

Professional Growth & Support System Self-Assessment

The *Professional Growth & Support System Self-Assessment* helps school systems evaluate their current Professional Growth & Support strategy. The self-assessment is organized around the *Eight Principles of Strategic Professional Growth & Support*. In each section, choose the statement that most closely aligns to your system's current reality. When you have completed the self-assessment, add the total points for each principle; lower numbers indicate the principles and practices where your system has the most room for growth, and will help to prioritize the next steps of your system's evolution.

Eight Principles of Professional Growth & Support

A strategic system...

1. Integrates human capital, professional growth, and teaching support functions to support the school system's broader improvement strategy and context
2. Invests primarily in job-embedded teacher growth through school-based content experts, teacher leaders, and time for teacher teams
3. Links results of performance evaluations to opportunities for growth that are ongoing and occur at key career junctures
4. Supports growth throughout a teacher's career by restructuring compensation and career path
5. Organizes sufficient teacher time to meet both individual growth and organization needs
6. Differentiates investments based on school and educator needs and performance levels
7. Ensures accountability and continuous improvement by assigning responsibility and measuring impact
8. Pays for ongoing costs with sustainable funding and leverages external resources, partners, and technology to promote quality and efficiency

The New World of Professional Growth & Support: Beyond “PD”

To implement a system-wide, well-coordinated strategy for teacher development and growth, system leaders first must quantify all current spending aimed at improving teaching effectiveness. In the tool that follows, ERS expands the more traditional definition of professional development to professional growth and support in order to include *any* use of people, time, and money that targets improvement of teaching.

Key Definitions

Professional Growth (PG): This spending area applies to investments that further an individual teacher’s career or to organizational improvements targeted at teams of teachers, schools, or the entire system. Professional Growth captures spending in three areas:

- *Direct Professional Growth (Direct PG)* defined as training, conferences, coaching and expert support, substitute coverage *plus any professional development support provided by curriculum, evaluation, and assessment functions*, such as content and data coaches.
- *Teacher PG Time:* The percentage of salary that teachers spend on professional growth, as explicitly stipulated in the teacher union contract or calendar, or otherwise mandated for use as staff development or teacher collaboration. Examples include staff development and early release days, data days, or required collaborative planning time.
- *Salary for Education Credits:* We also refer to this as “lanes,” or the jump in salary lanes as a result of coursework.

Teacher Support (Support): Since investments in curriculum, evaluation, and assessment are designed to enhance teacher capacity and quality, we link them to the universe of Professional Growth.

- *Curriculum Development*
 - Staff who develop and write guided curriculum linked to standards
 - Purchased Instructional Guidance Systems
- *Teacher Evaluation*
 - Staff who observe teachers and document performance
 - Staff who oversee an evaluation system or its components
- *Student Assessment*
 - Staff who write assessments and analyze data centrally
 - Staff who oversee an internal or contracted assessment system

This self-assessment contains 20 statements, organized within the *Eight Principles of Strategic Professional Growth & Support*. Print out the scorecard on page 17 before starting the self-assessment. Then, after reading each section, record the numbered statement that most closely aligns to your system's current reality on the scorecard.

1. Integration and Alignment to Strategy, Vision, and Context

A strategic Professional Growth & Support system integrates human capital, professional growth, and teaching support functions to support the school system's broader improvement strategy and context

- A. **Expanded View of Professional Growth & Support:** System administrators think beyond the traditional definitions of Professional Growth to include investments in curriculum, evaluation, and assessment (CEA), the time that central office staff devotes to developing teacher capacity, teacher time, and “lanes” (i.e., teacher compensation for additional degrees or educational credits).

