



## **Reforming Professional Development at the School Site: New Standards and New Practices**

*Jennifer Good*  
*Auburn University*

*Vikki Miller & Cathy Gassenheimer*  
*Alabama Best Practices Center*

### *Abstract*

*Professional development practices in schools have been changing recently, particularly with the mandates regarding professional development through No Child Left Behind. In 2001, the National Staff Development Council revised its standards of professional development to shift thinking in this area and reflect the changing needs of schools, students, faculty, and administrators. The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of a program based on the revised standards that acts as a catalyst for improving professional development practices at school sites, entitled Powerful Conversations in Professional Development, and to provide evaluation data that documents the program's effectiveness. Conversations were conducted at 32 school sites, selected to represent a variety of demographics. Approximately six months to one year after the conversations, depending on the cohort, surveys capturing professional development practices were sent to participating and comparison schools. In addition, participating schools were asked to revisit the self-assessment instruments to track change in practices over time. The following is a summary of the evaluation findings: (a) participating schools use more nontraditional practices that align with current standards of professional development than their comparison counterparts; (b) participating schools use more data-driven and research-based methods of professional development than their comparison counterparts; and (c) greater change in practices occurred over time, with the first cohort of schools making more significant gains in reforming professional development than the second cohort.*

Professional development is an essential component of retaining high quality teachers. Current legislation as stated in *No Child Left Behind* emphasizes this premise (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Although professional development opportunities have been abundant for decades, educators recognize the need for a closer look at standards and criteria for effective professional development in order to increase the possibility of having programming impact teacher behaviors and, thus, student achievement. According to Hiebert, Gallimore, and Stigler (2002), current research indicates that effective professional development needs to be "long-term, school-based, collaborative, focused on students' learning, and linked to curricula" (p. 3). In response to efforts to revitalize the context, process, and content of professional development offerings to address some of these changes, the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) revised its standards of professional development in 2001 to encourage educators to program opportunities that were research-based, data-driven, job-embedded, and ongoing.

The National Staff Development Council (2001) states that although "staff development has been synonymous with workshops, courses, and presentations by 'experts,' . . . today we know that professional learning can take many forms" (p. 2). Hilliard (1997) argues that teachers need to be more empowered to demand structures and practices in professional development that deviate from the standard routines. No longer are single-session workshops seen as a productive or effective means of professional development; rather, professional development should be an ongoing collaborative effort among faculty members, with emphasis on student needs and learning as the driving focus (Hord, 1997). Sparks and Hirsh (1997) argue that major shifts in the beliefs and processes of professional development must take place in order to shape and impact school reform.

Collective learning by an entire faculty that promotes change among the school community is essential (Lambert, 1998). Abdal-Haqq (1996) argues that this can be achieved by allowing members of a faculty the opportunity to share, interact, and collaborate with each other. Collegiality and inquiry become important in teachers' learning processes as they form professional learning communities (Wald & Castleberry, 2000). Professional development experiences that build upon the expertise of the teachers and allow them to use site-based management to collectively decide upon direction and school goals is highly recommended to increase the possibility of programming effectiveness.

Although most school-based staff development coordinators and administrators recognize the benefits of intensive school-based professional development, changes in format or processes recommended by the revised standards can present challenges. Traditionally, due to cost and convenience, administrators have selected single-session workshops as the primary mode of delivery or instruction. This traditional format is diametrically opposed to the recommendation of NSDC. The transition to actually adopting new standards of professional development and learning how to implement these standards at the school site can be a difficult process. Self-assessment conversations at the school site are recommended as a catalyst to initiate reform and move schools toward adopting rigorous standards of professional development.

### **Program Description: Powerful Conversations About Professional Development**

In Spring 2002, the Teacher Quality Enhancement Project of the Alabama State Department of Education and the Alabama Best Practices Center combined efforts to create and present a program entitled "Powerful Conversations About Professional Development." Using trained facilitators to prompt honest discussions of current practices at a school site, program creators committed to promoting a *process* of professional development at the school site, which was more in keeping with the NSDC standards. Through conversation, two external facilitators urged school administrators and lead teachers to assess their current practices in professional development within their school communities, using a self-assessment tool and rubric developed by experts as the primary mechanisms for discussion. It is important to note that self-assessment conversations responses were not shared with any external agencies for measurement purposes. In other words, the data was collected for use at the school site only, prompting an honest exchange of ideas.

