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# INFORMATION BULLETIN

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## **New York State Professional Development Standards**

The Board of Regents adopted state standards for professional development at its January 27, 2009 meeting. The New York State Professional Development Standards were developed by the State Professional Standards and Practices Board for Teaching. The Professional Standards and Practices Board (PSPB), comprised of educators, and business and public representatives, was established by the Board of Regents in 1998 to advise the Regents and Commissioner of Education on issues relating to the quality of teaching and teacher education.

The professional development standards grew out of the PSPB's concern that, in order to help school districts provide the most effective professional development programs for educators, New York State should adopt statewide professional development standards. The standards reflect the many comments received by the State Education Department during a six month public comment period, which the PSPB used to make revisions and refinements to the Standards. NYSUT commented on the standards and many of NYSUT's recommendations were incorporated into the final document.

The purpose of the standards is to:

- Provide a clear vision and definition of high-quality, effective professional development that focuses on local district needs and priorities;
- Support the professional development planning process used by public school districts; and
- Align with student learning standards to improve student learning.

The professional development standards focus on ten areas and include a set of quality indicators for each standard.

- Standard 1: Designing Professional Development
- Standard 2: Content Knowledge and Quality Teaching
- Standard 3: Research-based Professional Learning
- Standard 4: Collaboration
- Standard 5: Diverse Learning
- Standard 6: Student Learning Environments
- Standard 7: Parent, Family and Community Engagement
- Standard 8: Data-driven Professional Practice
- Standard 9: Technology
- Standard 10: Evaluation

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## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

### **1. What is NYSUT's position on the State Standards?**

NYSUT steadfastly supports a quality teacher in every classroom in New York State. Good teaching must be supported by well planned, sustained and high quality professional development. NYSUT has been a strong advocate for high quality professional development to close the achievement gap and for resources, for example Teacher Centers, National Board Certified teachers, and the Mentor Teacher Internship grant to deliver high quality professional development. Because the quality of professional development varies from district to district, these standards will go a long way in defining high quality professional development and will be useful to local Professional Development Plan (PDP) committees in planning and evaluating what is being offered to educators. Further, these standards are consistent with the high standards for professional development already established by our national affiliates, the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association.

### **2. Are the State Standards intended to be used as criteria for evaluating teacher performance under the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR)?**

No. The Professional Standards and Practices Board, at the urging of NYSUT, clarified that these standards provide guidance for the purpose of “creating and implementing effective professional development.” Specifically, the standards “provide guidance for achieving high quality professional development planning, design, delivery and assessment, and should serve as a foundation for all professional development in our schools.” Additionally, the standards and quality indicators are intended to be used to “guide high quality professional development offered by professional development plan committees and other providers.” These statements make it quite clear that the standards are not to be used to evaluate the performance of teachers and other school personnel.

### **3. How will the State Standards be implemented and disseminated?**

The Board recommended to the Regents that the Department utilize the following strategies to ensure that the standards are implemented and disseminated widely to the field through:

- Dissemination to a multitude of providers of state-supported professional development;
- Incorporation within the Commissioner's Regulations and other SED planning documents; and
- Development of resource tools, such as rubrics for each standard.

To ensure that educators are aware of the standards, members of PSPB will make presentations to professional organizations, higher education, and other groups, stakeholder groups will be asked to publicize and promote the existence of the standards. In addition, educators will be asked to help with rubric development and field testing of the standards.

# New York State Professional Development Standards

In a commitment to raising the knowledge, skills, and opportunity of its citizens, New York State seeks to enhance students' cognitive, social, emotional and academic achievement throughout its schools. Given that research indicates that teacher quality is the single most powerful influence on student achievement, it is essential to ensure that teachers are provided with ongoing, high quality professional development to sustain and enhance their practice. Indeed, teacher professional development is an essential element of comprehensive school improvement. The professional development needs of other members of school community, including administrators and support personnel, must also be addressed to ensure a focus on continuous learning and to create the conditions necessary for closing the achievement gap and improving the achievement of all students. These standards provide guidance for achieving high quality professional development planning, design, delivery and assessment, and should serve as a foundation for all professional development in our schools.

