



*Professional Learning for NJ Educators:  
An Overview of NJ Policies, Research and Best  
Practices*

**Regional Presentations      July 16, 17 & 23, 2013**

**NJ DOE Division of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness**

**Office of Professional Development**

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# Agenda

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Revised NJ Professional Development Regulations

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Individual, School & District PD Planning Guidance

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TEACHNJ: New Teacher Mentoring Requirements

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Characteristics of High Quality Professional Development Systems

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# NJ Professional Development Regulations

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*Revised regulations were adopted by the NJ State Board of Education on June 5, 2013 – (N.J.A.C. 6A:9-15)*

- Reflect recommendations from the 2012 Education Transformation Taskforce Report
- Simplify governance structures and provide flexibility to districts
- Provide an explicit link to evaluation process
- Align with the TEACHNJ Act
- Continue to apply to LEAs and charter schools



# NJ Professional Development Regulations

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***Areas addressed*** in the new regulations include:

- Definition of Professional Development
- Revised Standards for Professional Learning
- Individual professional development plan requirements for teachers, ed specialists, supervisors, principals and superintendents
- PD planning at school and district levels
- Monitoring and assistance
- New state-level advisory committee



# Professional Development and Professional Learning

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- *Professional development (PD)*: the process, plan or system created by the organization to facilitate professional learning
- *Professional learning (PL)*: what individual educators do to improve their practice in order to enhance the learning of all students
- *Professional learning* entails active engagement on the part of the educator
- Desire to create systems in which educators engage in PL rather than “receive” PD or have PD “given” to them



## Definition of Professional Development (6A:9-15.2)

*Definition has five key components explaining alignment, purpose and types of PD activities/learning designs*

- (a) Professional development shall be comprised of **professional learning opportunities aligned with student learning and educator development needs, and school, school district, and/or State improvement goals.**
  
- (b) Professional development shall have as its **primary focus the improvement of teachers' and school leaders' effectiveness in assisting all students to meet the CCCS.**



## Definition of Professional Development (cont.)

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(c) **Professional development shall include the work of established collaborative teams** of teachers, school leaders, and other administrative, instructional, and educational services staff members **who commit to working together to accomplish common goals** and who are engaged in a continuous cycle of professional improvement focused on:

1. Evaluating student learning needs through **ongoing reviews of data on student performance**; and
2. Defining a clear set of **educator learning goals** based on the rigorous analysis of these data.



## Definition of Professional Development (cont.)

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- (d) Professional learning shall incorporate **coherent, sustained, and evidenced-based strategies** that improve educator effectiveness and student achievement, **including job- embedded coaching or other forms of assistance to support educators' transfer of new knowledge and skills to their work.**
- (e) Professional development may be supported by external expert assistance or additional activities that:
1. Address defined student and educator learning goals;
  2. Advance primarily ongoing school-based professional development; and
  3. Include, but are not limited to, courses, workshops, institutes, networks, and conferences provided by for-profit and nonprofit entities outside the school such as universities, educational service agencies, technical assistance providers, networks of content specialists, and other education organizations and associations. <sup>8</sup>

# Standards for Professional Learning

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*Standards provide the framework and 7 essential conditions for effective professional learning.*

- Revised by a national consortium led by *Learning Forward*
- Simplify the previous 12 standards which had been organized in the 3 domains of content, context and process
- Focus on design of systems and conditions which will allow the kinds of professional learning to occur which will improve educator effectiveness so as to improve student learning outcomes – **the learning organization**



# Standards for Professional Learning (6A:9-15.3)

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Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and improves results for all students shall be guided by the following standards:

1. **Learning communities:** Occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment;
2. **Leadership:** Requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning;
3. **Resources:** Requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning;
4. **Data:** Uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning;
5. **Learning designs:** Integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes;
6. **Implementation:** Applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change; and
7. **Outcomes:** Aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

# Individual PD Plans

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## *Individual plans continue to be required but with significant changes*