The self-assessment instrument (see Appendix) was based on NSDC standards. The actual instrument assisted in educating faculties on the newly revised standards, initiating discussion about professional development practices, and guiding the overall self-assessment conversations. Based on the fact that the full extensive self-assessment instrument, covering all 12 standards presented by NSDC, was too consuming and cumbersome to manage in a single session with teacher leaders, the program creators opted to focus a second shortened version of the instrument on the following four strands of

professional development: Data-Driven, Research-Based, Quality Teaching, and Learning Communities, as was recommended through the data collected during an evaluation of the pilot program (Good, Miller, & Gassenheimer, 2003). The driving concept behind the self-assessment conversation was to improve the texture and offerings of professional development at the school site, by increasing awareness of effective standards-based programs. Effective professional development would then lead to enhanced teaching and, ultimately, to improved student achievement.

Prior to the actual conversation and visitation with program facilitators, a program administrator called the school principal to request if an interest in participating in the self-assessment conversation existed at the school site. At that time, the program administrator discussed the procedures and purpose of the visit and asked the principal to select a team of teacher leaders to be involved. The number of teachers involved in the conversation varied, typically representing faculty members from a variety of grade levels and content areas. Groups ranged in size from seven to fifteen individuals. Copies of the self-assessment instrument, rating rubric, and a glossary of professional development terminology were sent in advance of the conversations to promote thinking and reflection among the teachers regarding current practices at the school site.

Upon first visiting the school, members of the school faculty led the conversation facilitators through a guided tour of the facility. The actual self-assessment conversation then followed, typically spanning a 2-hour time frame. The self-assessment conversations were scheduled both during the actual school day and during after-school sessions, at the convenience and recommendation of the principal. Either a principal or assistant principal was present during the sessions. During the actual conversation, program facilitators led the school leaders through a series of items defined within the four-scale self-assessment instrument. The faculty members relied upon the provided rubric for guidance on accurately rating their school's professional development program. Facilitators encouraged discussion of standards and an authentic assessment of the school's current professional development practices.

Referencing the descriptions provided by the rubric, faculty members rated their school's current professional development practices on a scale of 0 to 4 (4 being the most favorable rating of *exemplary*) based on the aforementioned standards: data-driven, research-based, quality teaching, and learning

communities. The faculty members would use finger ratings to provide their assessments of the scales, and the session facilitators averaged and recorded these individual ratings. Variance in ratings among participants often sparked discussion about definitions of terms and provision of examples of the scale at the school site, potentially deepening the participants' understanding of the professional development standards.

At the end of the conversation, the lead facilitator would spend an additional 15 to 20 minutes of summary, recommending and discussing potential follow-up to the conversation at the school site. In addition, three key leaders from participating schools were invited to statewide quarterly meetings to network and share standards-based professional development activities with other schools with similar grade-level configurations and demographics.

## **Evaluation Method**

The 32 total schools involved, including schools from the pilot program (Cohort I) and schools from the first full year of program implementation (Cohort II), were selected to represent varying demographics. Schools represented a mix of size, grade level, location (rural versus urban versus suburban), and systems with varying socio-economic community bases. Unlike other professional development programs that focus on a specific content area or avenue of student achievement, the "Powerful Conversations in Professional Development" program intends to make an impact on the process of professional development, not a specific byproduct of professional development. Thus, a change in the actual types of professional development practices parallels the program's objective, making that the primary essential measure of program success.

Cohort I schools ( $N = 16$ ) participated in the conversations in the spring of 2002. After the completion of a pilot evaluation, Cohort II schools ( $N = 16$ ) participated in conversations during the following academic year. Two primary layers of evaluation were used to determine if the conversations were having an impact in professional development practices at the school site: (a) a survey was used to compare professional development practices at participating and non-participating schools; and (b) participating schools were asked to revisit the self-assessment rubric to track changes in perceptions of practices at the school site over time.

The first component of the evaluation consisted of sending surveys to a total of 48 schools, including all participating schools and a group of nonparticipating schools. Using a 5-point Likert-type scale, the majority of the survey used for the comparison component of the evaluation is comprised of 15 items regarding professional development practices. The 15 items can be broken into two primary subgroups, representing traditional professional development practices (5 items) and nontraditional practices (7 items) as defined by NSDC. The final three items of the survey define practices based on the standards that are emphasized during the conversation, asking respondents to indicate the degree to which their current professional development practices are driven by student achievement data, based on current research, and embedded as part of teachers' regular workdays. The survey concludes with two open-ended items, requesting a listing of strengths and recommendations for changes in professional development practices at the school site.