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Systems often underestimate their Professional Growth spending because they do not include less direct investments in Professional Growth, such as department staff time devoted to building teaching capacity, teacher time set aside for Professional Growth and collaboration, or “lanes.” “Lanes,” in particular, often overshadow other spending. Systems also tend to omit the support functions of curriculum, evaluation, and assessment, elements of which can directly help teachers improve their craft or be integrated directly into Professional Growth activities. School systems should take a broader view of Professional Growth & Support to ensure spending in these areas is integrated, strategically aligned, and fully leveraged.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ The system defines Professional Growth narrowly and does not include CEA, central office staff time spent on developing teacher capacity, teacher time spent on Professional Growth, and “lanes” when it considers its investments in Professional Growth & Support.
- ❷ The system views CEA, central office staff time, teacher time spent on Professional Growth, and lanes as part of its Professional Growth & Support investments; however, it does not deliberately allocate investment with integration and alignment to strategy in mind.
- ❸ The system currently holds this broader view of Professional Growth & Support, considers spend in each component, and allocates investments with integration and alignment to strategy in mind.

- B. Integration and Alignment to Vision:** Decision makers work collaboratively to ensure Professional Growth & Support investments are integrated and are aligned to the system’s vision of how to improve instruction.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Research shows that Professional Growth & Support improves instruction when significant time is devoted to it and when it is connected to the specific instructional challenges teachers face in teaching content or responding to individual student needs.¹ This means that Professional Growth & Support that is too general or superficial may not have much impact. It also means that if Professional Growth & Support comes out of various departments or initiatives with slightly different emphases or language, it could have two kinds of negative consequences. First, with limited resources, every new initiative dilutes the time and energy that can go toward the others. Second, the initiatives may actually conflict with each other or with the needs of the teacher. Therefore, it is important for decision makers to work collaboratively to align on a common vision, especially in systems with many decision makers, which can make integration more challenging.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM’S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ Decision makers in the Professional Growth & Support functions work in isolation and have little communication regarding goals, spending, and integration.
- ❷ Decision makers in some areas work together to align and integrate Professional Growth & Support initiatives.
- ❸ Cabinet-level leaders have explicit responsibility for ensuring alignment and integration across all Professional Growth & Support investments. Decision makers share a common vision, communicate regularly, and work to ensure such integration.

- C. Alignment to System Context:** Professional Growth & Support investments are aligned to the system’s context.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Research suggests that Professional Growth & Support priorities should reflect a system’s context, taking into account the system’s level of centralization, teacher capacity, school performance, and student proficiency. While certain priorities are common across all systems, such as building the technical skills of teachers, other priorities should respond to the system’s particular context. For example, a low-performing system might focus Professional Growth & Support priorities on motivating and providing scaffolding for low-skill teachers through coaching and guided curriculum, while it works simultaneously to change the composition of its workforce. A higher-performing system might focus Professional Growth & Support priorities on improving the teaching force by fostering peer-led learning communities.²

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ① Professional Growth & Support investments are developed without consideration of the system's context.
- ② Professional Growth & Support investments consider a system's context but do not reflect long-term thinking in terms of adjusting investments as the system evolves.
- ③ Professional Growth & Support investments strategically reflect the system's context and reflect a long-term plan for improvement that assumes and adjusts for evolution of those contextual factors.

D. Professional Growth-Embedded Formative Assessments: The system supports schools in implementing common formative assessments that match the standards-based curriculum the school is using to adjust instruction and inform Professional Growth.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Data from formative assessments enables leaders to provide Professional Growth that maps to the specific teacher and student challenges. Formative assessments are valuable for teachers because they highlight, in a timely fashion, the skills and content areas with which their students are struggling. However, if teachers aren't clear what lesson plans and tools are available to re-teach those skills, or what Professional Growth supports they should access to improve their instruction in those content areas, then the district is missing out on fully leveraging this important investment.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ① System does not use formative assessments, only summative assessments.
- ② System uses formative assessments; however, the results are not integrated with curricular systems and direct Professional Growth.
- ③ System uses formative assessments and the results are integrated with curricular systems and direct Professional Growth so that teachers know the targeted lesson plans, curricular tools, and Professional Growth supports that best meet their and their students' needs, based on student outcomes.

