# Mississippi Department of Education
# STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OVERVIEW

The information in this section is taken from *Standards for Professional Learning* published by Learning Forward in 2011 and is intended to give the reader basic knowledge about each standard.

**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.**

Professional learning within communities requires continuous improvement, promotes collective responsibility, and supports alignment of individual, team, school, and school system goals. Learning communities convene regularly and frequently during the workday to engage in collaborative professional learning to strengthen their practice and increase student results. Learning community members are accountable to one another to achieve the shared goals of the school and school system and work in transparent, authentic settings that support their improvement.

Core Elements:
- Engage in continuous improvement
- Develop collective responsibility
- Create alignment and accountability

| What it looks like … | What it doesn't look like … |
|---|---|
| **Engage in continuous improvement:** <br><br> • School and district leaders creating policies and organizational structures that support implementation of collegial learning <br> • Ensuring that teachers and school/district administrators are prepared to be skillful members and leaders of learning teams <br> • Learning teams meeting regularly and frequently <br> • Educators using agendas and protocols that focus team work on learning for all students <br> • **All** educators participating in learning communities that align collaborative work with school improvement goals and focus on continuous improvement <br><br><br> **Develop collective responsibility:** <br><br> • Learning communities sharing collective responsibility for all students in the school or district <br> • Learning community members exchanging feedback about their practice with one another, visiting each other's classrooms or work settings, and sharing resources <br> • Developing and employing norms of collaboration and relational trust <br><br> **What it looks like …** <br><br> • Using technology to facilitate and expand learning community interaction <br><br> **Create alignment and accountability:** <br><br> • Team members and faculties holding themselves collectively accountable for student results <br> • Leaders creating policies and providing support aligned with an explicit vision and goals for successful learning communities <br> • Learning communities bridging the knowing-doing gap between development of knowledge and skills (macro-level learning) and practices and refinements (micro-level learning) necessary for full implementation in the classroom or workplace | • Having no policies or procedures to support implementation of learning communities <br> • Teachers and administrators being told that they will implement learning communities without any training on what they are or how they operate <br> • Teams meeting randomly only whenever an issue arises <br> • Team meetings having no structure and becoming gripe sessions <br> • Teams being established for only elementary grade level teachers or secondary teachers of major content areas <br><br><br><br><br> • Teachers taking responsibility for the learning of only those students in their classroom <br> • Teachers developing their own lesson plans and strategies and not sharing with others <br> • Team without meeting rules for how team meetings should be conducted <br><br> **What it doesn't look like …** <br><br> • Team members or whole faculty not trusting each other <br><br><br><br> • Team members and faculty blaming each other for poor student results <br> • Policies not existing to align vision or goals for learning communities <br> • Support provided does not align with goals for successful learning communities <br> • Professional learning usually focusing on just knowledge and skills |

**LEADERSHIP:**
**Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity for learning and leading, advocate for professional learning, and create support systems for professional learning.**

Leaders throughout the Pre-K through12 education community recognize effective professional learning as a key strategy for supporting significant school and school system improvements to increase results for all students. Whether they lead from classrooms, schools, school systems, technical assistance agencies, professional associations, universities, or public agencies, leaders develop their own and others' capacity to learn and lead professional learning, advocate for it, provide support systems, and distribute leadership and responsibility for its effectiveness and results.

Core Elements:
- Develop capacity for learning and leading
- Advocate for professional learning
- Create support systems and structures

| What it looks like … | What it doesn't look like … |
|---|---|
| **Develop capacity for learning and leading:**<br><br>• Teachers working in a variety of leadership roles<br><br>• Faculty involved in planning and implementing high quality professional learning<br><br>• Administrators participating in professional learning with staff<br><br>**Advocate for professional learning:**<br><br>• Teachers articulating the benefits and intended results of professional learning on teacher practice<br><br>• Administrators modeling instructional leadership, continuous improvement, and professional learning<br><br><br>**Create support systems and structures:**<br><br>• Administrators creating a school culture that supports continuous improvement through team learning<br><br>• Using resources, including time, equitably distributed to accomplish learning goals<br><br>• Establishing policies and guidelines to ensure effective professional learning | • Teachers with no roles other than in the classroom<br>• Professional learning planned and implemented only by administrators or outside consultants<br>• Administrators busy with other things while teachers learn<br><br><br><br>• Teachers complaining that everyone has enough to do without participating in professional learning<br>• Administrators managing the school/district with little emphasis on instructional leadership<br><br><br><br>• A negative school culture with little emphasis on learning and working together<br>• Little attempt made to find time for professional learning in the school day or to allocate adequate financial and material resources<br>• Absence of school/district policies or guidelines for effective professional learning |

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

Effective professional learning requires human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources to achieve student learning goals. How resources are allocated for professional learning can overcome inequities and achieve results for educators and students. The availability and allocation of resources for professional learning affects its quality and results. Understanding the resources associated with professional learning and actively and accurately tracking them facilitates better decisions and increased quality and results.

