

# Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards

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The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards are intended to contribute to increased student learning by improving teachers' knowledge and skills. The standards call on teachers, principals, district staff and leaders, the Maryland State Department of Education, institutions of higher education, and other stakeholders to work together to plan, design, implement, and evaluate professional development.

When fully implemented at the state, district, and school levels, the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards can serve five critical functions. These standards can:

- Provide a clear vision of high-quality professional development that recognizes local needs, priorities, and resources;
- Provide a framework and specific tasks for planning, designing, implementing, and evaluating high-quality professional development, including both professional development programs and an entire professional development agenda;
- Provide a framework for ensuring that professional development is aligned with state, district, and school policies, priorities, and goals for improving student learning;
- Inform allocation of resources for professional development; and
- Define responsibility and accountability for ensuring that all professional development is of the highest quality and aligned with school improvement planning and implementation.

## Core Assumptions about High-Quality Teacher Professional Development in Maryland

The Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards are derived from the National Staff Development Council's (NSDC) Standards for Staff Development. The eight standards and the indicators that accompany them are intended to address Maryland's priorities for improving student learning. They are also intended to apply to a broad range of professional learning experiences, including, but certainly not limited to, workshops, college and university courses, coaching and mentoring relationships, teacher study groups, teacher networks, and participation on school improvement teams and committees that develop curriculum and assessments.

Like the NSDC standards, the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards rest on the following assumptions which define the primary focus of professional development and the context necessary for it to be effective:

- Effective professional development focuses on eliminating the gaps in student learning while meeting the professional learning needs of all teachers.
- Effective professional development takes place in the context of professional communities, in which members continually explore ways to improve learning for all students.
- Effective professional development requires strong leaders who value professional development, understand its potential to improve teaching and learning, set priorities for professional development in school improvement plans and district master plans, and actively communicate the importance of professional development to all stakeholders.
- Effective professional development requires adequate resources—money, time, and people—to ensure quality and full access by all teachers.

When these assumptions and the process and content standards that follow are met, teacher professional development will be coherent and have a positive impact on teacher performance and student learning.

## Process Standards

<b>Standard</b> 1	Effective professional development relies on rigorous analysis of disaggregated student data to focus adult learning priorities, teacher practice and student learning, and to sustain continuous improvement. (Data driven)
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### Indicators:

- 1a. School communities and providers have ready access to high-quality student data from various sources, including the Mdk12 website, that are organized in user-friendly formats.
- 1b. School communities and providers have the knowledge and skills necessary to use disaggregated student data (by race, gender, English language learners, special education, and eligibility for free or reduced price meals) for planning, implementation, and evaluation of professional development and instructional programs.
- 1c. School communities and providers set aside time for teachers and others to examine student data as the starting point for planning professional development.
- 1d. School communities and providers conduct careful analyses of a variety of disaggregated student data to identify gaps between student learning and standards for proficiency to inform the choice of the content of professional development.
- 1e. As appropriate to school and district needs, data analysis focuses on results from approved national, state, and local assessments, as well as student work samples and portfolios and behavioral indicators such as attendance and disciplinary referrals.
- 1f. School communities and providers (1) identify the kinds of evidence (including evidence about teaching behavior and student learning) that will be collected and used as indicators of the success of professional development, and (2) consistent with progress benchmarks and goals, determine how and when the data will be collected and reported.

**Standard  
2**

Rigorous, multifaceted evaluations assess the quality of professional development and the attainment of intended outcomes and are used to inform planning. (Evaluation)

*Indicators:*

- 2a. School communities and providers work with evaluators to ensure that the design of professional development includes plans and resources for an objective evaluation and for reporting the results.
- 2b. Evaluation of professional development gathers reliable data on participants' mastery of new knowledge and skills and their ability to apply the knowledge and skills to affect student learning.
- 2c. Evaluation should also assess the impact of professional development on school culture and organization to support school improvement efforts.
- 2d. Evaluation results are clearly and thoroughly communicated to key stakeholder groups, including teachers, school and district leaders, central office staff, providers, policymakers, and parents, in a timely fashion.

