

ACTION GUIDE

for the
PRINCIPAL

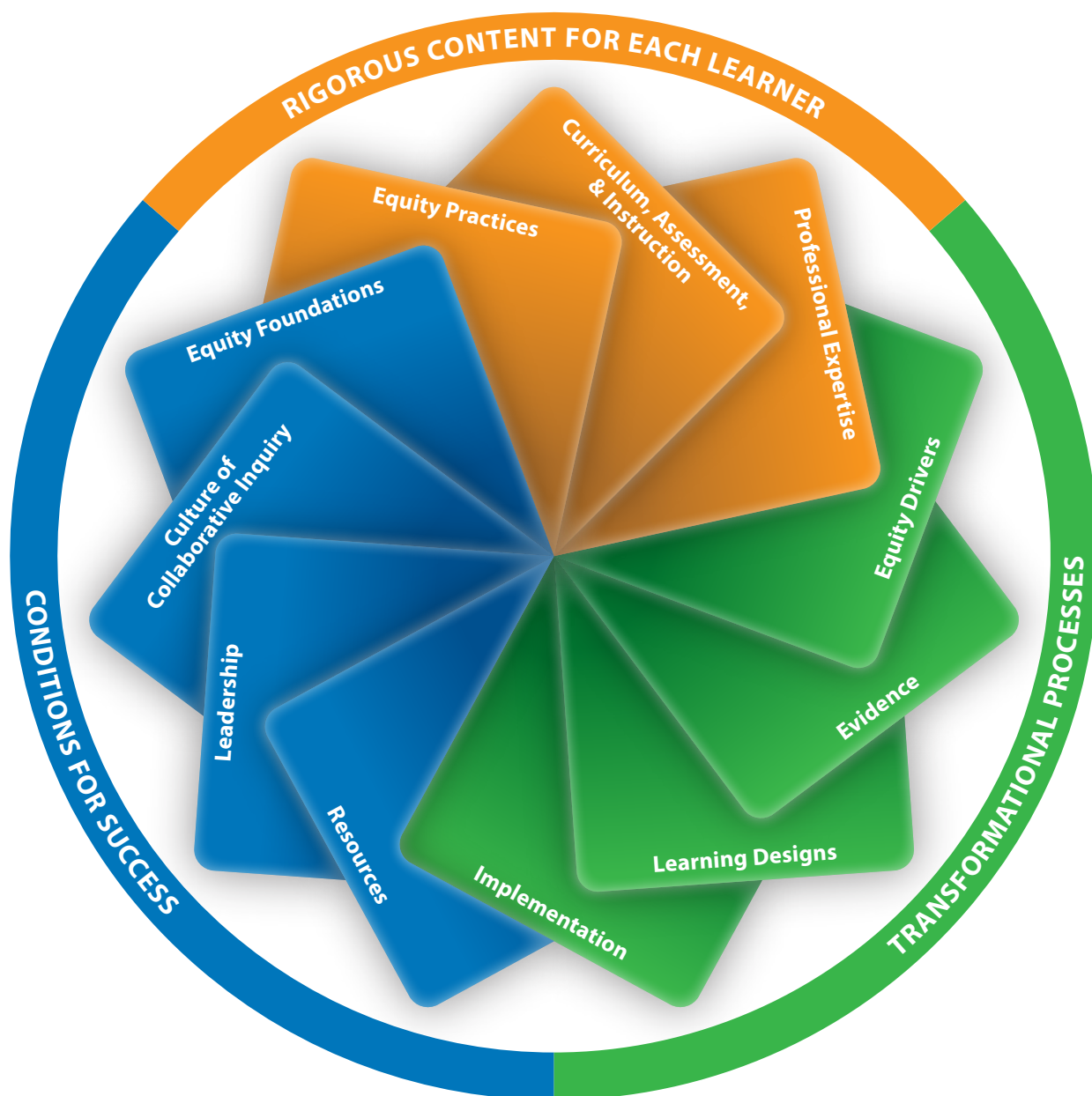
Standards for Professional Learning

Principals, in many ways, are the keystones to effective professional learning systems. A system for professional learning is only effective if the vision for high-impact professional learning is enacted with coherence and intention at the school level as part of educators' daily work.

