

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Kathe Decker at 9:00 a.m. on February 4, 2003 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Dan Williams - excused absence

Committee staff present: Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research Department
Kathie Sparks, Legislative Research Department
Ann Deitcher, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Stephanie Hirsh, Deputy Exec. Dir. National Staff
Development Council
Michelle Exstrom, Policy Spec., Education Program,
National Conference of State Legislators
Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner, State Board
of Education
Christy Levings, KNEA President

Deputy Commissioner Dennis reminded the committee of the Technology Fair to be held on Thursday, February 6.

The Chair welcomed Senator Lana Oleen who introduced Stephanie Hirsh and Michelle Exstrom.

Ms Hirsh offered a presentation on Quality Teaching and the Legislative Agenda. (Attachment 1).

Following a brief question and answer session, Michelle Exstrom spoke to the committee on Cultivating High-Quality Professional Development. (Attachment 2).

(Additional brochures regarding frequently asked questions, quality teaching and policy options for improved professional development are available).

Another question and answer session followed.

HB 2006 - concerning the state in-service education opportunities act.

Christy Levings gave testimony in support of **HB 2006**. (Attachment 3).

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 5, 2003.

QUALITY TEACHING AND THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA: POLICY OPTIONS FOR IMPROVED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Testimony to the
Kansas House and Senate Education Committees

Presented by

STEPHANIE HIRSH

Deputy Executive Director

National Staff Development Council

and

MICHELLE EXSTROM

Policy Specialist, Education Program

National Conference of State Legislatures

February, 2003

Topeka, Kansas

House Education Committee

Date: 2/4/03

Attachment # 1-1

STEPHANIE HIRSH . . .

. . . is the Deputy Executive Director of the National Staff Development Council. The Council is the largest non-profit membership association focused solely on school improvement and staff development.

Stephanie Hirsh has been recognized by the Texas Staff Development Council with a Lifetime Achievement Award; by the University of North Texas as a Distinguished Alumnae; and by the Texas Association of School Boards as Master Trustee and a member of an Honor Board. She serves on advisory boards for Different Ways of Knowing, National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, The Quest Center, The University of Texas College of Education Foundation, and The University of North Texas Jewish Studies Program. She is a third-term school board trustee in the Richardson Independent School District which serves 35,000 students in north Texas. Stephanie is married to Mike and they have two children, Brian 20 and Leslie 17.

Dr. Hirsh has co-authored three manuals published by NSDC: *School Improvement Planning Manual*, *Keys to Successful Meetings*, and *NSDC's Standards for Staff Development: Trainer's Guide*. She has written articles that have appeared in *Educational Leadership*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, *The Record*, *The School Administrator*, *American School Board Journal*, *The High School Magazine*, *Education Week*, and the *Journal of Staff Development*. She facilitated the process that led to the national dissemination of NSDC's Standards for Staff Development.

Prior to her position with the Council, Dr. Hirsh completed 15 years of district and school-based leadership positions including: teacher, community college teaching, consulting teacher for free enterprise, and program and staff development director.

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MICHELLE EXSTROM . . .

. . . is a policy specialist in the National Conference of State Legislatures' Education Program, specializing in teaching quality. NCSL is a non-profit, non-partisan organization serving the legislators and legislative staff of the nation's 50 states, commonwealths and territories. NCSL was formed in 1975 to improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures, to foster interstate communication and cooperation, and to ensure states have a strong cohesive voice in the federal system.

Ms. Exstrom has been serving the legislative process for over 7 years. During the past three years at NCSL, she has tracked and published annual reports on education legislation in all 50 states and published numerous magazine articles, reports and books on education public policy. She has assisted state legislators with various education policy issues, including character education, school discipline, alternative education, social promotion and after-school programs. She now directs the Education Program's Teaching Quality project. In addition to her policy work, Ms. Exstrom also staffs NCSL's Education Standing Committee and the Legislative Education Staff Network and serves as NCSL's liaison to Rhode Island.

Prior to NCSL, Ms. Exstrom served as Senior Legislative Assistant in the Office of Legislative Legal Services, which is a legislative agency of the Colorado General Assembly. In this capacity, she assisted in drafting finance and state and local government legislation and with legal research for legal memorandums for the Colorado General Assembly. Ms. Exstrom also assisted with House of Representatives Amendment Clerk duties.

Ms. Exstrom is a certified paralegal and has worked at the Colorado Public Defender's Office and in the field of family law and mediation. She is a graduate of Colorado State University and Denver Paralegal Institute.

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NSDC Goal:

All the teachers
in all the schools
experience
high-quality professional
learning by 2007.

Education Week - Quality Counts - Kansas Teacher Quality = D-

- › Teacher Assessment
- › Teaching in Field
- › Professional Support and Training
- › Teacher Education

Learning Teams

- Meet every day
- Assume collective responsibility for their students
- Study content embedded in standards
- Develop powerful lessons and assessments
- Critique student work
- Observe and coach in classrooms
- Determine needs for additional learning

Characteristics of Powerful Professional Learning



- > Results-driven
- > Standards-based
- > Job-embedded

It is no failure to fall short of realizing all that we might dream.
The failure is to fall short of dreaming all that we might realize.



-Dee Hock
Founder, VISA

Results-Driven

- > What do students need to know and be able to do?
- > What do educators need to know and be able to do to ensure student success?
- > What professional development will ensure educators acquire the necessary knowledge and skills?



What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must be what the community wants for all its children.

-John Dewey



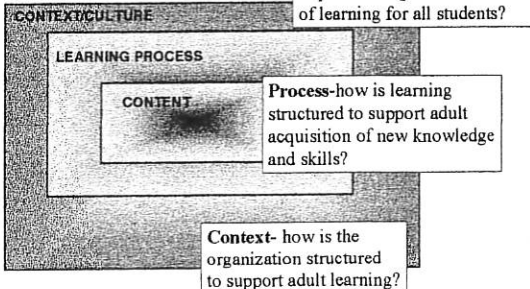
Standards-Based



- > Student
- > Teaching
- > Leadership
- > Staff Development

Standards-Based

Content-what knowledge and skills must educators learn to produce higher levels of learning for all students?



Job-Embedded



At school everyone's job is to learn.



Quality professional development
leads to improved
teaching and student achievement.

Policymaking Arenas

- Professional development standards
- Professional development planning and evaluation
- Professional development resources
- Career development
- External assistance providers

Professional Development Standards



Standards establish benchmarks for ensuring quality professional learning.

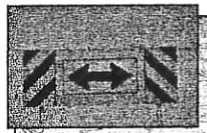
Professional Development Standards

Convene state-wide task force to create state specific professional development standards



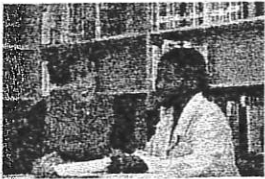
Professional Development Standards

Adopt National Staff Development Council's Standards for Staff Development



Embed standards in the state's teaching standards

Professional Development Planning and Evaluation



Plans make visible steps for achieving goals and evaluations provide evidence of the progress and impact.

Professional Development Planning and Evaluation

Recommend a statewide plan for professional development.



Require local districts to submit staff development or continuous improvement plans to a state or regional agency for approval/review.

Professional Development Planning and Evaluation



Require individual or preferably teams of teachers to write annual professional learning plans.

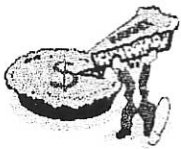
Professional Development Planning and Evaluation

Incorporate professional development standards into the state school accreditation or ranking process.

Provide technical assistance for professional development planning to low-performing schools.



Policy Option: Provide Professional Development Resources



Time and money are necessary to the achievement of improvement goals.

