

# The Standards

## CONTEXT STANDARDS

**LEARNING COMMUNITIES:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.

**LEADERSHIP:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.

**RESOURCES:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires resources to support adult learning and collaboration.

## PROCESS STANDARDS

**DATA-DRIVEN:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.

**EVALUATION:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and demonstrate its impact.

**RESEARCH-BASED:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to apply research to decision making.

**DESIGN:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.

**LEARNING:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change.

**COLLABORATION:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.

## CONTENT STANDARDS

**EQUITY:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.

**QUALITY TEACHING:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.

**FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:** Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

LEADERSHIP

RESOURCES

DATA-DRIVEN

EVALUATION

RESEARCH-BASED

DESIGN

LEARNING

COLLABORATION

EQUITY

QUALITY TEACHING

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

# The Teacher

# Learning Communities

*Staff development that improves the learning of all students organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.*

## RATIONALE

Staff development that has as its goal high levels of learning for all students, teachers, and administrators requires a form of professional learning that is quite different from the workshop-driven approach. The most powerful forms of staff development occur in ongoing teams that meet on a regular basis, preferably several times a week, for the purposes of learning, joint lesson planning, and problem solving. These teams, often called learning communities or communities of practice, operate with a commitment to the norms of continuous improvement and experimentation and engage their members in improving their daily work to advance the achievement of school district and school goals for student learning.

Learning teams may be of various sizes and serve different purposes. For instance, the faculty as a whole may meet once or twice a month to reflect on its work, engage in appropriate learning, and assess its progress. In addition, some members of the faculty may serve on school improvement teams or committees that focus on the goals and methods of schoolwide improvement. While these teams make important contributions to school culture, learning environment and other

priority issues, they do not substitute for the day-to-day professional conversations focused on instructional issues that are the hallmark of effective learning communities.

Learning teams meet almost every day and concern themselves with practical ways to improve teaching and learning. Members of learning communities take collective responsibility for the learning of all students represented by team members. Teacher members of learning teams, which consist of four to eight members, assist one another in examining the standards students are required to master, planning more effective lessons, critiquing student work, and solving the common problems of teaching.

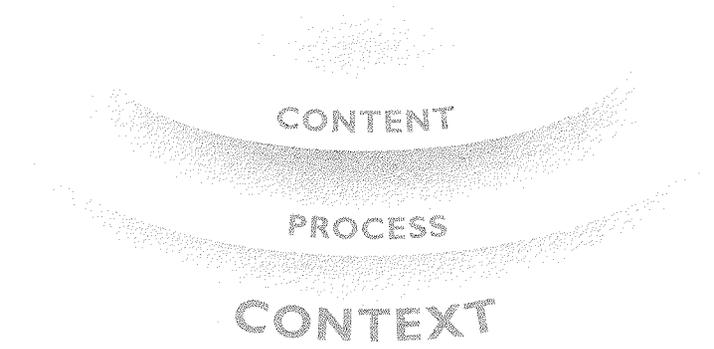
The teams determine areas in which additional learning would be helpful and read articles, attend workshops or courses, or invite consultants to assist them in acquiring necessary knowledge or skills. In addition to the regular meetings, participants observe one another in the classroom and conduct other job-related responsibilities. Learning communities are strengthened when other support staff, administrators, and even school board members choose to participate, and when communica-

tion is facilitated between teams. Because of this common focus and clear direction, problems of fragmentation and incoherence that typically thwart school improvement efforts are eliminated.

Administrator learning communities also meet on a regular basis to deepen participants' understanding of instructional leadership, identify practical ways to assist teachers in improving the quality of student work, critique one another's school improvement efforts, and learn important skills such as data analysis and providing helpful feedback to teachers.

Many educators also benefit from participation in regional or national subject-matter networks or school reform consortia that connect schools with common interests. While most such networks have face-to-face meetings, increasing numbers of participants use electronic means such as e-mail, listservs, and bulletin boards to communicate between meetings or as a substitute for meetings. Such virtual networks can provide important sources of information and knowledge as well as the interpersonal support required to persist over time in changing complex schoolwide or classroom practices.

