

# **THE IOWA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **What is the Iowa Professional Development Model?**

The Iowa Professional Development Model (IPDM) focuses on improving student learning and engages all educators in collective professional development. The (IPDM) provides guidance for implementing the requirements related to professional development (Iowa Chapter 284.6) as well as processes and tools for local districts to use when designing, implementing, and evaluating the District Professional Development Plan, the Building-Level (Attendance Center) plans, and the Individual Teacher Professional Development Plans.

### **What is the purpose of this type of professional development?**

The intent of the Iowa Professional Development Model is to provide a structure for professional development that is focused, collaborative, and that directly supports the Comprehensive School Improvement Process (CSIP) goals for student achievement.

### **What influenced the formation of the model?**

The model was established in response to state and federal legislation, current trends in education, and research.

- Overwhelming evidence that well designed staff development, fully integrated with effective school improvement practices, can increase student learning.
- Iowa Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program (SF 476, 2001)
- Federal legislation - No Child Left Behind Act (2002)
- State and National Standards for Staff Development (National Staff Development Council and the Iowa Teacher Quality Program)

### **Who developed the model?**

Quality Professional Development Stakeholder Group. This group includes representatives of the major organizations and role groups involved in professional development and school improvement in Iowa.

### **What are the requirements for school districts?**

Each district is required to submit a district professional development plan as part of The Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. Attendance center professional plans must be developed for each public school. Individual teacher career development plans are required for each career teacher. The individual teacher career development plans are based on the relevant Iowa teaching standards and support the student achievement goals of the school building and district, as outlined in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. Individual plans must be developed, in cooperation with the teacher's supervisor.

## **How does a district accomplish gains in student achievement through staff development?**

The process that results in student learning is described in the full text of the Iowa Professional Development Model (see DE Web Page). This process involves teachers and administrators in the collective study of student data, goal setting, determining content, designing training/learning opportunities, and using data to measure targeted outcomes, guiding training decisions, and evaluating the program. The Iowa Professional Development Standards establish expectations for the implementation of this process.

## **What are the Iowa Professional Development Standards?**

The Iowa Teacher Quality legislation established standards for professional development. These standards are to be used in designing, delivering, and evaluating the district career development plans.

### ***The Iowa Professional Development Standards***

*Implementation of a school district's career development plan shall meet the following standards:*

- 1. Align with the Iowa teaching standards and criteria;*
- 2. Deliver research-based instructional strategies aligned with the student achievement goals established by the district;*
- 3. Deliver professional development training and learning opportunities that are targeted at instructional improvement and designed with the following components:*
  - Student achievement data and analysis;*
  - Theory;*
  - Classroom demonstration and practice;*
  - Observation and reflection;*
  - Teacher collaboration and study of implementation; and*
  - Integration of instructional technology, if applicable;*
- 4. Include an evaluation component that documents the improvement in instructional practice and the effect on student learning; and*
- 5. Support the professional development needs of district certified staff responsible for instruction.*

## **What are the components of the IPDM?**

The model is depicted in a graphic that includes two sections: the **Operating Principals** and the **Cycle of Professional Development**. The components are described on the following pages.

**The Operating Principles** describe actions and priorities essential for the ongoing sustained implementation of professional development at the district, building, and classroom levels. Attention to these operating principles occurs as needed throughout the cycle of professional development.

### **Focus on Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

A clear focus on instruction is essential. Deliberate alignment of instruction, curriculum, and assessment increases the likelihood that professional development efforts will be effective. If the goal is increased student achievement, use the most powerful tools over which the school has control.

### **Participative Decision Making**

Collective action requires a democratic process. Teachers are engaged in decision making and planning for professional development that is aligned with identified student needs. Communication and governance processes are in place to increase the likelihood that decisions made about staff development are binding. When professional development decisions affect a group (rather than an individual), group members must participate in those decisions.

### **Leadership**

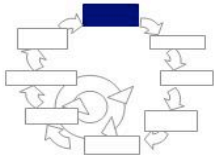
Strong leaders are essential for successful professional development efforts. Leaders facilitate the engagement of all faculty members responsible for instruction, address time and resource issues and balance both the pressure and support required to sustain professional development efforts as a priority. For leadership to be pervasive and intense enough to make things happen at the district, building, and classroom levels, it must be distributed through the organization – involving the school board, central office administration, building-level administration, and teachers. Collective professional development aimed at student learning goals requires focused leadership.

