

# *The Leadership Standard*

*Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.*

**L**eaders throughout the preK–12 education community recognize effective professional learning as a key strategy for supporting significant school and school system improvements to increase results for all students. Whether they lead from classrooms, schools, school systems, technical assistance agencies, professional associations, universities, or public agencies, leaders develop their own and others' capacity to learn and lead professional learning, advocate for it, provide support systems, and distribute leadership and responsibility for its effectiveness and results.

## **DEVELOP CAPACITY FOR LEARNING AND LEADING**

Leaders hold learning among their top priorities for students, staff, and themselves. Leaders recognize that universal high expectations for all students require ambitious improvements in curriculum, instruction, assessment, leadership practices, and support systems. These improvements require effective professional learning to expand educators' knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions. All leaders demand effective professional learning focused on substantive

results for themselves, their colleagues, and their students. Leaders artfully combine deep understanding of and cultural responsiveness to the community they serve with high expectations and support for results to achieve school and school system goals. They embed professional learning into the organization's vision by communicating that it is a core function for improvement and by establishing and maintaining a public and persistent focus on educator professional learning. Leaders of professional learning are found at the classroom, school, and system levels. They set the agenda for professional learning by aligning it to classroom, school, and school system goals for student and educator learning, using data to monitor and measure its effects on educator student performance. They may facilitate professional learning, coach and supervise those who facilitate it, or do both. As facilitators of professional learning, they apply a body of technical knowledge and skills to plan, design, implement, and evaluate professional learning. As coaches and supervisors of those who facilitate professional learning, they develop expertise in others about effective professional learning, set high standards for their performance, and use data to give frequent, constructive feedback.

To engage in constructive conversations about the alignment of student and educator performance, leaders cultivate a culture based on the norms of high expectations, shared responsibility, mutual respect, and relational trust. They work collaboratively with others, such as school and system based resource personnel and external technical assistance providers, so that all educators engage in effective job-embedded or external professional learning to meet individual, team, school, and system goals.

Systems that recognize and advance shared leadership promote leaders from all levels of the organizations. Leaders can hold formal roles, such as principal, instructional coach, or task force chair, for long periods of time or informal roles, such as voluntary mentor or spokesperson, for shorter periods. All leaders share responsibility for student achievement among members of the school and community. Leaders hold themselves and others accountable for the quality and results of professional learning. Leaders work collaboratively with others to create a vision for academic success and set clear goals for student achievement based on educator and student learning data.

## **ADVOCATE FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

Leaders clearly articulate the critical link between increased student learning and educator professional learning. As supporters of professional learning, they apply understanding of organizational and human changes to design needed conditions, resources, and other supports for learning and change.

As advocates for professional learning, leaders make their own career-long learning visible to others. They participate in professional learning within and beyond their own work environment. Leaders consume information in multiple fields to enhance their leadership practice. Through learning, they clarify their values and beliefs and their influence on others and on the achievement of organizational goals. Their actions model attitudes and behavior they expect of all educators.

## **CREATE SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES**

Skillful leaders establish organizational systems and structures that support effective professional learning and ongoing continuous improvement. They equitably distribute resources to accomplish individual, team, school, and school system goals. Leaders actively engage with policy makers and decision makers so that resources, policies, annual calendars, daily schedules, and structures support professional learning to increase student achievement. Leaders create and align policies and guidelines to ensure effective professional learning within their school systems or schools. They work within national, regional, and local agencies to adopt standards, monitor implementation, and evaluate professional learning's effectiveness and results.

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*Source:* Learning Forward. (2015). *Standards for Professional Learning*. Oxford, OH: Author.