

July 2016

Thank you for your request for **help in determining (1) which states have professional development (PD) standards and how might they be accessed, and (2) what process did the states use to develop PD standards.** Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the 10 regional educational laboratories (REL) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. It provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations on research-based education questions. **Please note that REL Southwest has not done an evaluation of the resources themselves, but offers this list to you for your information only.**

## BACKGROUND

The liaison for Oklahoma Rural Schools Research Alliance received this request from staff at the Oklahoma State Department of Education and submitted it to Ask A REL on their behalf.

Following an established REL Southwest protocol, we conducted searches regarding (1) which states have PD standards and how might they be accessed, and (2) what process did the states use to develop PD standards. The sources included state education agency websites, additional institutions, and general Internet searches using Google and Bing.

Given the potential breadth of this search (that is, 50 states), we initially limited the search to rural<sup>1</sup> states' SEA websites, given that the request came from Oklahoma (a rural state). After that search yielded four states' standards, we did general Internet searches and yielded a few more results. See the methods section at the end of this Ask a REL response for additional information on how we identified the following sources.

## QUESTIONS

### 1. Which states have professional development standards and how can they be accessed?

- Alabama Professional Development Standards  
<http://alex.state.al.us/leadership/Alabama%20Professional%20Development%20Standards.pdf>.

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<sup>1</sup> States identified by the U.S. Census as having a larger percentage of rural population than the national average — Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Tennessee, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, and Alaska.

*From the document:* “The List of Standards for Effective Professional Development were adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education on June 13, 2002. These state standards are embedded in the NCLB definition of professional development in Title IX, Section 9101 (34). They should be used as a guide in developing an LEA Professional Development Plan and implementing activities under that plan.”

- Florida Professional Development Standards  
<http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-dev/professional-dev-stards.stml>.

*From the website:* “District professional development activities in Florida are guided by Florida's Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol. This evaluation model assesses the local planning, learning, implementation, and evaluation of professional development activities according to standards modeled after the Learning Forward (formerly National Staff Development Council) standards as well as Florida statutory requirements. The Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol includes standards that serve to identify and recognize best practices as well as to identify local professional development systems in need of improvement.

The Florida Department of Education initiated the Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol in spring 2003 as a means to fulfill the requirements of Section 1012.98, Florida Statutes. This legislation sets forth that the purpose of professional development systems is to increase student achievement, enhance classroom instructional strategies that promote rigor and relevance throughout the curriculum, and prepare students for continuing education and the workforce. The standards were revised and updated in 2010 to reflect recent changes in law and current research and practice.

Florida's Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol provides the criteria for evaluating the quality of each district's professional development system. Systems are evaluated at the district, school and educator level in four essential elements of high quality professional development, or strands, which are incorporated into each level: planning, learning, implementing and evaluating. Judgments on 65 standards organized under these strands are made using a 4-point rating scale, with a midpoint of 2.5. A school district meets the adequacy provision when the average of the ratings for all of the standards is above the midpoint on the scale. District professional development systems are reviewed on a four-year cycle beginning with the third cycle in the 2010-2011 school year.”

Florida’s Professional Development Standards can be accessed here:  
<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5636/urlt/0072404-protocostandards.pdf>.

Other resources at the site include access to PDF versions of the following:

- ❖ Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol
- ❖ Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol Reviewer’s Guide
- ❖ Matrix of Professional Development Standards for Educator, School, and District levels

- ❖ Checklist for district level implementation of standards
  - ❖ Checklist for school level implementation of standards
  - ❖ Checklist for educator level implementation of standards
  - ❖ Checklist for leadership development program review
  - ❖ Teacher Professional Development Programs in Florida: 2008 Interim Project Report from the Florida House of Representatives
- Iowa Professional Development Standards and Requirements  
[http://educate-old.iowa.gov/pdmtm/pdfs/part\\_3-i.pdf](http://educate-old.iowa.gov/pdmtm/pdfs/part_3-i.pdf).

*From the standards document:* “Implementation of a school district’s career development plan shall meet the following standards:

1. Align with the Iowa teaching standards and criteria;
  2. Deliver research-based instructional strategies aligned with the student achievement goals established by the district;
  3. Deliver professional development training and learning opportunities that are targeted at instructional improvement and designed with the following components:
    - Student achievement data and analysis;
    - Theory;
    - Classroom demonstration and practice;
    - Observation and reflection;
    - Teacher collaboration and study of implementation; and
    - Integration of instructional technology, if applicable;
  4. Include an evaluation component of professional development that documents the improvement in instructional practice and the effect on student learning; and
  5. Support the professional development needs of district certified staff responsible for instruction.”
- Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards  
[http://mdk12.msde.maryland.gov/instruction/professional\\_development/teachers\\_standards.html](http://mdk12.msde.maryland.gov/instruction/professional_development/teachers_standards.html).

*From the website’s introduction:* “Research, insights from practice, and common sense converge around the understanding that skilled teachers have a significant impact on student learning. Helping teachers develop the knowledge and skills they need begins with rigorous teacher training programs. Subsequently, effective professional development helps teachers continue enhancing their knowledge and skills throughout their careers.

