



Debbie Harris Rollins, Ed.D., *Coordinator of Professional Development* :: (919) 807-3356

Who's Accountable: The Roles and Responsibilities of Educators in Implementing the North Carolina Professional Development Standards

North Carolina has always been ahead of the standards game establishing a system of accountability for public school students more than ten years ago. Through the years, we have learned much about accountability. One powerful lesson has been that every educator along with every student and every parent has a role and a responsibility for accountability. In the words of Douglas Reeves, "When accountability is the exclusive initiative of the legislature, the board of education, or the superintendent, the inevitable consequence is the perception that accountability is something "done to" students and teachers."

North Carolina now takes leadership in the arena of professional development. The North Carolina Professional Development Standards describe a system of professional development that can lead to improved student achievement and clearly set the direction for quality professional learning for all educators. Additionally, the standards describe a

comprehensive system that is the shared responsibility of all educators. Just as accountability cannot be the lone work of the legislature, the board, or the superintendent, so too can professional development not be the lone work of the school or district staff developer. To proceed in that fashion results in professional development being something "done to" educators.

Fully implementing the standards requires more than one single role acting within a school or district. Fully implementing the standards requires teachers, principals, central office administrators, superintendents, and local boards of education to gain new knowledge and skills, to change beliefs, and to engage in new thinking and practice. Each role has a unique challenge and responsibility. Likewise, the State agency also has a role and a responsibility. This and the next two newsletters will focus specifically on each of the roles mentioned and what it means for each to implement the professional development standards.

Bottom-Up Accountability

Confucius said, "To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right." To put the world of student achievement in order, we must first put teaching and school leadership in order; to put teaching and school leadership in order, we must first put professional learning in order; to put professional learning in order, we must first identify the responsibilities of each educator and put those in order. Just as Confucius understood that we must begin with the heart, the work of professional development must begin at the heart, in this case, with the teacher – the working relationship that is closest to the student. From there we work 'upward' in terms of the relationship furthest from the student. Hence, our focus begins with the role of teachers in professional development. The very heart of the North Carolina Professional Development Standards is a description of a school-based system of professional

learning that ensures that all teachers are learning every day with and from their colleagues. Other roles in the school system and state are responsible for making this teacher action possible.



The Role of the Teacher

The teacher role and responsibilities are clear across each of the twelve professional development standards.

STANDARD	TEACHER ROLE & RESPONSIBILITY
LEARNING COMMUNITIES	Meets regularly with a structured learning team during the school day and also participates in learning networks beyond the school and district.
LEADERSHIP	Participates in instructional leadership experiences and assumes instructional leadership roles being able to articulate impact on professional learning on practice.
RESOURCES	Accesses internal and external resources to support professional learning priorities.
DATA-DRIVEN	Collects and analyzes multiple sets of relevant student data to establish professional learning priorities and engages in analysis with professional colleagues.
EVALUATION	Collects and analyzes classroom data to determine impact of professional learning on instructional practice.
RESEARCH-BASED	Reviews instructional research and uses findings to guide instructional decisions.
DESIGN	Engages in intensive professional learning and implements new classroom practices based on new knowledge/skill.
LEARNING	Engages in professional learning that deepens understanding, broadens knowledge, and mirrors expected instructional methods.
COLLABORATION	Develops knowledge about effective group processes and routinely collaborates with colleagues about improvement of practice.
EQUITY	Understands relationship between attitude, background, culture and social class on instruction.
QUALITY TEACHING	Demonstrates deep understanding of subject matter and employs various instructional and assessment strategies.
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT	Partners appropriately with families and community.

The Role of the Principal

Fully implementing the standards also requires principals to gain new knowledge and skills. In fact, the teacher cannot fully implement the standards in the absence of a knowledgeable and supportive principal.

Principals are commonly referred to as instructional leaders. That being so, the expectation is that the principal creates and maintains the culture and context that will enable the instructional staff to access the resources, develop the knowledge, skills and behaviors, and engage in the practices that result in instruction appropriate to meet the needs of the students. Three things must happen in order for a principal to truly be

The Role of the Principal, Continued

an instructional leader – (s)he must know, understand, and embrace the professional development standards allowing them to guide practice; (s)he must engage in appropriate personal professional learning that not only addresses curriculum but also leadership, culture, and relationships; and the principal must have a superintendent who is an instructional leader. Just as the other roles in the school system and state are responsible for making teacher action possible, so they are responsible for making principal action possible.

The Principal role and responsibilities are, like those of the teacher, clear across each of the twelve professional development standards.

