

Wise Ways

Professional development for teachers is determined by data (including classroom observations and review of lesson plans) that demonstrate teachers' attention to academic, social, emotional, and behavioral expectations and standards. (EQ CL17)

Evidence Review:

Educational standards are a list of skills that help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning. Illinois has in place educational standards for early childhood, fine arts, foreign language, physical development and health, science, social emotional, and social science. The Common Core for English-language arts and Math are now incorporated into the full set of learning standards. The standards will not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students reach the standards.

The Illinois State Board of Education, in accordance with Section 15(a) of Public Act 93-0495, incorporated social and emotional development standards as part of the Illinois Learning Standards. The Illinois SEL Standards address the following competencies: self awareness and self management skills; social awareness and interpersonal skills; and decision-making skills and responsible behaviors. The IL SEL Standards describe the social and emotional learning content and skills for students in grades K - 12. Each standard includes five benchmark levels that describe what students should know and be able to do in early elementary (grades K - 3), late elementary (grades 4 - 5), middle/junior high (grades 6-8), early high school (grades 9-10), and late high school (grades 11-12). Teachers can address the SEL Standards by embedding SEL skill instruction into other subject areas and/or by choosing to purchase an evidence-based SEL program.

Source- Illinois State Board of Education (www.isbe.net)

Evidence Review:

Response to Intervention (RtI) is “the practice of providing 1) high-quality instruction/ intervention matched to student needs and 2) using learning rate over time and level of performance to 3) make important educational decisions” (*Batsche, et al., 2005*). This means using differentiated instructional strategies for all learners, providing all learners with scientific, research-based interventions, continuously measuring student performance using scientifically research-based progress monitoring instruments for all learners and making educational decisions based on a student’s response to interventions.

RtI has three essential components: 1) using a three tier model of school supports, 2) utilizing a problem-solving method for decision-making, and 3) having an integrated data system that informs instruction.

Source- The Illinois State Response to Intervention (RtI) Plan, January 1, 2008

Evidence Review:

In addition to evaluating student data to monitor the progress of individual students, student data should also be evaluated to plan professional development and “systematically target educators’ needs such as using research-based strategies in content area instruction, knowing how to administer benchmark measures, using student data to inform instruction, knowing how to identify and implement effective interventions to meet student needs, and how to use student data to reflect on and improve the overall instruction and intervention provided to students.”

Source- The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, Building RtI Capacity

Evidence Review:

According to Adelman and Taylor (2010), if Response to Intervention (RtI) is treated simply as a matter of providing more and better instruction and student motivation is not taken into account, there is no way to validly assess whether or not a student has a true disability or disorder. If this is the premise, it is also unlikely to be effective for a great many students. However, if the strategies are understood as part of a comprehensive system of classroom and school-wide learning supports, schools will be in a position to not only address problems effectively early after their onset, but will prevent many from occurring.

Adelman and Taylor (2010) recommend that the 3-tiered RtI framework expand to ensure an optimal learning environment that takes student motivation into account and addresses barriers to teaching and learning and re-engages disengaged students. "Implied in all this is that specified staff are working to ensure (1) development of an optimal learning environment in classrooms and schoolwide, (2) classroom teachers are learning how to implement "well-designed early intervention" in the classroom, and (3) support staff are learning how to play a role, often directly in the classroom, to expand intervention strategies as necessary." RtI needs to be embedded into a comprehensive system of learning supports that clarifies the full continuum of supports (i.e., promotion of social, emotional, behavioral and cognitive development and prevention of problems, targeted interventions that occur early after onset, and intensive interventions) and the critical arenas of intervention (e.g., classroom, supports for transitions, crisis response/prevention, home involvement, community engagement, and student & family assistance). In addition, the framework needs to allow the weaving together of school-community-home resources to develop the system.

Source- Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, Response to Intervention

Evidence Review:

Researchers have identified core implementation components that support practitioners, such as teachers, in high-fidelity behavior. These components (also called "implementation drivers") include but are not limited to: in-service training, ongoing coaching and consultation. In a meta-analysis of research on training and coaching, Joyce and Showers (2002) found that training with or without demonstration, practice and feedback had little to no impact on teacher behavior. However, when on-the-job coaching was also present, 95% of participants demonstrated increases in knowledge, skill demonstration, and implementation of the innovation in the classroom with students. Joyce & Showers also found that full support and participation of school administrators is necessary for successful implementation. In addition, implementation also works best with teachers who are willing and able to be fully involved. "Forthman, Wooster, Hill, Homa-Lowry, & DesHarnais (2003) found that feedback, provided in a timely fashion (short feedback loops, recurring), and delivered personally by a respected source was most effective when accompanied by written material and attended to the motivation of the audience..."

Source: Fixsen, D. et. al (2005), Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature

References and Other Resources:

Forthman, M. T., Wooster, L. D., Hill, W. C., Homa-Lowry, J. M., & DesHarnais, S. I. (2003). Insights into successful change management: empirically supported techniques for improving medical practice patterns. *American Journal of Med Qual*, 18(5), 181-189.

