HIGH-QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GUIDE

A FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE FOR CREATING EFFECTIVE SYSTEMS OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

RIDE Rhode Island Department of Education

CCNETWORK Comprehensive Center Network

REGION 2 Connecticut New York Rhode Island

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Part I: High-Quality Professional Learning 5

Overview: A Systems Framework for High-Quality Professional Learning 5

Section I: Center High-Quality Professional Learning Around Equitable Student Outcomes 10

Section II: Focus High-Quality Professional Learning on High-Quality Instruction 15

Section III: Develop a Professional Learning Plan 21

Section IV: Organizational Culture and Climate 34

Part II: Curriculum-Based Professional Learning Using High-Quality Curriculum Materials 47

Overview 47

Section I: Center Professional Learning for HQCMs Around Equitable Student Outcomes 52

Section II: Focus Curriculum-Based Professional Learning on High-Quality Instruction 55

Section III: Develop a Curriculum-Based Professional Learning Plan 58

Section IV: Consider Organizational Culture and Climate 60

Conclusion 63

Key Terms and Definitions 64

Checklists for Action 65

References 74

Introduction

Why is there a need for a High-Quality Professional Learning Guidebook?

In recent years the educational landscape has undergone profound transformations marked by the implementation of high-quality curriculum materials (HQCM), evolving pedagogical approaches, advancements in technology, and changing student demographics. With these advancements come new opportunities for educators to adapt and innovate their instructional practices. To support educators in navigating these changes effectively and ensuring the continued success of students, there arises a pressing need for high-quality professional learning (HQPL).

Recognizing the critical role that professional learning plays in enhancing educator effectiveness and ultimately student success, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) understands the importance of providing professional learning guidance and resources. By equipping professional learning leaders with the knowledge and strategies outlined in this guidebook, RIDE aims to empower leaders to implement HQPL systems to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving educational landscape and drive positive learning outcomes for all students.

What shaped the development of the High-Quality Professional Learning Guidebook?

Before developing this guidebook, RIDE engaged in a needs assessment process to better understand Rhode Island educators' experiences engaging with and delivering professional learning. In Fall 2023 and Winter 2024, RIDE gathered input from district leaders, school leaders, and educators from the District Teacher of the Year cohort through surveys and meetings. These groups shared information about how professional learning is structured in their districts, the practices they have found to be successful, and the challenges they experience in implementing HQPL.

The following needs were the most frequently mentioned throughout the process:

- Professional learning needs to be high-quality, relevant, content-focused, and include a job-embedded component.
- There needs to be involvement from a wide range of roles (e.g., administrators, teacher leaders, instructional coaches) in planning and delivering professional learning.
- There is a need to address the lack of time and funding, which are the biggest barriers to planning and delivering professional learning that meets the needs of all educators.

In addition to the needs assessment that informed the development of the High-Quality Professional Learning Guidebook, recent data from a SurveyWorks poll of Rhode Island educators suggest the need for additional guidance around professional learning. Findings include:

- 38% of educators believe the available professional learning opportunities are valuable.
- 36% of educators believe professional learning opportunities help them explore new ideas.
- 39% of educators believe professional learning opportunities are relevant to the content they teach.
- 38% of educators believe they have input in individualizing their professional learning opportunities.

How does the Guidebook address the evolving needs of educators and leaders?

This guidebook addresses the aforementioned needs and provides professional learning leaders with the knowledge, strategies, and resources necessary to implement HQPL systems within their districts and schools, ultimately fostering positive outcomes for both educators and students.

Organized around a *Systems Framework for High-Quality Professional Learning*, each section of the guidebook outlines what professional learning leaders **need to know** and **what they need to do** to strengthen each framework component. This framework and guidebook explore the structures, processes, and conditions essential for implementing HQPL systems.

The guidebook aligns with the Rhode Island Professional Learning Standards (RIPLS) and makes connections to RIDE's Curriculum Frameworks and the HQCM Professional Learning Competencies (***coming soon***). While the RIPLS offer descriptors of an ideal professional learning system, this guidebook provides actionable guidance to help educators meet those standards. The Curriculum Frameworks emphasize the importance of high-quality instruction and cross-disciplinary practices for educators. The HQCM Professional Learning Competencies set the bar for what educators and educator candidates work towards as they implement HQCM in their classrooms. This includes why and how HQCM contributes to better learning outcomes for all students, how to effectively plan for instruction utilizing HQCM, and how to effectively deliver instruction utilizing HQCM. This guidebook provides actionable guidance to support professional learning leaders in addressing both the frameworks and the competencies through HQPL.

How is this Guidebook organized?

