



Cooperative Wide Professional Learning

Northern Suburban Special Education District

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Professional Learning System Overview and Process

One outcome of the 2018 NSSSED strategic plan was the need to create a comprehensive professional learning system that fosters collective responsibility for student success across the NSSSED region. A professional learning system can be described as “how professional learning works.” The remodeling of the system allowed opportunity to examine transparency in decision making, intentionality, and effectiveness of professional learning.

To meet the charge of designing the system, the Professional Learning Innovation Team was launched in April 2019. The team consisted of engaged participants from member districts and NSSSED programs and departments; they represent different regions, roles, and age of students served.

The innovation team designed a system to (i) equitably support member district needs and (ii) impact student learning. The system’s essential components, which are included in this document, were developed by the team.

- 1) A shared vision of and beliefs about professional learning, in alignment with NSSSED’s Strategic Plan;
- 2) A definition of professional learning;
- 3) Standards for Professional Learning;
- 4) Stakeholder roles and responsibilities defined and articulated;
- 5) Ongoing assessment and evaluation; and
- 6) A transparent process of how resources are allocated

A special thank you to the members of the Professional Learning Innovation Team. We are grateful for their leadership and valued the diverse perspectives that contributed to the design of the system. Our sincerest thanks goes out to:

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Professional Learning Vision Statement

Empower diverse learners* to collaborate in order to develop equitable and inclusive learning environments, which leads to actions that impact student growth and potential.

**A Learner is everyone/anyone*

Definition of Professional Learning

Professional learning is designed to refine and expand knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices in order to impact student growth through intentional, continuous, and collaborative engagement.

Professional Learning Beliefs

High Expectations: *Ambitious goals* lead to powerful actions & remarkable results.

Diversity: *Diversity and inclusivity* strengthen an organization and improve its decisions and *outcomes*.

Impact: Evaluation and reflection strengthen performance & results.

Collaboration: Any organization's culture and climate builds shared responsibility for learning that produces student growth.

Shared Leadership/ Expertise: As a cooperative wide community we can solve our most complex problems by tapping internal expertise and knowing when to utilize outside resources.

Empowerment: Learners develop personalized plans that are relevant and meaningful to support their continuous improvement.

Professional Learning Standards

Overview of Professional Learning Standards

Learning Forward, with the contribution of 40 professional associations and education organizations, developed the Standards for Professional Learning. The Professional Learning Innovation Team adopted these standards to guide the design, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning.

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.

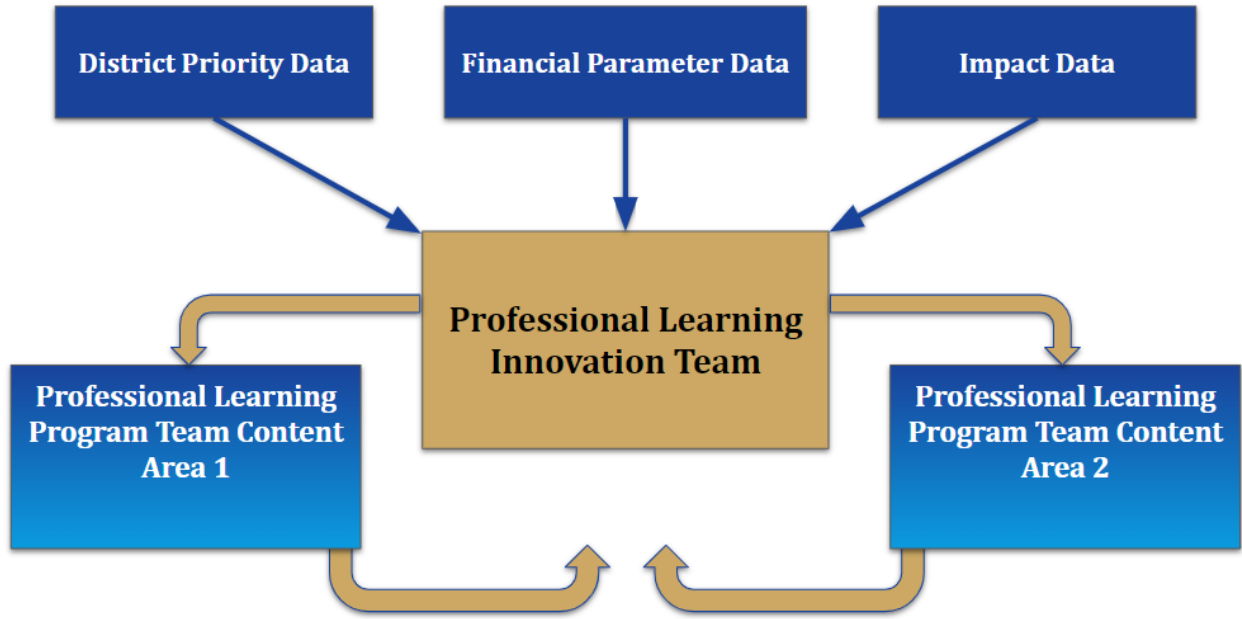
Outcomes: Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Process of how needs are assessed and resources are allocated

