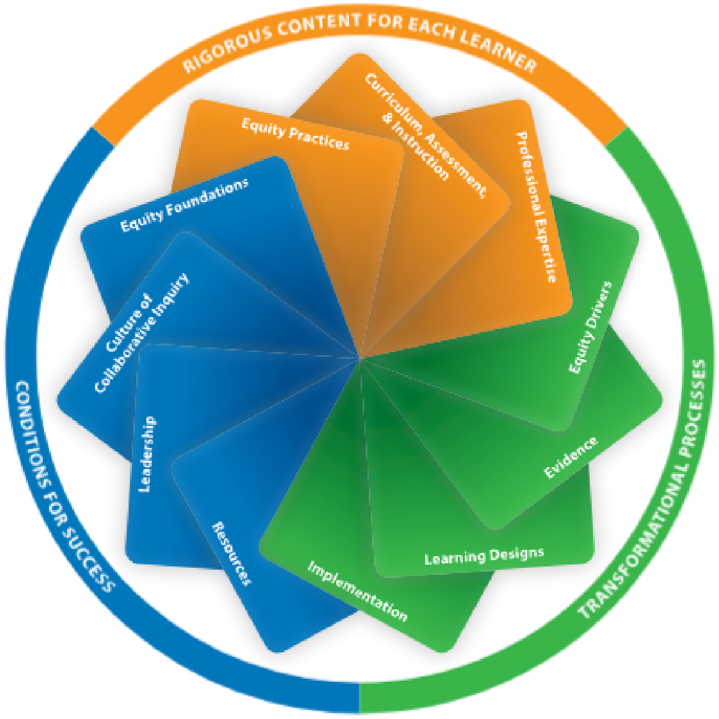
THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

Standards for Professional Learning



LEARNING FORWARD

Equity Drivers

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators prioritize equity in professional learning practices, identify and address their own biases and beliefs, and collaborate with diverse colleagues.

Educators create more equitable learning environments when they engage in professional learning that builds knowledge about how to demonstrate understanding and affirm each person's identity and contribution and supports reflection about how learners' backgrounds and experiences impact teaching, learning, and culture.

Educators work independently and collaboratively, within their sphere of influence and beginning with a clear assessment of their current state, to achieve school and system priorities related to equity. The collective commitment to equity builds over time as individual educators' dispositions, behaviors, and interactions increasingly lead to equity.

Educators in all roles have responsibility for making the processes of professional learning equitable, which contributes to developing equitable systems and disrupting inequitable patterns and practices for all learners, whether student or educator.

Here are the main constructs of the Equity Drivers standard.

Educators prioritize equity in professional learning practices.

Educators engage in professional learning that deepens their knowledge about the importance of equity by examining the evidence about the impact and causes of inequities. They learn about the beliefs and practices that support equitable learning, develop their understanding of the vision for equity in their school or system, and build their capacity to examine their own practices related to equity.

Educators collaborate with colleagues and learn from experts about diverse cultures, identities, and others' lived experiences and how those varying perspectives contribute to a rich learning environment for educators and students.
Educators build their understanding about the system of which they are a part, examining systemic inequities, institutional biases, power dynamics, prevalent mindsets, and expectations and misconceptions about learning and abilities.

They develop their understanding about issues such as representation and unconscious bias and how these impact schools and classrooms. They design and lead professional learning that signals and models respect for racial, cultural, and gender identities and expressions in individual and collaborative learning experiences.

They prioritize learning that broadens their understanding of the world and their approaches and roles relative to their fellow educators and their students.

Not only do educators actively learn how to create inclusive professional learning experiences, they also learn to identify professional learning practices that disenfranchise learners and need to be discontinued and replaced. They advocate for inclusive professional learning practices and expanded pathways for growth and leadership.

Professional learning leaders develop their own expertise to support and facilitate reflection about equity and any resulting shifts in beliefs and practices. Educators work with shared expectations for equitable professional learning practices that are enacted through frameworks and protocols. They prioritize an equity lens on their learning through such tools as equity inventories and frameworks, teacher and student surveys, equity walks, classroom observations, and community interviews.

Educators use data analysis and vetted strategies to reveal and address equity challenges. For instance, teams develop and use protocols and tools to monitor equity and balance of voices in meetings to move toward more inclusive decision-making.