- Tighter alignment to the results of the new teacher and principal evaluation systems
- Designed **to move away from**
  - a focus on **compliance** for having a plan and (in teachers' case) completing a certain number of hours
- Designed **to move toward**
  - a focus on **an ongoing cycle of growth and development** informed by educator and student performance data, team, school and district goals
- Plans become **living documents** that can be modified and adjusted when needed based on the examination of data and evidence

# Individual PD Plans for Teachers: Key Changes (6A:9-15.4)

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- PD plan tailored to individual needs and strengths through the addition of evaluation data
- Annual plans must address at least:
  - One area for development identified through evaluation
  - Additional areas of development aligned to team, school and/or district goals, as appropriate
  - Any requirements for PD stipulated in statute/regulation
- Plans revised at minimum annually but may be adjusted as necessary to support teachers' progress
- **Minimum of 20-hours** of “qualifying activities” **each year** replaces 100 hours every five years; PDP goals may necessitate more than this minimum requirement; additional hours of may be required for teachers in low-performing schools (Commissioner discretion)
- Any required corrective action plan (CAP) becomes the individual PD plan for the struggling teacher but does not preclude other PD needs identified by supervisor

# Individual PD Plans for Leaders: Key Changes (6A:9-15.7)

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## For all:

- Professional Growth Plan (PGP) replaced with individual PD plan explicitly linked to annual performance review cycle and derived from the results of observations, evidence and recommendations included in the annual performance evaluation
- Plan must address individual, school & district goals; also requirement for ethics, law, governance and HIB training
- PL activities in plan grounded in the improvement of teaching, learning and student achievement
- Plan aligns with NJ Professional Standards for School Leaders, PL standards
- Evidence of progress toward plan fulfillment is required:
  - Narrative account detailing goals and their achievement, or
  - Documentation of professional growth activities



# Individual PD Plans for Leaders (cont.)

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## **For chief school administrators (CSA):**

- Plan developed by CSA; status and evidence of progress reviewed annually by district board of education
- Summative evidence of plan completion provided to district board of education every 3-5 years, depending on contract
- Review of plan by NJ ASA no longer required
- Executive county superintendent acts as intermediary in disagreements on plan contents or status; has final decision-making authority in appeals on such matters

## **For principals and supervisors:**

- 3-year plan replaced with annual plan
- Peer committee no longer required to aid in plan development, implementation and review
- CSA/designee must meet with the principal or supervisor at mid-year to assess progress or necessary modifications of plan

## District- and School-Level PD Plans (6A:9-15.5 and 15.6)

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### ***District and school plans continue to be required but with significant changes to regulations & governance***

- County PD boards have been eliminated and, hence, the required external review of district plans
- The elected PD committees at the district (LPDC) and school (SPDC) levels have been eliminated from regulation
- Rationale is to give more flexibility to superintendents and principals but to also make them accountable for the human capital aspects of their work
- Planning cycle remains the same

# PD Planning Requirements: Key Changes

## **District level planning:**

- CSA oversees plan development, content and implementation; has flexibility to develop own planning process; also responsible for mentoring plan
- No county-level review; plan remains in district
- CSA reviews plan annually to assess effectiveness and revise as necessary to meet district goals
- Local professional development committee (LPDC) no longer required (but may be kept if desired)
- District plan must address PD for administrators
- Plan includes school-level and district-wide PD; and PD required by statute or regulation; the resources being allocated toward these and a justification for expenditures
- Plans reviewed by district board of educ. for fiscal impacts

# PD Planning Requirements: Key Changes

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## **School level planning:**

- Principal oversees plan development and implementation
- Plan includes school-level and team-based professional learning aligned with identified school goals, and teacher and student learning needs
- School professional development committee (SPDC) no longer required but may be continued; ScIP provides input on PD activities
- School plan narrative must be shared with CSA to facilitate alignment of district and school plans
- Principal ensures that teachers receive the necessary opportunities, supports and resources to compete their individual PD requirements