Professional Development Resources

- > Find time within the school day for collaborative professional learning.
- > Offer planning grants and technical assistance.
- > Set percentages of state or district funds to be used for professional development.
- > Prioritize funding for professional development programs that address high-priority areas.

Policy Option: Support Career Development

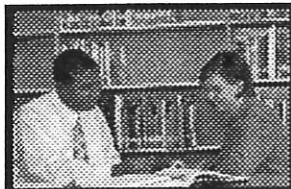


Expectations and support expedite, ensure, and reward teacher competency in the classroom.

Career Development: New Teachers

Provide induction and mentoring services.

If funds are limited, focus on teachers in high-poverty and/or low performing schools.



Career Development: Recertification and Advanced Degrees



Establish a performance-based recertification system that requires teachers to demonstrate teaching competency.

Provide incentives for teachers to earn National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification or another similar master license or certificate.

Career Development: Leadership Opportunities



Provide training, support, and funding for mentors.

Consider support for school-based staff developers by providing partial or total salary reimbursement and by creating a specialized license.

Policy Option: Use External Assistance Providers

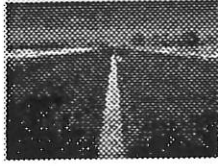
External assistance providers have potential to accelerate improvement efforts.



External Assistance Providers



- › Regulate providers
- › Provide training and resources
- › Channel funds to high-priority areas or programs that demonstrate results.



No matter how far you have gone on a wrong road,
turn back.

Turkish proverb

If we don't change the direction we're going, we're
likely to end up where we are headed.

Chinese proverb

Teacher Quality and the No Child Left Behind Act

- Title I includes accountability provisions for qualified teacher and paraprofessionals. Title II provides grants to improve teacher quality and increase the number of "highly qualified" teacher.
- Beginning with the 2002-03 school year, teachers newly hired and teaching in a Title I program or school must be "highly qualified." All teachers must be "highly qualified" by 2005-2006.
- "Highly Qualified" means that teachers are fully licensed, have a BA and have passed a state test demonstrating subject knowledge and teaching skills in reading, writing and math.
- Districts must use at least 5% of Title I funds to help teachers become "highly qualified."

Professional Development under NCLB

- NCLB is the first piece of federal legislation improving student learning in all core subject areas that specifically referencing professional learning.
- Defines "professional development activities" as high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom focused, not one-day or short-term workshops or conferences.



Professional Development under NCLB

- Title II, Part A of NCLB replaces the Eisenhower Professional Development program and the Class Size Reduction program with a single formula grant program. States are guaranteed at least as much funding as they received in FY 2001.
- \$2.85 billion has been authorized for FY 2002.
- At the state level, 95% goes to LEAs, 2.5% for local partnerships and the remainder for state activities. LEAs and states may use funding for specified activities increasing teaching quality, including professional development.
- State policymakers may want to investigate if their SEA/LEAs are planning to use the funding for professional development.

NCSL Assistance Available to Your State

- With support from the Ford Foundation, NCSL and NSDC are assisting 12 states in the development of professional development policy.
- Kansas City meeting at Kauffman Foundation
 - Professional development session at NCSL's 2002 Annual Meeting
 - State specific technical assistance
 - Professional development "toolkit" policy.

Kansas is one of the 12 states!

The Bottom Line:

Professional learning is essential to school improvement.

School improvement is essential to student learning.



Additional Thoughts

Rationale for investing in professional development ...

Over the last decade, policymakers have focused their energies on putting the architecture of reform in place: the academic content and performance standards, the tests, the incentives, and the accountability systems. But, more recently, they have paid greater attention to building the capacity needed to achieve the higher standards

Massell, Diane. (1998). Six strategies for building capacity in education: Progress and continuing challenges. CPRE research report series RR-41. PA: Consortium for Policy Research in Education, PENN Graduate School of Education, p. 1.

...some urban schools and districts with high minority enrollments and high poverty have succeeded in substantially raising achievement. These top-performing schools tend to design instruction and assessments around state standards, devote increased time to reading and math instruction, **invest in teacher professional development**, and involve parents in their efforts to meet standards, among other strategies.

Kober, N. (2001). *It takes more than testing: Closing the achievement gap*. Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy, p. 19.

Support for teacher leadership and school-based staff developers...

Teachers who become leaders experience personal and professional satisfaction, a reduction in isolation, a sense of instrumentality, and new learnings--all of which spill over into their teaching. As school-based reformers, these teachers become owners and investors in the school, rather than mere tenants. They become professionals.

Barth, Roland S. (2001, February). Teacher leader. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(6) 443.

Good professional development needs to move into the classroom. School-based teacher coaches and outside experts should work with teachers on designing and using challenging instruction in their classrooms. Performance assessments should be built into daily instruction.

Lewis, Anne C. (2001, April). A performance test for districts and states. *Phi Delta Kappan*, p. 567.

Focusing initially on reading, and then moving to mathematics, Alvarado made sure his teachers, in particular, got lots of on-site coaching from experts. As a result, student achievement has climbed steadily over the past 10 years.

Haycock, Kati. (1998, Summer). Good teaching matters a lot. Education Trust. *Thinking K-16*, p. 36.

Crafting policy agenda to produce results...

Five dimensions to organizational capacity:

1. Leadership that helps articulate and sustain a collective vision of excellence
2. Collective commitment to student learning and cultural norms that demand continual improvement.
3. Access to knowledge (ensuring that staff members have access to ideas, strategies, and models that will improve their practice)
4. Organizational structures that promote improvement (for example, a schedule that provides common planning time for collaborative efforts)
5. Resources (time, money, and people) that support improvement

O'Day, J.; M. E. Goertz; and R. E. Floden. (1995, December). Building capacity for educational reform. *CPRE Policy Briefs*.

Policymakers can start to narrow the gap by acting on what can be done today, based on what we already know. Research has identified several strategies that are effective in raising achievement. Several states and school districts have made progress in narrowing the gap. Policymakers can learn from these sources. Some of the most promising research-based strategies include the following:

- investing in teacher professional development;
- lowering class size in high-minority schools;
- increasing the participation of minority students in challenging academic courses and rigorous instruction

Kober, N. (2001). *It takes more than testing: Closing the achievement gap*. Washington, DC: Center on Education Policy, p. 4

From her research, Darling-Hammond concludes that states experiencing progress in raising student achievement are likely to be taking two key policy steps:

Identifying teaching standards that articulate what teachers should know and be able to do at different points in their careers; and

Using these standards to develop more thoughtful certification and licensing systems; more productive teacher education and induction programs; and more effective professional development.

McRobbie, Joan. Career-long teacher development: Policies that make sense. WestEd knowledge brief, p. 1.

Based on a presentation by Linda Darling-Hammond to the WestEd Board of Directors in March 2000.

Reviewing characteristics of powerful professional development...

Research on teacher learning shows that fruitful opportunities to learn new teaching methods share several core features: (a) ongoing (measured in years) collaboration of teachers for purposes of planning with (b) the explicit goal of improving students' achievement of clear learning goals, (c) anchored by attention to students' thinking, the curriculum, and pedagogy, with (d) access to alternative ideas and methods and opportunities to observe these in action and to reflect on the reasons for their effectiveness...

Garet, M., Porter, A., Desimone, L., Birman, B., Yoon, K. (2001). What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American Educational Research*, 38(4), 917.

Professional development must be held accountable...

Finally, successful professional development - because it is specifically designed to improve student learning - should be evaluated continuously and primarily on the basis of the effect it has on student achievement.

Elmore, R. (2002). *Bridging the gap between standards and achievement: The imperative for professional development in education* Washington, DC: The Albert Shanker Institute, p.8.