# The Teacher



**DESIRED OUTCOME 1.1:** Meets regularly with colleagues during the school day to plan instruction.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Meets regularly with learning team during scheduled time within the school day to develop lesson plans, examine student work, monitor student progress, assess the effectiveness of instruction, and identify needs for professional learning.	Meets regularly with learning team during the school day to plan instruction, examine student work, and monitor student progress.	Works with learning team on special instructional projects during planning time.	Works with others on non-instructional issues. Addresses personal concerns, not group issues.	Uses planning time for individual planning.	Uses planning time for non-instructional tasks (e.g. management, personal tasks).

**DESIRED OUTCOME 1.2: Aligns collaborative work with school improvement goals.**

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Participates frequently with all professional staff members to discuss, document, and demonstrate how their work aligns with school and district goals. Engages in professional learning with colleagues to support this work.	Aligns the work of the learning team with school-wide goals. Works in a learning team (grade level, subject matter, interdisciplinary, vertical) to address issues related to the grade or subject area.	Works in a learning team (grade level, subject matter, interdisciplinary, vertical) to address issues related to specific grade or subject area.	Works alone; addresses individual issues rather than school or grade level issues.		

**DESIRED OUTCOME 1.3: Participates in learning teams, some of whose membership extends beyond the school.**

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Participates in state, regional, districtwide and/or national networks. Participates in interdisciplinary or subject matter/grade level learning teams.	Participates in districtwide and regional networks and interdisciplinary or subject matter/grade level learning teams.	Participates in both interdisciplinary and subject matter/grade level learning teams within the district.	Participates in interdisciplinary learning teams and/or subject matter or grade level teams only.	Participates in individual learning outside grade level, subject area, and/or school.	

# Leadership

*Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.*

## RATIONALE

Quality teaching in all classrooms necessitates skillful leadership at the community, district, school, and classroom levels. Ambitious learning goals for students and educators require significant changes in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and leadership practices. Leaders at all levels recognize quality professional development as the key strategy for supporting significant improvements. They are able to articulate the critical link between improved student learning and the professional learning of teachers. They ensure that all stakeholders – including the school board, parent teacher organizations, and the business community – understand the link and develop the knowledge necessary to serve as advocates for high quality professional development for all staff.

Staff development leaders come from all ranks of the organization. They include community representatives, school board trustees, administrators, teachers, and support staff.

Principals, superintendents, and other key personnel serve as instructional leaders, artfully combine pressure and support to achieve school and district goals, engage parents and other caretakers in the education of their children, and establish partnerships with key community institu-

tions that promote the welfare of all students. They are clear about their own values and beliefs and the effects these values and beliefs have on others and on the achievement of organizational goals. As primary carriers of the organization's culture, they also make certain that their attitudes and behavior represent the values and practices they promote throughout the school or district.

Skillful leaders establish policies and organizational structures that support ongoing professional learning and continuous improvement. They ensure an equitable distribution of resources to accomplish district goals and continuously improve the school or district's work through the ongoing evaluation of staff development's effectiveness in achieving student learning goals. They make certain that employee contracts, annual calendars, and daily schedules provide adequate time for learning and collaboration as part of the workday. In addition, they align district incentive systems with demonstrated knowledge and skill and improvements in student learning rather than seat-time arrangements such as courses completed or continuing education units earned.

Principals and superintendents also distribute leadership responsibilities among teachers and

other employees. Distributed leadership enables teachers to develop and use their talents as members or chairs of school improvement committees, trainers, coaches, mentors, and members of peer review panels. These leaders make certain that their colleagues have the necessary knowledge and skills and other forms of support that ensure success in these new roles. These leaders read widely, participate in learning communities, attend workshops and conferences, and model career-long learning by making their learning visible to others.

All leaders make use of various electronic tools to support their learning and make their work more efficient. They use e-mail, listservs, bulletin boards, Internet, and other electronic means to communicate, locate research and other useful information, and seek assistance in problem solving. They enlist other electronic tools to organize and schedule their work, produce and share documents, and increase their accessibility to colleagues, parents, and community members. Skillful leaders are familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of various electronic learning processes for themselves and others and make certain these processes are appropriately matched to individual and organizational goals.

## LEADERSHIP

# The Teacher

CONTENT  
PROCESS  
CONTEXT

### DESIRED OUTCOME 2.1: Participates in instructional leadership development experiences.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Participates in an instructional leadership program as a member of a cohort group that meets monthly, under the supervision of a mentor, with expressed purposes and opportunities for practical applications.	Participates in instructional leadership programs during intensive summer sessions with follow-up sessions throughout the school year.	Participates in instructional leadership experiences that focus on a variety of topics scheduled throughout the school year.	Does not participate in instructional leadership activities.		