E. Professional Growth-Embedded Evaluation Results: Teacher evaluation results link systematically to the appropriate Professional Growth opportunities available.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Robust evaluation systems are significant investments, which should be structured to help teachers improve their instruction. Based on their evaluation results, teachers should be able to identify the Professional Growth supports they can access in order to improve. If teachers view the evaluation system simply as a mechanism for evaluating teachers out of the district, and not as a useful tool to help them improve their craft, then their trust in the system will decrease, and its value in raising student achievement will be diminished.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ Evaluation results are not shared with coaches or support providers and are used primarily to assign teacher ratings.
- ❷ Evaluation results are shared with coaches and support providers but are not explicitly linked to available supports.
- ❸ Evaluators are the same staff members providing coaching and support to teachers OR the district has created an explicit map from the teaching rubric used for evaluation to the various Professional Growth support tools and opportunities available to them.

2. Job-Embedded Organizational Improvement

A strategic Professional Growth & Support system invests primarily in job-embedded teacher growth through school-based content experts, teacher leaders, and time for teacher teams

- A. **School-Based Support:** Teacher Professional Growth is primarily job-embedded (i.e., it occurs within the context of day-to-day teaching practice and enhances teachers' content-specific instruction to directly improve student learning³) and is supported by school-based lead teachers or instructional coaches.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The vast majority of Professional Growth opportunities do not directly connect to the specific curriculum and instructional practices, or the actual teaching challenges that teachers face in a particular school. Neither do they allow for immediate feedback and practice. Traditional Professional Growth instead involves individual coursework completed outside of school, or in-school workshops that are separate from teachers' daily work. Research has shown that job-embedded Professional Growth, which is primarily school- or classroom-based, is more effective at improving teaching practice. Under the guidance of an instructional expert who focuses on how students are performing and what they need to improve, job-embedded Professional Growth ensures that teachers get support that is more tailored to their individual needs and to their daily work, and is thus immediately actionable.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ Teachers have very few opportunities to engage in job-embedded Professional Growth.
- ❷ Teachers have substantive opportunities to engage in job-embedded Professional Growth, but the majority of their opportunities are not job-embedded.
- ❸ Professional Growth is primarily job-embedded, using school-based experts (lead teachers or instructional coaches) to improve practice through teaching teams, coaching, modeling, and observations.

B. Teacher Teams: Job-embedded supports are delivered mostly to or through teams of teachers.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

When teams of teachers have a balanced set of experience and skills, job-embedded Professional Growth delivered to or through teams may be a more cost-effective way to improve instruction, as it allows instructional experts to significantly increase the number of teachers they impact without significantly increasing the amount of time invested. Additionally, the team will have collective accountability for improving instruction and be able to leverage the different experiences and expertise of individual team members. This will be especially true with collaborative planning time for teacher content-area teams. Without such a team focus, delivering Professional Growth that targets content knowledge can be quite expensive, as it requires customized supports by content area and age group. Expanded use of technology, including remote coaching from content experts, and expanded use of instructional guidance systems will help systems scale this kind of support cost-effectively.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ Teachers don't tend to collaborate in teams that share content or students.
- ❷ Teachers have structured collaborative planning time with other teachers who share content or students, but that time is not viewed as a significant lever for improving instruction and student performance, and is thus not integrated into the larger system and strategy of Professional Growth.
- ❸ Teachers have structured collaborative planning time with other teachers who share content or students, and that time is viewed as a significant lever for improving instruction, and is integrated into the larger system and strategy of Professional Growth.

3. Professional Growth & Support at Career Junctures

A strategic Professional Development and Support system links results of performance evaluations to opportunities for growth that are ongoing and occur at key career junctures

- A. **Professional Growth & Support at Career Junctures:** The system deliberately invests in Professional Growth at critical career junctures, including induction, remediation, and transition to leadership, as well as support for additional qualifications needed to serve shortage subjects or skill areas such as serving special education or bilingual student needs.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Teachers have many similar sets of learning needs at each career stage. Especially if the system has a centralized curriculum and instructional strategy, these similarities offer school systems the opportunity to be systematic and cost-effective in addressing career-stage needs in a way that would be hard for individual schools. For example, new teachers might need to develop fundamental teaching skills like classroom management, while highly effective teachers might benefit from Professional Growth opportunities focused on leadership growth to prepare them for roles as teacher leaders. Differentiating these investments will not only help improve the effectiveness and impact of teachers at these different stages, but will improve the retention of these teachers as well.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ① The district has no clear differentiated strategy for individual Professional Growth based on career stage.
- ② The district invests primarily in teacher induction but does not have a targeted approach for support at other career junctures.
- ③ The district invests systematically to support teachers at all critical career junctures.