Professional development is at the center of the practice of improvement. It is the process by which we organize the development and use of new knowledge in the service of improvement. I have taken a deliberately instrumental view of professional development, that it should be harnessed to the goals of the system for the improvement of student achievement, rather than driven by the preference of individuals who work in schools.

Elmore, R. (2002). *Bridging the gap between standards and achievement: The imperative for professional development in education* Washington, DC: The Albert Shanker Institute, p.32.

Data must drive planning and evaluation...

Effective principals must work with their staff members to articulate clear and measurable goals; to identify indicators that offer evidence of progress; and to develop systems from monitoring those indicators on a continuous basis. Principals must be constantly in search of meaningful data. They must analyze results critically. If the principal of a school disregards, dismisses, or denies data that suggest a problem, there is little hope the school will ever improve.

DuFour, Rick. (1999, February). Help wanted: Principals who can lead professional learning communities NAASP Bulletin.

The importance of external assistance providers...

Teacher learning is most likely when teachers collaborate with professional peers, both within and outside of their schools, and when they gain further expertise through access to external researchers and program developers. Yet traditional professional development relies almost exclusively on outside experts and materials without integrating these resources into existing systems of peer collaboration.

King, M. Bruce & Newmann, Fred M. (2000, April). Will teacher learning advance school goals? *Phi Delta Kappan*.

Reasons for investing in whole-school learning rather than individual learning...

Professional development for teachers should be school-based, preferably embedded in instructional efforts through collaborative analysis of student work. This is contrary to most traditional professional development, such as courses leading to certificates or degrees but unrelated to the specific needs of the school, quick-fix workshops that do not offer consistent feedback, or professional development offered by external trainers to help teachers adopt specific programs

Lewis, A. (2001). *Add it up: using research to improve education for low-income and minority students*: Washington, DC: Poverty & Race Research, p.22.

There is reason to worry that individual incentives might reinforce the existing atomization of schools. As previously stated, individual teachers accumulate points toward salary and step increases by accumulating academic credits from courses that may have no relationship to their school's performance. Many districts also offer professional development activities on a space-available basis for which teachers sign up as individuals, usually disconnected from any school-improvement plan or schoolwide priority. The large-group workshops and school-level meetings that are typical of professional development days also tend to be only loosely related to actual classroom needs. Thus, the structure of professional development reflects and reinforces the atomized, individual incentive structure of schools and school systems. This, in turn, undermines the possibility of using collective resources—the time of teachers and administrators and the money that is used to purchase outside expertise—to support a coherent and collective improvement of practice. In this instance, individual rewards and incentives work against the objective of overall improvement.

Elmore, R. (2002). *Bridging the gap between standards and achievement : The imperative for professional development in education* Washington, DC: The Albert Shanker Institute, p.22.

The findings suggest “that teachers working together as a community of adults with individual and joint commitments to a set of common goals within the broader context of the school can have a powerful effect beyond their individual contributions.

Lewis, A. (2001). *Add it up: using research to improve education for low-income and minority students*: Washington, DC: Poverty & Race Research, p.8.

School-based staff development and on-site technical assistance produces results...

In Community School District #2 in New York City, Superintendent Tony Alvarado has invested generously in the professional development of its principals and teachers. Focusing initially on reading, and then moving to mathematics, Alvarado made sure his teachers, in particular, got lots of on-site coaching from experts. As a result of student achievement has climbed steadily over the past 10 years.

Strauss, Robert P. & Sawyer, Elizabeth A. (1986). Some new evidence on teacher and student competencies. *Economics of Education Review*, p. 41.

School-based designs apply to principals as well...

As rich as the professional development system is in District 2, it would not produce a skillful corps of principals as instructional leaders were it not for the intensive individualized coaching that every principal receives as an integral part of her or his service.

Fink, Elaine & Resnick, Lauren B. (2001, April). Developing principals as instructional leaders. *Phi Delta Kappan*, p. 603.

Team learning and collaboration are keys to results...

The most promising forms of professional development are those that engage teachers in the pursuit of genuine questions, problems, and curiosities, over time, in ways that leave a lasting mark on their thinking and practice. Such alternatives communicate a view of teachers as productive, knowledgeable, and responsible members of a broader professional community.

Little, Judith Warren. (1997, March). *Excellence in professional development and professional community*. Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Working Paper Benchmarks for Schools.

Schools where teachers focus on student work, interact with colleagues to plan how to improve their teaching, and continuously bring new skills and knowledge to bear on their practice are also schools that produce the best results for children.

The NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE). (2000, Fall). Engaging Public Support for Teachers' Professional Development, No. 3, p. 1.

Our school has a unique master schedule that builds staff collaboration time into the contractual day. The Mid-Day Block is from 11:30am to 1:00 pm Monday-Friday. The faculty is released for lunch and staff development while students go through a daily cycle of Running Club (a lap program), Study Hall, and lunch recess all supervised by paraprofessionals. When we developed our instructional program, we knew that teachers needed time to talk and work together on a daily basis, not once a week at a staff meeting usually held after school. Our typical weekly Mid-Day Block schedule covers content training, grade level meetings, guest speakers, staff meetings, etc.

Lambert, L. (2002). *The constructivist leader, 2nd edition*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press and NSDC.
(Chapter 6, page 191)

When teachers present individual professional development plans, for example, it is often unclear which activities are designed to enhance their individual growth and which are designed to improve their practice as teachers in a particular organization with clear goals. Likewise, courses and workshops that are offered for academic credit are often focused on the individual interests of teachers and administrators more than on the development of a shared body of skills and knowledge, necessary for schools and districts to implement a common set of successful practice.

Elmore, R. (2002). *Bridging the gap between standards and achievement : The imperative for professional development in education* Washington, DC: The Albert Shanker Institute, p.14.

This disconnect between the requirements of learning to teach well and the structure of teachers' work life is fatal to any sustained process of instructional improvement.

Elmore, R. (2002). *Bridging the gap between standards and achievement : The imperative for professional development in education* Washington, DC: The Albert Shanker Institute, p.29.

Professional Development Meeting Guide

Gathering together state policymakers and stakeholders for a meeting can be effective in addressing how to improve the quality of teacher professional development. A meeting encourages discussion between these powerful groups about current professional development policies and practices and provides an opportunity for them to jointly develop strategies to improve upon current policies and practices.

To help you plan and conduct a successful, educational meeting, we have assembled sample materials that you can use or adapt. NCSL and NSDC have successfully used these materials throughout our joint professional development project to provide opportunities for state policymakers to have conversations with educators and set priorities for state policy activity. The following meeting materials are included in this guide. These materials are intended to be used only as a guide and can be modified as necessary.

- Sample letter of invitation that can be modified and used with a variety of policymakers;
- Sample meeting agenda for a one-day meeting with policymakers and stakeholders;
- Facilitator guidelines for small group activities;
- Lecture materials on a new vision for professional development to provide meeting attendees with background and the ultimate goals for high-quality professional development;
- *Professional Development Roadmap* PowerPoint presentation to guide the discussion of policy options;
- *The Mysterious World of Policymaking: Questions and Answers* to inform non-policymakers and stakeholders about legislative priorities.

Sample Letter of Invitation

Dear policymakers and stakeholders:

You are invited to participate in an upcoming meeting, "Professional Development and State Policy: Encouraging High-Quality Staff Development." The meeting is co-sponsored by (insert list of meeting sponsors) and will be held (insert where and when the meeting will occur).

The primary goal of the meeting is to bring together staff developers and legislators to discuss current state professional development policy and to identify strategies to improve the quality of professional development in the state. The meeting will feature experts on the issues and will provide you with ample time to work with others to craft a plan to improve the quality of professional development.

