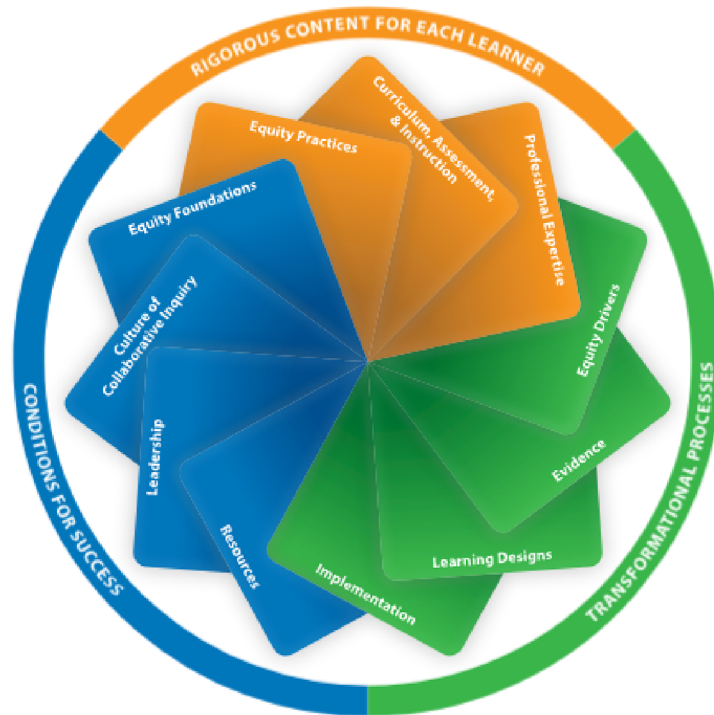


Leadership



Standards for Professional Learning



LEARNING FORWARD

Leadership

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators establish a compelling and inclusive vision for professional learning, sustain coherent support to build educator capacity, and advocate for professional learning by sharing the importance and evidence of impact of professional learning.

Leadership in professional learning can come from educators serving in a range of positions with varying levels of seniority and authority. Educators lead professional learning from many roles, based on an understanding of their system and context and their own sphere of influence. Leadership can take many forms, including establishing policy, collaborating with others, allocating resources, modeling best practices, applying an equity lens, improving an existing initiative, or establishing a teacher-led innovation.

Teachers, principals, instructional coaches, and content experts lead when they design and facilitate professional learning that builds capacity for effective classroom practices. Superintendents, school board members, state and provincial departments of education, and community partners act as professional learning leaders by advocating for and committing resources to effective practices and policies using a shared vision for professional learning and committing to sustained implementation. Teachers and other practitioners without formal leadership responsibilities exercise leadership and agency in their advocacy for professional learning in their own spheres of influence.

Here are the main constructs of the Leadership standard.

Educators establish a compelling and inclusive vision for professional learning.

Professional learning leaders define the critical aspects of a culture that values continuous improvement for all educators in their school or system, articulate a vision for learning and equity, and establish expectations for monitoring and adapting to achieve that shared vision. Educators in all leadership roles recognize that effective professional learning is a key strategy for realizing the promise of equity and the potential of high-quality curriculum and instructional materials and for driving individual and collective improvements that result in better outcomes for all students. They collectively demand high-quality professional learning that addresses these needs.

Educators' vision for professional learning includes a commitment to a comprehensive, collaborative, and differentiated professional learning system informed by formative and summative data and supported by policies and resources.

Leaders communicate clear expectations for equity across and throughout the system and provide meaningful professional growth avenues so that each educator can thrive. Educators engage stakeholders at multiple levels by communicating the vision for professional learning, developing a shared language about professional learning, and establishing vehicles and support for educator voice and agency.

Educators who lead professional learning understand and apply relevant leadership standards as well as research about high-impact practices such as cultivating collaborative teams for both management and instruction, facilitating educator agency, and communicating clear expectations for a productive climate. Leaders participate in individual and collaborative learning, planning, and implementation to model the vision in action.

Educators sustain coherent support to build educator capacity.

Educators lead professional learning by maintaining alignment to a vision focused on educator and student improvement, coherence among initiatives, and sustained support for implementation. Leaders establish strategic goals and articulate how the various individuals and teams in the system contribute to achieving those goals. Leaders work toward a system in which observation, feedback, and the work of all educators and students inform professional learning priorities, and they consistently measure progress against shared goals and benchmarks.

