

## NSDC STANDARDS PROVIDE A RICHER DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THAN DOES NCLB

One benefit of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is heightened attention on educators' learning. Except for requirement vi (see below), the NSDC standards address all NCLB requirements. The following crosswalk may help states and school systems better understand the relationship between NCLB and the NSDC standards. Limiting professional development planning to the NCLB definition will not produce high-quality results. NSDC's Standards for Staff Development emphasize the importance of working simultaneously on context and process issues, as well as content issues. NCLB, on the

other hand, prioritizes content and some process issues and pays no attention to context.

Effective professional development is not about meeting the requirements of a list; it is about carefully considering and planning according to desired outcomes and standards that will contribute to that success.



In each issue of *JSD*, Stephanie Hirsh writes about the NSDC Standards for Staff Development. Columns about the standards can be found at [www.nsdc.org](http://www.nsdc.org).

### REFERENCES

**National Staff Development Council. (2001).** *Standards for staff development (revised)*. Oxford, OH: Author.

**U.S. Department of Education. (2002).** *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. Available at [www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/](http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/) ■

#### NCLB's definition

Under the federal act, the term "professional development" (NCLB, section 910 (34)A) includes activities that:

- (i) Improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach; ... and enable teachers to become highly-qualified.
- (ii) Are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans.
- (iii) Give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging state academic content standards and student academic achievement standards.
- (iv) Improve classroom management skills.
- (v) (I) Are high-quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom.
- (v) (II) Are not one-day or short-term workshops or conferences.
- (vi) Support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through state and local alternative routes.

#### Corresponding NSDC standard

Staff development that improves the learning of all students (this phrase precedes all NSDC standards):

**QUALITY TEACHING: Deepens educators' content knowledge**, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.

**LEARNING COMMUNITIES:** Organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.

**QUALITY TEACHING:** Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.

**EQUITY:** Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.

**DESIGN:** Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.

**LEARNING:** Applies knowledge about human learning and change.

**DESIGN:** Uses learning strategies appropriate to the intended goal.

In addition, the explanation/rationale for the standard offers supporting statements, including, "An extended summer institute with follow-up sessions throughout the school year will deepen teachers' content knowledge and is likely to have the desired effect. A two-hour after-school workshop will not achieve that goal" (NSDC, 2001, p. 22).

Educators traditionally have not viewed "professional development" as having a role in recruiting, hiring, and preparing employees. Professional development occurs once an individual becomes an employee of a school system.

**NCLB's definition**

**(vii)** Advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are —  
**(I)** based on scientifically based research.

**(II)** Strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers.

**(viii)** Are aligned with and directly related to:

**(I)** State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments.

**(ix)** Are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools.

**(x)** Are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments.

**(xi)** To the extent possible, provide training for principals and teachers in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach.

**(xii)** As a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement with the findings of the evaluation used to improve the quality of professional development.

**(xiii)** Provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs.

**(xiv)** Include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice.

**(xv)** Include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents.

**Corresponding NSDC standard**

**QUALITY TEACHING:** Deepens educators' content knowledge, **provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards.**

Research-Based: Prepares educators to apply research to decision making.

**QUALITY TEACHING:** **Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.**

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**FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:** Provides educators with knowledge and skills **to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.**

Learning Communities: **Organizes adults into learning communities** whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.

Collaboration: Provides educators with the knowledge and skills to **collaborate.**

**EQUITY:** **Prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.**

**QUALITY TEACHING:** Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to **assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards.**

**QUALITY TEACHING:** Deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.

In addition, the rationale for the **DESIGN** standard also makes references to technology, including, "Technology provides a useful tool for accessing various means of professional learning. It provides for the individualization of teacher and administrator learning ..." (NSDC, 2001, p. 22).

**EVALUATION:** Uses multiple sources of information to guide improvement and **demonstrate its impact.**

**DATA-DRIVEN:** Uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, **monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.**

**EQUITY:** Prepares educators to **understand and appreciate all students, create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments, and hold high expectations for their academic achievement.**

**QUALITY TEACHING:** Deepens educators' content knowledge, **provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.**

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**FAMILY INVOLVEMENT:** Provides educators with knowledge and skills to **involve families and other stakeholders appropriately.**

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