## New York State's Commitment to Professional Development

The efforts of the New York State Board of Regents, the State Education Department, and the State Professional Standards and Practices Board for Teaching have resulted in formal processes that promote and support professional development for all educators and other school personnel. Listed below are existing State requirements and systems that build a strong foundation for professional development in New York:

- Commissioner's Regulation 80-3.6 (b)(1) requires that Professional certificate holders and Teaching Assistant III certificate holders complete professional development every five years (175 hours for teachers and school leaders and 75 hours for TA IIIs) in order to maintain their certification.
- Commissioner's Regulation 100.2(dd) Professional Development requires each district and BOCES to collaboratively develop a plan for professional development that is annually revised and approved by its board of education.
- Commissioner's Regulation 100.2(o) Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) focuses on the process of teacher evaluation and improving professional practice in the context of local needs and resources. This regulation requires that those with unsatisfactory performance receive a teacher improvement plan with appropriate professional development.

The State Education Department also administers a number of State and federal programs that support ongoing sustained professional development to schools and BOCES, such as the State's Teacher Center Program, the Mentor-Teacher Internship Program, and NCLB Title IIA Teacher Quality grants. In addition, various State-supported professional development networks share the goal of improving student achievement by supporting educator growth and change in practice, for example, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), Special Education Training Resource Centers (SETRC), and Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Centers (BETAC).

The New York State Professional Development Standards and the related indicators will guide high quality professional development offered by these and other providers. Use of the standards will increase coordination of effort and consistency in providing professional development to all school personnel throughout the State.

## **Standards Ensure Consistent High Quality Professional Development Leading to Increased Student Achievement**

New York State's Professional Development Standards provide a blueprint for high-quality professional development for all educators to improve instruction and student achievement. These standards promote and sustain continuous development, growth, and examination of practice. They also provide clearly defined expectations and commitment to change. They are aligned with New York State Learning Standards and are based on an analysis and adaptation of the National Staff Development Council's Standards for Staff Development as well as other national, state, and professional standards. The New York State Professional Development Standards are based on fundamental knowledge about contextual factors from converging research about effective professional development and its ultimate impact on student learning. Attributes of effective professional development include the following:

- **Effective professional development fosters a culture of continuous improvement for all engaged in the learning endeavor.** Practices address the needs of professionals throughout their careers and embrace other stakeholders as participants in learning. Activities are evaluated both for effectiveness and impact on student learning.
- **Effective professional development is that which improves the learning of all students, including those with different educational needs, learning styles, and incremental abilities, and those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.**
- **Professional development is most effective when there are clear research-based expectations for what teachers should know and be able to do to support student learning.** These expectations are reflected in the New York State Code of Ethics for Educators, district Professional Development Plans, Annual Professional Performance Reviews, and Commissioner's Regulations related to teacher preparation and certification. They are also enumerated and reflected in collective bargaining agreements, job descriptions and assignments, performance appraisal systems, systems of rewards and incentives for teachers, and in the design and content of teacher professional development.
- **Professional development is most effective when it takes place in professional learning communities.** These learning communities might take various forms, but they are all characterized by ongoing learning. They encourage individual and collaborative exploration, practice, and reflection. They foster collegiality and problem solving, and they emphasize continuous improvement in classrooms and schools.
- **Professional development is most effective when there is collaborative leadership and shared responsibility for improving teaching and learning.** Collaborative leadership for professional development recognizes that the pursuit of excellence is never-ending and embraces the individual and collective goals and talents of teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, school administrators, school boards, district and state staff, institutions of higher education, unions, and other stakeholders.
- **Professional development is most effective when it is job embedded, directly relevant to classroom practice, provided over time, and when it provides opportunity for practice of new strategies, time to reflect on changes, and time to integrate new learning into the teaching practice.**
- **Professional development is most effective when adequate resources are provided.** Resources include money, people, and time. Resources necessarily come from a variety of sources, and must be sufficiently sustained over time to insure the full impact of professional development. Resources are adequate when they ensure that all educators can study, practice, reflect, receive feedback on practice, and implement knowledge and skills necessary to be effective with their students and others.

## The Ten Standards for High Quality Professional Development

1. **Designing Professional Development:** Professional development design is based on data; is derived from the experience, expertise and needs of the recipients; reflects best practices in sustained job-embedded learning; and incorporates knowledge of how adults learn.
2. **Content Knowledge and Quality Teaching:** Professional development expands educators' content knowledge and the knowledge and skills necessary to provide developmentally appropriate instructional strategies and assess student progress.
3. **Research-based Professional Learning:** Professional development is research-based and provides educators with opportunities to analyze apply and engage in research.
4. **Collaboration:** Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge, skill and opportunity to collaborate in a respectful and trusting environment.
5. **Diverse Learning:** Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge and skill to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.
6. **Student Learning Environments:** Professional development ensures that educators are able to create safe, secure, supportive, and equitable learning environments for all students.
7. **Parent, Family and Community Engagement:** Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge, skill, and opportunity to engage and collaborate with parents, families, and other community members as active partners in children's education.
8. **Data-driven Professional Practice:** Professional development uses disaggregated student data and other evidence of student learning to determine professional development learning needs and priorities, to monitor student progress, and to help sustain continuous professional growth.
9. **Technology:** Professional development promotes technological literacy and facilitates the effective use of all appropriate technology.
10. **Evaluation:** Professional development is evaluated using multiple sources of information to assess its effectiveness in improving professional practice and student learning.