Please complete the enclosed state team registration form and fax to (insert contact) no later than (insert registration or RSVP deadline). After you have registered, you will receive a registration packet that will include meeting details and background information about professional development to prepare you to discuss this important issue.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions about the meeting. I look forward to seeing you at this very informative and productive meeting.

Sincerely,

(insert name and title)

Enc.

Sample Meeting Agenda

Meeting Overview

Meeting participants will have the opportunity to:

- Review the characteristics of effective staff development linked to improved student learning.
- Examine policy options to influence the quality of professional learning in schools.
- Assess current state legislative and policy against a comprehensive framework for high-quality professional development.
- Learn about other states' work in the professional development arena.
- Expand a network of colleagues.
- Identify priorities and begin to craft strategies for state action.

8:30 a.m.–9:30 a.m.	Continental Breakfast and Registration Small Group Activity #1
9:30 a.m.–10:30 a.m.	Welcome and Introductions A New Vision for Professional Development
10:30 a.m.–10:45 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m.–11:30 a.m.	Small Group Activity #2
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Lunch (may include optional guest speaker)
12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.	Small Group Activity #3
2:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.	Small Group Activity #4 Next Steps and Action Planning
3:30 p.m.	<i>Meeting Adjourns</i>

Sample Facilitator Guidelines for Small Group Activities

The group will be divided into the same small groups throughout the meeting and will work through the activities below to achieve the following objectives:

- Get to know each other stakeholders and policymakers.
- Review the state professional development landscape.
- Begin to identify some statewide goals and objectives for professional development.
- Work through state policy choices for professional development.
- Identify action steps and set goals.

Small Group Activity #1 8:30 a.m.–9:30 a.m.

The primary objective of the first activity is for small group members to become acquainted and begin to identify their individual goals.

- Small group members should introduce themselves, describe what they do and explain how they have come to be involved in professional development activity. Each person should identify his or her unique contribution to discussion and the power he or she holds to improve the condition of professional development in the state. The small group should identify their power as a team.
- Each person should identify one to two goals for the meeting. Group members should write down each of their goals. Perhaps ask, “For this meeting to have an impact, the team needs to ...” Group members then will share these goals with the small group.

Small Group Activity #2 10:45 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

The primary objective of the second activity is for the small group to identify the professional development landscape in the state.

- The facilitator should begin with a quick discussion about the presentation. What did small group members learn? What did they find to be particularly useful?
- Small groups then should begin to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current professional development system. This discussion in the context of the previous activities will help to illuminate gaps or needs in the current system. Group members should take about three minutes to write down three to six current policies or practices that they view as *successful or strengths*. They then should report their list of strengths to the small group, recording the policies or practices on a flip chart. The facilitator should limit discussion of each item because there is not enough time to provide background or to debate whether it should be included in the list of successes.
- Small group members also should take about three minutes to write down three to six current policies or practices that they view as *unsuccessful or weaknesses*. They then should report their list of weaknesses to the small group, recording the policies or practices on a flip chart. Again, the facilitator should limit discussion of each item because there is not enough time to provide background or to debate whether it should be included in the list of weaknesses.

Small Group Activity #3 12:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.

The primary objective of the third activity is to build a framework for staff development policy. This activity will be facilitated by the lead presenter, who will guide participants through the *Professional Development Roadmap* and help them to explore whether the policy options listed in this publication are options for their state. Small groups should sit together to work through this interactive exercise.

Small Group Activity #4 2:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m.

The primary objective of the fourth activity is to identify three action steps or goals for the small group. The team needs to use this time in whatever format necessary to ensure that they have a list of priorities and next steps to report to the large group.

The small group should use the attached Action Item Worksheet. The small group should be as specific as possible, identifying action steps and who will be responsible for each action item. One member of each small group should briefly present to the large group the small group’s priorities and action items.

Sample Action Item Worksheet

Team Members: _____

Goals/priorities for state professional development policy:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Specify action item(s) and the timeframe for realizing these priorities:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____


What will each team member do to achieve these priorities?

What information or technical assistance would be useful to help you achieve your goal?


Lecture Materials on a New Vision for Professional Development

TALKING POINTS

NSDC Goal




All students
and
staff learning
and
performing at
high levels




The goal of professional development must be (read slide).
The National Staff Development Council keeps its eyes on this goal.

The NSDC Vision

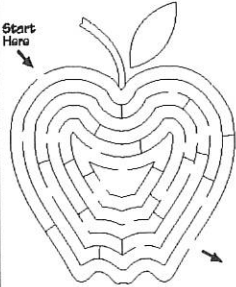


- Results-driven
- Standards-based
- Job-embedded




There are three critical components of the NSDC Vision (read slide). Each contributes to professional learning that improves learning for students.

Results-Driven



Begin
with the
end in
mind.

Stephen Covey




Stephen Covey reminds us to (read slide).
Staff development planning is most effective when the outcomes sought are considered first.

If you would like a copy of this presentation to use at your meeting, please contact Michelle Exstrom, policy specialist at NCSL, at (303) 364-7700.

TALKING POINTS

Results-Driven

Results-driven education for students requires results-driven staff development for adults.



Dennis Sparks


Said another way by NSDC Executive Director (read slide).

Results-Driven

- What do students need to know and be able to do?
- What do educators need to know and be able to do to ensure student success?
- What professional development will ensure educators acquire the necessary knowledge and skills?

- Three key questions guide planning for results-driven professional learning (read slide).
- The answer to question 1 guides us to answer question 2 and so forth to question 3.

Standards-Based



- Student
- Teaching
- Leadership
- Staff Development

- 4 kinds of standards are critical to ensuring all students and staff members learn at high levels. Student standards let us know the knowledge and skills students are expected to master. Teaching standards like those advocated by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards articulate knowledge, skill and dispositions effective teachers possess in order to facilitate successful student learning. Leadership standards articulate the skills & knowledge of leaders essential to ensuring a culture of learning. Staff development standards define the context, process and content for staff learning.

TALKING POINTS

Standards-based

Process-How is learning designed to support adult acquisition of new knowledge and skills?

CONTEXT/CULTURE

LEARNING PROCESS

CONTENT Content-What knowledge and skills must educators learn to produce higher levels of learning for all students?

Context- How is the organization structured to support adult learning?

The nationally accepted NSDC Standards for Staff Development are organized into 3 sections (read slides).

Content Standards

- 12. Family Involvement
- 11. Equity
- 10. Quality Teaching

The three content standards are (read slide).

Content Standards

Not all content is created equal.

We have developed quotes to help you remember the difference among the standards. For content we say - (read slide). Keep in mind a decision to invest in a particular staff development program is extremely important. Make sure there is evidence that your investment will reap the benefits you seek.

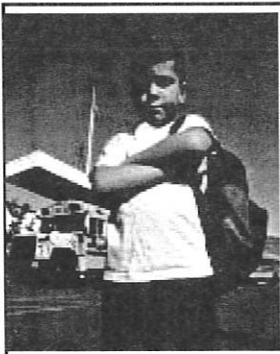
Process Standards



- 9. Collaboration
- 8. Learning
- 7. Design
- 6. Research-based
- 5. Evaluation
- 4. Data-driven

The six process standards are (read slide).

Process Standards



Training without follow up is malpractice.

Our quote about process is (read slide). Systems get 10% return on its investment for each one shot workshop. We cannot ignore the fact we know how to increase that return!

Context Standards

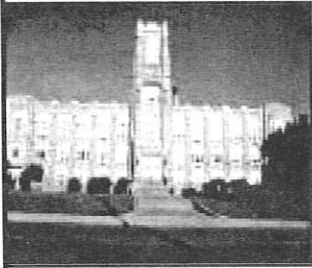



- 3. Resources
- 2. Leadership
- 1. Learning Communities

The three context standards are (read slide).