Standards for Professional Learning provide principals with the rationale for establishing time and support for collaborative cycles of continuous improvement, fostering and sustaining cultures of safety, belonging, transparency, and trust, and modeling what it means to be a lead learner.

Principals rely on the guidance of Standards for Professional Learning and work closely with other instructional leaders to ensure equity of access to timely, relevant, and powerful professional learning for each educator. Through these job-embedded supports, educators, in turn, engage students with rich and relevant learning reflective of their assets and interests.

A systemwide approach to professional learning



Standards for Professional Learning work within a framework of three categories:

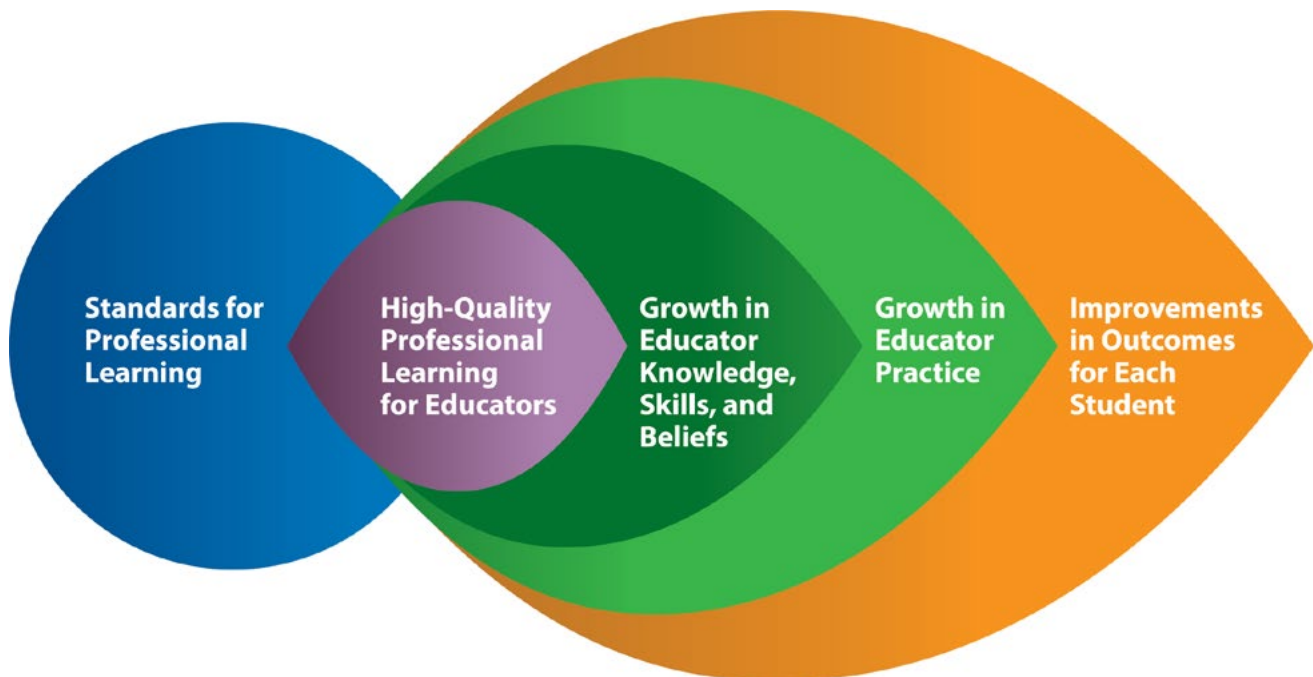
- The **Rigorous Content for Each Learner** standards describe the essential content of adult learning that leads to improved student outcomes.
- The **Transformational Processes** standards describe process elements of professional learning, explaining how educators learn in ways that sustain significant changes in their knowledge, skills, practices, and mindsets.
- The **Conditions for Success** standards describe aspects of the professional learning context, structures, and cultures that undergird high-quality professional learning.