## PD Monitoring and Assistance (6A:9-15.9)

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- District boards of education are responsible for monitoring, enforcing and actively supporting efforts of educators to meet the PD requirements - district board is charged with providing resources and opportunities
- Local supervisors/administrators are responsible for monitoring each educator's progress through the evaluation process and PD planning process, and for taking appropriate action to address inadequate progress
- Each school district administration is responsible for maintaining accurate records of individual plans and progress towards meeting requirements
- When educators move to a new district, if the previous PDP is unsuitable, a PDP appropriate to the new assignment must be created within 30 days of hire (formerly 60 days)



# State Committee on Professional Learning (6A:9-15.10)

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- New state committee to replace the Professional Teaching Standards Board and the Professional Development Advisory Committee for School Leaders
  - To advise the Commissioner and Department on PD issues and policies
  - To deal holistically with teacher and leadership PD successes and challenges
  - 16 members representing teachers, administrators, district boards, higher education and parents
  - Organizations have been contacted to submit nominees
  - Committee will be finalized by end of July and announced in August
- Committee will be working with Reform Support Network facilitators to review the state's policies for PD



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# Teachers' PDP and 20 Hours Per Year Requirement

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- Individual PDP is a record of approved professional learning goals and activities, created by the administrator and teacher
- Choice of professional learning opportunities guided by focus on improving the teacher's practice and improving student learning – should be differentiated according to teacher's needs
- Each teacher must complete at least 20 hours of “qualifying activities” each school year – to guide planning consider: state requirements; PD definition; individual, team, school and district goals (e.g., evaluation results, student growth objectives, curriculum standards; program implementations)
- Teachers earn PD hours by participating in an array of learning activities that, in almost all cases, will lead to more than 20 hours per year
- Not necessary to carry over hours from year to year, as in past (district may want to keep records across years to help evaluate long-term professional development goals)

## Teachers' 20 Hours Per Year Requirement (cont.)

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*When approving hours for working with collaborative teams, consider the following:*

- Is the work of the team purposeful - guided by specific goals and outcomes for student learning?
- Are the team goals aligned with school & district goals for students?
- Is the work of the team guided by relevant data?
- What evidence/artifacts will the teacher(s) share with the administrator to document progress on their team goals?

# School and District PD Planning Requirements:

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- New guidance is being developed, including some optional planning templates
- Existing guidance for plans was developed when the state was launching its professional learning communities initiative and to support paradigm shift anchored in collaboration and shared responsibility
- This guidance continues to be powerful and pertinent; however new materials aim to better communicate how a system of PD fits into the strategic planning and goal-setting processes that leadership teams perform
- High capacity PD systems support the learning and work educators must do to realize change and meet their goals



# School-Level PD Planning: Role of the ScIP

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- ScIP has been given responsibility for identifying professional development opportunities at the school level ( as well as for evaluation and overseeing mentoring)
- Some important questions to ask/conversations to have:
  - Will the ScIP be expanded to include more teachers? (teachers must make up at least 1/3 of the committee); will membership be voluntary/required?
  - How will you provide the time for members of the ScIP to meet on a regular basis; implications of collective bargaining agreements?
  - How will ScIP support the principal in developing the school's PD plan?
  - How will the principal share necessary data and information with the ScIP?
  - How will the ScIP ensure that the district's mentoring plan is being implemented at the school level?
  - What is the level of relational trust in this group and how will you build it?
  - How will this committee have powerful conversations about teacher support and growth while respecting the confidentiality of individuals?
- Coming soon: ScIP Handbook 1.0



# Guiding Questions: Planning for Educator Growth

Students

- What do we want our students to know and be able to do?

Teachers

- What do we want our teachers to know and be able to do to develop and sustain effective learning environments?

Leaders

- What do our leaders need to know and be able to do to create optimum conditions for teaching and learning?

Organization

- In what ways can we ensure teachers and leaders develop the skills that they need to be consistently effective?