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student Achievement Through Staff Development (3rd ed.)*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Evidence Review:

According to Shulman (2004), "authentic and enduring learning occurs when the teacher is an active agent in the process...Teacher learning becomes more active through experimentation and inquiry, as well as through writing, dialogue, and questioning. Thus, the school settings in which teachers work must provide them with the opportunities and support for becoming active investigators of their own teaching."

One effective strategy is a mentoring and induction program which facilitates professional conversations with beginning teachers about their practice and allows for novice teachers to reflect honestly, without fear. Some questions that may promote self-assessment and reflection include:

- Did you depart from your plan?
- If so, how and why?
- How did the modification improve the lesson?
- If you had to teach this lesson again to the same group of students, what would you do differently?

Mentors also find value in the process and report that their own teaching has improved as a result of focusing their attention on effective teaching practices.

Schools can further promote professional growth by engaging teachers in an annual process of self-assessment and goal setting which is critical to the development of their individual professional development plans. The results of this annual process can also guide schools and districts in the identification and coordination of professional development, including the creation of study groups or professional learning communities that focus on areas of interest.

Source: Danielson, C. A Framework for Learning to Teach
Online June 2009 | Volume 66 Revisiting Teacher Learning

Reference and Other Resource:

Shulman, L. S. (2004). *The wisdom of practice: Essays on teaching, learning, and learning to teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Evidence Review:

Schools must develop policies, infrastructure, mechanism, and procedures to monitor, evaluate and enhance the planning of all interventions. To ensure the quality of interventions meet standards, schools must take steps to analyze and use quality assurance data to “determine that all personnel have essential knowledge and skills to perform their roles and functions and all are pursuing education to enhance their job capabilities”.

Staff development may include a focus on ways to:

- (a) be a positive social model and create effective opportunities for students to communicate and bond with staff
- (b) improve the school atmosphere to support social and emotional development
- (c) build healthy, enduring, trusting bonds with families through developing proactive relationships and regular, meaningful, and effective two-way communications
- (d) increase understanding of healthy development and what motivates students (encompassing an appreciation of individual differences and group diversity)
- (e) provide opportunities for motivated practice (repetition, rehearsal) to integrate emotional experiences, and awareness with cognitive abilities (planning, problem-solving, etc.) and behavior
- (f) provide opportunities for all youngsters to engage in positive roles at school and in the community as part of their service, recreational, and enrichment experiences
- (g) plan, implement, and evaluate an integrated approach to fostering socio-emotional development
- (h) increase understanding of barriers to learning (including ensuring that staff understands the effects on students' academic and social development of transient, but important stressors, such as school-related transitions, loss or trauma, family instability/divorce)
- (i) plan and implement strategies for identifying when a youngster is troubled, appropriately identify and refer individuals experiencing mental health and psychosocial problems

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| (j) engage the family in shared problem-solving when early signs of learning, behavior, or emotional difficulties arise
(k) develop appropriate strategies for enhancing the likelihood that all students have an equal opportunity to learn and succeed |
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Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA

Other recommendations for professional development include:

- linking Learning Supports (i.e., mechanisms and interventions that promote the necessary conditions for learning such as positive school climate and address barriers to learning such as bullying) professional development to school-wide improvement programs and integrating it with other staff development;
- including relevant stakeholders in planning, implementing, and evaluating the scope, timing, and delivery and impact of the Learning Supports professional development;
- planning, implementing and evaluating professional development in a well-conceived and effective manner (eg., the process reflects research-based approaches that underscore the importance of interactive and reflective learning over time);
- employing internet, distance learning, and other advanced technologies to enhance the feasibility, nature, and scope of professional development; and
- analyzing and using quality assurance data to improve interventions.

Source- Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, Mental Health in Schools: Guidelines, Models, Resources, & Policy Considerations, May, 2001.

Evidence Review:

Researchers have found that teachers who develop relationships with professional colleagues for guidance and support are more likely to implement new practices and successfully address behavior problems in the classroom. Trusting peer relationships can occur through informal interactions, collaborative learning teams, mentoring, and peer coaching. Mentors and peer coaches often assist their colleagues by conducting observations, suggesting innovative strategies and techniques, and providing an environment conducive to trying new approaches. Studies have shown the positive impact mentoring and coaching have on attrition, teachers' attitudes and perceptions, procedural changes, student engagement, and students' social relationships. Collaborative learning teams have contributed to positive student social and behavioral outcomes.

Consultation with behavioral experts has also had a positive impact on student achievement and behavior. In a randomized controlled trial, Dunson et al., (1994) confirmed the effectiveness of teachers' consulting with behavioral experts in altering teachers' perceptions of student's disruptive behavior and in reducing behavior problems among students who exhibit inattentive and disruptive behaviors.

Source- IES Practice Guide for Reducing Behavior Problems in the Elementary School Classroom

Reference and Other Resource

Dunson, R., Hughes, J., & Jackson, T. (1994). Effect of behavioral consultation on student and teacher behavior. *Journal of School Psychology*, 32, 247–66.