

## INSIDE THIS GUIDE

<u>NEW STANDARDS IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ELICIT ACTION AND CHANGES IN PRACTICE</u>	p. 2
<u>STANDARDS NOTE-TAKING GUIDE</u>	p. 4
<u>QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE DISCUSSION PLAN</u>	p. 5
<u>A BRIDGE FOR MOVING THE STANDARDS INTO PRACTICE</u>	p. 6
<u>STANDARDS POLICY ACTION PLAN</u>	p. 7
<u>UNPACKING THE STANDARDS</u>	p. 8
<u>Cover suitable for binder sleeves, front, and spine</u>	p. 9

# New Standards for Professional Learning elicit action and changes in practice

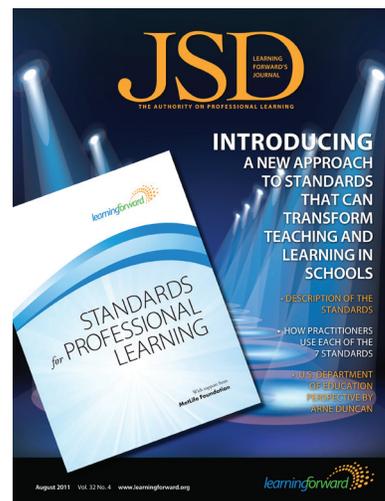
By Jacqueline Kennedy

**T**his issue of *JSD* is focused on the release of the Standards for Professional Learning. Mizell, Hord, Killion, & Hirsh (pp. 10-14) proclaim that the exclusive focus of the standards is professional learning. The standards emphasize learning, and they explicitly tie that learning to student results. Professional learning that exemplifies this very focus is described and characterized within each of the core elements embedded in the standards.

As a collective unit, the standards define the conditions, attributes, and essential content for effective professional learning with the primary focus on educator learning that leads to successful student learning. Just as the Standards for Professional Learning work in partnership with one another, they also work in concert with other standards in education to maximize improvement efforts that lead to increased student and educator outcomes. When combined with leadership, teaching, and student standards, these standards leverage professional learning embedded into every aspect of curriculum and instruction while supporting continuous improvement.

The authors and practitioners in this issue provide the research base as well as practical examples to illustrate how effective professional learning leads to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results. The thematic articles take readers deeper into each of the seven standards, demonstrating the role they play in schools and school districts.

Use the tools and tasks in this guide to frame both individual and team reflection and dialogue about the standards. As you work through the articles, individually or with your teammates, consider the following questions.



**How will you use what you learn about the standards?**

**What steps will you take to share and study the standards more deeply with others?**

**How can you use the viewpoints of the practitioners featured in this issue to further your efforts?**

**Given the emphasis on moving the standards into practice, what actions will you take to integrate the standards into your everyday practices and decisions?**

**Who will you give you encouragement and an opportunity to share your successes and mistakes along the way?**

## Standards note-taking guide

Using each of the *JSD* articles as a reference, read and generate a list of key points for each standard as described by leading voices in the field in the table that follows. With a team, take turns summarizing the reading, using participants' notes as a reference. After all standards have been addressed, begin a second round allowing individual team members to share what they learned from the practitioner they read about. Add comments shared in the practitioner viewpoint column of the table.

Page	Article	Key points	Practitioner viewpoint
16	Learning Communities		
22	Leadership		
26	Resources		
34	Data		
46	Learning Designs		
52	Implementation		
58	Outcomes		

## Quick reference guide discussion plan

The four-page pullout quick reference guide (pp. 41-44) provides a convenient overview of the Standards for Professional Learning. Use the template below to capture the essential concepts included in the guide to use when leading and facilitating discussions with colleagues and other stakeholders on the basic ideas and assumptions underlying the standards.

<b>STEM</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>PREREQUISITES FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING</b>  1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____ 4. _____ _____
<b>KEY CONCEPTS</b>	<b>RESEARCH</b>	

STANDARDS LAYOUT

### THE LINK TO STUDENT RESULTS

1. When professional learning is \_\_\_\_\_, it has greater potential to change what educators know, are able to do, and believe.
2. When educators' knowledge, skills, and dispositions change, they have a broader repertoire of effective \_\_\_\_\_ to use to adapt their practices to meet performance expectations and student learning needs.
3. When educator practice \_\_\_\_\_, students have a greater likelihood of achieving results.
4. When student results improve, the cycle repeats for continuous \_\_\_\_\_.

### WAYS TO USE THE STANDARDS

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## **A bridge for moving the standards into practice**

Research informs us that change in teachers’ classroom practices requires more than subtle introductions to new approaches and practices. In order to address this dynamic complexity of implementing change, Hall and Hord (pp. 52-57) describe an Implementation Bridge. This metaphor creates a visual from which educators can relate. Only after careful consideration of all of the unique variables involved in any given change effort can educators chart the progression across the bridge that will denote reasonable, specific, observable results, along with achievable milestones.

1. After reading the article “Learning builds the bridge between research and practice,” use the T-chart below to identify your own thoughts on both the levers (supports) and obstacles (challenges) involved in making it across the implementation bridge.
2. Share reflections included in your T-chart with a partner.
3. As a team, discuss the following questions: How can the Implementation standard inform your professional learning practices? What do you see as a starting point to address the Implementation Bridge? What actions do you recommend to eliminate some of the obstacles? How do you commit to apply change process research?

<b>LEVERS</b> <i>Resources and conditions that support implementation and application of research-based strategies</i>	<b>OBSTACLES</b> <i>Barriers and challenges to implementation and application of research-based strategies</i>

## Standards policy action plan

Every educator can be involved in influencing policy. Using the standards policy action guide (p. 45), determine how you can advocate for effective learning in your circle of influence. Chart your plan of action using the worksheet below to identify what you intend to do, who will join you, and your timeline. Revisit your plan periodically and report your successes with a colleague or accountability partner.

Stakeholders (Who?)	Actions (What?)	Date (When?)	Evidence of results

## Unpacking the standards

In *Unwrapping the Standards: A Simple Process to Make Standards Manageable*, Larry Ainsworth (2003) describes a process for examining standards and identifying the important concepts and skills outlined within. This process, also known as unpacking and deconstructing the standards, allows for educators to gain clarity and a deeper understanding of the scope of the essential concepts and skills within the standards. This process can also be applied to the study of the Standards for Professional Learning.

Use the *Standards for Professional Learning* book or the full elaborations located on the standards web pages at [www.learningforward.org/standards](http://www.learningforward.org/standards) and select one standard to read. After reading, follow the steps below to unpack the standard with your team. Follow the same process until all seven standards have been unpacked.

1. Identify key concepts and skills.
2. Create a graphic organizer to represent the concepts and skills (or use the one below).
3. Determine the big ideas or core elements to explore and share.
4. Write essential questions to guide and focus practice and implementation.

Standard: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students		
3 core elements	Topics (Know)	Skills (Do)
Essential questions		

Source: Ainsworth, L. (2003). *Unwrapping the standards: A simple process to make standards manageable*. Denver, CO: Advanced Learning Press.

# *JSD* Professional Learning Guide

A COMPANION TO *JSD*



A bimonthly collection of tools  
to help educators expand their knowledge  
and learn about new practices  
through collaborative reflection

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800-727-7288