(Learning Forward brief , 2013)

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# TEACHNJ Act Emphasizes Support and Growth

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- Identifies mentoring, evaluation and professional development as elements needed to assure educator effectiveness
- Requires PD for teaching staff members through an individual PD plan
- Creates the School Improvement Panel (SCIP) with responsibility for oversight of teacher mentoring, recommending PD opportunities and conducting teacher evaluations
- Requires a corrective action plan and additional PD for struggling teaching staff members not meeting performance standards in summative performance evaluation
- Requires all new first-year teachers to be mentored in a research-based program that is based on professional standards for teachers



# Mentoring Supports for New Teachers (6A:9-8)

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- TEACHNJ requires districts to provide a program of mentoring for all new, first-year teachers
  - Novice teachers under a provisional license
  - Experienced teachers new to a district
- Regulations to build out these requirements will be introduced the the NJ State Board of Education for first discussion in August
- All current mentoring regulations for novice teachers continue to be in effect
- In the meantime, districts should provide experienced teachers new to the district with the following supports:
  - Comprehensive orientation to district policies and procedures, including training on the district evaluation process, teacher practice evaluation instrument, and the development of Student Growth Objectives (SGOs).
  - Additional individualized supports coordinated through the PD plan process and based on the new teacher's preparation, prior experience and identified needs

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# **We Haven't Done Professional Development Very Well**

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## **A National Status Report On Teacher Development in US and Abroad says:**

- On the 2003-4 national Schools and Staffing Survey, 57% of teachers said they had received 16 hours or less PD during previous 12 months on the content they teach.
- More than 9 out of 10 teachers have participated in PD consisting primarily of short term conferences or workshops.
- “U.S. teachers spend 80% of their working time engaged in instruction as compared to about 60% for these other nations’ teachers.”
- “Other nations that outperform U.S. on international assessments invest heavily in professional learning and build time for ongoing, sustained teacher development and collaboration into teachers.”

(Wei, et al., *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession*, National Staff Development Council 2009)



# Characteristics of Effective Professional Learning

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## ***Effective professional learning experiences are:***

- Connected to individual, school and/or district improvement goals
- Connected to content students need to know
- Sustained enough to affect practice
- Designed to incorporate active learning
- Designed to incorporate opportunities for collaboration and shared inquiry

(National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, Research to Practice Brief, May 2012)



# High Quality Professional Development Requires a New Model

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## We need to move

FROM	TO
Time, activity-driven	Results-driven
Pull-out, episodic	Job-embedded
Provider-driven	Educator-driven
Individual process	Collaborative process
Generic	Goal/problem-specific
Generated from adult needs	Generated from student needs
Once and done thinking	Continuous improvement
Professional development	Professional learning
Human capital only focus	Human & social capital focus

*Adapted from Roberts, S. and Pruitt, E. (2003). Schools as professional learning communities: Collaborative activities and strategies for professional development. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.*

# Effective Leaders Foster Professional Community

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## Wallace Foundation Learning from Leadership Project Report(2010)

- Leadership effects on student learning occur because effective leadership strengthens professional community which in turn fosters the use of instructional practices that are associated with student achievement.
- Shared leadership between teachers and principals results in stronger working relationships among staff and increased student achievement.

(Louis, et al., *Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*, Wallace Foundation, 2010)