The comparison group was selected using a combined method of matched and random sampling. Because external variables that could possibly affect professional development practices are too numerous to list (i.e., philosophy of school system, leadership of principal, faculty size, student population, grade-level configuration, socio-economic status, additional state and federal support to practices, etc.), a pure matched sampling was an impossibility based on the number of available schools. Hence, it was determined that two primary criteria would be used for matching purposes—the same school systems and grade level configurations of the participating schools. After matching occurred on these levels, comparison schools were selected on a random basis from a master list of possibilities.

Surveys were sent to the entire faculties of the Cohort I and II schools as well as the comparison group. Even though the initial conversations involved only a small select group of teachers per school site, survey responses were requested of all faculty members in order to garner a more accurate picture of professional development practices at the school site, rather than one that could be biased by involving only the teachers made knowledgeable of the standards of professional development during the conversation. If the conversations truly initiated change in practices at the grass roots level, then the entire faculty's input became essential at each school site. The response rate from Cohort I, Cohort II, and comparison schools were 81%, 56%, and 56%, respectively.

The second component of the evaluation involved capturing the teacher leaders' perspectives on their current practices of professional development and their growth in their perceptions of changing practices at the school site, six months to a year after the initial conversation. To accomplish this, the self-assessment instrument and rubric were mailed to all 32 participating schools, requesting that the same team of teachers and administrators who had originally met with a self-assessment conversation facilitator meet again to revisit the rubric independently. Because the teacher leaders and administrators were already familiar with the rubric, a facilitator's presence was not necessary, as the participants were already comfortable with the concepts presented in the instrument. Ten of the first cohort of pilot schools (63%) responded to the second set of self-assessment instruments, while eight of the second cohort (50%) returned the completed second set of ratings.

Unlike the initial conversation, however, each team member responded individually to the self-assessment, unaware of the responses of others, rather than discussing perspectives in a group. Whereas a score would not be recorded until consensus was reached through dialoguing during the actual facilitated conversations, for this iteration of the self-assessment the participants responded to the instrument independently. The evaluator recorded the numerical average score of the participants' ratings per school site. This variation on the original method makes the scores look slightly different than the original self-assessment ratings, as true numerical averages were more defined. In some cases, during the pilot round of conversations, principals mentioned during follow-up interviews that they were concerned about the honesty of responses from their faculties, causing either rating inflation or deflation, depending on the circumstances. This was not a consideration on the second self-assessment ratings. By having the participants respond to the self-assessment rating individually, potential biases were avoided.

## **Results**

### ***Comparison of Survey Responses***

As indicated earlier in the study, the majority of the items on the survey can be categorized into two predominant areas: traditional practices of professional development (i.e., "attending off-site conferences;" "attending workshops with outside consultants;" or "attending system-wide planned workshops during inservice days") and nontraditional practices (i.e.,

"observing model lessons of other teachers at our school;" "participating in study groups with teachers at the school" or "discussing and analyzing student work with other teachers"). When separate items were collapsed into these two categories, sufficient reliabilities, or measures of internal consistency (traditional alpha = .69; nontraditional alpha = .84), were obtained, making an analysis of data from the survey more manageable.

The guiding question that leads this layer of the evaluation is as follows: Do schools that have participated in these conversations approach professional development practices in a different way than schools that have not been involved in the conversation? Table 1 provides the mean scores per cohort and comparison group of survey respondents regarding traditional and nontraditional practices. Because the scale per survey item progresses from a response of 1, indicating that teachers *Always* engage in particular practices to a response of 5, indicating that teachers *Never* participate in particular practices, lower numeric values on the mean scores actually indicate a greater frequency in participating in certain kinds of professional development practices, making lower mean scores the more favorable responses in the comparison.

**Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations per Group for Traditional and Nontraditional Practices in Professional Development**

Group	<i>n</i>	Traditional		Nontraditional	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Cohort I (Pilot)	354	2.41	.61	2.71	.75
Cohort II	262	2.42	.61	2.75	.71
Comparison	230	2.50	.68	2.94	.85

An observation of means suggests that traditional practices are similar among the three groups, whereas nontraditional practices vary, particularly for the comparison group. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) reveals that no significant difference exists among the three groups regarding traditional practices,  $F = 1.52$ ,  $\alpha = .22$ . In other words, all three groups appear to engage in the same frequency of traditional practices of professional development. In contrast, regarding nontraditional practices, those practices that are clearly in keeping with the standards of effective professional development as defined by NSDC, an ANOVA reveals that a significant difference does exist between group means  $F = 6.42$ ,  $p = .00$ . It appears as though the self-assessment conversations have

impacted the process or approach that schools use for professional development practices.