The chart below articulates the process of assessing professional learning needs from our member districts. Once the needs are assessed and prioritized, resources are then allocated to develop professional learning plans. This transparent process distributes resources equitably based on the greatest needs of students and educators. The process also applies the professional learning beliefs to action. This alignment of the beliefs are articulated in the rationale for each step of the process.

Step	Process	Outcome	Timeline	Rationale
1	Member district profile meetings Districts and NSSED prioritize needs aligned with strategic organizational goals and NSSED System Assessment	The needs of educators and students are gathered from across the region.	Annually, by end of October	This is the first step in the process to gather data on needs of students and educators.
2	Professional Learning Team Meeting to review data and allocate resources based on priorities.	A prioritized list of district and NSSED needs	Annually in November	This is a data-based decision making process to allocate resources equitably based on the highest needs of students and educators.
3	Director of Professional Learning and Director of Instruction form collaborative team, with representation from districts and NSSED programs/services	A team is formed, composed of diverse representation across districts and roles	Annually, by end of January	Diverse team membership honors various perspectives
Step	Process	Outcome	Timeline	Rationale

4	<p>Teams develop and review professional learning plans</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Develop shared vision of desired state Develop goals and specific student outcomes Identify learning targets Identify regional resources and expertise Identify necessary external resources Develop action plan Develop evaluation plan 	Each team creates the professional learning plan for the prioritized area of focus	Ongoing; this is a multi-year process of implementation and evaluation	<p>Professional learning plans align with our definition of professional learning: “Professional learning is designed to refine and expand knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices in order to impact student growth through <u>intentional, continuous, and collaborative engagement.</u>”</p> <p>This step:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboratively provides clarity and commonality of the vision of learning, Identifies high expectations through ambitious goals Honors regional expertise, and Supports thoughtful incorporation of external resources
5	<p>NSSSED implements the action plans</p> <p>NSSSED gathers data based on the evaluation plan</p>	Learning and Assessment/ Evaluation Plan are implemented	Ongoing; this is a multi-year process of implementation and evaluation	Engage in the professional learning activities which are intentional, continuous, and collaborative and empower learners.
6	<p>Team reviews assessment/evaluation results</p> <p>Team evaluates the evaluation</p>	Data-based decisions are made for refinement of the plan	Ongoing; this is a multi-year process of implementation and evaluation	Provides opportunity for reflection on impact for students and educators
7	Professional Learning Team Meeting to review the evaluation data from the professional learning programs and assess and evaluate the system for improvement.	Data-based decisions for continuous improvement of implementation of the system.	Annually in the spring	Provides opportunity of continuous improvement of the system.



Assessment and Evaluation

NSSSED prioritizes professional learning programs rather than single events. This shift aligns with our definition of “professional learning designed to refine and expand knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices in order to impact student growth through intentional, continuous, and collaborative engagement.”

A well-designed program evaluation provides data to inform changes and improvements within the program. Evaluation data can also provide evidence of return on a district’s or school’s investment. The evaluation process is outlined in the “how resources are allocated”.

NSSSED professional learning is assessed through merit, impact and worth.

Merit addresses how closely a program adheres to the Standards for Professional Learning.

Impact addresses the changes for educators and students that result from a program; it goes beyond program participation, examining the measurable impact on learning. Program development includes consideration of these questions:

1. In what ways have educators been affected by their participation in this program (specifically, their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors)?
2. In what ways have students been affected by this professional learning?