4. Career Opportunities and Compensation

A strategic Professional Growth & Support system supports growth throughout a teacher's career by restructuring compensation and career path

- A. **Minimal Investment in Lanes:** The system has minimal or no investment in “lanes” (i.e., raises and other compensation provided to teachers for gaining additional degrees or education credits. See Analysis C in the Professional Growth & Support Spending Calculator).

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

“Lanes” typically represent the largest component of a system’s investment in individual growth, despite the fact that education credits and additional degrees are found to have a minimal impact on teacher effectiveness, if any⁴. If systems must pay for education credits and degrees, it is more efficient to do so as limited one-time payments, rather than as raises that add to a teacher’s annual salary.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM’S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ System investment in “lanes” is a large percentage of its investment in Professional Growth, and it serves as the primary investment in a teacher’s individual growth.
- ❷ System uses “lanes,” but the amount of resources tied up in “lanes” is relatively small, and is a relatively small fraction of the system’s investment in individual growth.
- ❸ System has minimal or no investment in “lanes.”

- B. Extending the Reach of Effective Teachers:** The system recognizes effective teachers and offers opportunities to extend their reach, such as through assignments to team leader, curriculum specialist, coach, or more difficult teaching challenges.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Providing opportunities for the most effective teachers to extend their reach can encourage a teacher’s professional growth, incentivize and reward performance, and increase the retention of the most effective teachers without making broad changes to compensation models. Additionally, giving effective teachers leadership roles extends their reach to more students and teachers and can have a significant effect on student performance. Research shows that children with highly effective teachers, those in the top 20–25 percent, demonstrate three times the learning as children with teachers in the bottom 20–25 percent.⁵ Placing these teachers in leadership roles can compound these effects by either increasing the number of students with whom they are directly working, or by increasing the effectiveness of their colleagues.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM’S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ System has few differentiated teacher roles available for the most effective teachers.
- ❷ System differentiates teacher roles for most effective teachers; however, leadership roles are not fully leveraged to benefit and develop other teachers.
- ❸ System recognizes effective teachers and offers growth opportunities that leverage their expertise to benefit and develop other teachers.

5. Teacher Time for Comprehensive Professional Growth

A strategic Professional Growth & Support system organizes a sufficient amount of teacher time to meet both individual growth and organization needs

- A. **Professional Growth Days:** Systems should give time to initiatives that support organizational improvement, such as before-the-school-year and mid-school-year system-wide Professional Growth days. These days, when used effectively, can develop pedagogy, pedagogical content knowledge, and school culture. System-wide Professional Growth days can also provide larger blocks of time for department or grade-level teams. The system significantly invests in large blocks of teacher time (e.g., whole or half days) for Professional Growth both during the instructional year (outside of the instructional day) *and* before or after the instructional year. These are typically in the form of contractual Professional Growth days. The typical range is 3–8 days; however, charter districts with greater flexibility and more novice teaching forces might have as many as 20.⁶

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

It is important that these Professional Growth days do not come at the expense of sufficient student instructional time. (To calculate the number of total teacher work days, total Professional Growth days, and total student instructional time, please use Worksheet B1, Breakdown of Teacher Time, in the Professional Growth & Support Spending Calculator.)

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ System gives limited contractual system-wide Professional Growth days: < 5 days.
- ❷ System gives 5–10 days for system-wide Professional Growth.
- ❸ System gives a significant number of system-wide Professional Growth days, before, during, and after the academic year: > 10 days.

