



Implementing, Evaluating and Sustaining Professional Learning

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Impactful professional learning continues to gain importance as Kentucky educators strive to maximize benefits of the [Professional Growth and Effectiveness System](#), address equitable access and improve learning outcomes for all of Kentucky's students.¹

Successful professional learning addresses a school's needs assessment, is based upon multiple sources of data and input from all stakeholders, and is carefully planned, implemented and monitored. The [Kentucky Professional Learning Standards](#) and the [Professional Learning Standards Guidance document](#) provide a framework for professional growth and have useful tools for both building and evaluating a successful professional learning plan.

One useful resource is the seven-step process for developing short- and long-term professional learning plans. The steps include:

Step 1: Analyze student learning needs

Step 2: Identify characteristics of the classroom, department, school and district community

Step 3: Review student growth and school and district improvement goals

Step 4: Develop educator professional growth/learning goals based on steps 1-3

Step 5: Study available research and evidence-based professional learning options

Step 6: Create the professional learning plan

Step 7: Implement, evaluate and sustain the professional learning

(Kentucky Department of Education, p. 10)

The last step in the process – to implement the professional learning plan in classrooms, and support, monitor and measure the instructional shifts – is no easy task. When educators leave a professional learning session with a great deal of knowledge or even enthusiasm, – but do not have a clear understanding of the larger professional learning plan, expectations or next steps – they may have questions like, *What should happen next in my classroom? Where can I go for real support and feedback to sustain improved practice?*

Professional learning leaders can maximize the impact of learning by involving all participants in determining what this innovation should look like in the school or classroom. Once the expectations are understood by all, implementation, support and follow-up begin. Because quality professional learning produces effective teaching, it is too important not to be managed well.

Although the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of professional learning is best designed and managed by local school teams, the example strategies below may be helpful:

1. Utilize professional learning communities (PLCs) to discuss how the professional learning is impacting teaching and student achievement. Have teachers bring

evidence of the progress they and their students are making to regularly scheduled meetings. Consider discussing these questions in PLCs:

- a. *What do we want students to learn?*²
 - b. *How will we know when they have learned it?*³
 - c. *How will we respond when they do not reach learning goals?*⁴
 - d. *How will we respond when they already know what we want them to learn?*⁵
2. Facilitate teachers' reflection on personal successes or difficulties implementing the learning in their classrooms. This reflection should take place on a regular schedule and be used to inform planning for future professional learning sessions. A [google form](#) can be a great way to manage and review responses.
 3. Utilize classroom walkthroughs or instructional rounds that specifically look for implementation of the learning. Consider involving all staff in the data collection process by participating in classroom walkthroughs or instructional rounds. Collect, aggregate, analyze and share data with staff on a regular basis.
 4. Reserve time in faculty meetings to review observation and reflection data, student work or other evidence of implementation progress that the school is making. It is in these meetings, as well as in PLCs, that adjustments can be made to the professional learning plan as needed.
 5. Identify teachers within your building that are especially successful in implementation. Publicize this success with the staff and find ways to enable peer observation opportunities.
 6. Seek feedback. Electronic surveys can be utilized to get feedback from teachers regarding the professional learning experience. Share survey results with staff and adjust plans as appropriate.
 7. Continue to assess and reflect upon student learning and work products to determine if the professional learning is impacting student growth as expected.
 8. Embed collaborative professional learning into the daily lives of teachers and school leaders whenever possible.
 9. Utilize personal learning networks.⁶

“Teachers are widely acknowledged as the most important school-related factor influencing student achievement and principals are the key factor in building and sustaining a school culture in which both teachers and students can succeed” (MetLife Inc., 2012, p. 17).

Endnotes

1. See [Principal Performance Standard 1](#)
2. See Domain 1, Component F, [Kentucky Framework for Teaching](#)
3. See Domain 3, Component D, [Kentucky Framework for Teaching](#)
4. See Domain 4, Component E, [Kentucky Framework for Teaching](#)
5. See Domain 1, Component F and Domain 3, Components D and E, [Kentucky Framework for Teaching](#)
6. See [Principal Performance Standard 2](#) and Domain 4, Components D and E, [Kentucky Framework for Teaching](#)

Works Cited

Kentucky Department of Education (September, 2014). *Professional Learning: Kentucky Professional Learning Standards Guidance*. Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Next Generation Learners.

MetLife, Inc. (February, 2013). *The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Challenges for School Leadership*.