A post-hoc analysis, the test of least significant difference, indicates that Cohort I's mean scores differ significantly from the comparison group at the .00 level, while Cohort II's mean rating differ significantly from the comparison group at the .01 level. Both groups that were involved in the professional development conversations have significantly different mean scores than the comparison group, suggesting that these two groups use more nontraditional professional development practices at their schools than the comparison group. Specifically, the means per group reveal that the comparison group ( $M = 2.94$ ) does not participate in as many nontraditional professional development practices as Cohort I ( $M = 2.71$ ) and Cohort II ( $M = 2.75$ ) schools that had the advantage of participating in the self-assessment conversations.

Based on the mean scores, it appears as though schools that have participated in the conversation have expanded their repertoire of professional development practices, causing a difference in their approach to or process of professional development at the school site. Interestingly, participation in the conversations does not suggest an abandonment of traditional professional development practices, as there is no significant difference between mean scores for those activities. Rather, participation intimates that these school faculties have adopted nontraditional practices in professional development while maintaining the same frequency of traditional practices.

The three final items reveal if professional development practices at a school site are data-driven, research-based, and job-embedded--three important standards or criteria for effective practice. Item 13 asks how often practices are determined by student achievement data, while Item 14 asks

**Table 2. Mean Scores per Group for Standards of Professional Development**

Surevey Item	Cohort I	Cohort II	Comparison	<i>p</i>
Data-driven	2.01	2.07	2.34*	.00
Research-based	1.75	1.74	1.97*	.00
Job-embedded	1.89*	2.04	2.18	.00

*Note:* An asterisk (\*) indicates that the post-hoc test (Least Significant Difference) revealed a significant difference between noted mean score and other two groups.

how often sessions are based on current research, and Item 15 asks how often professional development is part of the regular teaching day. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) again indicates that a significant difference in mean scores exists for these three groups on every single item. The test of least significant difference reveals some interesting information. Regarding data-driven professional development, Cohorts I and II more regularly base professional development topics on student achievement data as compared to the comparison group. The same is true of research-based practices; again, Cohort I and II more often seek a research base to inform their professional development practices than does the comparison group.

The data regarding Item 15 illustrates a surprising circumstance. Regarding Item 15, job-embedded professional development, Cohort II's mean score ( $M = 2.04$ ) is not significantly different from the comparison group ( $M = 2.18$ ). Rather, Cohort I alone practices more job-embedded professional development than the other two groups, as the post-hoc test yielded information revealing that only Cohort I respondents yield a mean score that is significantly different than the other two groups. This is the one instance where both groups that participated in the self-assessment conversations did not produce similar favorable mean scores. Instead, only the pilot group that had an extra year of opportunity for program reform adopted job-embedded practices. Because planning of job-embedded professional development requires scheduling flexibility, alternate scheduling, and, often, additional financial resources, Cohort I was possibly the only group that had the time to make such radical changes to their overall process and philosophy of professional development, whereas Cohort II did not have the opportunity to actively change their practices after the conversation which occurred as little as six months prior to the study.

In general, however, the results of the analysis on the three emphasized standards of professional development (data-driven, research-based, and job-embedded) indicate that the schools that have participated in self-assessment conversations engage in activities that are more in keeping with the revised standards of professional development.

Two open-ended items concluded the survey. The first item solicited the strengths of the various professional development activities at the school site, while the second item asked the respondents to list avenues of change in their school-based professional development programs. A content analysis, organized by group category (Cohort I, II, and comparison) was completed on each of these two items.

Responses to the first item indicated that data-driven practices, teacher collaboration, and relevant and needs-based sessions are listed as top strengths for all three groups, regardless of participation in the self-assessment conversations. In fact, the patterns of responses and top five strengths as listed by respondents from Cohort I and Cohort II schools are highly similar, with the exception of research-based programming emerging as a top strength for Cohort I schools only. Within the comparison group, two completely different categories are listed as strengths, frequency of sessions and basing sessions on current trends and issues, whereas those are not listed as top strengths by either participating cohort. The patterns of responses among the comparison group appear notably different than the schools that were involved in the conversations. Schools that have participated in self-assessment conversations appear to evaluate the process of professional development programming along different criteria, recognizing strengths of the process that are more similar to those acknowledged by the standards set forth by NSDC.