Professional learning leaders use technology-enabled dashboards to make information and progress toward equity transparent. Educators in leadership positions use data about teacher qualifications, experience, assignments, and attrition to guide their professional learning choices and priorities.

Educators use multiple sources of evidence to plan professional learning.

Building from what they have learned about the importance of equity in professional learning and how identities and experiences impact teaching and professional learning, educators reflect on their own backgrounds, mindsets, and practices. Educators discuss instances of privilege and bias in their day-to-day experiences and articulate their own assumptions about key concepts like equality and fairness.

Educators engage in conversations grounded in a culture of open and respectful dialogue that encourages individual and collective reflection. They implement and model norms that encourage educators to reflect on how their own privilege, race, and class might be impacting their mindsets, practices, and expectations of themselves and each other.

Educators use their knowledge about privilege, power, historical biases, and institutional racism to communicate about their own experiences. To deepen their understanding, educators in all roles seek out discussions with colleagues and students to learn more about the ways in which their identity has impacted their own learning.

Educators work together to define the inequities that impact them most and test the strategies that might lead to improvements. Educators learn about and use research-based frameworks and protocols that help them identify whether they are perpetuating beliefs or upholding barriers to learning opportunities for adults or students.

Educators combine knowledge with an understanding of their own perspectives and context to articulate the steps required to achieve a vision for equity as well as the indicators of progress along the way. They look to relevant research to identify whether any content is missing or undervalued or whether there are any blind spots related to how they are learning about increasing opportunities or cultural responsiveness.

They confer with colleagues and examine data about their own classroom, school, or system to reveal any patterns of inequity, such as lack of access of particular educators to innovative or new professional learning content.

Educators recognize that changes in beliefs and practices can happen simultaneously in a mutually reinforcing cycle and engage in learning experiences that change practices or shift mindsets, depending on the professional learning goals and the learners' dispositions.

Educators collaborate with diverse colleagues.

Culturally responsive and supportive relationships among educators are critical to sustaining a thriving learning culture. Educators strengthen their knowledge about the value that diversity brings through individual and collective learning to bring cultural competence and responsiveness to collaboration with colleagues.

Educators intentionally build their capacity to contribute to an equitable culture (as described in Equity Foundations), working to identify inequities and honor all voices to broaden the conversation. They identify instances where a single voice or view dominates the dialogue and take action to change that pattern.

They acknowledge and talk about when privilege or unconscious bias is affecting decision-making or planning, such as classroom management practices or the selection and assignment of mentors and teacher leaders.

Educators consider a range of racial and cultural backgrounds when establishing professional learning norms and procedures and recognize that individuals' different experiences with the education system can result in a range of ways of engaging with professional learning.

For instance, teachers' responses to conversations about bias will vary depending on culture and previous experiences, and those experiences need to be valued in planning professional learning design, cadence, and expected outcomes.

Comfort and engagement levels will also vary depending on the group's makeup — for instance, whether group members are peers or supervisors, or new or experienced educators. Educators also identify the impact of institutionalized gender norms on discussions, relationships, and policies.

Educators examine their collaborative efforts against their goal of successful learning for each individual and ensure practices do not institutionalize inequities. They honor and model vulnerability, trust in the collective commitment to ongoing learning to achieve equity, and offer each other grace as they navigate challenging conversations and collaborations.

Educators leading professional learning solicit a wide range of opinions about the content of professional learning and share that information transparently so that their own biases are not creating any gaps in knowledge, responsiveness to student and educator needs, or are not in alignment with school and district equity priorities. They strategize about how to lead equity efforts based on their roles, spheres of influence, and opportunities to engage with colleagues.

Selected research

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Hammond, Z. (2020, February). *A conversation about equity with Zaretta Hammond, part 1.* Collaborative Classroom. www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/instructional-equity-with-zaretta-hammond/

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Links to other standards

Educators use the Standards for Professional Learning together to inspire and drive improvement. Each of the 11 standards connects to the other standards to support a high-functioning learning system. **Here are some of the ways the Equity Drivers standard connects to other standards:**

The **Leadership** standard establishes the vision and structures that integrate equity as a critical element of all aspects of the professional learning system.

The **Equity Foundations** standard discusses the role of professional learning in setting expectations, creating structures, and sustaining a culture to ensure and support equity.

The **Evidence** standard provides detail about how educators examine and use research and data to identify inequities and improvements.