

Indicator: The LEA/School provides all staff high-quality, ongoing, job-embedded, and differentiated professional development. (5163)

Explanation: The evidence review indicates that high performing LEAs and schools provide high quality professional development (PD) for all staff. High quality PD is that which is ongoing, not a onetime event. It is can be extremely effective when the PD is job embedded allowing for authentic, ample practice opportunities for those striving to improve practices. Aligning staff development opportunities to valid and reliable data increases the likelihood that teachers will be open and receptive to participating in a PD that is personally differentiated for them.

Questions: What process will the LEA/school use to align and differentiate professional development offerings? What data will the LEA/school use to identify areas of professional need? How will the LEA/school ensure that PD is targeted and ongoing? How will the LEA/school ensure that PD is job-embedded with multiple practice opportunities as well as follow-up debriefing and reflection time?

From: Standards for Professional Learning, National Staff Development Council

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.

Leadership: 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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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

According to the article *Teaching the Teachers: Professional Development at RMP* (Rocky Mountain Prep, 2015), “Educators often ask questions about how their students learn, but who is asking questions about how teachers themselves learn? A recent study reports that 90 percent of teachers regularly participate in professional development (PD), but a majority of these teachers also described their PD as ineffective. So, how can school instructional leaders combat the reputation that seems to be attached to PD for teachers?”

“‘We hire amazing educators and promise them that we will support their development and continued growth,’ explains Jenni Reese, RMP’s Director of Curriculum & Instruction. ‘It’s also a lot of pressure to meet our promise! When we plan professional development, we have to ask ourselves: What topic is going to have the highest leverage impact for our teachers?’”

“To answer this question, the RMP team chooses three focus areas: one instructional focus that is applicable across all content areas, one whole-school culture focus, and one focus differentiated for teachers and fellows based on grade level. Take, for example, checks for understanding (CFU). CFUs are used at all grade levels, but look different in a pre-k read aloud compared to a third grade science lesson. To ensure PD sessions are relevant to the entire staff, RMP teachers and fellows are clustered into groups that have different priorities based on grade-level needs.

“‘The differentiated professional development allows me to zero in on my greatest teaching needs and tackle problems with a small group of teachers that also have that same focus,’ says founding RMP teacher Sara Carlson.”

References and Resources

- Darling-Hammond, L., Wei, R. C., Andree, A., Richardson, N., & Orphanos, S. (2009). *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad*. Dallas, TX: National Staff Development Council. Retrieved from <http://learningforward.org/docs/pdf/nsdcstudy2009.pdf>
- Hassel, Emily. (1999). *Professional Development: Learning from the Best: A Toolkit for Schools and Districts Based on the National Awards Program for Model Professional Development*. Oak Brook, IL. North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. [Includes 14 tools for planning professional development] Retrieved from <http://www.learningpt.org/pdfs/pd/lftb.pdf>
- Learning Forward. (2008). *Definition of Professional Development*. Dallas, TX: Author. Retrieved from <http://learningforward.org/who-we-are/professional-learning-definition#.VX8FflVhBc>
- Learning Forward. (2011). *Standards for Professional Learning*. Dallas, TX: Author. Retrieved from <http://learningforward.org/docs/pdf/facilitatorguide.pdf?sfvrsn=2>
- Rocky Mountain Prep. (2015). *Teaching the Teachers: Professional Development at RMP*. Denver, CO: Author. Retrieved from <http://rockymountainprep.org/teachingteachers/>
- Wei, R. C., Darling-Hammond, L., Andree, A., Richardson, N., & Orphanos, S. (2009). *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad – Technical Report*. Dallas, TX: National Staff Development Council. Retrieved from <http://learningforward.org/docs/pdf/nsdcstudytechnicalreport2009.pdf?sfvrsn=0>