TALKING POINTS

Context Standards




Place a good person in a bad system and the system will win every time. 

Our quote regarding context is . . . (read slide). We cannot afford to ignore the system when we address professional development.

Job-Embedded Learning




- Happens during the work day in the work place.
- Supports team learning.
- Includes all the teachers all the time. 

Finally, professional learning is job-embedded. It is a seamless part of the day (read slide).

Job-Embedded



At school everyone's job is to learn. 

Let me close by offering a new mental model of professional development. It begins with 6-8 teachers who work together as a team. They meet daily to study content standards, plan & critique lessons, examine student work, and solve common problems. They share responsibility commitments to the same group of students in many cases for multiple years. They refer to themselves as a learning team. And while they frequently attend seminars, workshops, and courses to extend their learning choices are guided by the priorities of the team. When everything is added up the vast majority of their learning occurs in those daily meetings. Let's work to have this model replace your current mental model.

Designing
**POWERFUL
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**
for Teachers and Principals



DENNIS SPARKS



NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

THE CASE FOR POWERFUL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

[T]eachers who know a lot about teaching and learning and who work in environments that allow them to know students well are the critical elements of successful learning.

—Linda Darling-Hammond (1997, p. 8)

This book has a simple three-part premise: First, quality teaching makes a difference in student learning. Second, the professional learning of teachers and principals is a central factor in determining the quality of teaching. And third, district structures and culture that surround the school play a critical role in determining the quality of professional learning experienced by teachers and principals.

While it seems obvious, the first part of our premise bears repeating: Teacher expertise is one of the most important variables affecting student achievement. Linda Darling-Hammond (1997) expresses it this way: “That is, teachers who know a lot about teaching and learning and who work in environments that allow them to know students well are the critical elements of successful learning” (p. 8). If quality teaching is to occur in every classroom, all teachers must be supported in turn by skillful principals who work in systems that support their sustained development as instructional leaders.

Quality teaching in all classrooms and skillful leadership in all schools will not occur by accident. They require the design and implementation of the most powerful forms of professional development, the kind that is described in detail in this book. Unfortunately, the professional learning opportunities for most teachers are woefully inadequate to meet

the demands of today's classrooms. And in most districts the quality of professional learning for principals and other schools leaders is even less adequate in assisting them to meet the almost overwhelming challenges of their work. Nonetheless, the importance of high-quality professional development for teachers and administrators has become increasingly obvious to reformers and policy makers at all levels.

The past 15 years have seen a steady movement toward standards-based reform. As the pressure for higher test scores and other accountability measures increased, so too did an appreciation for the central role professional development must play in this movement and a recognition that this professional development must represent a sharp departure from past practice. Most recently, several national reports have emphasized the importance of professional development for teachers and administrators. One such report, *Does Professional Development Change Teaching Practice?: Results from a Three-Year Study* (U.S. Department of Education, 2000), is a longitudinal study of the federal Eisenhower professional development program. The study found that while teachers experienced considerable variation in the quality of professional development from year to year, when professional development was of the "reform type"—that is, it promoted active teacher learning, collective participation, and coherence—teachers increased their use of desired strategies in their science and mathematics classrooms. "Reform type" activities included teacher study groups; teacher collaboratives, networks, or committees; mentoring; internships; and resource centers.

How Teaching Matters: Bringing the Classroom Back into Discussions of Teacher Quality (Wenglinsky, 2000) points out that today's students do not have the benefit of waiting for the next generation of teachers to fill their schools. Instead, they are dependent on the effectiveness of those they now have. The report provides evidence of the link between particular types of teacher development and improved student learning in science and mathematics.

The National Education Goals Panel's report, *Bringing All Students to High Standards* (NEGP Monthly, 2000), also links professional development to improved student achievement. In particular, the panel recommended professional development that is sufficiently sustained and intense to help teachers become more effective at helping all students meet high academic standards.

Before It's Too Late (National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century, 2000) concludes that better mathematics and science teaching depends on continuing professional development for all teachers. The report recommends the development of an ongoing system to improve the quality of mathematics teaching and the working

environment of teachers.

The Learning First Alliance's publication, *Every Child Reading: A Professional Development Guide* (2000), points out that for the teaching of literacy to succeed with almost all students, schools must use the most effective forms of professional development. The guide notes that student achievement in reading will improve when everyone who affects student learning is involved in professional development, when professional learning is given adequate time during the work day, and when professional development occurs through processes such as workshops, guided peer observation with feedback, teacher research groups, and demonstration lessons by master teachers, among other recommendations.

Teachers Who Learn, Kids Who Achieve: A Look at Schools with Model Professional Development, a report of WestEd (2000), identifies a number of shared characteristics among schools that distinguished themselves in the U.S. Department of Education's National Awards Program for Model Professional Development by demonstrating the link between staff development and student learning. These schools had clear student achievement goals, provided an array of professional development opportunities, embedded ongoing learning in the school culture, built a highly collaborative school environment, found and used time for teacher learning, and used a broad range of student performance data.

The U.S. Department of Education's report, *e-Learning: Putting a World-Class Education at the Fingertips of All Children* (2000), stresses the importance of technology-related teacher professional learning. The report advocates that states and school districts make professional development a priority to "increase the quantity, quality, and coherence of technology-focused activities aimed at the professional development of teachers" (p. 38).

Another report on technology, *The Power of the Internet for Learning: Moving from Promise to Practice* (Web-Based Education Commission, 2000), recommends the continuous and relevant training and support of teachers and administrators at all levels. "We heard that professional development—for preK-12 teachers, higher education faculty, and school administrators—is the critical ingredient for effective use of technology in the classroom," the report notes. "However, not enough is being done to assure that today's educators have the skills and knowledge needed for effective web-based teaching" (p. iv).

Trying to Stay Ahead of the Game: Superintendents and Principals Talk About School Leadership (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, & Foleno, 2001) demonstrates the value school administrators attach to their own professional learning. Fifty-six percent of superintendents and 54 percent of principals viewed improved professional development as a "very effective" way of

improving school leadership. Administrators criticize current professional development efforts as impractical and focused on the wrong things and express support for professional learning focused on the latest research on student learning and effective educational practices.

DEVELOP HIGH-QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

In this book, I argue that high-quality staff development driven by a compelling vision of student learning and a data-based assessment of current reality is essential if teachers are to consistently apply in their classrooms the findings of the most recent research on teaching and learning. This professional development, however, must be significantly different than it has been in the past if it is to produce high levels of learning for students and staff members. At its core, it will have a professional learning team whose members accept a collective responsibility for the academic achievement of all students represented by the teachers in the group and who meet regularly to learn, plan, and support one another in the process of continuous improvement. This professional development will not only affect the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of individual teachers, administrators, and other school employees, but will also alter the cultures and structures of the organizations in which those individuals work (Jones, 1998; Sparks & Hirsh, 1997).

As you will see in the chapters that follow, high-quality staff development:

- Focuses on deepening teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills;
- Includes opportunities for practice, research, and reflection;
- Is embedded in educators' work and takes place during the school day;
- Is sustained over time; and
- Is founded on a sense of collegiality and collaboration among teachers and between teachers and principals in solving important problems related to teaching and learning.

Such staff development moves beyond the transmission of knowledge and skills to include analytic and reflective cognitive processes, focuses on problems experienced by educators and reflects their input, and allows participants to share power and authority with those who teach them (Education Commission of the States, 2000).

Dramatically improved staff development will obviously not occur by accident. It will result from ambitious goals for both student and adult learning and deep changes throughout the system, which will be the subject of Chapter 2. As Michael Fullan argues (1991), "The greatest problem faced by school districts and schools is not resistance to innovation, but the fragmentation, overload, and incoherence resulting from the uncritical acceptance

of too many different innovations” (p. 197). Chapter 2 argues that a clearly-articulated and widely-held vision for student learning and educators’ professional development based on stretch goals and deep change that is taken seriously by district and school leaders reduces the likelihood of such fragmentation, overload, and incoherence.