In response to the second item, all three groups, regardless of participation in the self-assessment conversations, listed the opportunity to visit schools and more content-specific sessions as two top priorities for changes to professional development practices. Otherwise, many interesting differences have developed among the responses to this query. Rather than recommending changes to their programs, respondents from Cohort I and II schools requested that no changes be made at all to their professional development practices. However, among the comparison group, only two respondents listed similar favorable reactions. This finding intimates that the conversation participants are pleased with the new practices that have been adopted at their schools sites. One respondent in Cohort I described the professional development practices at the school as "wonderful," while another indicated that he or she was "pleased" with programming. Another said, "I would not change anything, nothing," and another stated, "I believe our professional development has grown over the past year and is excellent." Cohort II participants made similar comments stating that the school professional development program does an "excellent job" and described their school's program as "the best system I have worked in." In contrast, respondents from the comparison group were not as effusive in their compliments of the programs, nor as interested in maintaining the status quo.

Respondents from Cohort I and II listed scheduling as an area that needed more focus. Specifically, they did not enjoy being pulled from classes to attend professional development sessions or meetings, requesting that professional development not be offered during after school times when they are trying to work with students or during the regular workday. Although it appears as though administrators may be attempting to offer more job-embedded training, pulling the teachers away from instructional time on a regular basis appears to be causing some tension and anxiety among teachers in Cohort I and II.

In general, it can be observed from the responses that individuals at schools that participated in the self-assessment conversations approach and critique professional development differently than those that did not participate, suggesting that there is a different depth and understanding of professional development theory which in turn initiates new vocabulary and sparks new ideas for improvement.

### **Revisiting the Self-Assessment Rubric**

The second component of the evaluation involved revisiting the self-assessment rubric by the same teacher leader and administrator teams. Table 3 provides the self-assessment initial ratings and follow-up ratings per each of the four primary strands of professional development, as well as the level of significance, based on a paired samples t test, between mean scores. Because internal consistency or reliability measures were strong for each of the strands, both pre- and post-ratings (range .81 to .97), the twelve separate items on the instrument could be collapsed into the four primary standards to make the analysis more meaningful. The self-assessment rubric progressed on a scale of 0 to 4 (4 being the most favorable rating of *Exemplary*). Thus, higher ratings on various components indicate that the respondents felt as though the practices were being met more favorably than the lower ratings. Table 3 provides the breakdown of initial self-rating scores and post-intervention scores for both the first and the second cohort of participating schools.

When looking at the mean scores yielded from the ratings of the Cohort I participants, each of the four standards increases, indicating that the respondents feel as though professional development practices have improved in all four areas. In fact, the increases in mean scores are significant at the .05 level in both the data-driven and quality-teaching areas. In contrast, the Cohort II schools have an extremely different pattern of mean scores than the Cohort

I schools. Although there was visible improvement for the data-driven and research-based strands among the Cohort II mean scores, the increase was not significant in these areas. In spite of the lack of significance, it can be observed that the two weakest targeted areas from the initial conversation of Cohort II were the only two areas that showed growth or improvement. The mean scores for the other two strands, quality teaching and learning communities, decreased from the initial conversation to six months after the intervention.

**Table 3. Pre- and Post-Conversation Mean Scores for Cohort I and Cohort II Schools**

Scale	Cohort I			Cohort II		
	Pre	Post	<i>p</i>	Pre	Post	<i>p</i>
Data-driven	2.1	2.8	.01	2.8	2.9	.86
Research-based	2.2	2.6	.07	2.0	2.5	.27
Quality teaching	2.6	3.0	.03	3.5	3.1	.12
Learning Communities	2.4	2.5	.33	3.3	3.0	.10

What could potentially cause this unusual pattern for the Cohort II schools? If the need for time to actually reform professional development practices is truly necessary, then it can be surmised that more notable improvement in self-ratings for the Cohort I will occur, as they have had an entire year to reform professional development at their school site as opposed to only six months or less that was available to Cohort II. Such was the case. In addition, because the self-assessment conversation could have enhanced awareness of effective standards of professional development, the participants may have been more rigorous in their ratings on the second iteration. Also, because the second ratings were completed independently, the respondents may not have felt pressured to compromise their views for consensus, causing possible rating deflation, or in other cases, inflation. Methodological limitations, such as those listed earlier in this paragraph, could have impacted the outcomes; however, it is important to recognize that the overall pattern of ratings for Cohort II schools did not change radically. In other words, quality teaching and learning communities still remained as the considered strengths of professional development practices overall for the Cohort II schools. Instead, the targeted weaknesses experienced observable improvement, a potential sign of positive program impact.