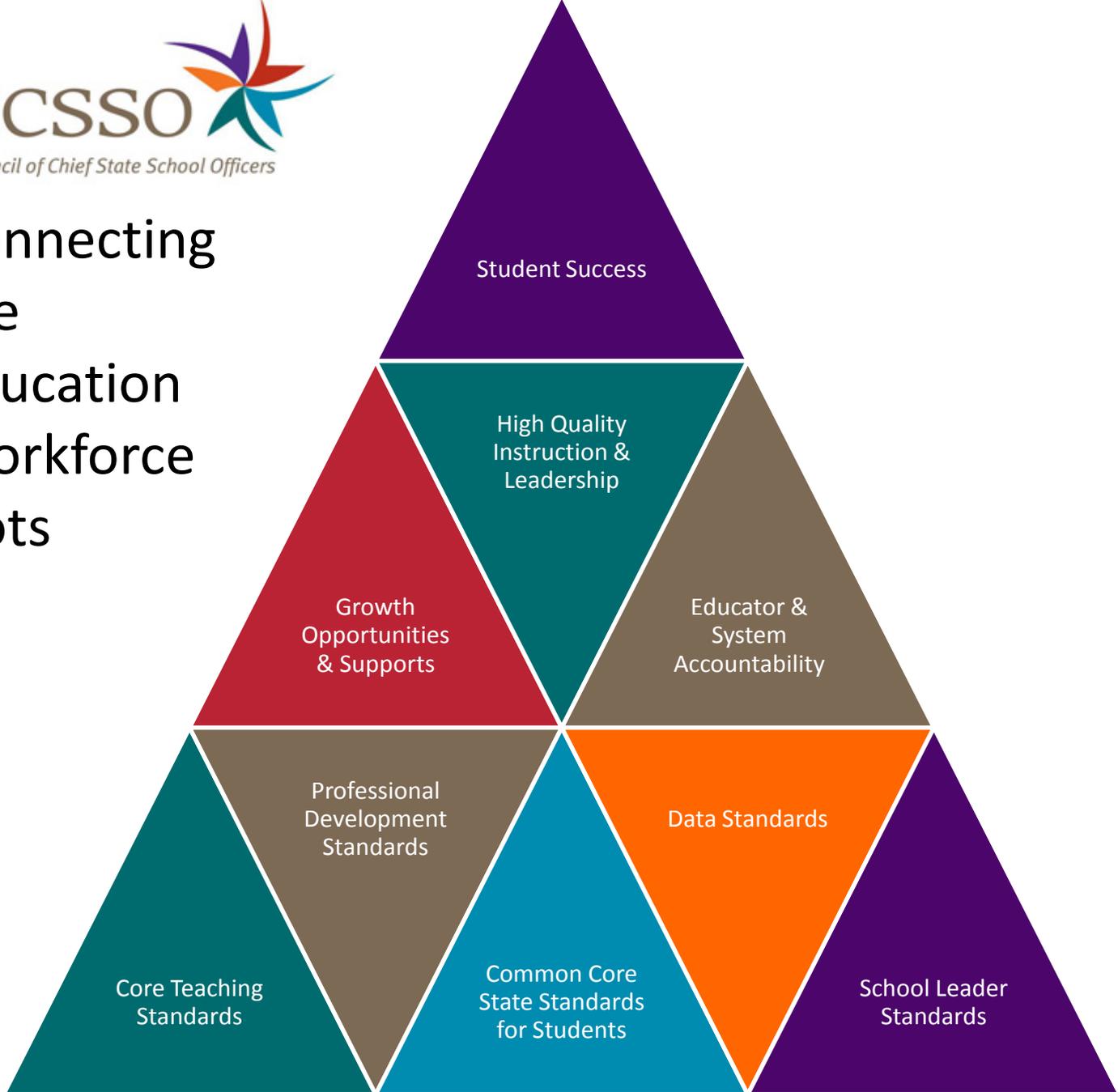
# Connection is the Key

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“The most essential factor in a successful school is that of *connection*; the most successful learning occurs when teachers teach effectively in their own classrooms but also find solutions *together*. In such schools, teachers operate as team members, with shared goals and time routinely designated for professional collaboration. Under these conditions, teachers are more likely to be consistently well-informed, professionally renewed, and inspired so that they inspire students.” (Boyer, *The Basic School*, 1995)



# Connecting the Education Workforce Dots





**Resources:** <http://nj.gov/education/profdev>

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**Revised PD Standards and Definition:**

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/profdev/pddef.pdf>

**Policy Briefs:**

<http://nj.gov/education/profdev/pdoverview.pdf>

**Professional Learning Communities Resources:**

<http://nj.gov/education/profdev/pd/teacher/plc.shtml>

**School Scheduling Resources**

<http://www.schoolschedulingassociates.com> (schedule library)

**Fullan, M. and Hargreaves, A. (2012) *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*. Teachers College Press.**

**Easton, L. (Ed.) (2008). *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. National Staff Development Council.**

## Contact Information

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