

Providing Focused and Sustained Professional Development

What can you expect to get from this module?

Professional development means different things to different people. To some, it means one-stop workshops and in-services. In this module, participants learn of much richer ways to enhance professional learning that make a difference in student achievement. Participants learn to identify, develop, nurture and monitor a variety of different professional development experiences that are tied to school improvement.

Who should take this training?

This module is for school leaders and potential school leaders. The audience may include school teams of principals, aspiring leaders, teacher leaders and others who are members or potential members of the school's instructional leadership team. **NOTE:** In order for this training to have significant impact, the principal **MUST** be part of the school team being trained. In addition, it is beneficial to include district staff involved in curriculum and professional development.

Other SREB Leadership Curriculum Modules that support this module:

This module is most appropriate for those who have a strong background in data analysis, assessment and instruction, curriculum, and culture (SREB foundational modules).

What will you have to do to get the most from this module?

Participants must commit to attending as a team, completing the prework, attending two initial days, completing a homework assignment and attending two follow-up days. It is important for teams to have time to reflect and apply what they have learned between the initial training and the follow-up session.

Big Ideas in This Module

- There are many different types of professional development experiences, but most of us have had exposure to just a few. We get stuck with defining professional development as traditional training workshops.
- Professional development is much more than faculty in-service training. Study groups, mentoring, peer observation, action research and many other strategies should be part of the professional development system. If you are part of a school improvement team, you are addressing not only your own learning needs, but also those of the organization. Learning does not require direct instruction.
- It isn't easy to change people's thinking about professional development!
- There are barriers to effective professional development that are rooted in our routines, our relationships, our systems and our culture.
- About change — in some ways, we should “just do it.” Too many times, we get so bogged down in change management that we get nowhere. Make a change, communicate it, stick with it — don't wait until everyone supports you.
- There are many professional development strategies, but you need to use them correctly to see the intended benefits. Provide support, make sure teachers know the guidelines, keep it going for a sufficient period of time and measure results!
- A top-notch schoolwide professional development plan is created by a collaborative team effort. It is realistic, schoolwide, clear, detailed and tied to the school's student achievement goals.
- You must plan to evaluate your professional development efforts based on their impact on student achievement.

Module Design. *Providing Focused and Sustained Professional Development* is a four-day workshop (2+2). It also includes prework and homework assignments. Each section is described below.

Prework (two hours). First, participants create index cards listing experiences that encourage professional growth. Second, participants describe a satisfying learning experience and a frustrating learning experience. Last, they read three articles and reflect on the characteristics of effective professional development (PD).

The Opportunity to Make a Difference (six hours, 30 minutes). Participants learn about what makes some professional development efforts fail while others result in improved student learning. Participants gain a firm understanding of the philosophy and nationally recognized standards that guide effective professional development. Then, participants reflect upon their own practices.

Homework. Participants first list their concerns about trying new professional development approaches in their schools. Then, they read two articles and think about how commitments, competing interests and assumptions influence an organization's ability to change.

Change: Yes, You Can! (30 minutes). Participants reflect on and practice using two models for analyzing factors that affect change adoption (extending the homework assignment). This process begins in the homework from Day One and continues with group discussions.

Learning Cultures that Support PD (one hour, 45 minutes). Participants examine best practices and identify ways to close the gap between the existing culture and a top-performing culture.

Creating a Team and Setting Goals (one hour, 50 minutes). After this section, participants are prepared to organize their teams and lead them through a goal-setting process. The focus is on creating an effective team structure to lead schools' professional development efforts.

Homework. Participants form/reform their school's professional development team and lead the team through the process of using data to determine professional development needs and assessing the school's learning culture, keeping journals of these efforts. Working in study groups, they explore two of the following methods: action research, whole-faculty study groups, mentoring, peer coaching, Japanese lesson study, journaling, self-assessment, examining student work, portfolio development, conversation, immersion and tuning protocols.

Review of Homework (one hour, 40 minutes). Participants work in small groups to organize their homework assignments. Each group walks the rest of the large group through their process, getting feedback through a critical friends' circle.

PD Strategies (four hours, 40 minutes). In a series of study groups, participants explore the strategies from Day Two homework. Each study group creates a guide sheet for one strategy and presents their guidelines to the large group. School teams determine the best strategies for their school's professional development plan.

Creating a PD Plan (three hours). Participants take a critical look at existing school plans and identify their strengths and weaknesses based on a list of criteria presented in class. They discuss ways to increase the chances of success and create a "plan to plan" that specifies next steps and outlines critical success factors for moving forward at their schools.

Evaluating Your Success (one hour, 45 minutes). Using Guskey's levels of evaluation, participants discuss initial monitoring efforts and next steps.

Summary and Portfolio Assignments (40 minutes). Participants, working as a team, must lead the effort to facilitate the school's professional development plan.