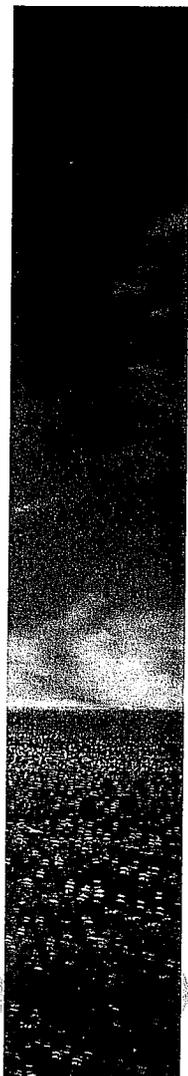


# How do we stand?



**Purpose:** To assess the school's professional development in relationship to NSDC's definition.

**Time:** Approximately one hour.

**Materials:** A copy of NSDC's definition of professional development for each participant. The full text of the definition is available at [www.nsdc.org/standfor/definition.cfm](http://www.nsdc.org/standfor/definition.cfm).

## STEPS

1. Give participants these instructions:
  - a. Using the elements of NSDC's definition of professional development, rate where the school stands on each element using a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest rating. Add notes about evidence you considered in assigning your rating. (10 minutes)
  - b. Move into small groups of about five. Share your ratings with one another, and discuss as a team the evidence you considered in your rating. (20 minutes)
  - c. Ask a reporter from your group to share one or two insights with the large group. (10 minutes)
2. Debrief. Discuss key lessons as a faculty from the small group reports.

## RATING SCALE

1. Our school's professional development does not include this element.
2. Our school's professional development occasionally includes this element.
3. Our school's professional development includes this element most of the time.
4. Our school's professional development aligns perfectly with this element.

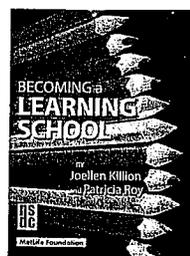
### How to order the book

One of NSDC's fundamental beliefs is that schools' most complex problems are best solved by educators collaborating and learning together. Research increasingly acknowledges the added value of collaboration among educators as contributing to improving teaching quality and student learning. When educators learn together, we believe, student opportunities for academic success increase significantly. Further, we believe that the closer professional learning is to the

classroom in which students learn, the more deeply connected it will be to student learning needs and student academic standards.

*Becoming a Learning School* offers the guidance, structure, and tools that classroom teachers, coaches, principals, and central office staff need to understand their role in the success of collaborative professional learning. This book is a critical resource in transforming schools into places where NSDC's definition of

professional learning comes to life each day for every student and every educator.



**Becoming a Learning School**  
(177 pages + CD)  
Item #B423  
Price: \$60 nonmembers,  
\$48 members  
Order at 800-727-7288 or  
[store.nsdc.org](http://store.nsdc.org)

| Definition elements  | Rating | Evidence |
|--|--------|----------|
| comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement   |        |          |
| (A) fosters collective responsibility for improved student performance   |        |          |
| (A) (1) aligned with state and district standards for student achievement  |        |          |
| (A) (2) conducted among educators at the school and facilitated by well-prepared school principals and/or school-based professional development coaches, mentors, master teachers, or other teacher leaders  |        |          |
| (A) (3) primarily occurs several times per week among established teams of teachers, principals, and other instructional staff members in a continuous cycle of improvement  |        |          |
| (A) (3) (i) evaluates student, teacher, and school learning needs through a thorough review of data on teacher and student performance;  |        |          |
| (A) (3) (ii) defines a clear set of educator learning goals based on the rigorous analysis of the data;  |        |          |
| (A) (3) (iii) achieves the educator learning goals identified above by implementing coherent, sustained, and evidenced-based learning strategies, such as lesson study and the development of formative assessments, that improve instructional effectiveness and student achievement; |        |          |
| (A) (3) (iv) provides job-embedded coaching or other forms of assistance to support the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the classroom  |        |          |
| (A) (3) (v) regularly assesses the effectiveness of the professional development in achieving identified learning goals, improving teaching, and assisting all students in meeting challenging state academic achievement standards;   |        |          |
| (A) (3) (vi) informs ongoing improvements in teaching and student learning;  |        |          |
| (A) (3) (vii) may be supported by external assistance.   |        |          |
| (B) The process outlined in (A) may be supported by activities such as courses, workshops, institutes, networks, and conferences that: (1) must address the learning goals and objectives established for professional development by educators at the school level;                   |        |          |
| (B) (2) advance the ongoing school-based professional development; and   |        |          |
| (B) (3) are provided by for-profit and nonprofit entities outside the school, such as universities, education service agencies, technical assistance providers, networks of content-area specialists, and other education organizations and associations.                              |        |          |

