Indicator Explanation

DOMAIN	EFFECTIVE PRACTICE	INDICATOR
Talent	Target professional learning opprtunities	2B.3 The school's professional learning promotes collaboration and collegiality, and effectiveness through differentiated, highquality opportunities that benefit teachers both individually and collectively.

Explanation. The evidence review indicates that high performing LEAs and school provide high quality professional development for all staff. High quality professional development is that which is ongoing and job-embedded allowing for authentic, ample practice opportunities for those striving to improve practices. Aligning staff development opportunities to valie and reliable data increases the likelihood that teachers will be open and receptive to participating in professional development that is personally differentiated for them.

Questions. What processess will the LEA/school use to align and differentiate professional development offerings? What data will the LEA/school use to identify areas of professional need? How will the LEA/school ensure that professional development is targeted and ongoing? How will the LEA/school ensure that professional development is job-embedded with multiple practice opportunities as well as follow-up debriefing and reflection time?

Wei et al., (2009) define high quality or effective professional development as "that which results in improvements in teachers' knowledge and instructional practice, as well as improved student learning outcomes" (p. 3). Teachers often acknowledge that the professional development they receive is of limited usefulness to their daily work and to their professional growth. LEAs and schools must work to create systems of professional development that genuinely advance the effectiveness of their staff for the benefit of both staff and students. Professional development should be standards based, results driven, and job embedded (e.g., formal or informal professional development conducted during the school day as educators engage in their daily work activities). Professional development programs should extend beyond traditional workshops to include activities such as peer observation, mentoring, the creation of teacher portfolios, action research projects, whole-faculty or team/department study groups, curriculum planning and development, literature circles, critical friends groups, data analysis activities, school improvement planning, the shared analysis of student work, lesson study, or teacher self-assessment and goal-setting activities. Professional development activities should be collaborative but also differentiated to meet the individual needs of teachers (Chambers, Lam, & Mahitivanichcha, 2008).

Professional development systems and requirements should be aligned with staff observations. They should be guided by formative teacher data as well as formative and summative student assessment data to create individualized professional development that will address a teacher's specific challenge areas. Professional development also should be linked to opportunities for career advancement, and provide opportunities for teachers to be involved in its selection and delivery. Finally, professional development should be aligned with school and district vision, mission, and improvement goals (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

LEAs/schools should consider high quality professional development in the following areas: Developing a deeper understanding of the community served by a school. Because at-risk schools often struggle with teacher retention and student achievement, targeted professional development should be provided for teachers in these schools that is focused on understanding the community culture and the specific needs of students. This professional development might include training in communication and linguistic differences, strategies for overcoming language barriers for English Language learners, engaging parents, and equipping teachers with a better understanding of and comfort with the home background of their students.

Developing subject-specific pedagogical knowledge. Professional development should be provided in content areas where children often under-perform and where teacher shortages sometimes result in under-qualified instructors being hired. Mathematics, science, and foreign language instruction often benefit the most from such targeted professional development.

Developing leadership capabilities. Ongoing opportunities for school leaders to engage in professional development should be provided by the district. As is the case for teacher learning, professional development for school leaders should be on-going, job-embedded, and differentiated to meet the needs of individual principals and other school leaders (Goldring, Camburn, Huff, & Sebastian, 2007; Portin, Alejano, Knapp, & Marzolf, 2006). This approach may involve coaching, mentoring, reflection, and self-assessment. Through professional development, school leaders are often better equipped to promote collaboration among principals, teachers, and other school and district personnel to create opportunities for staff to share in leadership responsibilities and develop and demonstrate leadership potential (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Salazar, 2007).

Finally, the effectiveness of professional development activities for all staff should be monitored. Data on the extent to which professional development changes instructional practice should be collected and used to make future decisions about the professional development and then assessing whether these have been achieved (Borko, 2004).

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