STANDARD	PRINCIPAL ROLE & RESPONSIBILITY
LEARNING COMMUNITIES	Creates an organization that ensures that educators, including self, possess the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to engage in job-embedded collaboration.
LEADERSHIP	Advocates with key stakeholders for high-quality professional development and actively involves faculty in comprehensive professional development planning.
RESOURCES	Allocates resources to support job-embedded professional learning. Focuses fiscal and human resources on high-priority professional learning goals.
DATA-DRIVEN	Collects, uses, and disseminates data that monitor the accomplishment of goals. Directs faculty in data analysis as basis for determining learning priorities.
EVALUATION	Develops a comprehensive plan for monitoring and evaluating (formative and summative) professional learning using a variety of data.
RESEARCH-BASED	Reads and interprets research and develops staff and community capacity to analyze research that supports instructional decisions.
DESIGN	Aligns professional development with school improvement goals and expected outcomes. Establishes expectations for implementation of learned practices.
LEARNING	Differentiates professional learning to meet individual educator needs and ensures professional development is grounded in a theory of change.
COLLABORATION	Builds and sustains a culture characterized by collective responsibility, trust, respect, and collaboration.
EQUITY	Develops the skills that communicate high expectations for self, staff, and students.
QUALITY TEACHING	Creates work schedules and a culture that supports professional learning and collaboration within the school day. Uses a variety of assessment strategies.
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT	Implements strategies to intentionally increase meaningful, relevant family involvement.

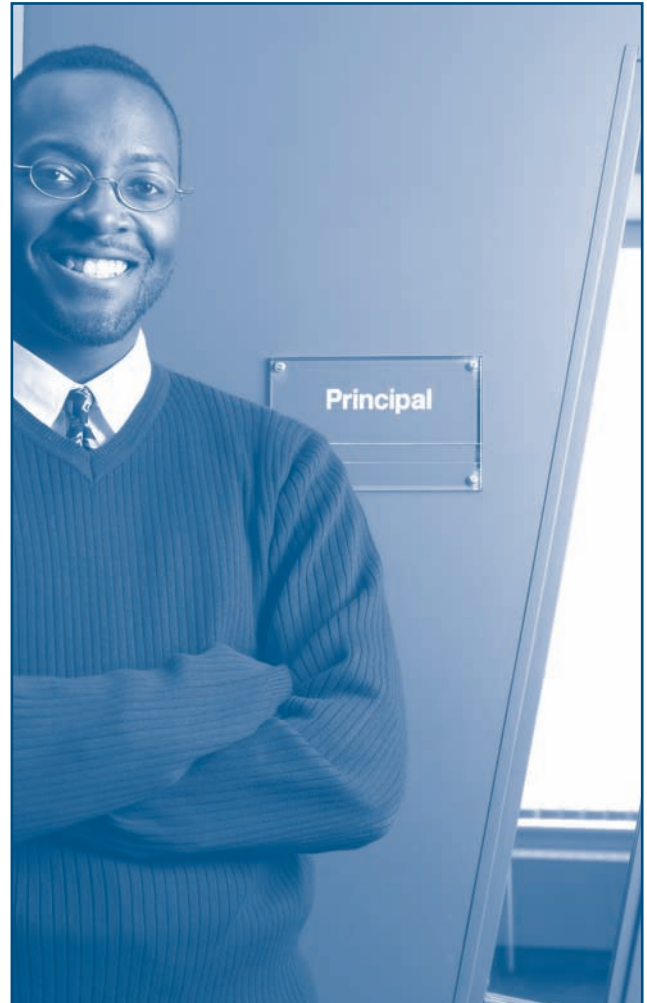
Summary

Fully implementing the standards requires more than one single role acting within a school, district, or state. Fully implementing the standards requires every educator to gain new knowledge and skills, to change beliefs, and to engage in new thinking and practice.

Schools and districts can use the tables in this newsletter to begin assessing current practice and creating theories of change and precise plans to transform professional development at the local level. Let the following simple questions guide thinking and discussion:

QUESTIONS

- On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being ideal, how well do our current practices align with the teacher and principal descriptors identified for each standard?
- What are our priorities?
- What first steps do we need to take?
- What should be our next steps?
- How will we know we are moving in the right direction?
- What is our timeframe?
- Have we identified and appropriately involved all stakeholders?
- Will all stakeholders accept the same evidence of success?



References

1. Moving NSDC's Staff Development Standards Into Practice: Innovation Configurations. (2003). NSDC.
2. Ibid