### DESIRED OUTCOME 2.2: Serves in a variety of instructional leadership roles.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Serves as designated leader of committees that make instructional decisions for the school and district (e.g. school improvement, professional development, curriculum development). Helps to develop guidelines that support these practices. Serves as a lead teacher, instructional coach, or as a mentor to new teachers.	Serves on committees that make instructional decisions for the school and district (e.g. school improvement, professional development, curriculum development). Helps to develop guidelines that support these practices. Serves as a lead teacher, instructional coach, or as a mentor to new teachers.	Serves as a lead teacher, instructional coach, or as a mentor to new teachers.	Serves as unofficial leader of grade level or content area committees.	Serves in no instructional leadership roles within the school or district.	

**DESIRED OUTCOME 2.3:** Contributes to the planning of school-based professional learning.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Works with principal and colleagues to develop plans for monitoring the implementation of new classroom strategies, create a system of follow-up to support implementation of new strategies, establish a schedule that provides additional time for professional learning, and design and implement an ongoing staff development program based on assessed student and teacher needs.	Works with the principal and colleagues to create a system of follow-up to support implementation of new strategies, establish a schedule that provides additional time for professional learning, and design and implement an ongoing staff development program based on assessed student and teacher needs.	Works with the principal and colleagues to establish a schedule that provides additional time for professional learning and to design and implement ongoing professional learning based on assessed student and teacher needs.	Assists in planning professional development experiences for designated days on the school calendar.	Is not involved in planning professional learning.	

**DESIRED OUTCOME 2.4:** Articulates the intended results of staff development programs on teacher practice.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Creates a description of classroom behaviors that range from non-use to expert use for the professional development programs used in the building. Explains the impact of classroom practices on student learning. Explains how a specific program will increase targeted student learning outcomes in the school.	Monitors the level of classroom implementation using descriptive rubrics of new practices. Can explain the impact of classroom practices on student learning. Explains how a specific program will increase targeted student learning outcomes in the school.	Explains the intended results of staff development in terms of broad goal statements (e.g., to increase 6th-grade female mathematics achievement on standardized test).	Explains the intended results of staff development in terms of session objectives and agenda items (e.g., to learn about cooperative strategies).	Cannot articulate the intended results of staff development programs.	

<b>DESIRED OUTCOME 2.5: Advocates for support of professional development.</b>					
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Promotes the importance of professional development with the PTA, community, other key decision makers, colleagues, principals, and central office staff.	Promotes the importance of professional development with colleagues, principals, and central office staff.	Promotes the importance of professional development with other teachers and the principal.	Discusses the importance of professional development with other teachers.	Fails to support professional development.	
<b>DESIRED OUTCOME 2.6: Articulates the benefits of professional learning.</b>					
LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Explains how professional learning has improved or can improve student learning.	Explains how professional learning has improved schoolwide instructional practices.	Cites the benefit of professional learning in terms of individual growth opportunities.	Describes the benefit of professional development as advancement on the salary schedule.	Expresses that professional development has no personal or professional benefit.	

# Learning

*Staff development that improves the learning of all students applies knowledge about human learning and change.*

### RATIONALE

No matter the age at which it occurs, human learning is based on a common set of principles. While adults have more life experience to draw on than younger learners and are often clearer about what they want to learn and why it is important, the means by which the learning occurs is remarkably similar. Consequently, it is important that the learning methods used in professional development mirror as closely as possible the methods teachers are expected to use with their students.

It is essential that staff development assist educators in moving beyond comprehension of the surface features of a new idea or innovation to a fuller and more complete understanding of its purposes, critical attributes, meaning, and connection to other approaches. To improve student achievement, adult learning under most circumstances must promote deep understanding of a topic and provide many opportunities for teachers and administrators to practice new skills with feedback on their performance until those skills become automatic and habitual. Such deeper understanding typically requires a number of opportunities to interact with the idea or proce-

dures through active learning processes that promote reflection such as discussion and dialogue, writing, demonstrations, practice with feedback, and group problem solving.

Because people have different learning styles and strengths, professional development must include opportunities to see, hear, and do various actions in relation to the content. It is also important that educators are able to learn alone and with others and, whenever possible, have choices among learning activities.