MY ASSUMPTIONS

- Quality teaching makes a difference in student learning.
- Teachers and principals can improve their practice through professional learning.
- The professional learning of teachers is a central factor in determining the quality of teaching.
- The professional learning of principals is a central factor in determining the quality of their instructional leadership.
- District structures and culture that surround the school play a critical role in determining the quality of professional learning experienced by teachers and principals.

FOR DISCUSSION

Write your assumptions regarding the areas addressed by my assumptions. Be specific and succinct. Dialogue with your group regarding your assumptions, remembering that the intention of dialogue is the nonjudgmental surfacing of assumptions rather than critiquing or seeking to change the assumptions of others.

Discuss your views regarding the assertion made earlier in this chapter: “Quality teaching in all classrooms and skillful leadership in all schools will not occur by accident, however. They require the design and implementation of the most powerful forms of professional development.”

To gain a clearer sense of your “current reality,” to what extent do you believe this statement accurately describes your school or district: “Unfortunately, the professional learning opportunities of most teachers are woefully inadequate to meet the demands of today’s classrooms. And in most districts the quality of professional learning for principals and other schools leaders is even less adequate in assisting them to meet the almost overwhelming challenges of their work.” Again, please be as specific as possible, citing evidence that supports your views.

Specify actions that will be taken as a result of this discussion, who will take them, and by what date.

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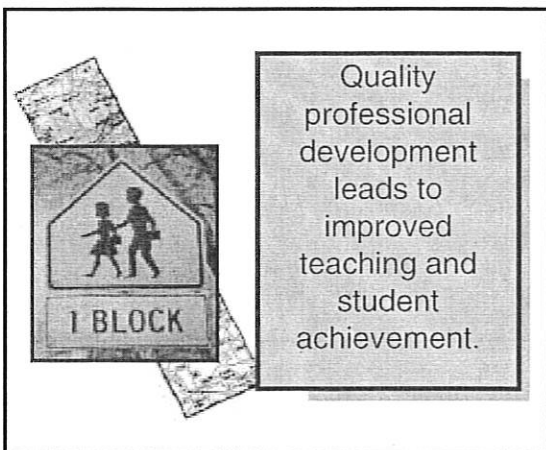
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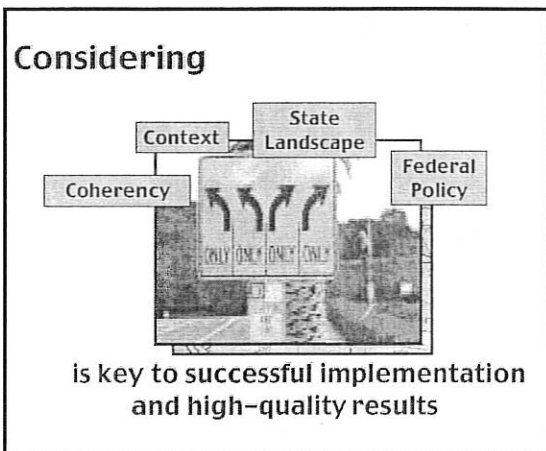
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Professional Development Roadmap Presentation

TALKING POINTS



- School districts have traditionally taken the lead in professional development.
- However, as state policymakers better understand that professional development is a key component to successful education reform, they are seeking an appropriate state role.
- States can impact the resources, incentives, and requirements that enable all teachers to participate in high-quality professional development.



Policymakers should be mindful of several points when using this publication:

Coherency: Issues are addressed separately, but eventually they must be considered together to form cohesive professional development policy.

Context: Effective professional development policy must be considered within the context of other teacher quality policy, including preparation, licensure, recruitment, and retention.

State Landscape: Existing practices, state context and political landscape should be considered to determine the success and appropriateness of professional development reform.

Federal Policy: Professional development provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 may affect professional development efforts in the states.

TALKING POINTS

Options for Policymakers

- Professional development standards
- Professional development planning and evaluation
- Professional development resources
- Career development
- External assistance providers
- Under each option we present multiple pathways for achieving the goal of the policy option



- This presentation and accompanying materials were created to assist policymakers with the challenges of creating quality, thoughtful professional development policy.
- We will review professional development policy options in five key areas—professional development standards, professional development planning and evaluation, professional development resources, career development, and external assistance providers.

Policy Option: Set Professional Development Standards

Standards establish benchmarks for ensuring high-quality professional learning in schools.



- Education reform efforts have focused on state standards for students.
- Now states are setting standards for what teachers should know and be able to teach.
- Professional development standards provide the structure that ensures teachers acquire the knowledge and skills outlined by the standards as necessary to support student learning.
- The state can require that all organizations receiving state funds use the standards to guide professional development planning and delivery.

Professional Development Standards

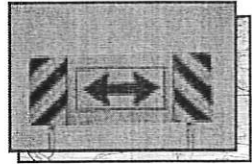
Convene state-wide task force to create state specific professional development standards



- State-specific staff development standards contribute to a state's vision for high-quality professional learning.
- Ensure all perspectives are considered in the development of standards and plans for implementation by involving all stakeholder groups.

Professional Development Standards

Adopt National Staff Development Council's Standards for Staff Development



Embed standards in the state's teaching standards

TALKING POINTS

- NSDC standards are based on years of research and a consensus of 15 leading organizations in the field.
- Another option is to include professional development responsibilities in state-adopted teaching standards.

Policy Option: Require Professional Development Planning and Evaluation



Plans make visible steps for achieving goals and evaluations provide evidence of the progress and impact.

- One of the most important goals of professional development is the creation of a school culture that supports high levels of teacher and student learning.
- As with other education reform efforts, improving professional development requires planning and evaluation.
- To address the need for planning and evaluation, some states are calling for professional development plans at the state, school district, school, and individual levels.
- These plans help to ensure alignment of goals and outcomes throughout the system.
- Required evaluations create a mechanism for determining whether professional development investments are producing intended results in terms of improved practice and student learning.

Professional Development Planning and Evaluation

Recommend a statewide plan for professional development.



Require local districts to submit staff development or continuous improvement plans to a state or regional agency for approval/review.

- The No Child Left Behind Act allocates professional development funds to state education agencies that pass through to local education agencies.
- A state plan could assist with coordination of these resources.
- A state plan could ensure that professional development covers state standards and priority issues of state policymakers, such as reading and technology.
- The requirement for local plans sends the message that the state values professional development and it must be accompanied with corrective actions when plans do not adhere to state standards or other requirements.

TALKING POINTS

Professional Development Planning and Evaluation



Require individual or preferably teams of teachers to write annual professional learning plans.

- Plans developed in a team setting may produce greater accountability for action.
- Mechanisms must be in place to ensure all plans are aligned with school, system, and state expectations.

Professional Development Planning and Evaluation

Incorporate professional development standards into the state school accreditation or ranking process.

Provide technical assistance for professional development planning to low-performing schools.



- Including a review of professional development in the state accreditation process indicates importance placed on it by the state.
- Improving the quality of professional development can serve as a leading indicator of improvement in a system or school.
- The state could limit support to those schools with the greatest need and conserve scarce resources.

Policy Option: Provide Professional Development Resources

Time and money are necessary to the achievement of improvement goals.



- Time and money are two key resources that support quality professional development.
- Time for professional development is always limited.
- Rethinking the design of the teacher workday will be key to finding enough time.
- School-based professional development that is embedded into the teachers' workday has been shown to be most helpful.
- Money is the other important resource used to support quality professional development.
- While we can debate how much time and how many dollars are essential, where we can agree is that they matter and should be used wisely.