- B. **Collaborative Planning Time:** Teacher teams in all schools have at least 90 minutes of collaborative planning time per week.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Research shows that collaborative planning time, when used well, is an important predictor of student achievement and one of the best uses of teacher time.⁷ All core teachers (elementary school classroom teachers and secondary English language arts, math, social studies, science, and foreign language teachers) and their teams should have at least 90 minutes of collaborative planning time each week.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ Teachers have limited time to meet beyond individual planning time.
- ❷ Core subject teachers in some schools have additional collaborative planning time.
- ❸ Core teachers in all schools have at least 90 minutes per week of collaborative planning time.

- C. **Leveraged Non-Instructional Time:** The system strategically uses available non-instructional time for Professional Growth. To calculate this investment, please use Worksheet B1, Breakdown of Teacher Time, in the Professional Growth & Support Spending Calculator to determine the total Professional Growth investment as a percentage of the total non-instructional time available. A typical range is 15–30 percent; however, charter districts with greater flexibility and a more novice teaching force might go as high as 70 percent.⁸

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

If a system wants to increase the time teachers engage in professional growth, it can either increase the *percentage* of non-instructional time spent on Professional Growth, or it can increase the *amount* of time teachers work—by adding non-instructional time to the work day or additional days to the year. Given the challenges involved in adding time, it is important to understand how much non-instructional time is currently used for Professional Growth. A large portion of non-instructional time is typically individual planning time. This unstructured time, which research suggests typically constitutes 80 percent of total non-instructional time⁴, could be used instead for Professional Growth. Systems, particularly those that are under-investing in Professional Growth time, should therefore look at how non-instructional time is used and assess if they can better direct it to Professional Growth.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ System does not strategically leverage available non-instructional time and devotes less than 20 percent of available non-instructional time to Professional Growth.
- ❷ System leverages available non-instructional time for Professional Growth, devoting up to 20–40 percent to it.
- ❸ System maximizes available non-instructional time for Professional Growth, devoting > 40 percent to it.

- D. Individual Growth and Organizational Improvement:** The system plans strategy and investment for building individual teacher capacity and growth over each teacher’s career, as well as organizational/collective capacity and organizational improvement. The system balances investment between individual growth and organizational improvement depending on their context.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Effective Professional Growth systems invest in both individual growth and organizational improvement in a deliberate strategy that accounts for the needs of individual teachers and the larger system. Individual growth investments, such as debrief time with the evaluator after a teacher’s observation, self-directed Professional Growth, and continuing education, can support teachers where they most need improvement, as well as support their needs at various career junctures. Organizational improvement investments, such as system-wide Professional Growth days and weekly grade-level meetings, can use teams and teacher leaders to drive system instructional priorities, as well as differentiate investments by *school* need, targeting initiatives at the lowest-performing schools and teachers. Districts should be deliberate in how they invest in individual growth and organizational improvement based on the system’s context and need. For example, a district with low teacher capacity and with homogenous teacher needs might want to invest more heavily in organizational improvement.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM’S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ System does not think about Professional Growth investments as targeting individual growth or organizational improvement.
- ❷ System has a strategy for investing in both individual growth and organizational improvement but strategy is not tightly aligned with system’s context and need.
- ❸ System has a deliberate strategy for both individual growth and organizational improvement and it evolves to match changing needs of the system.

6. Differentiated Professional Growth Investments

A strategic Professional Growth & Support system differentiates investments based on school and educator needs and performance levels.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- A. Professional Growth Based on School Needs and Performance Levels:** To ensure all students have an opportunity to attain an excellent education, and because teacher effectiveness is the strongest lever for raising student achievement, it is important to differentiate school-level investments in

Professional Growth so that the teachers at the lowest-performing, highest-need schools have additional resources to improve instruction. These supports must be tailored to the school's need based on the type of instructional model used, the specific challenges the school is facing, and the level of overall school performance and capacity.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ School-level Professional Growth investments are allocated at a flat rate, without consideration for school need.
- ❷ Some school-level Professional Growth investments are allocated with consideration for school need, but many are allocated at a flat rate.
- ❸ School-level Professional Growth investments are mostly or entirely allocated based on school need, with higher investments going to the lowest-performing, highest-need schools.