The guidebook is organized into two distinct parts:

- **Part I** explores the *Systems Framework for Professional Learning* and explains four key components that RIDE considers to be essential for establishing a HQPL system.
- **Part II** shifts the focus to a more specific component of professional learning: Curriculum-Based Professional Learning (CBPL) utilizing HQCMs. This section explores how professional learning leaders can effectively plan CBPL using HQCM.

Together, these two parts form a cohesive guide for professional learning leaders, equipping them with the necessary tools and strategies to strengthen professional learning systems within their districts and schools.

Who should use this Guidebook?

Although this guidebook is designed to be useful for a variety of educators in a wide range of roles, the primary and most likely audiences are state, district, and building leaders responsible for planning HQPL. Listed below are the specific roles and responsibilities of each leader. While each leader has specific responsibilities in relation to their role, cross-entity support, collaboration, and cohesion are essential to the success and longevity of any effective professional learning system.

Rhode Island Department of Education:

- Provide LEAs with guidance and support on the implementation and development of HQPL systems.
- Consult the guidebook when planning RIDE professional learning opportunities.
- Ground initiatives, projects, frameworks, and blueprints that include professional learning in the guidebook.

District Leaders:

- Review and analyze school and district accountability data to define and address focus areas that must be a priority for school improvement.
- Collaborate with third-party vendors using this guidebook.
- Monitor, evaluate, and sustain a coordinated professional learning plan.
- Ensure professional learning time is a priority in district and school schedules.
- Advocate for the inclusion of professional learning time within educator contracts.

Building Leaders:

- Ensure professional learning is a priority in the school schedule and ensure it is protected and respected during the school day and week.
- Utilize time, human, fiscal, and physical resources in a manner that enhances learning opportunities.
- Be actively present and participate in professional learning alongside educators.
- Implement a school-based professional learning system that addresses the needs of students and staff.
- Collaborate with third-party vendors using this guidebook.
- Monitor professional growth of educators.

How should this Guidebook be used?

It is important to note that this guidebook is designed to provide guidance around the key considerations and actions district leaders should take when implementing a professional learning system. It is not designed or intended to be a one-stop shop for developing a professional learning system. As such, we recommend using this document with other resources, such as the Curriculum Frameworks, school improvement resources, Blueprint for Multilingual Learner Success, and the Professional Learning Plan Template, among others available through RIDE's website.

We encourage professional learning leaders to use this guidebook in collaboration with other leaders, ideally as part of a district-level and/or building-level team that is responsible for leading systemwide professional learning. Examples of teams might include central office teams, administrative teams, school improvement teams, instructional leadership teams, grade-level teams, and department teams. **In addition, research suggests it is important for central offices to have someone who is the primary leader of professional learning across the district** (Hanover Research, 2014; Honig et al., 2010). As a start, we recommend professional learning teams read through this guidebook section by section and complete each section's *Checklist for Action*. Teams can either 1) have individuals complete the checklist separately and share and discuss their responses as a team, or 2) have the team go through the checklist and discuss each item one at a time. The *Checklists for Action* are intended to help teams identify what steps they need to take to move forward with their professional learning planning.

Finally, we recommend professional learning leaders utilize the Professional Learning Plan templates to assist in supporting all educators in obtaining Professional Learning Units (PLUs) to meet certification regulation requirements.

Part I: High-Quality Professional Learning

Overview: A Systems Framework for High-Quality Professional Learning

What is the purpose of High-Quality Professional Learning?

The purpose of HQPL is to enhance the knowledge, skills, and effectiveness of educators to improve student outcomes. Similarly, a *system* for HQPL should aim to routinely support all educators with staying abreast of best practices, research, and innovative strategies that are relevant to their roles and the desired outcomes intended for students. **Ultimately, the goal is to positively impact student learning and achievement by ensuring that educators are well-equipped to meet the diverse needs of learners and facilitate their success in school and beyond.**

What are the characteristics of High-Quality Professional Learning?

There has been a great deal of research into what constitutes HQPL (Darling-Hammond, 2017; Fairman et al., 2023). In 2017 RIDE developed the Rhode Island Professional Learning Standards (RIPLS), which identify key criteria for HQPL. Below are the defining characteristics RIDE encourages LEAs to strive for when developing professional learning systems that support adult learning.

For a system of professional learning to be high-quality it should do all of the following:

- ***Be student-focused:*** Effective professional learning strategically focuses on and is designed to strengthen the capacity of educators to help students achieve desired learning outcomes.

- ***Aligned to a school or district's curriculum, LEA strategic plans for improvement, and needs:*** Professional learning is optimally effective when it is coherently aligned to a school or district's existing plans for ongoing improvement.