**Standard  
3**

The design of effective professional development applies knowledge about adult learning theory and effective practices to all teacher learning experiences. (Design and teacher learning)

*Indicators:*

- 3a. Professional development matches learning experiences, including the intensity and duration, with individual teacher needs, current knowledge and skills, and learning goals.
- 3b. Professional development combines a variety of learning experiences, including, but not limited to, individual study, demonstrations, observation, practice, feedback, and reflection as well as opportunities for collaboration and problem solving among colleagues.
- 3c. Professional development includes extensive follow-up, including, but not limited to, further demonstrations in the classroom, feedback on practice of new knowledge or skill, and peer coaching.
- 3d. Professional development relies on information technology to provide more extensive and diverse content, and it also relies on communication technologies to expand access and participation and to create virtual professional learning communities.
- 3e. Professional development recognizes and draws on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of successful teachers by including them as leaders, facilitators, and resources in professional learning opportunities.

## Content Standards

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**Standard****4**

Effective professional development (1) deepens all teachers' content knowledge and understanding of Maryland content standards, (2) ensures that all teachers understand and can apply research-based instructional strategies to assist students in mastering Maryland content standards, and (3) ensures that all teachers understand and can use various types of classroom assessments to accurately measure student mastery as well as gaps in mastery. (Quality teaching)

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Indicators:

- 4a. Professional development includes learning experiences and resources to ensure that teachers understand the relationships between the subjects they teach and other subjects in the curriculum, and understand how the subject(s) they teach addresses the Maryland content standards.
- 4b. Professional development provides opportunities for teachers to examine, observe, practice, and receive feedback on their use of research-based instructional strategies to help all of their students master Maryland content standards.
- 4c. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to examine a variety of classroom assessments, practice using them in their classrooms, and analyze the results to (1) understand and report on student mastery of Maryland content standards, (2) identify gaps in student learning, and (3) adjust instruction.

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**Standard****5**

Effective professional development ensures that all teachers have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to apply research to decision making. (Research-based)

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Indicators:

- 5a. Professional development includes ongoing opportunities for teachers to read and reflect on current research on topics of interest to them and consistent with state and local school improvement priorities.
- 5b. Professional development involves two-way interactions with researchers to discuss research design, data collection, analysis, and reporting to assist teachers in understanding what works, particularly in areas where there may be competing perspectives and conclusions.
- 5c. Professional development involves individual teachers or teams of teachers, often in collaboration with researchers, in action research to test their own hypotheses and to report the results about professional development program impact or the effectiveness of particular instructional strategies and programs for teachers and students.

**Standard  
6**

Effective professional development ensures that all teachers are able to collaborate with colleagues and others in the interest of improving instruction and eliminating student learning gaps. (Collaboration)

Indicators:

- 6a. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for teachers to practice working with colleagues and others and emphasizes that collaboration is a means and not an end in addressing issues related to school improvement and improved student learning.
- 6b. Professional development emphasizes constructive management of conflict and fosters the understanding that disagreement and conflict are potentially beneficial elements of professional discourse.
- 6c. Professional development relies on communication technologies to broaden the scope of collaboration.

**Standard  
7**

Effective professional development ensures that all teachers (1) understand and are able to meet the learning needs of all students, (2) expect that all students will master Maryland's content standards and score well on approved national, state, and local assessments,<sup>1</sup> and (3) are able to create safe, orderly, and supportive learning environments to facilitate learning by all students. (Equity)

Indicators:

- 7a. Professional development focuses on developing teachers' understanding of and disposition to acknowledge the diversity of student learning styles and needs.
- 7b. Professional development provides opportunities for teachers to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to design and implement instructional and assessment strategies that meet diverse student learning needs and help all students master Maryland content standards.
- 7c. Professional development provides opportunities for teachers to develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to create and maintain classroom and school environments that are safe, orderly, and conducive to learning by all students.
- 7d. Professional development fosters teachers' respect for all students and guides teachers in setting and maintaining high expectations for all students to demonstrate proficiency on Maryland content standards.

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<sup>1</sup> As it used in this document, the term "approved" refers to approval by the state or local board of education.

**Standard  
8**

Effective professional development ensures that all teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to involve families and other stakeholders as active members of the school community. (Family involvement)

*Indicators:*

- 8a. Professional development provides opportunities for teachers to develop and demonstrate oral and written communication skills to build partnerships with parents and community members and to communicate expectations for student mastery of Maryland content standards and success on approved national, state, and local assessments.
- 8b. Professional development fosters teachers' understanding and respect for varying cultural backgrounds of students, families, and the community and how the richness of these cultural backgrounds can serve as foundations for student learning.
- 8c. Professional development includes opportunities for teachers to master the use of technology to strengthen partnerships with families and the community.