- B. Pedagogical Content Knowledge Versus Pedagogy Based on Teacher Capacity:** The system balances Professional Growth investments in pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge according to teacher capacity.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

To be truly effective at increasing student achievement, teachers must excel at both pedagogy (knowledge of how students learn regardless of content area) and pedagogical content knowledge (knowledge related to helping students learn specific subject area skills and content). Systems must be deliberate about how they support growth in both of these key areas, and should tailor the balance to their teacher needs. A system with inconsistent and low teaching capacity or a junior teaching staff might focus more of its investments on pedagogy because these teachers need to hone basic teaching skills. Pedagogical content knowledge (which is more difficult and expensive to administer, as it requires content expertise in each subject in addition to knowledge of generic teaching methods) may be a greater focus for districts with higher teacher capacity, as they support their teachers in moving from good to great.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ System delivers solely pedagogy-focused Professional Growth.
- ❷ System delivers both pedagogy- and pedagogical-content-knowledge-focused Professional Growth, but without consideration of teacher capacity.
- ❸ System delivers both pedagogy- and pedagogical-content-knowledge-focused Professional Growth, balancing the investment in each according to teacher capacity.

7. Accountability for Continuous Improvement

A strategic Professional Growth & Support system ensures accountability and continuous improvement by assigning responsibility and measuring impact

- A. **Accountability System:** The system creates accountability for Professional Growth effectiveness by using feedback and outcomes metrics to improve Professional Growth activities and inform future Professional Growth investments.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Many Professional Growth activities are not effective or strategic, and without a targeted accountability system, systems continue to spend money on Professional Growth initiatives with little or no impact on teacher effectiveness. An effective system not only solicits feedback and considers impact on classroom practice and student outcomes, but also assesses the fidelity of the initiative's implementation. With this information, the system can decide if the initiative can be improved or how the resources could be realigned. For example, an instructional coach might receive poor feedback if his/her skills and particular areas of expertise are not aligned with the teacher's need but could be highly effective in another context. An effective accountability system will identify this misalignment and allow the district to assess whether the Professional Growth initiative was properly implemented, whether it could be improved, and whether or not to continue the investment.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ① System does not systematically evaluate the effectiveness of its Professional Growth activities.
- ② System assesses i) implementation of Professional Growth activities for fidelity and ii) whether or not the system has the capacity to improve ineffective activities; however, system does not measure impact on classroom practice.
- ③ System collects feedback on Professional Growth activities and measures the impact on classroom practice, while rigorously evaluating the implementation of Professional Growth activities and strategizing areas for improvement or realignment. System uses this information to support decision-making on future investments.

8. Sustainable Funding and Leveraged Resource Use

A strategic Professional Growth & Support system pays for ongoing costs with sustainable funding and leverages external resources, partners, and technology to promote quality and efficiency

- A. **Strategic Use of Short- and Long-Term Funds:** Short-term funding sources are used primarily for start-up costs and not to fund ongoing, annual costs. The system funds ongoing Professional Growth investments through stable revenue sources.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Systems need to operate from the perspective that their revenue will stagnate or decline, in part because several federal funds are set to expire in the next 1–3 years. Therefore these funds should be used for start-up costs, such as the purchase or growth of an assessment system. If the system uses such funds for long-term, ongoing costs, such as compensating academic coaches, the stability and long-term viability of such programs are threatened.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ Short-term funds are used to support ongoing costs and system has little stable revenue targeted for Professional Growth.
- ❷ Short-term funds are used to support both start-up costs and, when necessary, ongoing costs.
- ❸ Short-term funds are used entirely for start-up costs and system funds ongoing Professional Growth investments through stable revenue sources.

- B. **Leveraged External Resources, Partners, and Technology:** The system leverages external resources, partners, and technology to efficiently utilize existing expertise.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Rather than re-inventing the wheel with every Professional Growth initiative, systems should leverage existing expertise and capacity through strategic external partnerships. Systems should also utilize technology to deliver Professional Growth, as a supplement to job-embedded supports, when appropriate. For example, a system that has an effective evaluation system could utilize web-based Professional Growth modules, as a support tool for teachers after they receive their evaluation results. This self-directed Professional Growth works well in systems with effective evaluation systems because the teacher knows precisely what area should be improved and can access Professional Growth supports immediately.