## **New York State Professional Development Standards and Indicators**

### **Standard 1: Designing Professional Development**

#### **Standard:**

Professional development design is based on data, is derived from the experience, expertise and needs of the recipients, reflects best practices in sustained job-embedded learning, and incorporates knowledge of how adults learn.

#### **Indicators:**

- 1a. Professional development design begins with a needs assessment that is grounded in the analysis of multiple sources of disaggregated teaching and learning data.
- 1b. Professional development design is based on the learning styles of adult learners as well as the diverse cultural, linguistic, and experiential resources that they bring to the professional development activity.
- 1c. Professional development design is grounded in the New York State Learning Standards and student learning goals.
- 1d. The intended beneficiaries of professional development are substantively involved in all aspects of professional development design.
- 1e. Professional development design addresses the continuum of an educator's experience and level of expertise, and is based on an analysis of individual educator needs; current knowledge and skills; and district, building and educator learning goals.
- 1f. Professional development formats include, but are not limited to, lesson study, demonstrations, observations, analysis of student work and assessment data, collegial circles, feedback, action research, reflection, and opportunities for collaboration and problem solving.
- 1g. The format of professional development incorporates technologies to provide more extensive and diverse content, expand access and participation, and create virtual professional learning communities.
- 1h. Professional development is sustained over time and provides continued support such as follow-up, demonstrations, feedback on mastery of new knowledge and skills, peer coaching and mentoring, and continued opportunities for additional study.

### **Standard 2: Content Knowledge and Quality Teaching**

#### **Standard:**

Professional development expands all educators' content knowledge and the knowledge and skills necessary to provide developmentally appropriate instructional strategies and assess student progress.

#### **Indicators:**

- 2a. Professional development includes learning experiences and resources to ensure that educators understand how the subjects they teach address the New York State Learning Standards and the relationships between the subjects they teach and the other subjects in the curriculum.
- 2b. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to examine, observe, practice, and receive feedback on their use of research-based instructional strategies to improve their students' learning by utilizing methods such as peer review, coaching, mentoring, and modeling.

- 2c. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for educators to examine a variety of classroom assessments, practice using them in their classrooms, and analyze the results to 1) understand and report on student achievement based on New York State Learning Standards, 2) identify gaps in student learning, and 3) adjust instruction.
- 2d. Professional development provides differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners.
- 2e. Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge and skills needed to develop and foster the critical thinking, problem solving, literacy, and technological skills that students need to be successful in the 21st century.
- 2f. Professional development provides the knowledge, skill, and opportunity for educators to make relevant connections between the subjects they teach and the applications of those subjects.

### **Standard 3: Research-based Professional Learning**

#### **Standard:**

Professional development is research-based and provides educators with opportunities to analyze, apply, and engage in research.

#### **Indicators:**

- 3a. Professional development is based on current research in teaching, learning, and leadership.
- 3b. Effective professional development ensures that all educators have the knowledge, skill, and opportunity to apply research to instructional decision making.
  - 3b.1. Professional development includes ongoing opportunities for educators to read and reflect on current research on topics that are of interest to them and that are consistent with state and local school improvement priorities.
  - 3b.2. Professional development involves discussion of research design, data collection, and analysis to assist teachers in understanding how to interpret research findings, particularly in areas where there may be competing perspectives and conclusions.
  - 3b.3. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to collaborate with higher education and other partners in action research to test their own hypotheses and to report the results about the impact of professional development programs or the effectiveness of particular instructional strategies and programs for educators and students.

### **Standard 4: Collaboration**

#### **Standard:**

Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge, skill, and opportunity to collaborate to improve instruction and student achievement in a respectful and trusting environment.

#### **Indicators:**

- 4a. Professional development provides skills that educators need to communicate effectively, to listen to the ideas of others, to exchange and discuss ideas, to work in diverse teams, and to share responsibility for work toward a common goal.

- 4b. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for educators to work with colleagues including teachers, principals, teaching assistants, librarians, counselors, social workers, psychologists, higher education faculty, and others critical to student success.
- 4c. Professional development maximizes the use of technology to broaden the scope of collaboration.

