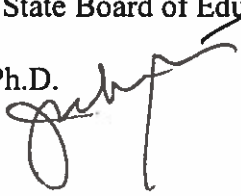




Jack R. Smith, Ph.D.  
Interim State Superintendent of Schools

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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education

**FROM:** Jack R. Smith, Ph.D. 

**DATE:** March 22, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.07.11 Standards for Professional Learning (NEW)  
**PERMISSION TO PUBLISH**

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this action is to request that the State Board grant permission to publish the regulation that governs Standards for Professional Learning.

**REGULATION PROMULGATION PROCESS:**

Under Maryland law, a state agency, such as the State Board, may propose a new regulation whenever the circumstances arise to do so. After the State Board votes to propose such a regulation, the proposed regulation is sent to the AELR Committee for a 15-day review period. If the AELR Committee does not hold up the proposed regulation for further review, it is published in the Maryland Register for a 30-day public comment period. At the end of the comment period, MSDE staff reviews and summarizes the public comments. Thereafter, MSDE staff will present a recommendation to the State Board of Education to either: (1) adopt the regulation in the form it was proposed; or (2) revise the regulation and adopt it as final because suggested revision is not a substantive change; or (3) revise the regulation and re-propose it because the suggested revision is a substantive change. At any time during this process, the AELR Committee may stop the promulgation process and hold a hearing. Thereafter, it may recommend to the Governor that the regulation not be adopted as a final regulation or the AELR Committee may release the regulation for final adoption.

**BACKGROUND/HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:**

The purpose of professional learning is for educators to develop their knowledge and practice in order to reflect, improve, and individualize student performance and increase student achievement. A growing, and increasingly rigorous body of research has confirmed that effective teaching is the most important school-related variable related to student success. Maryland has a rich history of professional learning standards. In 1995, the Maryland State Board approved the use of the Standards for Staff Development from the National Staff Development Council (NSDC). Then, in 2001 Maryland authored and adopted the 2001 Maryland Professional Development Standards. Both the 1995 NSDC Standards and the 2001 Maryland Standards have provided consistency and high-quality to professional learning across the state. They have been used on the school system level to create educator courses and other professional development offerings for educators. They have been used on the state level to evaluate and approve courses offered for Continuing Professional Development credit.

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In 2011, Maryland began a study to upgrade the Maryland Professional Development Standards. Input was solicited from the professional development coordinators and the assistant superintendents of instruction from the 24 state school systems. The resulting recommendation was to move to the practice of employing the *Learning Forward* (formerly NSDC) Professional Learning Standards in Maryland. The *Learning Forward* Standards embody the 2001 Maryland standards, but are updated to include the most recent body of research around professional learning. As a result, in 2012 Maryland began the shift from the 2001 Maryland Standards to the *Learning Forward* Standards for Professional Learning. A January 2016 survey conducted by the MSDE Division of Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability to the central office staff in Maryland's 24 school systems revealed that 19 of the state's 24 systems are currently using the *Learning Forward* Standards for Professional Learning. In addition, these standards are currently being employed by MSDE to evaluate and approve courses offered for Continuing Professional Development credit. Since 2012, all MSDE state-wide professional learning initiatives have employed these standards as a basis, including the Educator Effectiveness Academies and the College and Career Readiness Conferences.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The adoption of this COMAR will validate Maryland's rich history of professional learning and will provide Maryland school systems with guidance and consistency in offering high quality professional learning based upon the most recent research.

**ACTION:**

I request permission to publish COMAR 13A.07.11.

Attachments

# **Title 13A STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **Subtitle 07 SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

### **Chapter 11 Standards for Professional Learning**

**Authority: Education Article, §§2-205(c) and 5-206-1, Annotated Code of Maryland**

#### **.01 Scope.**

This chapter applies to local school systems that provide professional learning programs for educators.

#### **.02 Purpose.**

A. The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance for local school systems to establish a high quality, comprehensive professional learning program based on professional learning standards aligned to the international *Learning Forward* Standards for Professional Learning that result in increased student achievement by:

- (1) Providing support for the implementation of Maryland content standards and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Education;
- (2) Fostering collaborative inquiry and learning that enhances individual and collective performance;
- (3) Providing research and evidence-based professional learning to ensure equity and excellence in educator learning;
- (4) Aligning with the professional growth model for implementation of teacher and principal evaluation; and
- (5) Including the *Learning Forward* Standards for Professional Learning set forth in .03A(1) of this regulation.