Worth is the *perceived* value of professional learning, and is assessed at the completion of each professional learning activity. Worth data is used by presenters or facilitators for reflection and also to monitor participant satisfaction in general.

Roles and Responsibilities of Standards in Action

Overview of Roles and Responsibilities

This portion of the system describes what individuals in the roles listed do to support effective professional learning. It articulates the behaviors for each role within the system based on each of the Professional Learning Standards.

The interconnectedness and belief in shared leadership results in high quality professional learning within a system. Essentially, it is the responsibility of everyone in the system.

Below are the roles of the stakeholders within our Professional Learning System. On the following pages are the articulated responsibilities.

Roles of Stakeholders within the Professional Learning System

District Administrator

District administrators include superintendent and central office leadership staff who are responsible for advocating, supporting, and sustaining district culture conducive for staff professional growth and student learning. They engage in continuous professional learning that improves professional practice in support of district and school improvements targeting educator and student learning.

Building Administrator

Building administrators includes principals, assistant principals, and others in leadership roles who are responsible for advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program to foster student learning and staff professional growth. They are engaged in continuous professional learning that supports student and staff professional growth.

Director of Professional Learning

Collaboratively facilitate the planning, implementation and monitoring of professional learning opportunities for educators. They advocate and ensure researched-based professional learning standards. They engage in continuous professional learning that enhances their professional practices to support the learning needs of educators and all students.

Roles and Responsibility of Standards in Action continued

Instructional and Related Services Personnel

Instructional and Related Services Personnel are licensed professionals, such as pre-K-12 general and special education teachers, Speech Language Pathologists, Social Workers, School Psychologists, Occupational and Physical Therapists and others who have primary responsibility for the learning process of students. They engage in continuous professional learning that improves professional practice to support the learning needs of all students.

Coach

Coaches are those who work in partnership with educators to enhance their learning and reflection in order to maximize student learning. They engage in continuous professional learning that improves their professional practice to support the learning needs of educators and all students.

Paraprofessional/ Teacher Assistants

Paraprofessionals are instructional assistants, associate teachers, or classroom aides who work under the supervision of certified school professionals or others serving in a lead teacher role. In collaboration with teachers, they support student learning.

Support Personnel

Support personnel includes administrative assistants, transportation and food service personnel, building and grounds personnel, security staff, and custodians. Support personnel interact with students, families, and community members. Their professional learning impacts the school and district educational environment, improves job performance, aligns with district and school improvement efforts, and supports student growth.

*Role and responsibilities of Parent/Caregiver will be developed in the future.

The responsibilities of each role group have been outlined under each of the NSSED Professional Learning Standards.

Standard: [Learning Communities](#)

<p>District Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishes and sustains a cooperative wide team-based collaborative culture that promotes collegiality, trust and respect to support professional learning for continuous improvement ● Applies cycle of continuous improvement to lead professional learning ● Advances collective responsibility ● Aligns professional learning cooperative-wide goals
<p>School Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishes and sustains a cooperative wide collaborative culture that promotes collegiality, trust and respect to support professional learning for continuous improvement ● Applies the cycle of continuous improvement with fidelity to lead professional learning ● Develops an agreement about how a team will accomplish and document its work, including its collaborative processes
<p>Director of Professional Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Applies cycle of continuous improvement to lead professional learning ● Advances collective responsibility by participating in learning communities ● Aligns professional learning with school and system goals
<p>Instructional and Related Services Personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engages in continuous improvement and aligns personal and team goals to school goals ● Engages with colleagues to meet the needs of all students ● Advances collective responsibility by participating in learning communities
<p>Coaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitates application of cycle of continuous improvement ● Fosters engagement of all colleagues in meeting the needs of all students ● Aligns professional learning with school and district goals
<p>Teacher Assistants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engages in continuous improvement and aligns personal and team goals to school goals ● Engages with colleagues to meet the needs of all students
<p>Support Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engages in and maintains a team-based collaborative climate and culture that promotes trust, respect, and professionalism in a continuous learning environment