Foundations for standards

Several foundations underlie Standards for Professional Learning. Understanding these foundations is critical to understanding the standards as well as the contexts and support within which they can flourish.

- High-quality professional learning improves educator practice and student results.
- Professional learning systems drive high-quality professional learning.
- Equity is both an outcome of and focus threaded throughout learning.
- High-quality curriculum and instructional materials are a critical priority for professional learning.
- Educators are responsible for leading learning for self and others.
- Policy guides practice.
- Research informs revised Standards for Professional Learning.

How standards lead to improvement for all learners



As the graphic above illustrates, Standards for Professional Learning lead to high-quality professional learning, which leads to positive changes in educator knowledge, skills, and dispositions, which lead to improvements in educator practice, which in turn

lead to accelerated student results. Monitoring progress at each step contributes to continued improvement throughout the system, with student and educator data providing evidence about how professional learning evolves to lead to excellence and equity.

Standards for Professional Learning

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators ...

EQUITY PRACTICES

... understand their students' historical, cultural, and societal contexts, embrace student assets through instruction, and foster relationships with students, families, and communities.

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, AND INSTRUCTION

... prioritize high-quality curriculum and instructional materials for students, assess student learning, and understand curriculum and implement through instruction.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

... apply standards and research to their work, develop the expertise essential to their roles, and prioritize coherence and alignment in their learning.

RIGOROUS CONTENT FOR EACH LEARNER

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators ...

EQUITY DRIVERS

... prioritize equity in professional learning practices, identify and address their own biases and beliefs, and collaborate with diverse colleagues.

EVIDENCE

... create expectations and build capacity for use of evidence, leverage evidence, data, and research from multiple sources to plan educator learning, and measure and report the impact of professional learning.

LEARNING DESIGNS

... set relevant and contextualized learning goals, ground their work in research and theories about learning, and implement evidence-based learning designs.

IMPLEMENTATION

... understand and apply research on change management, engage in feedback processes, and implement and sustain professional learning.

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESSES

Professional learning results in equitable and excellent outcomes for all students when educators ...

EQUITY FOUNDATIONS

... establish expectations for equity, create structures to ensure equitable access to learning, and sustain a culture of support for all staff.

CULTURE OF COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY

... engage in continuous improvement, build collaboration skills and capacity, and share responsibility for improving learning for all students.

LEADERSHIP

... 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.

RESOURCES

... allocate resources for professional learning, prioritize equity in their resource decisions, and monitor the use and impact of resource investments.

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

Key roles and responsibilities for principals

These key roles and responsibilities, aligned to each frame within the standards, are not meant to be used as an all-inclusive checklist but rather to drive critical actions to achieve school and system goals and priorities. They complement and support the responsibilities of educators in other roles. Collaboration with other educators is embedded in many of these responsibilities. Learning Forward recognizes that principals share school leadership and perhaps some of these responsibilities with assistant principals, leadership teams, and others.

RIGOROUS CONTENT FOR EACH LEARNER

- **Learn about student and family contexts and life experiences and their potential impact on teaching, learning, and interactions at school.**
- **Prioritize understanding and applying inclusive education practices across the school.**
- **Develop or contribute to policies to provide high-quality curriculum and instructional materials and aligned assessments.**
- **Focus professional learning on standards and research.**