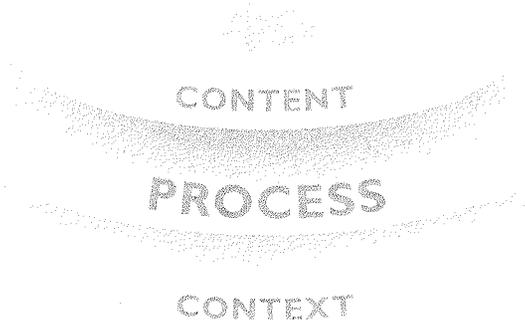
Another important dimension of adult engagement in change processes is the feelings that such change often evokes in individuals. Even under the best of circumstances, pressure for change, no matter what its source, may produce feelings of anxiety, fear, and anger. Such feelings are most effectively addressed through skillful listening and problem solving within a respectful and trusting school culture. It is helpful for educational leaders to appreciate that, to some degree, such feelings are natural and an inevitable part of the change process. Such appreciation is aided when leaders have a deep understanding of the change literature, particularly the Concerns-

Based Adoption Model, and are able to apply its insights when planning and implementing new practices in schools.

A third dimension of change is the life stage of individuals engaged in the change process. While recognition of life stage differences would not alter expectations for performance, it may affect an individual's availability and interest in additional work responsibilities during different phases of his or her life. Recognition of life stage differences may also help staff development leaders in tapping educators' strengths and talents, such as asking skillful veteran teachers to serve as mentors or coaches for their peers.

Electronic forms of learning may prove particularly helpful in providing alternatives that respond to differences in learning styles and availability due to life stage issues. Staff development content may be accessed via the Internet or other forms of distance technology that will enable learning throughout the day in various settings using media that appeals to different learning preferences.

# The Teacher



**DESIRED OUTCOME 8.1:** Participates in professional development that mirrors expected instructional methods.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Engages in professional development that consistently employs the same instructional strategies that are expected in the classroom.	Engages in professional development that models and demonstrates expected classroom practices.	Participates in professional development that demonstrates classroom practice through videotapes and simulations.	Participates in professional development strategies that are unrelated to those expected to be used in the classroom (i.e., lecturing on inquiry method).		

**DESIRED OUTCOME 8.2:** Participates in professional learning that impacts depth of understanding.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Exhibits deep understanding and meaning of new concepts and strategies. Solves problems and adapts new strategies to match classroom circumstances.	Exhibits deep understanding of new content knowledge and uses new strategies routinely.	Gains an understanding of new content knowledge but cannot translate that understanding into new practices.	Gains awareness of new content knowledge and skill but not deep understanding.		

**DESIRED OUTCOME 8.3:** Participates in a variety of professional development experiences appropriate to career stage.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Selects among multiple professional development opportunities that reflect various career stage needs (e.g., mentoring, leading learning teams, coaching, and curriculum writing).	Participates in specialized staff development focused on teacher leaders, teacher trainers, new teachers, and mentor training.	Participates in staff development focused on new teacher and/or mentor training.	Experiences no differentiation or accommodation for years of experience or career stage.		

**DESIRED OUTCOME 8.4:** Engages in professional development that considers participant concerns about new practices.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Expresses concerns related to implementation of innovations and engages in professional development that adjusts its design to accommodate those expressed needs.	Expresses feelings and concerns related to implementation of innovations and regularly accesses support to address those needs.	Voices concerns about personal needs related to the implementation of new practices.	Engages in staff development that does not reflect participant concerns about the use of new practices.		

# Collaboration

*Staff development that improves the learning of all students provides educators with the knowledge and skills to collaborate.*

## RATIONALE

Some of the most important forms of professional learning and problem solving occur in group settings within schools and school districts. Organized groups provide the social interaction that often deepens learning and the interpersonal support and synergy necessary for creatively solving the complex problems of teaching and learning. And because many of the recommendations contained in these standards advocate for increased teamwork among teachers and administrators in designing lessons, critiquing student work, and analyzing various types of data, among other tasks, it is imperative that professional learning be directed at improving the quality of collaborative work.