Maryland’s Teacher Professional Development Standards are intended to guide efforts to improve professional development for all teachers. These standards call on teachers, principals and other school leaders, district leaders and staff, the Maryland State Department of Education, institutions of higher education, and cultural institutions and organizations<sup>1</sup> across the state to work together to ensure that professional development is of the highest quality and readily accessible to all teachers. These

standards also acknowledge that teacher professional development encompasses a wide variety of learning activities. The list includes, but is certainly not limited to, teacher study groups, coaching and mentoring relationships, teacher networks, participation on school improvement teams and committees that develop curricula and assessments, workshops, and college and university courses.

When fully implemented, these standards and the related indicators can help improve the quality of professional development by:

- ❖ Providing a clear vision of high-quality professional development that recognizes local needs, priorities, and resources;
  - ❖ Guiding planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating high-quality professional development, including both professional development programs and an entire professional development agenda;
  - ❖ Supporting alignment of professional development with goals for improving student learning and state, district, and school policies and priorities;
  - ❖ Informing allocation of resources for professional development; and
  - ❖ Defining accountability for ensuring that professional development is of the highest quality and readily accessible to all teachers.”
- Mississippi Standards for Professional Learning  
<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/ESE/SPL>

*From the SEA website:* “The Commission on School Accreditation approved the adoption of the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning, on April 18, 2012, as the state standards for professional development. These standards make explicit that the purpose of professional learning is for educators to develop the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions to help students perform at high levels. Additionally, the standards guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning, and allow for consistent, statewide implementation of a professional learning system (<https://learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning#.V4lr97ikWM8>.)”

The Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning are:

**Learning Communities:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

**Leadership:** 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.

**Resources:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

**Data:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

**Learning Designs:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

**Implementation:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

**Outcomes:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

- New Jersey Professional Development Standards

Adapted Learning Forward's Professional Learning Standards

(<https://learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning#.V4lr97ikWM8.>)

described under the Mississippi Standards above

A PDF version of New Jersey's adapted Definition of Professional Development and Standards for Professional Learning can be accessed at

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/regs/def.pdf>

The state's Revised Professional Development Regulations and other related information can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/regs>

The State-Required Professional Development Topics are at

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/topics/>

New Jersey's State Professional Learning Committee (SPLC) "is authorized by the State Board of Education (*N.J.A.C. 6A:9C-4.5*) to advise the Commissioner and the Department on professional development policies and other matters pertaining to the professional growth and development of all educators in service to improved outcomes for students. This committee replaces two former professional development advisory committees, the Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB) and the Professional Development Advisory Committee for School Leaders (PDAC), with the goal of enabling more coherent and aligned policies and guidelines for professional learning for all educators." The committee's mission and work and composition and membership can be accessed at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/spcl/>.

- New York State Professional Development Standards  
<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/pdf/pdstds.pdf>.

*From the document's introduction:* "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.”

- North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board  
<http://www.nd.gov/espb/profdev/>.

*From the ND website:* “The Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB) in 2009 endorsed the NSDC/Learning Forward definition for professional development and the professional development standards which can be found at:  
<http://www.learningforward.org/index.cfm>.

The ESPB seeks the advice of teachers, administrators, school board members, teacher education professors, and other interested citizens in developing and updating codes of professional development. Professional development is accomplished, in part through licensure renewal. At the present time, a contracted teacher is required to complete 4 semester hours every five years.”

## **2. What process or procedure did the states use to develop professional development standards?**

Though our searches yielded no detailed “processes” or “procedures” some states, as noted above, have either adopted or adapted the Forward Learning (formerly National Staff Development Council) Standards.

Forward Learning standards are documented in a book published in 2011. Information about the book of standards can be accessed at  
<https://lf.ps.membersuite.com/onlinestorefront/ViewMerchandiseDetails.aspx?contextID=cbc968d7-00ce-cd37-6cd0-0b3b5f8f014c&categoryID=>

*From the website description:* “The book is the third revision since 1995, the standards define the essential elements of and conditions for professional learning if improvements in educator effectiveness and student learning are to be realized. As with past versions, the latest standards represent the work of many organizations and associations. In developing this version, Learning Forward and its partners examined the latest research and practice in professional learning to create a template for professional learning. Everyone who funds, plans, facilitates, participates in, and advocates for effective professional learning should engage in reading and discussion of the standards. Included in this book is an introduction describing the history and role of the standards. There are seven standards in this version; a complete explanation of each standard is included along with selected research citations. Appendices provide a crosswalk between the previous and current version as well as guidelines for how various stakeholder groups can make use of this document.”

## METHODS

### Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Searches:

(State PD standards, PD standards, professional development standards, state professional development standards, procedure/process for developing professional development standards).

### Search of Databases and Websites

- Google Scholar ([scholar.google.com](https://scholar.google.com))
- Google ([www.google.com](https://www.google.com))
- Bing ([www.bing.com](https://www.bing.com))

### Criteria for Inclusion

REL Southwest selected resources that provide research on (1) which states have PD standards and how might they be accessed, and (2) what process did the states use to develop PD standards. When REL Southwest staff reviewed resources, we considered – among other things – three factors:

1. Date of Publication: The most current information (primarily published from 2011 to the present) is included.
2. Source and Funder of the Report/Brief/Article: Priority was given to publications written in relevant, peer-reviewed journals or reports or produced by well-known research organizations.
3. Methodology: sources include reported studies, literature reviews and policy reports.

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