

Professional Learning System Foundations Toolkit



Introduction

This toolkit guides teams of educators through the process of developing a common understanding of a high-quality professional learning system through facilitated discussion and analysis of the *Connecticut Definition for Professional Learning*, *Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning (CT Standards for PL)*, and *Connecticut Guidance for a Professional Learning System (Guidance)*. The strategies in this toolkit will help guide discussion of the key ideas of high-quality professional learning, the *CT Standards for PL*, and the *Guidance* document. Each tool is intended to build off one another. The purpose of this resource is to facilitate group discussion to build a common understanding of high-quality professional learning and use that understanding to develop and enhance an effective and comprehensive system.

The table on page 2 describes the purpose for each tool. It is recommended that members of learning communities have a common understanding of high-quality professional learning as they design and engage in high-quality professional learning. Tools 1.1-1.5 are intended to build off one another; therefore, learning communities should use the tools in the order listed on page 2 to enhance their understanding of the *CT Standards for PL* and the *Guidance* document.

Tool	Tool Title	Description
1.1	<i>The Connecticut Definition of Professional Learning and the Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning</i>	This page outlines <i>the Connecticut Definition of Professional Learning</i> and the <i>Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning</i> . Professional learning communities, Professional Development and Evaluation Committee (PDEC) members, and other members of the school/district community should know and understand the definition and standards in order to develop and enhance their professional learning system. This tool can be used in combination with <i>Tool 1.3: Core Ideas of the Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning</i> and <i>Tool 1.4: In-depth Understanding of Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning</i> .
1.2	High-Quality Professional Learning Key Concepts	The proposed questions will help guide an initial conversation with professional learning community members, PDEC members, and other school/district community members.
1.3	Core Ideas of the <i>Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning</i>	This tool provides a table to identify the core ideas of all eight <i>Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning</i> . It can be used individually or collaboratively. Also use <i>Tool 1.1: The Connecticut Definition of Professional Learning</i> and the <i>Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning</i> .
1.4	In-depth Understanding of <i>Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning</i>	The four-square graphic organizer is a tool to use with a professional learning community or PDEC to take an in-depth look at each standard and next steps to implementation. Also use <i>Tool 1.1: The Connecticut Definition of Professional Learning</i> and the <i>Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning</i> .
1.5	Shared Understanding of the <i>Connecticut Guidance for a Professional Learning System</i>	This tool provides a structured process to review the <i>Connecticut Guidance for a Professional Learning System</i> and identify potential changes in current professional learning practices. The <i>Guidance</i> document can be accessed at http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2762&Q=335480 .

Tool 1.1 *Connecticut Definition of Professional Learning and Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning*

Connecticut Definition of Professional Learning¹

High-quality professional learning is a process that ensures all educators² have equitable access throughout their career continuum to relevant, individual and collaborative opportunities to enhance their practice so that all students advance towards positive academic and non-academic outcomes.

Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning³

Cultural Competence: *Professional learning that enhances both educator practice and outcomes for each and every student* facilitates educators' self-examination of their awareness, knowledge, skills, and actions that pertain to culture and how they can develop culturally-responsive strategies to enrich the educational experiences for all students.

Learning Communities: *Professional learning that enhances both educator practice and outcomes for each and every student* occurs within learning communities committed to continuous growth, collective responsibility, family and community engagement and alignment of district and school vision and goals.

Leadership: *Professional learning that enhances both educator practice and outcomes for each and every student* requires and develops leadership capacity at all levels to advocate for and create systems for professional learning.

Resources: *Professional learning that enhances both educator practice and outcomes for each and every student* requires purposeful planning for the identification, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and equitable use and allocation of resources to support educator learning.

Data: *Professional learning that enhances both educator practice and outcomes for each and every student* requires the use of both quantitative and qualitative student, educator and system data to plan, implement, monitor and assess professional learning.

Learning Designs: *Professional learning that enhances both educator practice and outcomes for each and every student* integrates research on effective adult learning and uses flexible learning designs to achieve intended outcomes.

Implementation: *Professional learning that enhances both educator practice and outcomes for each and every student* applies change research and uses tools to identify and support the developmental stages of change and ensures the fidelity of implementation.

Outcomes: *Professional learning that enhances both educator practice and outcomes for each and every student* is aligned with district/school goals, relevant Connecticut standards, and other agreed-upon standards for educator practice and student growth.

¹ Adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education on May 6, 2015.

² Must apply to all certified employees and can extend to all school and district staff.

³ Adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education on May 6, 2015.

Tool 1.2 High-Quality Professional Learning Concepts

What is learning? Create an image that depicts your definition/concept of learning.

What distinguishes a profession from other types of careers?

What is professional learning, and how does it contribute to a profession?

Tool 1.3 Core Ideas of the *Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning*

Standard	Core Ideas
Cultural Competence	
Learning Communities	
Leadership	
Resources	
Data	
Learning Designs	
Implementation	
Outcomes	
Notes	

Tool 1.4 In-depth Understanding of *Connecticut Standards for Professional Learning*

<p>Key Ideas: What information is important to know about this standard?</p>	<p>Standard in Practice: Which behaviors are observable when the standard is implemented?</p>
<p>When the Standard is Missing: What are the potential challenges when this standard is missing?</p>	<p>Next Steps: What steps are necessary to implement this standard in our professional learning systems?</p>

Tool 1.5 Shared Understanding of the *Connecticut Guidance for a Professional Learning System*

Connecticut Guidance for a Professional Learning System

Work with a partner to conduct a shared reading and discussion of the *Connecticut Guidance for a Professional Learning System* document. Read the introductory section and then focus deeply on sections of particular interest to you. As you read, code the text, and discuss your rationale. Use the following codes:

- + Agreement
- ? Question
- ★ Surprise
- # Difference from current policy and practice

Discuss:

1. In what ways does/will this guidance document alter your current practices, experiences, and understanding of professional learning?
2. What supports are needed for full and deep implementation of this definition?
3. What do you anticipate will be some challenges, barriers, etc. with implementation of this guidance?
4. Be ready to share the highlights of your discussion.