The conversations intended to increase self-awareness of participants at the school site in order to promote effective practices in professional development programming. The revisiting of the self-assessment rubric suggests that the conversations accomplished exactly that. Self-assessment ratings on the majority of the strands have now improved observably during the six-month to one-year interim following implementation.

## **Conclusions**

It has been accepted that quality teachers make the difference in student achievement. It has also been accepted that quality teaching cannot be maintained without high quality, standard-driven professional development (Gallimore & Stigler, 2002; Hiebert et al.). How then can professional development practices be elevated at the school site to attain the quality desired? Does more professional development mean better professional development? No. Teachers and administrators must be informed about the look and shape of quality professional development programming. They require a better understanding of standards of professional development, and open conversations and self-assessments among faculty provide that needed catalyst for change.

The "Powerful Conversations in Professional Development" program set out to impact the actual processes of professional development engaged in by various teachers and administrators at the school site. The program successfully accomplished just that. According to respondents at the schools that have participated in the program, practices at their school are more data-driven, research-based, and among the first cohort of participants, more job-embedded than nonparticipating schools. Teachers at these schools approach, critique, and evaluate professional development practices differently, applauding some of the nontraditional processes that have been adopted at the school site. The self-assessment conversations have impacted the ways and means by which schools approach professional development. A structured opportunity to assess a school's practices among teacher leaders, become aware of deficits, and plan on improving their standards based on their newly-acquired knowledge provides an effective mechanism for initiating reform.

The improvements were most notable among the Cohort I schools, which had an entire year to introduce new programming at the school site, as opposed to the Cohort II schools, which had only four to six months to actually change practices. It also appears as though the self-assessment conversations were successful in improving the focus of professional development efforts by

targeting areas of programming weaknesses and demonstrating growth in those areas, particularly data-driven and research-based programming. In general, professional development practices at participating school sites align more directly with the standards presented by NSDC.

What can be learned regarding reform efforts in professional development practices? A couple of salient points can be discerned. First, it appears as though the adoption and implementation of new standards of professional development practice at the school site simply take time. Cohort I schools have progressed farther in this journey than have Cohort II schools, although changes and differences are still apparent among both groups. Educational reform that radically changes practices requires time to implement, digest, and reflect. In spite of the need for time to truly impact behavior in practices, the initial changes at the school site have met with general acceptance among the participating cohorts, as they recognize and appreciate the majority of the revisions that have taken place in the processes of professional development.

To further this study, it would be beneficial to explore if the professional development process and approach employed by a school site has the positive impact on student achievement, as research predicts. Fortunately, the first layer of analysis, focusing on changes in actual practices, has suggested positive growth due to the Powerful Conversations in Professional Development program. Thus, the relationship between changing teacher behaviors and practices has been initiated, opening the door for improving student achievement.

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## Appendix

### *Self-Assessment Instrument*

## **Self-Assessment of Your School's Professional Development: Rubric for A Powerful Conversation**

*Adapted from the NSDC Standards for Staff Development  
by the  
Alabama Best Practices Center and  
The Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Project*

### **Definition of rubric terms:**

Use the following indicators to assess your school's progress in meeting each of the staff development standards on the attached self-assessment rubric.

#### **0 – Not Addressed:**

- At this time, this standard has not been addressed.
- No evidence that would verify a beginning level of implementation.

#### **1 – Beginning:**

- Making initial steps, such as gathering information, analyzing data, and organizing resources to address this standard, and
- Arranging schedules, allotting time, and beginning to implement the standard on a limited basis. This is defined as at least 20% of the teachers at the school addressing the standard as a part of their regular (daily, weekly) practice.