CHOOSE THE STATEMENT THAT MOST CLOSELY ALIGNS TO YOUR SYSTEM'S CURRENT REALITY AND ENTER YOUR ANSWER ON THE SCORECARD ON PAGE 17:

- ❶ System leverages only internal resources and does not utilize external resources, partners, or technology.
- ❷ System uses some external resources, partners, and technology, but does not routinely evaluate them to ensure they are similar or better services at a lower cost than internal options.
- ❸ System leverages external resources, partners, and technology and routinely evaluates them to ensure they are similar or better services at a lower cost than internal options.

Endnotes:

- 1 S. Archibald et al., High-Quality Professional Growth for All Teachers: Effectively Allocating Resources (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2011).
- 2 M. Mourshed, How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better (McKinsey & Company, 2010).
- 3 A. Croft, et al., Job-Embedded Professional Growth: What It Is, Who Is Responsible, and How to Do It Well (National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, 2010).
- 4 D. Goldhaber, Teacher Pay Reforms: The Political Implications of Recent Research (Center for Education Data and Research, 2012).
- 5 B. Hassel, Seizing Opportunity at the Top: Policy Brief (Public Impact, 2011).
- 6 ERS District Analysis.
- 7 R. Shields & K. Miles, Strategic Designs: Lessons from Leading Edge Small Urban High Schools.
- 8 ERS District Analysis.

Acknowledgements

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ERS is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping urban school systems organize talent, time, and money to create great schools at scale. For more information, see ERStrategies.org

District Self-Assessment Scorecard

For each section, shade in the number of your answer choice in the circles below. Tally your points in each section to see how well aligned your district's Professional Growth & Support strategy is to each principle. Lower numbers indicate the principles and practices where your system has the most room for growth, and will help to prioritize the next steps of your system's evolution.

1. Integration and Alignment to Strategy, Vision, and Context

- | | YOUR ANSWER | | |
|---|-------------|---|---|
| A. Expanded View of Professional Growth & Support | ① | ② | ③ |
| B. Integration and Alignment to Vision | ① | ② | ③ |
| C. Alignment to System Context | ① | ② | ③ |
| D. Professional Growth-Embedded Formative Assessments | ① | ② | ③ |
| E. Professional Growth-Embedded Evaluation Results | ① | ② | ③ |

Total Section Score (Max 15) _____

2. Job-Embedded Organizational Improvement

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| A. School-Based Support | ① | ② | ③ |
| B. Teacher Teams | ① | ② | ③ |

Total Section Score (Max 6) _____

3. Professional Growth & Support at Career Junctures

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| A. Professional Growth & Support at Career Junctures | ① | ② | ③ |
|--|---|---|---|

Total Section Score (Max 3) _____

4. Career Opportunities and Compensation

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| A. Minimal Investment in Lanes | ① | ② | ③ |
| B. Extending the Reach of Effective Teachers | ① | ② | ③ |

Total Section Score (Max 6) _____

5. Teacher Time for Comprehensive Professional Growth

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. Professional Growth Days | ① | ② | ③ |
| B. Collaborative Planning Time | ① | ② | ③ |
| C. Leveraged Non-Instructional Time | ① | ② | ③ |
| D. Individual Growth and Organizational Improvement | ① | ② | ③ |

Total Section Score (Max 12) _____

6. Differentiated Professional Growth Investments

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| A. Professional Growth based on school needs and performance levels | ① | ② | ③ |
| B. Pedagogical Content Knowledge versus Pedagogy based on teacher capacity | ① | ② | ③ |

Total Section Score (Max 6) _____

7. Accountability for Continuous Improvement

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| A. Accountability System | ① | ② | ③ |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|

Total Section Score (Max 3) _____

8. Sustainable Funding and Leveraged Resource Use

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. Strategic use of short- and long-term funds | ① | ② | ③ |
| B. Leveraged external resources, partners, and technology | ① | ② | ③ |

Total Section Score (Max 6) _____