#### **.03 Incorporation by Reference.**

A. In this chapter, the following documents are incorporated by reference:

- (1) *Learning Forward* Standards for Professional Learning 2016;
- (2) Maryland Teacher Professional Learning Planning & Evaluation Guide;

**.04 Evaluation of the Professional Learning Program.**

Local school systems shall evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning program and shall use the Maryland Teacher Professional Learning Planning & Evaluation Guide as a resource for developing an evaluation model.

**.05 Reporting Requirements.**

Local school systems shall, in accordance with Education Article, §5-401(c), Annotated Code of Maryland, report in their Bridge to Excellence Master Plans their goals, objectives, and strategies regarding their professional learning programs along with timelines for implementation and methods for measuring progress.

# STANDARDS *for* PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

## About the standards

**T**his is the third version of standards that outline the characteristics of effective professional learning. This edition, drawn from research and based on evidence-based practice, describes a set of expectations for effective professional learning

to ensure equity and excellence in educator learning. The standards serve as indicators that guide the learning, facilitation, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning.

As with earlier versions of the standards, including the last revision in 2001, Learning Forward invited representatives from 40 leading education associations and organizations to contribute to the development of the standards. Together, these representatives reviewed research and best practice literature to contribute to the standards revision with consideration of their own constituencies, including teachers, principals, superintendents, and local and state school board members.

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**STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

*Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students ...*

**LEARNING COMMUNITIES:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

**LEADERSHIP:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.

**RESOURCES:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

**DATA:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

**LEARNING DESIGNS:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

**OUTCOMES:**

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

### 4 prerequisites for effective professional learning

The seven new standards focus attention on educator learning that relates to successful student learning. Implicit in the standards are several prerequisites for effective professional learning. They are so fundamental that the standards do not identify or describe them. These prerequisites reside where professional learning intersects with professional ethics.

Professional learning is not the answer to all the challenges educators face, but it can significantly increase their capacities to succeed. When school systems, schools, and education leaders organize professional learning aligned with the standards, and when educators engage in professional learning to increase their effectiveness, student learning will increase.

**1 Educators' commitment to students, all students, is the foundation of effective professional learning.** Committed educators understand that they must engage in continuous improvement to know enough and be skilled enough to meet the learning needs of all students. As professionals, they seek to deepen their knowledge and expand their portfolio of skills and practices, always striving to increase each student's performance. If adults responsible for student learning do not continuously seek new learning, it is not only their knowledge, skills, and practices that erode over time. They also become less able to adapt to change, less self-confident, and less able to make a positive difference in the lives of their colleagues and students.

**2 Each educator involved in professional learning comes to the experience ready to learn.** Professional learning is a partnership among professionals who engage with one another to access or construct knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions. However, it cannot be effective if educators resist learning. Educators want and deserve high-quality professional learning that is relevant and useful. They are more likely to fully engage in learning with receptive hearts and minds when their school systems, schools, and colleagues align professional learning with the standards.

**3 Because there are disparate experience levels and use of practice among educators, professional learning can foster collaborative inquiry and learning that enhances individual and collective performance.** This cannot happen unless educators listen to one another, respect one another's experiences and perspectives, hold students' best interests at the forefront, trust that their colleagues share a common vision and goals, and are honest about their abilities, practices, challenges, and results. Professional accountability for individual and peer results strengthens the profession and results for students.

**4 Like all learners, educators learn in different ways and at different rates.** Because some educators have different learning needs than others, professional learning must engage each educator in timely, high-quality learning that meets his or her particular learning needs. Some may benefit from more time than others, different types of learning experiences, or more support as they seek to translate new learning into more productive practices. For some educators, this requires courage to acknowledge their learning needs, and determination and patience to continue learning until the practices are effective and comfortable.

### Relationship between professional learning and student results

1. When professional learning is standards-based, it has greater potential to change what educators know, are able to do, and believe.
2. When educators' knowledge, skills, and dispositions change, they have a broader repertoire of effective strategies to use to adapt their practices to meet performance expectations and student learning needs.
3. When educator practice improves, students have a greater likelihood of achieving results.
4. When student results improve, the cycle repeats for continuous improvement.