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESSES

- **Leverage inclusive professional learning practices in the school, removing barriers that result from historical or systemic inequities.**
- **Address how bias, assumptions, and beliefs about aspects of educator identity impact teaching and learning and collaboration with colleagues.**
- **Set professional learning goals with staff tied to student needs to engage in or create aligned professional learning.**
- **Use multiple types of data and evidence to plan, design, implement, and evaluate professional learning.**
- **Apply change management theories and tools as part of the learning process.**
- **Sustain learning with opportunities for practice, feedback, and follow-up with coaches and team leads.**

CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

- **Create a school culture where professional learning connects to each student's opportunity for and access to rigorous learning.**
- **Create a vision for how professional learning enables educators to achieve school and system goals.**
- **Create schedules that include time for job-embedded learning for all educators in a school.**
- **Advocate for adoption of Standards for Professional Learning.**
- **Prioritize and model learning as a leader.**

Identifying the principal’s first actions

Use the reflection questions below and on p. 7 to determine action steps you will prioritize to develop, strengthen, transform, and sustain professional learning. Collaborate with colleagues to complete this table and clarify how you will move forward.

QUESTION	REFLECTIONS	FIRST STEPS
After reviewing the responsibilities on p. 5, what would we say is our highest learning need as a team or individuals?		
How well does our vision for professional learning describe specific actions we can take to achieve improved teaching and student learning?		
How well do we use data and evidence to inform professional learning priorities, selection, and design?		
How do we implement our vision for professional learning in a way that ensures alignment with our aspirations for equity for each learner?		

QUESTION	REFLECTIONS	FIRST STEPS
<p>What aspects of professional learning focused on understanding the contexts and experiences of our educators and students might be strengthened, and how?</p>		
<p>How do we ensure all educators understand continuous improvement, and what structures are in place to support that work?</p>		
<p>How do we monitor investments in professional learning to determine whether they are allocated to high-priority needs based on educator input?</p>		
<p>How can we strengthen the ways we evaluate professional learning and document its impact?</p>		
<p>How do I, as a school leader, model a commitment to continuous learning? What additional steps can I take?</p>		

Additional resources

FOR STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Visit standards.learningforward.org to find resources useful for sharing, studying, and implementing Standards for Professional Learning. Resources include:

Standards for Professional Learning

Read the full contents of the standards themselves, with an overview of the three critical constructs in each standard, links to related standards, and references to selected resources.

Role-Based Action Guides

Created for educators in multiple roles, Action Guides are intended to support educators in understanding and fulfilling their responsibilities in putting Standards for Professional Learning into motion in their contexts. Each Action Guide outlines high-level responsibilities and includes a tool to help educators identify the first steps they can take to implement standards. There are Action Guides for the following roles:

- State commissioner
- Superintendent
- System/central office
- Principal
- Coach
- Teacher
- External partner

Action Guides for those in coach, system/central office, principal, and external partner roles also include Innovation Configuration maps, which describe in detail specific behaviors educators undertake in fulfilling their responsibilities related to standards.

Quick-Start Guide

This four-page overview is ideal for sharing Standards for Professional Learning widely with stakeholders and can serve as an introductory piece across schools, systems, and other contexts.

Research Resources

Learn more about the research and evidence foundational to Standards for Professional Learning. Links include a position paper framing Learning Forward's approach to and use of evidence in developing standards and a meta-analysis conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR).

Policy Tools

Explore how to advance Standards for Professional Learning in policy at any level and why standards in policy matter.

Some resources are available in full to anyone who visits standards.learningforward.org, while others require membership in Learning Forward.

Learning Forward is committed to building every educator's capacity to establish and sustain high-quality professional learning so that every student has access to high-quality teaching and learning.

As the only membership association solely focused on effective professional learning for K-12 educators, Learning Forward serves thousands of members and subscribers while simultaneously influencing the broader education field. Learning Forward works at all levels of the education system.

Information about standards, membership, services, or products is available from:

Learning Forward

504 S. Locust St.

Oxford, OH 45056

Telephone: 800-727-7288

Email:

office@learningforward.org

www.learningforward.org