## Innovation Configuration map

K-8 READING INSTRUCTION/TEACHING LEARNING CYCLE

| THE TEACHER ... | 1<br>High fidelity   | 2  | 3  | 4<br>Nonuse  |
|-----------------|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Assess</b>   | Consistently uses formative and summative assessments (e.g. weekly, unit, and diagnostic assessments from core program).   | Incorporates formative and summative assessments (e.g. weekly, unit, and diagnostic assessments from core program) but is inconsistent in their use.   | Seldom uses formative assessments; more emphasis on summative.   | Does not use assessments from the core reading program.  |
| <b>Evaluate</b> | Reflects on data from multiple sources and uses data to identify next teaching steps (e.g. analyzes assessment rubrics in order to determine student level of understanding and to identify student needs of differentiated instructional support).  | Reflects on data from multiple sources and begins to use data to identify possible teaching points for differentiated instruction.   | Reflects on data from limited sources, but does not evaluate data in terms of identifying next teaching steps.   | Does not have assessment data or doesn't use data.   |
| <b>Plan</b>     | Shows in-depth knowledge of students and core reading program materials (e.g. teaches skills determined by core assessment results, plans for flexible, differentiated instruction using recommended core materials and considers and plans for different learning styles).                                    | Shows some knowledge of students and core reading program materials (e.g. beginning to use assessment results to influence teaching, plans for flexible, differentiated instruction using some of the core reading materials, and plans for different learning styles) | Shows limited knowledge of students and core reading program materials (e.g. does not understand the connection between core program assessment data and instructional planning, shows very little student differentiation and minimal use of core resources). | Does not have knowledge of students or core reading program materials for instructional planning.  |
| <b>Teach</b>    | Consistently uses core program reading materials as intended and has in-depth knowledge of differentiated instruction (e.g. teaches targeted skills and strategies, differentiates instruction based on student skill needs, teaches higher-order thinking/questioning skills and elicits student engagement). | Randomly uses core program reading materials and has some knowledge of differentiated instruction (e.g. teaches some targeted skills and strategies, beginning to differentiate based on student needs, and some eliciting of student engagement).                     | Seldom uses core reading materials and limited knowledge of differentiated instruction (e.g. rarely teaches targeted skills and strategies, shows minimal use of differentiated instruction, and does not elicit student engagement).                          | Does not teach core program reading and does not have knowledge of differentiated instruction (e.g. teaches whole-group instruction with noncore program materials). |

Source: Dysart Unified School District, Surprise, Ariz.

## Sample Innovation Configuration

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: Using tools to measure and monitor progress towards goals and objectives.

| Indicators  | 1 Not yet  | 2 Progressing  | 3 Proficient   | 4 Advanced   |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Mission statement</b>  | I am unfamiliar with classroom mission statements.                                 | I am aware of classroom mission statements, but I do not have one. | I have established a classroom mission statement.  | I have engaged students in drafting a classroom mission statement.   |
| <b>Goals/objectives</b>   | I do not identify learning objectives or classroom goals.                          | I write learning objectives and classroom goals.                   | I sometimes communicate the learning objectives and involve students in setting classroom goals. | I regularly communicate the learning objectives and involve students in setting classroom goals and their personal learning goals.                                   |
| <b>Measures/results</b>   | I do not collect student data to track student progress. (This is formative data.) | I collect student data for my own use (grades, etc.).              | I collect and chart data to track student progress or improvement towards goals and objectives.  | I systematically and purposely collect and chart data to track student progress or improvement towards goals and objectives. (This can be formal and informal data.) |
| <b>PDSA</b>   | I am not familiar with PDSA.   | I know that PDSA is a continuous improvement tool.                 | I sometimes use PDSA to improve classroom processes.   | I engage my students to use PDSA to measure and refine classroom processes.  |
| <b>TOOLS</b><br>Plus/delta<br>Issue bin<br>Affinity diagrams<br>Student data folders<br>Pareto charts | I do not use Continuous Improvement tools.   | I use Continuous Improvement tools.                                | I regularly use Continuous Improvement tools.  | I systematically engage my students in the use of Continuous Improvement tools.  |

Source: Birdville ISD.

gram evaluation, to ensure districtwide implementation of key initiatives. These tri-level looping teams share authentic evidence of district initiatives at work in classrooms and design “digging deeper” measures to increase staff and student learning on every campus.