Educators assess alignment between the vision and accompanying strategic goals and plans, policies, and practices and adjust as needed. They encourage progress toward the shared vision by embedding professional learning in the day-to-day operations of the school or system, leveraging or improving existing structures, and creating new opportunities for professional learning.

Leaders define and articulate the professional learning responsibilities of educators throughout the system and facilitate relationships, alliances, and teams that leverage educators' expertise in support of effective and strategic collaboration across the system.

Leaders of professional learning examine data and other evidence to determine the coherence of the professional learning system and look for opportunities to leverage effective initiatives that improve equitable access and outcomes for educators and students.

Educators prioritize structures and procedures that support individual and collective capacity and skill building, allocating whatever resources they have control over accordingly and advocating for additional resources they need. They strategically abandon or replace activities that do not align with or support the vision because misaligned activities diminish interest, engagement, and impact. Support includes progress-monitoring tools and a process for analyzing observation data as well as principal and teacher input to inform professional learning priorities.

Educators assume leadership when they ensure that aligned and sustained professional learning supports the selection and implementation of curricula and instructional materials.

Educators in certain leadership roles can arrange or facilitate teams of educators, peer-to-peer observation, reflection, and action research, creating opportunities for embedded professional learning. They leverage assets in knowledge and skills among educators in their system to improve instruction, deepen implementation of professional learning, and build leadership pathways.

Leaders provide sustained support, structures, and resources for a culture of continuous learning cycles focused on grade or content level, school, or systemwide challenges.

Educators advocate for professional learning with impact.

Educators lead by advocating for learning and capacity building for all educators, sharing the importance and impact of professional learning with colleagues, peers, school boards, families and caregivers, and the broader community. They publicly celebrate successes and acknowledge challenges while communicating openly in ways meaningful to stakeholders as a strategy for building community-wide understanding of and support for educator learning.

Leaders of professional learning appreciate the value of building their own and others' understanding of high-quality professional learning, seeking evidence related to the effectiveness of professional learning and contextualizing approaches based on the needs and priorities of learners in their settings.

As learners themselves, effective leaders model how learning and collaboration with colleagues lead to acquiring new knowledge and practices. They share their learning and their commitment to learning with others when they engage in learning communities with colleagues in their school or system and when they participate in networks with leaders from other [schools and]systems.

Leaders are public about their own learning as well as their commitment to continuously learn. For instance, a principal might share a relevant lesson learned from an individual pursuit or reading with a group of teachers and engage as a learner in a teacher-led conversations about shifts in classroom instruction.

System leaders who engage in collaborative learning networks with leaders from other systems not only benefit from learning across contexts, but also demonstrate the importance of consulting colleagues and new information to address particular challenges.

Leaders are open about the importance of collecting data related to the impact of professional learning as well as related to any gaps in opportunities for student learning or instructional challenges that the analysis of findings reveals.

Educators at all levels lead when they demand effective professional learning within their own sphere of influence, contributing to a culture of high collective expectations. As important stakeholders in achieving a system's vision for professional learning, teachers build their own capacity to understand and advocate for the essential supports that will sustain their individual and collective continuous improvement and strengthen their day-to-day practice.

Selected research

Grissom, J.A., Egalite, A.J., & Lindsay, C.A. (2021, February). *How principals affect students and schools: A systematic synthesis of two decades of research.* The Wallace Foundation. www.wallacefoundation.org/principalsynthesis

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Psencik, K., Brown, F., & Hirsh, S. (2020). *The learning principal: Becoming a learning leader.* Learning Forward.

Teacher Leader Exploratory Consortium. (n.d.) *Teacher Leader Model Standards.* Author. www.ets.org/s/education_topics/teaching_quality/pdf/teacher_leader_model_standards.pdf

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 Leadership standard connects to other standards:**

The **Equity Foundations** standard discusses the way leaders and all educators can strengthen professional learning in terms of setting expectations, creating structures, and sustaining a culture to ensure and support equity.

The **Evidence** standard provides guidance about how leaders can fulfill their commitment to having the most relevant and up-to-date information to guide decisions and priorities about professional learning at all levels of an effective system.

The **Learning Designs** standard focuses on the ways leaders can identify and select the most appropriate approach to achieving their professional learning goals.