Staff development provides teachers and administrators appropriate knowledge and skills regarding group processes to ensure various teams, committees, and departments within schools achieve their goals and provide satisfying and rewarding experiences for participants. Because acquisition of this knowledge and skill has not typically been a part of educators' professional preparation and because leaders often underestimate its importance, it is essential that professional

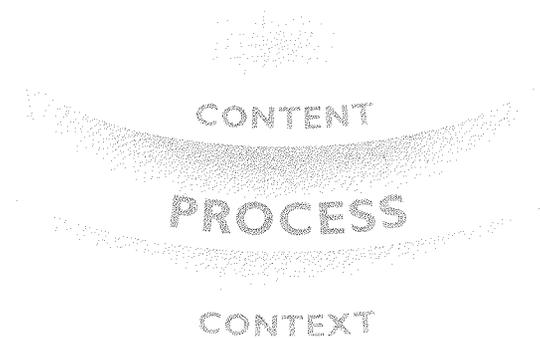
learning focused on helping educators work together successfully be given a high priority. Organized groups usually go through several stages in their development as participants come together, begin to know one another at deeper levels, get clear about the group's purpose and ground rules, surface and address the inevitable conflict that such work elicits, and become effective at performing the group's work in a manner that satisfies both the task and interpersonal expectations of participants. It is important that participants understand that these phases are a natural part of group development and that they be given opportunities to learn strategies for addressing problems that arise along the way. Outside facilitators can be helpful to groups as they navigate these unfamiliar waters.

One of the most difficult tasks of such groups is constructively managing the conflict that inevitably arises when participants discuss their fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning and seek the best ways to improve student achievement. Some schools have managed conflict by steering away from controversial issues or pretending that significant disagreements do not

exist. Such "pseudo community" or "contrived collegiality" is a barrier that inhibits educators from speaking honestly with one another about their views on important issues, which is a critical first step in conflict resolution. These candid conversations are essential in reaching consensus on long-term goals and strategies and in finding solutions to the perennial problems of teaching and school leadership.

While collaborative, face-to-face professional learning and work are the hallmarks of a school culture that assumes collective responsibility for student learning, technology will increasingly provide a means for new and different forms of collaboration. Technology will enable teachers and administrators from around the country and world to share ideas, strategies, and tools with one another in ways that will dramatically increase the number of collaborative links among educators. But electronic forms of such work will also present teachers and administrators with new challenges whose outlines are only becoming dimly visible as larger numbers of educators begin to use these processes to strengthen their teaching and leadership practices.

# The Teacher



**DESIRED OUTCOME 9.1:** Participates in a school culture that is characterized by collegiality and shared responsibility.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Works collaboratively with colleagues across the school on improving practice and the achievement of all students. Works collaboratively with colleagues in established, ongoing learning teams on improving practice and achievement of all students.	Works collaboratively with colleagues in established, ongoing learning teams on improving practice and achievement of all students.	Works collaboratively with temporary groups from the same grade level or content area on improving practice and achievement of all students.	Works alone without professional exchange with colleagues.		

**DESIRED OUTCOME 9.2:** Develops knowledge about effective group process.

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Develops knowledge of strategies to monitor and improve group interactions, group decision making strategies, group structures, stages of group development, and effective interaction skills.	Develops knowledge of group decision making strategies, group structures, stages of group development, and effective interaction skills.	Develops knowledge of the stages of group development and effective interaction skills.	Lacks knowledge about effective group process.		

**DESIRED OUTCOME 9.3: Collaborates successfully with colleagues.**

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Engages routinely in debriefing meetings to maintain effective interaction. Implements knowledge of group decision making strategies, group structures, group development, and effective interaction skills when working with colleagues.	Implements knowledge of group decision making strategies, group structures, group development, and effective interaction skills when working with colleagues.	Implements knowledge of group development and effective interaction skills when working with colleagues.	Lacks skills to work effectively within a group.		

**DESIRED OUTCOME 9.4: Uses effective conflict management skills with colleagues.**

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Manages productive conflicts with all colleagues. Participates in conversations with colleagues about teaching and learning that respect different beliefs.	Practices effective conflict strategies with a few trustworthy colleagues in a safe environment.	Engages in conflicts with colleagues and fails to use effective strategies, which aggravates the conflict.	Avoids or ignores conflicts with colleagues.		

**DESIRED OUTCOME 9.5: Uses technology to support collegial interactions.**

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
Uses technology to engage in online learning communities such as moderated discussions, webcasts, seminars, etc.	Uses online technology to promote collegial interaction with other teachers and to participate in subject area networks, action research studies, and lesson sharing.	Uses online discussion forums and web sites for collegial interaction with other teachers.	Uses e-mail and chat rooms for collegial interaction with other teachers.	Does not use technology to promote collegial interaction with other teachers.	