NSDC Definition of Professional Development

34) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - The Term 'professional development' means a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving teachers' and principals' effectiveness in raising student achievement –

(A) Professional development fosters collective responsibility for improved student performance and must be comprised of professional learning that –

(1) is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards, as well as related local educational agency and school improvement goals;

(2) is conducted among learning teams of educators, including teachers, paraprofessionals, and other instructional staff at the school;

(3) is facilitated by well-prepared school principals and, or, school-based professional development coaches, mentors, master teachers, or other teacher leaders;

(4) occurs primarily multiple times per week or the equivalent of several hours per week; and

(5) engages established learning teams of educators in a continuous cycle of improvement that –

(i) analyzes student, teacher, and school learning needs through a thorough review of data on teacher and student performance;

(ii) defines a clear set of educator learning goals based on the rigorous analysis of the data;

(iii) achieves the educator learning goals identified in subsection (A)(5)(ii) by implementing coherent, sustained, and evidence-based learning strategies that improve instructional effectiveness and student achievement, such as lesson study and the examining of student work;

(iv) provides classroom-based coaching or other forms of assistance to support the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the classroom;

(v) regularly assesses the effectiveness of the professional development in achieving identified learning goals, improving teaching, and assisting all students in meeting challenging state academic achievement standards;
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(vi) informs ongoing improvements in teaching and student learning; and

(vii) may be facilitated and strengthened by the local educational agency or other external assistance providers.

(B) The process outlined in subsection (34)(A) may be supported and strengthened by activities such as courses, workshops, institutes, networks, and conferences that:

(1) must address the learning goals and objectives established for professional development by educators at the school level;

(2) advance the ongoing school-based professional development; and

(3) are provided by for-profit and non-profit entities outside the school such as local education agencies, universities, education service agencies, technical assistance providers, networks of content-area specialists, and other education organizations and associations.

Proposal to amend: Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Title IX. Section 9101 (34)