### **Standard 5: Diverse Learning**

#### **Standard:**

Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge and skill to meet the diverse needs of all students.

#### **Indicators:**

- 5a. Professional development focuses on developing educators' knowledge of the learning styles, needs, and abilities of their students, as well as the diverse cultural, linguistic, and experiential resources that their students bring to the classroom.
- 5b. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to design and implement differentiated instructional and assessment strategies that utilize diverse student, family and community resources, and that meet diverse student learning needs.
- 5c. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to examine their practice in setting and maintaining high expectations for all students to enable them to attain high levels of achievement.

### **Standard 6: Student Learning Environments**

#### **Standard:**

Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge and skill to create safe, secure, supportive, and equitable learning environments for all students.

#### **Indicators:**

- 6a. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to create a safe, inclusive, equitable learning community where everyone participates in maintaining a climate of caring, respect, and high achievement.
- 6b. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to collaborate with school psychologists and social workers to develop effective strategies for student behavior and classroom management, and to seek creative solutions to conflicts.
- 6c. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to analyze and use data about student behavior (such as discipline referrals, suspension information, school climate surveys, and social-emotional data) to refine educational practices and promote optimal learning environments.

### **Standard 7: Parent, Family and Community Engagement**

#### **Standard:**

Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge, skills, and opportunity to engage and collaborate with parents, families, and other community members as active partners in children's education.



**Indicators:**

- 7a. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to develop communication and collaboration skills that enable them to build partnerships with parents, guardians, and the community.
- 7b. Professional development enhances educators' knowledge of varying cultural backgrounds of students, families, and the community, and of how the diversity of these cultural backgrounds can serve as foundations and resources for student learning and success.
- 7c. Professional development includes opportunities for educators to develop skills and strategies that use technology to strengthen partnerships with parents, families, and the community.

**Standard 8: Data-driven Professional Practice****Standard:**

Professional development uses disaggregated student data and other evidence of student learning to determine professional development learning needs and priorities, to monitor student progress, and to help sustain continuous professional growth.

**Indicators:**

- 8a. Professional development ensures ongoing opportunities for all educators to learn how to analyze and collect multiple sources of student data throughout the year, to monitor student progress and adjust instructional practice.
- 8b. Professional development provides educators with the opportunity to examine all relevant student data, including Individual Education Plans (IEPs), at the beginning and throughout the academic school year, in order to design effective instruction.
- 8c. Professional development provides educators with current, high quality data analysis presented in a clear, understandable format, to promote optimal student learning.
- 8d. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to use results from local, state and national assessments; student work samples and portfolios; school climate, parent, and teacher surveys; and student behavior data to guide their instruction.
- 8e. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for educators to use disaggregated student data by race, gender, English language learning, special needs, eligibility for free or reduced price meals, and other factors in order to improve student learning.

**Standard 9: Technology****Standard:**

Professional development promotes technological literacy and facilitates the effective use of all appropriate technology.

**Indicators:**

- 9a. Professional development ensures ongoing educator and student technological literacy.
- 9b. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for educators to learn about new and emerging technologies useful in professional teaching practice.
- 9c. Professional development facilitates the ability of educators to apply technologies to create optimal and equitable learning environments.

- 9d. Professional development promotes technology as a tool to design learning opportunities, to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, and to monitor student learning.
- 9e. Professional development encourages educators to engage with students in using available technology as it relates to curricular activities, and to assist students in using technology in innovative ways.
- 9f. Professional development provides educators with opportunities to learn and use technology for communication and collaboration.
- 9g. Professional development addresses the legal and ethical uses of technology.

### **Standard 10: Evaluation**

#### **Standard:**

Professional development is evaluated using multiple sources of information to assess its effectiveness in improving professional practice and student learning.

#### **Indicators:**

- 10a. Resources are provided to plan and conduct ongoing evaluation of professional development.
- 10b. Professional development evaluation uses multiple measures to assess effectiveness of the knowledge and skill acquired in improving professional practice and student learning (such as the use of new learning in instructional planning, the use of student data for the development and adaptation of teaching strategies, or the enhanced student performance following the application of a different teaching strategy).
- 10c. Professional development evaluation includes the use of multiple methods and techniques that provide information to ensure ongoing improvements in the quality of the professional development experience (such as participant reactions, surveys, focus groups, interviews, reflective journals, portfolios, or information about student behavior or performance).
- 10d. Professional development evaluation results are reported to key stakeholder groups in a manner that promotes effective use of the evaluation data for improving both individual educator practice and building- and district-wide professional development plans.

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