#### **2 – Basic:**

- Implementing this standard on a more wide-spread basis. This is defined as at least 60% of the teachers throughout the school who address the standard as a part of their regular (daily, weekly) practice, and
- Implementing this standard with great understanding and proficiency by a core group of experts within the school. A “core group of experts” is defined as at least 20% of the teachers who regularly demonstrate this standard at a level that could serve as a model for others and who could provide training and/or coaching to others working to meet the standard.

#### **3 – Proficient:**

- Implementing this standard in-depth, with great understanding and proficiency, by at least 80% of the teachers within the school, and
- Beginning to show linkage between implementation of this standard and improved student achievement using a variety of assessments.

#### **4 – Exemplary: All of the following**

- Implementing this standard at a highly proficient level on a routine basis throughout the school.
- Using data from ongoing student assessments to continuously modify and improve decisions and actions that address this standard.
- Assimilating this standard into the “culture of the school” so that newly-hired personnel develop the capacity (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) to meet the standard with their colleagues. The “culture of the school” is defined as the common values and beliefs of a group that are so deeply embedded that group members routinely act in accordance with them and automatically assimilate newcomers into their belief system.

**\*\*NOTE:** The scale on this instrument has been modified from the National Staff Development Council's original 6-point, agree-disagree scale listed in the back of the NSDC Standards for Staff Development – Revised, 2001. In this modified version, a 5-point scale indicating level of implementation of the standards appears in a rubric form. The purpose for this change is to provide greater specificity to the self-assessment conversation. Only four of the twelve NSDC Standards have been targeted for discussion in this rubric.

## Self-Assessment of Your School's Professional Development: Rubric for A Powerful Conversation

*Adapted from the NSDC Standards for Staff Development*  
by the  
**Alabama Best Practices Center and**  
**The Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Project**

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>DATA-DRIVEN:</b> Staff development that improves the learning of all students uses disaggregated student data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.					
Evidences:	Not Addressed	Beginning	Basic	Proficient	Exemplary
1. In this school, data on student learning provide the focus for staff development efforts.	0	1	2	3	4
2. In this school, teachers gather data frequently in their classrooms to determine the effects of their staff development on their students.	0	1	2	3	4
3. In this school, data are disaggregated to determine the needs of all students, including subgroups, so that the data informs staff development.	0	1	2	3	4

<b>RESEARCH-BASED:</b> Staff development that improves the learning of all students prepares educators to apply research to decision making.					
Evidences:	Not Addressed	Beginning	Basic	Proficient	Exemplary
4. In this school, staff development prepares educators to be skillful users of educational research.	0	1	2	3	4
5. In this school, teams of teachers and administrators methodically study research before adopting improvement strategies.	0	1	2	3	4
6. In this school, pilot studies and action research are used when appropriate to test the effectiveness of new approaches when research is contradictory or does not exist.	0	1	2	3	4

<b>QUALITY TEACHING:</b> Staff development that improves the learning of all students 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.					
<b>Evidences:</b>	<b>Not Addressed</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
7. In this school, staff development deepens teachers' knowledge of their content.	0	1	2	3	4
8. In this school, staff development expands teachers' instructional methods appropriate to specific content areas.	0	1	2	3	4
9. In this school, staff development teaches classroom assessment skills that allow teachers to frequently monitor gains in student learning.	0	1	2	3	4
<b>LEARNING COMMUNITIES:</b> Staff development that improves the learning of all students organizes adults into learning communities whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district.					
<b>Evidences:</b>	<b>Not Addressed</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Exemplary</b>
10. In this school, small learning teams are a primary component of the staff development plan.	0	1	2	3	4
11. In this school, all teachers are part of ongoing, school-based learning teams that meet several times a week to plan instruction, examine student work, and/or solve problems.	0	1	2	3	4
12. In this school, faculties and learning teams focus on school and district goals.	0	1	2	3	4

**DIRECTIONS:** Use the summary below to record your scores for the evidences under each standard. Average your scores, rounding off to the nearest tenth, to determine an overall score for the entire standard.

<b>PROCESS STANDARD:</b>	<b>PROCESS STANDARD:</b>
<b>Data-Driven</b>	<b>Research-Based</b>
1. _____	4. _____
2. _____	5. _____
3. _____	6. _____
Average: _____	Average: _____

<b>CONTENT STANDARD:</b>	<b>CONTEXT STANDARD:</b>
<b>Quality Teaching</b>	<b>Learning Communities</b>
7. _____	10. _____
8. _____	11. _____
9. _____	12. _____
Average: _____	Average: _____