A task force from this group recently crafted a much-needed Implementation Innovation Configuration map to measure implementation levels of the key initiatives in BISD. Baseline data collected from classroom teachers help campuses determine their implementation levels. These data provide the foundation

for goal setting in campus improvement plans. The descriptors and indicators on the Implementation Innovation Configuration set guideposts as teachers collaborate about how to move from their current status to a deeper level of implementation. (See the Innovation Configuration above.) District leaders benefit from active participation in region-wide consortia at the Educational Service Center, where they network with others regarding continuous improvement practices to achieve results.

### 3. Collaborate in teams.

Before 2003, staff development in

BISD had been either nonexistent or a disconnected series of random acts of inservice. Bell garnered the strengths of the curriculum and instruction staff to design professional learning that placed job-alike teachers in small learning communities across the district. Using *A Facilitator's Guide to Professional Learning Communities* (Jolly, 2005) as a framework, Miller coordinated more than 125 action learning teams that met five days throughout the year. These teacher teams analyze data, set goals, design action plans, implement those plans, examine student work, use protocols to examine their own work,

and try new practices to improve student performance. Teachers report that they look forward to staff development days and collaborative learning. Teachers found that learning teams afford them a deeper understanding of the interconnections and alignment of what had seemed like isolated initiatives before. Those initiatives work in tandem to engage staff and students in a systemic and systematic journey of continuous improvement.

A transformational shift from thinking about what teachers need to teach to thinking more purposefully about what students need to learn spread like a virus across the district. Teachers eagerly design professional learning to address specific student learning goals. For example, one teacher offers sessions on using Singapore math strategies, while other teachers design professional learning called ShareFests where teachers display and discuss their data, action plans, common assessments, rubrics, units, and student work samples. Teachers and leaders in BISD have become what Doug Reeves (2006) calls "learning leaders" who effectively design their learning in order to facilitate the learning of others, thereby deepening the level of the learning of their students.

#### 4. Engage everyone in meaningful learning and work.

Birdville educators believe that individual staff engagement in their daily work directly impacts student engagement in meaningful learning. Results of the Gallup Q12, a national survey designed to measure employee engagement, reveal increasing staff engagement and satisfaction in the last two years. High Q12 scores indicate organizations with lower turnover, better productivity, better customer loyalty, and superior performance. Birdville staff surveyed responded that they have multiple

opportunities to learn and grow. As part of the Schlechty Standard Bearer Network, BISD teachers and leaders focus on designing meaningful work that appeals to the motives of student and adult learners. BISD leaders embed design qualities into all learning experiences through a process called Coaching for Design. Designers use the high-yield classroom strategies that Robert Marzano compiled to address the varied learning needs of BISD adult and student learners.

#### 5. Use data to make decisions.

Birdville ISD designed a tool called the District Dashboard to display data to track progress toward district goals and objectives. Campuses access a variety of student performance reports online. The district recently invested in a data warehousing program that will allow teachers and leaders to manipulate data to answer customized queries. Leaders and teachers have been trained in the use of Baldrige tools and continuous improvement processes. District, campus, and classroom mission statements are posted for all to see. Many teachers engage students in tracking their own performance in data folders using formative and summative assessments. Data walls greet visitors in campus foyers. Principals engaged in an in-depth study on using formative assessment to transform classroom instruction. James Popham, author of *Transformative Assessment* (ASCD, 2008), will be the keynote speaker at this year's administrator retreat.

By using data to make decisions in the past five years, BISD leaders have reallocated funds, changed requirements, and created programs to boost academic excellence. As a result, the number of National Merit Scholars has increased from 5 to 22. The district pays for PSAT examinations for all 10th- and 11th-grade students. Selected students are invited to participate in a new Superintendent's

Scholars program that provides recognition and preparation for PSAT success. Students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses now take the AP exam as an expectation of participation in the college-prep program. BISD allocates money to cover AP examination fees.

BISD has added a program to its three high schools that addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Site teams support minority students in advanced academic opportunities and college preparation.

#### LOOKING AHEAD

Is the team of Birdville leaders satisfied with where the district is today? No. The good news is that because of the focus on staff engagement in small learning communities and the use of continuous improvement tools and high-yield strategies to transform instructional practices, student achievement results are beginning to reflect movement in the desired direction. Implementing simple professional learning principles has positioned the district to make a big turn ahead. BISD teams stand ready to lead that transformation.

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