Standard: Leadership

<p>District Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coaches staff to lead professional learning ● Invites, explores, and applies diverse perspectives as part of professional learning ● Selects and engages in a variety of evidence-based professional learning experiences, such as learning communities, communities of practice, lesson study, examining student work, and/or action research, that support achievement of improvement goals ● Articulates the link between student learning and professional learning ● Builds capacity for skillful collaboration/teaming
<p>School Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shares in leadership, including coordination and facilitation of the team’s work to improve job performance and student growth as well as create systems and structures that carry the professional learning forward ● Invites, explores, and applies diverse perspectives as part of professional learning including the different ways people learn and access information ● Identifies experts within their own organizations who can lead professional development as well as build the capacity of others ● Articulates the link between student learning and professional learning ● Acts as a model of continuous growth and learning through the development of their own professional learning plans
<p>Director of Professional Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Applies the Standards for Professional Learning in making decisions about professional learning ● Coaches staff to lead professional learning ● Articulates the link between student learning and professional learning ● Builds capacity for skillful collaboration ● Selects and engages in a variety of evidence-based professional learning experiences, such as learning communities, communities of practice, lesson study, examining student work, and/or action research, that support achievement of improvement goals
<p>Instructional and Related Services Personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Articulates the link between professional learning and student learning ● Shares in coordination and facilitation of a variety of learning

	designs (learning communities, lesson study, peer observation) that support adult learning to enhance student learning
Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves as a leader and model of professional learning • Articulates the link between professional and student learning • Contributes to the development and maintenance of a collaborative culture
Teacher Assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates the link between professional learning and student learning • Invites, explores, and applies diverse perspectives as part of professional learning • Shares in coordination and facilitation of a variety of learning designs (learning communities, lesson study, peer observation) that support adult learning to enhance student learning
Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With supervisor, allocate resources to allow for time in the work day for professional learning • Shares in coordination and facilitation of a variety of learning designs (learning communities, mentoring, etc) that support adult learning

Standard: [Resources](#)

District Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocates sufficient resources to support implementation of professional learning • Monitors professional learning resources • Collaborates and leverages resources to achieve and align professional learning goals cooperative wide
School Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborates with school, district, and education stakeholders to identify and provide various programs, services, time and/or resources (i.e., people, money, scheduling, technology, print and non-print materials) to enhance continuous professional learning • Allocates and prioritizes resources to support job-embedded professional learning that are high priority student and educator learning needs • Monitors effectiveness of the use of resources for professional learning
Director of Professional Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocates sufficient resources to support implementation of professional learning • Monitors professional learning resources • Leverages resources to achieve professional learning goals
Instructional and Related Services Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends resources to support implementation of professional learning, including job-embedded professional learning
Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to a comprehensive resource plan for professional learning • Curates resources to support implementation of professional learning • Monitors the effectiveness of the use of resources for professional learning
Teacher Assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with teachers and supervisors, recommends resources to support implementation of professional learning. This includes flexible scheduling for job-embedded professional learning
Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with supervisor, and/or colleagues, identify, develop, and disseminate resources for professional learning that support job related performance growth and standards

Standard: Data

<p>District Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develops and sustains a collaborative culture where all staff assume responsibility for analysis of data to determine needs ● Analyzes and interprets multiple sources of student, educator, and system data to determine professional learning needs ● Uses analysis of progress to make ongoing, needed adjustments in professional learning ● Uses evaluation results to improve professional learning
<p>School Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develops and sustains a collaborative culture where all building staff assume responsibility for and leadership of analysis of data to determine needs and develop collaborative professional learning and school improvement plans
<p>Director of Professional Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develops capacity to analyze and interpret multiple sources of student, educator, and system data to determine professional learning needs ● Uses analysis of progress to make ongoing, needed adjustments in professional learning ● Uses evaluation results to improve professional learning
<p>Related Services Personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individually and in collaboration with others uses and analyzes student learning to determine professional learning needs for self and team ● Develops individual professional learning plans that align with school improvement plans or educators performance standards and monitor personal progress for adjustments
<p>Coaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses data and feedback to determine professional learning needs ● Supports colleagues to use analysis of progress to make adjustments in professional learning ● Uses data, feedback, and reflective practice to improve coaching
<p>Teacher Assistants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In collaboration with the teacher and team, identifies and reviews student learning data to determine professional learning needs ● In collaboration with the teacher, develop individual professional learning plans and monitor personal progress for adjustments
<p>Support Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With supervisor, utilizes the yearly evaluation and other data resources and determines needs for personal and professional growth