### **Simultaneity**

Schools and districts often have to attend to multiple concerns simultaneously. Professional development efforts balance the resources directed toward and the efforts invested in content, context and processes. To accomplish student achievement gains, focusing on new content is the priority but simultaneously issues of context and process may also need to be addressed. Select a priority in which to invest professional development time and resources and then seek ways to integrate other concerns without losing focus on the major initiative. If multiple initiatives receive equal effort, the probability of succeeding with any of them is reduced.

**The Cycle of Professional Development**, which describes an action research process to study data, set goals, make decisions about the content and the design of professional development, support ongoing learning opportunities, collaboration, and implementation, and evaluate the results. Note that the “cycle within the cycle” components are ongoing, following the planning stage and preceding the summative evaluation stage.

# The Cycle of Professional Development

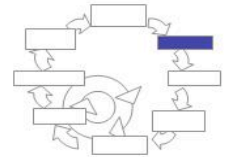


## Collecting and Analyzing Student Data

Identifying student need is the first step in designing professional development intended to improve student learning. Collecting and analyzing information about student performance in areas of interest enables a district and/or school to set priorities. If professional development is to impact student learning, it must precisely align with student need.

## Goal Setting

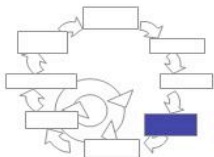
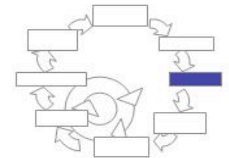
Clear statements of expectations regarding student learning allow schools and districts to focus professional development resources and energy on achievable goals. To meet the goals identified in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, the intent of professional development is to increase the learning of all students while attending to the learning needs of subgroups of students. If professional development content is to accomplish the desired increases in student learning, the goals for student learning must be explicit and concrete.



## Selecting Content

Content selected for collective study by schools and districts must be supported by evidence that it can accomplish the goals set for student learning. A district should be confident that the content they choose to study has been found to improve student achievement. A process for selecting content will include:

- A review of research on curricular and instructional innovations with a history of success in the areas identified for student improvement;
- A review of current knowledge and practices in the district/school;
- Alignment with the Iowa Teaching Standards; and
- Documentation that the practices are supported by scientifically-based research.



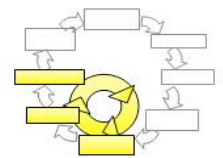
## Designing the Process

The professional development process must ensure that teachers have adequate opportunities to learn and implement new curriculums, instructional strategies, and assessments. Teachers need to have sufficient workshop and workplace supports to develop a deep understanding of the theory of the strategy/model they are learning. Professional development design will build in time for teachers to learn together and to collaborate with each other. If teachers have opportunities to learn new content and implement it in their classrooms, the investment in professional development will pay off in increased student learning.

*If professional development is based on powerful and proven content and implemented as designed, students will benefit.*

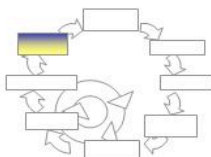
## Ongoing Cycle

Professional development is a continuous process rather than a one-time event. To be able to transfer new learning into the classroom, teachers need multiple opportunities to see demonstrations, plan together, work out problems, rehearse new lessons, develop materials, engage in peer coaching, and observe each other. The collaborative routines needed for supporting these actions must be planned for, supported and monitored. What staff developers learn from the study of implementation will inform decisions about future training, the need for support, and adjustments in the learning opportunities. If new content is to be learned and implemented in classrooms so that students benefit, teachers need ongoing training, the collegiality of peers as they plan and develop lessons and materials and study their implementation, and interim measures to judge the success of their efforts.



## Program (Summative) Evaluation

The effectiveness of professional development is judged by student learning outcomes. Determination of the efficacy of a professional development program is based on two factors: whether or not the content was implemented as planned and whether or not students acquired the desired knowledge/skills/behaviors. This judgment is based on both formative and summative evaluation data. The quality of the evaluation is contingent upon having clearly stated goals that target an improvement in student performance. A professional development program is successful when it achieves its student learning goals.



# Iowa Professional Development Model

Student learning – at the center  
of school improvement and staff development

## Operating Principles

- Focus on Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
- Participative Decision Making (School & District)
  - Leadership
  - Simultaneity