Core Elements:
- Prioritize human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources
- Monitor resources
- Coordinate resources

| What it looks like … | What it doesn't look like … |
|---|---|
| **Prioritize human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources:**<br><br>• Resources focused on small number of high priority goals for student and educator learning<br>• Resources allocated to support job-embedded professional learning in the school<br>• School schedule designed to provide time in the school day for professional learning<br>• Expertise within the school/district utilized for professional learning<br>• Resources allocated for technology to support student learning<br><br>**Monitor resources:**<br><br>• Process in place to track and monitor resources<br>• Address inequities in learning needs and opportunities to learn<br><br>**Coordinate resources:**<br><br>• All sources of funding coordinated and aligned to school/district learning goals<br>• Responsibility for allocation of resources shared among all educators | • Resources given to any program or learning opportunity that is available<br>• Resources utilized for external training rather than school-based professional learning<br>• Schedules created with no attention to professional learning time<br>• Costly external facilitators and/or training utilized for professional learning<br>• Resources allocated for technology for purposes other than student learning<br><br><br>• Resources utilized with no process to monitor effectiveness<br>• Decisions about allocation of resources made with little regard to student/educator learning needs<br><br><br>• Funding from each source is allocated separately with little or no regard to coordination or alignment to specific goals<br>• Decisions for resource allocation are made by a few administrators without input from school staff |

**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, assess, and evaluate professional learning.**

Data from multiple sources enrich decisions about professional learning that leads to increased results for every student. Multiple sources include both quantitative and qualitative data, such as common formative and summative assessments, performance assessments, observations, work samples, performance metrics, portfolios, and self-reports. The use of multiple sources of data offers a balanced and more comprehensive analysis of student, educator, and system performance than any single type or source of data can.

Core Elements:
- Analyze student, educator, and system data
- Assess progress
- Evaluate professional learning

| What it looks like ... | What it doesn't look like ... |
|---|---|
| **Analyze student, educator, and system data:**<br><br>• Teachers and administrators analyzing student data to identify adult learning priorities at the classroom, school, and district levels<br>• Teachers/teams analyzing student data to make decisions about student progress and adjustments needed to increase student learning<br>• Planners considering educator preparation, work performance, perceptions along with student data to set goals for educator learning<br>• School and district leaders collecting and analyzing data to determine changes in policies, procedures, resource allocation etc., needed to support team, school and district professional learning | • Professional Learning Committee considering only data from state assessments to determine student results<br>• Administrator/counselor/consultant analyzing data and telling teachers what the data says and how to improve<br>• Planners developing plans that do not take into account level of employee background and experiences<br>• Leaders not collecting data and determining changes needed |
| **Assess Progress:**<br><br>• Teachers/teams using student data to assess the effectiveness of the application of new learning<br>• School leaders using data to monitor implementation of professional learning and its effects on educator practice and student learning<br>• Educators frequently collecting and using data to make ongoing adjustments to increase results for students, educators, schools, and districts | • Teams, schools or districts establishing no benchmarks for success<br>• Implementation of concepts and practices from professional learning not monitored for classroom application<br>• Teachers, teams, schools or districts making no adjustments to educator learning during the year |
| **Evaluate Professional Learning:**<br><br>• Educators developing a theory of change and a framework to evaluate professional learning<br>• Educators working together collecting data to determine changes in educator knowledge, skills, and dispositions, changes in classroom practice and changes in student learning<br>• Educators working together to evaluate their learning designs, their collaboration, learning and results, and the design, content and duration of professional learning | • Having no theory of change or evaluation<br>• Data collection focusing on educator likes or dislikes<br>• Evaluation conducted only by consultants<br>• Evaluation based on just student data |

**LEARNING DESIGNS:**
**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. Several factors influence decisions about learning designs, including the goals of the learning, characteristics of the learners, their comfort with the learning process and one another, their familiarity with the content, the magnitude of the expected change, educators' work environment, and resources available to support learning. The design of professional learning affects its quality and effectiveness.

Core Elements:
- Apply learning theories, research, and models
- Select learning designs
- Promote active engagement

| What it looks like … | What it doesn't look like … |
|---|---|
| **Apply Learning Theories, Research and Models:**<br><br>• School and district plans focus on team and whole-school learning<br>• Most professional learning occurs as part of the workday<br>• Technology enhances and extends opportunities for professional learning<br><br>**Select Learning Designs:**<br><br>• Educator and student outcomes determine best designs for delivery of professional learning<br>• Adult learners engaging in using the processes they will use with students<br>• Providing multiple practices of the new learning with feedback and coaching<br>• Professional Learning Plan includes more than one way to learn or have support for learning new practices<br><br>**Promote Active Engagement:**<br><br>• Learners actively engaged with other learners and the content during the learning process<br>• Active learning processes may include writing, dialogue and discussion, demonstrations, inquiry, reflection, practice with feedback, coaching, modeling, problem solving, and constructing knowledge collaboratively<br>• Educators working in teams to collaboratively construct, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize knowledge and practices | • Professional learning basically scheduled outside the contractual workday or in summer<br>• Taking a trip to attend a workshop not tied to learning goals of the school/district/state<br>• Technology use not integrated to facilitate achieving student or educator learning goals<br><br><br>• Using workshops or courses as the format for all or most professional learning<br>• Educators expected to immediately implement new learning with no follow-up or feedback<br>• Professional learning planned as "one size fits all"<br><br><br><br>• Passive delivery of information by a speaker with little or no interaction among participants<br>• Educators usually working alone to learn<br>• Professional learning include mostly "Sit and Get" workshops |