Standard: [Learning Designs](#)

<p>District Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supports colleagues in the transfer of their professional learning to their job-related responsibilities ● Acquires knowledge and skills about multiple designs for professional learning ● Promotes active engagement in the learning process
<p>School Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Selects and engages in multiple designs of professional learning consistent with research and best practices that supports the collaborative professional learning plans ● Aligns professional learning designs with desired changes in classroom instruction ● Empowers colleagues in the transfer of their professional learning to their job-related responsibilities
<p>Director of Professional Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acquires and shares knowledge about multiple factors influencing the selection of learning designs ● Promotes active engagement in the learning process ● Selects and engages in multiple designs of professional learning consistent with research and best practices to support colleagues in the transfer of their professional learning to their job-related responsibilities
<p>Instructional and Related Services Personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Selects and actively engages in multiple designs of professional learning (workshops, learning community, coaching, etc) that support individual professional learning plans
<p>Coaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporates a variety of strategies to promote active engagement in professional learning
<p>Teacher Assistants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Selects and actively engages in multiple designs of professional learning (workshops, learning community, coaching, etc) that support individual professional learning plans ● Supports colleagues in the transfer of professional learning to the classroom
<p>Support Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engages in follow up collaborative conversations, coaching, and mentoring that support opportunities to transfer new learning into practice

Standard: Implementation

<p>District Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitors implementation of professional learning ● Differentiates support for implementation of professional learning ● Develops own and staff's capacity to give and receive constructive feedback to accelerate and refine implementation of professional learning ● Supports district staff and building administrators in the development of professional learning plans
<p>School Administration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engages in and provides school staff with follow-up experiences, such as mentoring or coaching, to support transfer of new learning, including multiple opportunities to practice a new instructional strategy ● Shares and uses regular feedback and reflections from colleagues and supervisors to support transfer of knowledge and skills into practice as part of ongoing professional learning ● Supports individuals and teams in using educator performance standards to identify the content of professional learning
<p>Director of Professional Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supports district staff and building administrators in the development of professional learning plans ● Shares and uses regular feedback and reflections from colleagues and supervisors to support transfer of knowledge and skills into practice as part of ongoing professional learning
<p>Related Services Personnel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develops and engages in individual and team professional learning plan that align with district and school improvement plans and student growth ● Engages in follow-up learning activities such as mentoring or coaching etc, to support with transfer of knowledge and skills into practice. These learning designs should be differentiated based on individual learning needs ● Develops capacity to give and receive constructive feedback to promote professional growth and ultimately student learning
<p>Coaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitates individual and team use of resources to assess and refine implementation ● Differentiates support for implementation of professional learning

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fosters a culture to give and receive constructive feedback to accelerate and refine implementation of professional learning
Teacher Assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and engages in individual and team professional learning plan, in collaboration with the classroom teacher and other supervisory staff, that align with district and school improvement plans and student growth • Engages in follow-up learning activities such as coaching etc, to support with transfer of knowledge and skills into practice. These learning designs should be differentiated based on individual learning needs • Develops capacity to give and receive constructive feedback to promote professional growth and ultimately student learning
Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With supervisor, develop learning plan specific for role and individual that aligns with district goals as well as maintains job specific certification

Standard: Outcomes

District Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Uses educator performance standards to identify and make decisions about professional learning ● Evaluates evidence of effectiveness of professional learning on job performance and student growth ● Builds alignment between professional learning and other cooperative wide systems
School Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluates evidence of effectiveness of professional learning on job performance and student learning and growth through team collaboration ● Builds congruence between professional learning and other school and school system initiatives
Director of Professional Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regularly monitors evidence of effectiveness of professional learning on job performance and student growth and revise plans based on reflections and evidence ● Evaluates evidence of effectiveness of professional learning on job performance and student growth
Instructional and Related Services Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engages in professional learning to increase student growth ● Monitors professional learning for educator and student growth
Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engages in professional learning to meet coaching performance standards ● Engages in professional learning to impact growth
Teacher Assistants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In collaboration with teachers and/or supervisor, engages in professional learning to increase student growth ● In collaboration with teachers and/or supervisor, monitors professional learning for educator and student growth
Support Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With supervisor, evaluates the evidence of professional based on job performance

*Role and responsibilities of Parent/Caregiver will be developed in the future.