

The Resources Standard

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

Effective professional learning requires human, fiscal, material, technology, and time resources to achieve student learning goals. How resources are allocated for professional learning can overcome inequities and achieve results for educators and students. The availability and allocation of resources for professional learning affect its quality and results. Understanding the resources associated with professional learning and actively and accurately tracking them facilitates better decisions about and increased quality and results of professional learning.

PRIORITIZE HUMAN, FISCAL, MATERIAL, TECHNOLOGY, AND TIME RESOURCES

Resources for professional learning include staff, materials, technology, and time, all dependent on available funding. How these resources are prioritized to align with identified professional learning needs affects access to, quality of, and effectiveness of educator learning experiences. Decisions about resources for professional learning require a thorough understanding of student and educator learning needs, clear commitment to ensure equity in resource allocation, and thoughtful consideration of priorities to achieve the intended outcomes for students and educators.

Staff costs are a significant portion of the resource investment in professional learning. Costs in this category include school and school system leaders and other specialized staff who facilitate or support school- or school system-based professional learning, such as instructional coaches, facilitators, and mentors, as well as salary costs for educators when professional learning occurs within their workday. The time leaders commit to professional learning, either their own or for those they supervise, is a cost factor because it is time these leaders are investing in professional learning; managing this time is another area of responsibility for leaders.

Time allocated for professional learning is another significant investment. Education systems worldwide have schedules that provide time in the school day for teacher collaboration and planning to increase student learning. Learning time for educators may extend into after-school meetings, summer extended learning experiences, and occasional times during the workday when students are not present.

Professional learning embedded into educators' workdays increases the opportunity for all educators to receive individual, team, or school-based support within the work setting to promote continuous improvement. Dedicated job-embedded learning time elevates the importance of continuous, career-long learning as a professional responsibility of all educators and aligns the focus of their learning to the identified needs of students they serve. Including substantive time for professional learning, 15% or more, within the workday shifts some costs for external professional learning to support job-embedded professional learning.

Technology and material resources for professional learning create opportunities to access information that enriches practice. Use of high-speed broadband, web-based and other technologies, professional journals and books, software, and a comprehensive learning management system is essential to support individual and collaborative professional learning. Access to just-in-time learning resources and participation in local or global communities or networks available to individuals or teams of educators during their workday expand opportunities for job-embedded professional learning.

Investments in professional learning outside the school or workplace supplement and advance job-embedded professional learning. To increase alignment and coherence between job-embedded and external professional learning, both must address

the individual, school, and school system goals for educator and student learning.

When economic challenges emerge, schools and school systems often reduce investments in professional learning. In high-performing countries, professional learning is valued so highly as a key intervention to improve schools that reducing it is not an option. Top-performing businesses frequently increase training and development in challenging times. In lean times, professional learning is especially important to prepare members of the workforce for the changes they will experience, maintain and increase student achievement, develop flexibility to detect and adapt to new economic conditions and opportunities, and sustain employee morale, retention, commitment, and expertise.

MONITOR RESOURCES

Resources for professional learning come from many sources, including government allocations, public and private agencies, and educators themselves. Tracking and monitoring these resources is challenging, yet essential. Some costs, such as those for staff, registrations, consultants, materials, stipends for mentor teachers, and relief teachers, are relatively easy to track. Others, such as the portion of time educators are engaged in job-embedded professional learning and technology used for professional learning, are more difficult to monitor. Yet without a consistent and comprehensive process to track and monitor resources, it is difficult to evaluate the appropriateness or effectiveness of their allocation and use.

The level of funding for professional learning in schools varies tremendously. Some studies on professional learning in public schools have suggested that the investments range from less than 1% of total operating expenses to as high as 12%. In the highest-performing countries, investments in professional learning for educators, particularly teachers and principals, are much higher. Decisions about funding must specifically address inequities in learning needs and opportunities to learn and be given highest priority so that all students and the educators who serve them have the resources to achieve at the highest levels.

COORDINATE RESOURCES

The coordination of resources for professional learning is essential to their appropriate and effective use. With funding for professional learning, school improvement, and other reform initiatives coming from multiple sources and for multiple purposes, ensuring alignment and effectiveness in resource use is paramount to ensuring success. School and school system leaders are primarily responsible for coordinating resources. However, all educators have a shared responsibility to understand and contribute to decisions about and monitor the effectiveness of resources allocated for professional learning.

To make certain that resources invested in professional learning achieve their intended results, school system leaders regularly convene representatives of all stakeholders to examine and recommend changes to policies, regulations, and agreements related to professional learning.

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