**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.**


The primary goals for professional learning are: changes in educator practice, and increases in student learning. This is a process that occurs over time and requires support for implementation to embed the new learning into practices. Those responsible for professional learning apply findings from change process research to support long-term change in practice by extending learning over time. They integrate a variety of supports for individuals, teams, and schools. Finally, they integrate constructive feedback and reflection to support continuous improvement in practice that allows educators to move along a continuum from novice to expert through application of their professional learning.


Core Elements:
- Apply change research
- Sustain implementation
- Provide constructive feedback

| What it looks like … | What it doesn't look like… |
|---|---|
| **Apply change research:**<br><br>• Educators committing to long-term change by setting clear goals and maintaining high expectations for implementation with fidelity<br>• School and district leaders providing and aligning resources to initiate and sustain implementation<br>• Leaders modeling outstanding practices and maintaining a sustained focus on the goals and strategies for achieving them<br>• Leaders creating and maintaining a culture of support opportunities | • Educators committed to short-term change<br>• Providing resources for consultants but no follow-up<br>• Leaders choosing to not be a part of professional learning<br>• Leaders focused only on budgets. construction and athletics |
| **Sustain implementation:**<br><br>• Professional learning producing changes in educator practice and student learning when it sustains implementation over time<br>• Three to five years of ongoing implementation support focusing on deepening understanding and addressing problems associated with the new practice<br>• Ongoing implementation support taking many forms but occurring at the implementation site<br>• School or district coaches providing extended learning opportunities for new practices | • Episodic or occasional professional learning<br>• Supporting implementation only for a few weeks or months<br>• Professional learning with no planned follow-up learning after the introductory session<br>• School or district choosing to use only technology for all follow-up support<br>• A single event defined by a predetermined number of hours |
| **Constructive feedback:**<br><br>• Educators providing specific information to assess practice in relationship to established expectations and to adjust practice to achieve those expectations<br>• Learners engaging in reflection and providing constructive feedback on his/her own or others' practices<br>• Feedback is focused, objective, relevant, valid, and purposeful<br>• Giving and receiving feedback require skillfulness in clear, nonjudgmental communication based on evidence, commitment to continuous improvement, and trusting relationships | • Feedback given only for formal evaluations<br>• Plan has no clear expectations for learning<br>• Feedback lacking in the formative stages of implementation<br>• Feedback given is judgmental with no supporting evidence |

**OUTCOMES:**

**Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.**

For all students to learn, educators and professional learning must be held to high standards. Professional learning that increases results for all students addresses the learning outcomes and performance expectations education systems designate for students and educators. When the content of professional learning integrates student curriculum and educator performance standards, the link between educator learning and student learning becomes explicit, increasing the likelihood that professional learning contributes to increased student learning. When systems increase the stakes for students by demanding high, equitable outcomes, the stakes for professional learning increase as well.

Core Elements:
- Meet performance standards
- Address learning outcomes
- Build coherence

| What it looks like … | What it doesn't look like … |
|---|---|
| **Meet performance standards:**<br><br>• Professional learning goals aligned to educator performance standards and student learning goals<br>• Professional learning driven by what teachers need to know and be able to do in order to provide effective learning for every student<br>• Learning goals based on analysis of educator and student data<br>• Specific expectations for administrator, teacher and student performance delineated | • Professional learning planned on a "whim" rather than based on educator or student learning goals<br>• Professional learning addressing topics extraneous to learning such as school law, CPR, etc.<br>• Professional learning planned by district with little regard to educator or learner needs at specific schools<br>• No explicit expectations for educator or student performance; expectations unclear |
| **Address learning outcomes:**<br><br>• Educator learning focused on student learning outcomes<br>• Professional learning focused on proven effective strategies and practices to be implemented in classroom<br>• Educator learning goals based on how to improve learning and growth of ALL students | • Educator learning loosely related or unrelated to student learning<br>• Professional learning focused on a number of different topics with little relationship to each other<br>• Educator learning focused on a small segment of the school population rather than on ALL students |
| **Build coherence:**<br><br>• Learning outcomes and pedagogy aligned with educator performance standards and student learning goals<br>• Professional learning built on earlier professional learning/what educators have already learned<br>• Learning followed up with later, more advanced work to assure that learning leads to practice | • Weak or no link between learning outcomes and educator standards<br>• "Stand-alone" professional learning without regard to current knowledge and skills of educators<br>• "One shot" professional learning with no follow up to assure its effectiveness |