**This cycle works two ways: If educators are not achieving the results they want, they determine what changes in practice are needed and then what knowledge, skills, and dispositions are needed to make the desired changes. They then consider how to apply the standards so that they can engage in the learning needed to strengthen their practice.**



THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

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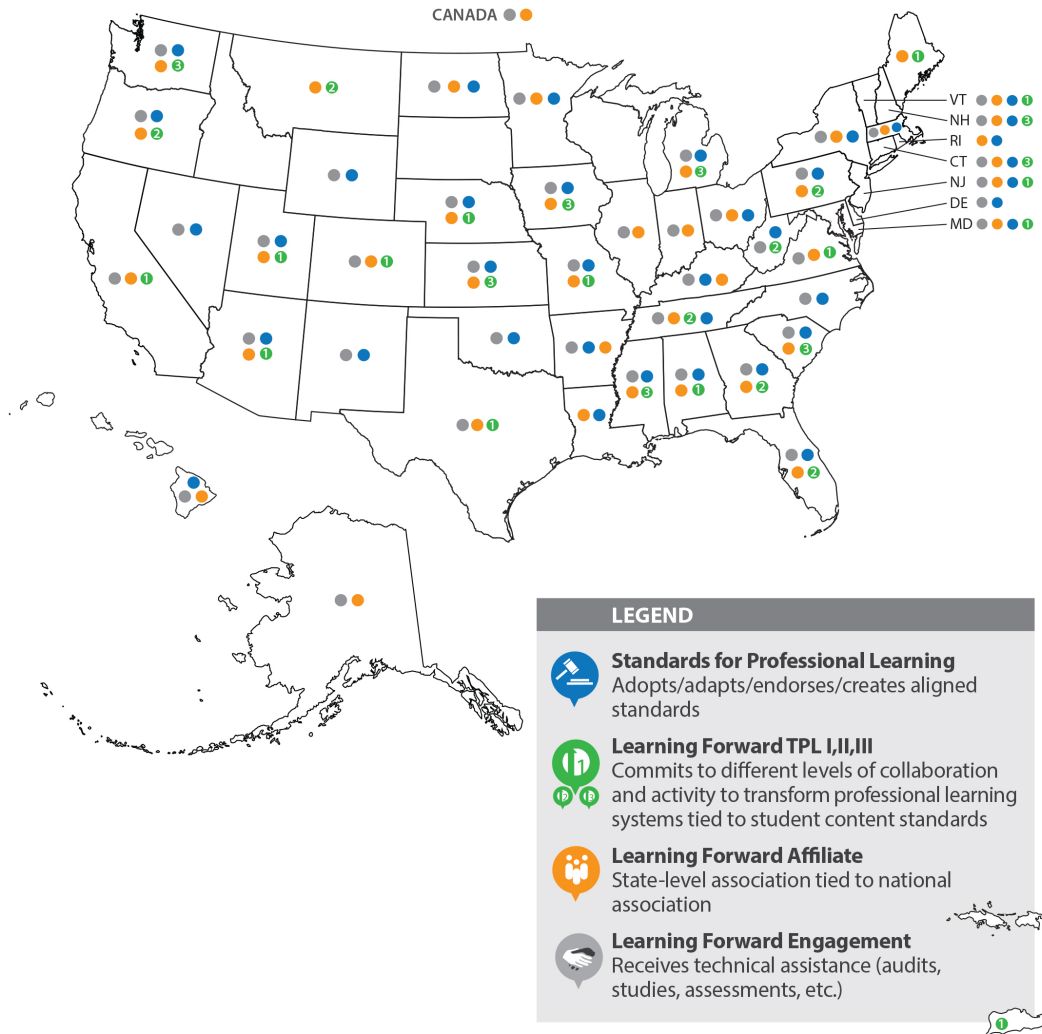
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Who We Are

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- Purpose, Beliefs, & Priorities
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## Our Impact

Learning Forward works with educators at the school, system, regional, state, provincial, and national levels, providing a range of services and supports. The [map](#) below shows our impact within the U.S. For an overview of selected deeper engagements, read [Evidence of Effectiveness](#).



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States have established the Standards for Professional Learning	States engaged in Learning Forward's Transforming Professional Learning	States have a Learning Forward affiliate	States have active Learning Forward engagement