TALKING POINTS

**Professional Development Resources:
Time**

Ensure school districts provide time within the school day for staff to collaborate for professional learning.

Offer planning grants and technical assistance to assist local school districts and school leaders to find ways to provide daily team learning time for teachers.



- On-the-job learning provides immediate support for teachers. Without an incentive or requirement, school districts may not provide teachers time during the day to participate in job-embedded professional learning.
- Selected grants and technical assistance could provide opportunities for the state to showcase districts that find ways to provide the daily team learning time.

**Professional Development Resources:
Funding**

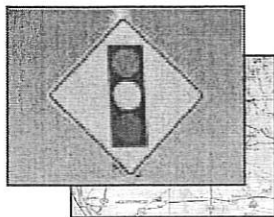


Require that a certain percentage of state and/or district funds be used for professional development.

Fund per pupil or per teacher allocations for professional development.

- State policies that address funding can ensure that a minimum amount is spent for professional development.
- Funding is likely to be distributed more equitably because it will be based on the school's population or number of teachers.
- This mechanism ensures a line item exists in state and local budgets for professional development.

**Professional Development Resources:
Funding**




Prioritize funding for those professional development programs that address high-priority areas.

Study current expenditures and the impact of such investments.

- The state can invest in priority areas, such as elementary reading or middle school math.
- State funding can be directed toward more effective forms of professional development.
- Consider a study of the current distribution of professional development funds, evaluate the effectiveness of current investments, and seek recommendations for improving use of such funds.
- Such a study could provide information on federal, state, and local funding streams; whether the current level of state funding is adequate; and how the state can better support quality professional development.

TALKING POINTS

Policy Option: Support Career Development




Expectations and support expedite, ensure, and reward teacher competency in the classroom.

- Career development policy conversations support states' efforts at recruitment and retention.
- Many states support new teachers through induction programs and mentoring support.
- States also are considering systems of recertification based on teaching performance.
- Teacher retention can also be addressed by expanding leadership opportunities.

Career Development: New Teachers

Provide induction and mentoring services.

If funds are limited, focus on teachers in high-poverty and/or low performing schools.



- High-quality induction programs have proven their success in increasing the retention of new teachers.
- Such policies send a strong message that induction and mentoring are important tools in recruiting and retaining new teachers.
- The state is assured that teachers in low-performing schools are receiving the support they need in order to improve their teaching methods and student achievement.
- Another option is to provide matching dollars to districts that are willing to implement programs that meet criteria established by the state and are grounded in research and best practice.

Career Development: Recertification and Advanced Degrees




Establish a performance-based recertification system that requires teachers to demonstrate teaching competency.

Provide incentives for teachers to earn National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification or another similar master license or certificate.

- Recertification would be based on the effectiveness of a teacher rather than a certain number of hours of professional development.
- Too much time is spent in states creating systems to "count" professional development hours; this time should be used to ensure states have quality teaching in classrooms.
- With this system the state has a mechanism for discussing how it ensures quality teaching.
- National certification or other mastery licenses provides a career step for teachers and a level of excellence for which teachers can strive.

TALKING POINTS

Career Development: Leadership Opportunities



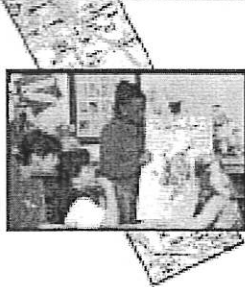
Provide training, support, and funding for mentors.

Consider support for school-based staff developers by providing partial or total salary reimbursement and by creating a specialized license.

- States benefit from investments in mentor training and service to novice teachers.
- Encouraging teachers to seek school-based staff developer positions establishes new career track for outstanding teachers who can remain in schools close to colleagues and students.
- Expertise provided at the school level is often perceived as more valuable than expertise provided from the outside.


Policy Option: Use External Assistance Providers

External assistance providers have potential to accelerate improvement efforts.



- Research has shown that external assistance to schools is critical to success.
- There are many organizations and people offering expertise and assistance to schools.
- Some organizations estimate this is a \$6 billion market.
- Policymakers have reason to be interested in this aspect of professional development.

External Assistance Providers



Regulate providers by creating a state registration system.

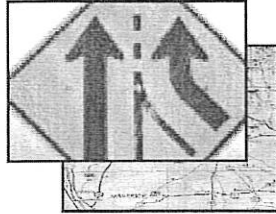
Provide training and resources to selected external assistance providers.

- The state would have information on minimum qualifications of all providers and potential for retribution if hears of a problem.
- The state can contribute to the quality of providers in the field and still allow local systems the flexibility of choosing in the marketplace.

TALKING POINTS

External Assistance Providers

Channel funds to professional development programs that address high-priority areas or programs that demonstrate results.



- The state can focus resources and expertise on those areas that are designated as a priority by the state.
- The state rewards programs that demonstrate that they provide high-quality professional development.

No matter how far you have gone on a wrong road, turn back.

Turkish proverb

If we don't change the direction we're going, we're likely to end up where we are headed.

Chinese proverb

The Bottom Line:

Professional learning is essential to school improvement.

School improvement is essential to student learning.



What role will you take to ensure this?

If you would like a copy of the slides to support this presentation and handouts for individuals to record notes, contact:

Michelle Exstrom
Policy Specialist

National Conference of State Legislatures
303.364.7700

The Mysterious World of Public Policymaking: Questions and Answers

To advance the issue of teacher professional development in your state, you need the support of the people who actually make public policy—state legislators. Elected bodies such as legislatures can appear to be mysterious, confusing and inaccessible. Legislatures are places of discussions, debates, confrontation, disagreements, give-and-take and, ultimately, consensus-making. This environment should not intimidate us. David Broder of *The Washington Post* calls legislatures “collecting points for conflicting views.” The debate and the conflict that occur as interests and agendas clash, he says, is healthy.

Access is actually quite simple. That is because legislators are really YOUR legislators. You have the right to contact them, inform them and, most of all, keep or not keep them in office. Besides, legislators want to hear from you. They were elected to their jobs because they care about the community and *you* are part of that community.

A former Colorado House speaker said that people who become legislators are successful only if they can bounce 15 balls in place at one time. Legislators never have enough time to do everything, go everywhere and read everything. That should not deter you. Your message about the importance and effectiveness of teacher professional development is one that legislators want to hear.

Questions You Wish You Could Ask

1. What are some general things I need to know about lawmakers and lawmaking?

Legislators are busy, community-minded people who usually ran for office because they had some specific issues to address. Because running for office can be intimidating, legislators tend to develop a thick skin. They are goal-oriented. The work of the legislator is to serve and represent his or her constituents and to develop and pass legislation.

Legislators have several roles—all relevant to being a legislator—that often pull them in different directions. They are politicians, campaigners and policymakers. They are both district-focused and state-focused. These are all legitimate parts of being a legislator. It is important to be acquainted with all the roles and perspectives of legislators in order to more effectively build support for teacher professional development.

In many states, the general assembly does not meet year-round. This means that legislators often have other jobs when the legislature is not in session. They are not always experts in certain public policy fields, so they welcome input and need information on specific issues from groups and individuals. Such input is called lobbying. Although this term has taken on negative connotations, it really means providing information on a specific side of an issue. In order to lobby successfully, groups need to build their credibility with legislators by providing balanced, accurate and sound information. If a legislator can count on you for this information, you can develop a strong mutual relationship.

2. How do I prepare myself for a meeting with legislators?

It's relatively easy to gather some information ahead of time so you will know something about the legislative environment.

- If possible, visit the capitol so you can visualize the surroundings.
- Know some basic facts about the structure of the legislature: How many members are in the House and the Senate? How long are their terms? Who are the top majority party and minority party leaders? Who are the chairs of the House and Senate education committees? (Most legislatures have a free booklet that contains this information.)
- Know the names of your own House and Senate representatives and learn something that no one knows—the numbers of their state House and state Senate districts.
- Do some research on your own legislators. How long have they been in office? What are their professional backgrounds? (Most states have Web sites where legislators are listed, and many legislators have their own Web sites.)
- If you are not meeting with your own legislator, know the same information about the legislators with whom you are meeting.

3. *How do legislators set their legislative and education priorities?*

You may have more in common with your legislators than you think. The majority of people who run for office do so because they want to make a difference. They have a streak of idealism, not unlike people who become teachers. To many legislators, public service means solving problems and making life better for constituencies, their state and the public interest. They have agendas to propose and goals to accomplish. They bring to their office their own backgrounds and experiences regarding public policy issues. Their families, communities, work experience and political parties shape their outlook. They set priorities based upon the issues that interest them, the concerns of their constituents and issues that are politically valuable.

When a legislator begins public service, one of the first realities he or she faces is the budget. There is never enough money to fund all the needs of the state. Since everything cannot be funded, legislators set priorities among public policy issues and within public policy issues. For example, a strong education legislator might be firmly committed to funding the needs of special education kids, and less interested in funding standardized tests.

4. *How can I help make education a priority?*

This is not difficult. The last three U.S. presidents have made education a top priority, and commitment to education crosses party lines. The public seems to understand that a strong education system is the key to building a good society. On a personal level, legislators draw from their own lives, as we all do. Their attitude toward education might be based on their own experiences or the experiences of their children and family—positive or negative. Your passion and commitment to educating children make you the best salesperson.

5. *How can I help make teacher professional development a priority?*

This may be more difficult. It is important to present a clear, concise case that high-quality professional development improves student learning and the quality of teaching. If your group has in mind a specific legislative proposal, be thoroughly familiar with how it will work. Develop a primer describing professional development in your state, modeled after the questions and answers in the first booklet in this packet, *Professional Development Policies and Practices: Frequently Asked Questions*. Many legislators may not know much about teacher professional development. Put yourself in their place. What would you ask about the subject if you knew very little about it? Be prepared to:

- Articulate a clear definition of teacher professional development.
- Be familiar with your current state law and how it is working.
- Describe the relevance of professional development to improving student learning and teacher quality.
- Use specific examples and quantitative measurements, if possible.
- Know how much it will cost.
- Explain how it will work. How will the state be involved? How will this apply to school districts?
- Be honest in your appraisal of current practices. Legislators want to know all sides of an issue, and your credibility will be enhanced if you are prepared to discuss the pros and cons.

6. *Is there a general view on the level of importance of teacher staff development?*

No. Legislators' frames of reference might be professional development classes in the business or nonprofit world, or their experience might be that their child has a day off from school because of a teacher in-service day. Most legislators do not know what professional development is and the level of its importance to the overall education system.

7. *What can I tell legislators about professional development that will attract their attention and raise the significance of the issue?*

Legislators like facts. They especially want to fund programs that raise the level of student learning. They will be impressed if you can quantitatively show a link between effective professional development and increased student achievement. Arm yourself with results from other states that show that high-quality professional development is working. Use information from the primer in this packet, *Professional Development Policies and Practices: Frequently Asked Questions*.

8. *Will legislators listen to me, even if I do not live in their districts?*

Yes, they will. It is true that legislators like to serve and respond to their constituents. That does not mean, however, that if you live outside the district you are less credible, especially if the issue is of interest to the legislator. This is why it is important to become acquainted with legislators, even if they are not in your district. Go to their community meetings. Visit them at the capitol. Meet with them on your issues. Observe them on the campaign trail.

Legislators are looking for good public policy issues to transfer into law. They want to carry a bill that has broad support so it will pass. You can show the legislator that your bill has this broad support and is good public policy.

9. *How do we get legislators into our schools?*

This is the easy part. Legislators enjoy visiting schools, especially classrooms. Extend the invitation yourself or ask a parent or constituent to invite the legislator. Suggest that the legislator speak on a specific topic—perhaps a pending bill that is of interest to students. The National Conference of State Legislatures has a Legislators Back to School Week in the fall that is designed to bring lawmakers to the classroom. The purpose is to teach young people what it is like to be a state legislator: the processes, the pressures, and the debate, negotiation and compromise that are representative democracy. If you are interested, contact the NCSL Civic Education Web site at www.ncsl.org/public/trust/contacts_bsw.htm.

10. *What is the best way to communicate with a legislator?*

There is no magic way. We all are different and we all prefer different ways of communication. You might start by sending a letter outlining why you want a meeting and enclose some materials. Follow up with a phone call and set up a meeting. You also could go to where they are—at a community meeting or one of their town meetings.

Less effective, in many cases, is electronic mail, because legislators receive so many messages. Some, however, like this approach and think it is easier than a phone call. The best method? Ask them or their aide how you can best keep them informed.

Although it takes work, it is more effective for your group to send individual messages to legislators, rather than flood them with faxes, letters or postcards that all say the same thing. These blanket mailings are tossed away and are never counted as valid. The same may be said of phone calls where each caller reads from the same script. A better method is to understand the message and say it in your own words, either by phone or mail.

11. *How is a legislative office organized?*

Most state legislatures are part-time. The legislative session is limited to a certain number of days per year, although committees may meet throughout the year. Staff are limited. Sometimes aides are volunteers who may be campaign workers, friends, college students who receive credit for the work, or someone the legislator trusts. In some of the larger states, legislative staff are professionals who might have worked for the legislature for a while. Even in the larger states, only one full-time staff member may be available when the legislature is not in session.

A legislator's staff—whether paid or volunteer—can be extremely helpful to you and can be a valuable source of information. An aide is your best ally in giving you advice on how to best work with the legislator and helping you schedule time with him or her. The work of an aide often includes writing policy briefs, so the aide will appreciate information you can provide on professional development. Because of a legislator's busy schedule, sometimes an aide will represent him or her at meetings and articulate policy positions.

12. *What are the three most important things I should know?*

- Take time to build relationships with your own legislators, staff and other key lawmakers. This could include the chairs of the House and Senate education committees, the appropriation or budget committee, and members of these committees.
- Present your information in a clear, concise way, showing how high-quality professional development improves student learning. You can make your information come alive with examples of model schools in your own school district, of outstanding teachers, and of improvement in student learning.
- Remember that you are participating in representative democracy. There is a clear need in America for citizens to engage in our democratic processes. By advocating for teacher professional development, you are helping to make our democracy work.



Good morning and thank you, Madam Chairperson and members of the Committee for the opportunity to talk with you about **House Bill 2006** on the Inservice Education Opportunities Act. I am here today wearing what I refer to as my two “hats.” I am speaking as the Chair of the Kansas Learning First Alliance and as President of the Kansas National Education Association.

Kansas was very fortunate when the Legislature discussed and drafted the current statute on professional development for Kansas’s educators. The depth and breadth of the bill as it outlines new knowledge, study, and professional development is as current as it was when the statute was written. However, the term inservice has developed a bad connotation. It has come to stand for bad practices and less than helpful learning experiences for educators. The “talking heads” approach is one that comes immediately to mind. In the Kansas Learning First Alliance presentation on quality standards before the Legislative Educational Planning Committee it was suggested that the title be changed but not the content of the statute and that is exactly what HB 2006 does. The act will now be called the Education Professional Development Act.

In the future when the economic situation of Kansas improves we will make suggestions for improved funding for Professional Development as we hope this statute will be called in the future. Thank you for your consideration.