- ***Provide rigorous, relevant content:*** Effective professional learning focuses on the content educators teach in their classrooms daily. Professional learning should be rigorous to help educators enhance and shift their professional practice and differentiated to meet their specific needs and the content they teach.

- ***Incorporate active learning:*** Effective professional learning includes active learning opportunities that give educators a chance to meaningfully engage with new concepts and teaching strategies by engaging in the work directly. Effective professional learning also takes into consideration how educators learn best, which includes adult learning theory.

- ***Support collaboration in job-embedded contexts:*** Much like with students, effective professional learning leverages the power of working one-on-one with a coach or in groups so educators have opportunities to learn with and provide support and feedback to each other. In addition, effective professional learning strives to embed new learning into what educators are already doing as not to add more to existing workloads.

- ***Use models and modeling of effective, evidence-based practice:*** Teaching is a complex and challenging endeavor. Therefore, effective professional learning strives to provide educators with effective examples and models of what research and evidence-based practice look like with students in real contexts.

- ***Provide coaching and expert support:*** A common approach to professional learning is the 'one and done' approach, which is when educators receive stand-alone workshops without support for the implementation and application of new learning. More effective professional learning builds opportunities for educators to receive coaching and support from experts as they practice applying new learning.

- ***Offer routine opportunities for formative feedback and reflection:*** An important component of professional learning is providing routine opportunities for educators to reflect and receive feedback on their professional practice. Effective professional learning will create multiple pathways for educators to receive formative feedback on their learning.

- ***Be ongoing and sustainable:*** Given that teaching is a challenging and complex endeavor, there is always room for improvement and growth. Thus, effective professional learning is designed to be continuous and ongoing.

What is the intended impact of High-Quality Professional Learning?

Ultimately, HQPL aims to improve learning and enhance positive outcomes for students. The theory of action behind this is straightforward yet powerful: to significantly increase positive outcomes for all students, schools, and districts must first improve the quality of instruction.

HQPL also aims to increase the self-efficacy of educators. Current research emphasizes that student-focused professional learning enhances educators' abilities to support student achievement by addressing students' specific needs, thereby boosting educators' confidence and their ability to positively impact student learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Additionally, aligning professional learning with a school or district's curriculum and improvement plans ensures coherence and relevance, making it easier for educators to integrate new strategies into their practices. This alignment reinforces the collective goals of a school or district and helps build a shared vision among educators, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and collaboration (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Furthermore, the ongoing and sustained nature of effective professional learning ensures continuous opportunities for skill development, maintaining and enhancing self-efficacy by reinforcing commitment to shared goals and continuous improvement (Guskey & Yoon, 2009). Through such comprehensive professional learning systems, educators are empowered to work together more effectively, leading to more rigorous and effective instruction and improved student outcomes.

As mentioned, the ultimate goal of HQPL is to optimize student outcomes. However, it is also important to consider the short-term impact HQPL has on educators. Guskey (2016) identifies five critical levels of impact that should be considered in relation to HQPL. These levels are hierarchically arranged, progressing from simple to more complex, where each level builds upon the previous ones, and success at one level is generally a prerequisite for success at the higher levels. These levels can help with the design, implementation, and evaluation of professional learning, which will be further explored in *Section 3: Develop a High-Quality Professional Learning Plan*.

- ***Level 1*** - *Participant's Reactions*
- ***Level 2*** - *Participant's Learning*
- ***Level 3*** - *Organizational Support and Change*
- ***Level 4*** - *Participant's Use of New Knowledge and Skills*
- ***Level 5*** - *Student Learning Outcomes*

Systems Framework for High-Quality Professional Learning

Building off the information thus far, RIDE has developed a conceptual framework to help educational leaders develop and/or strengthen their professional learning system.

When building and implementing an effective professional learning system, it is important to recognize that HQPL does not exist in a vacuum. It is influenced by organizational culture and climate and influences instruction and equitable student outcomes. The graphic above reflects these influences. At the core of the framework is a central focus on equitable student outcomes. This helps ensure that all professional learning opportunities are designed to achieve a positive impact for all students. The first inner ring of the framework emphasizes the role that high-quality instruction plays in ensuring students succeed. The next ring highlights the importance of developing a professional learning plan that provides HQPL opportunities for educators aligned with the characteristics of HQPL. Lastly, the outer ring provides a reminder that organizational culture and climate are necessary to consider when developing a professional learning system.

An Example of the Framework in Action: The Rhody School District

To provide a simple example of how educational leaders can use RIDE's HQPL framework to develop a system that includes the characteristics described above, consider the fictional Rhody School District (RSD).

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In 2023, RSD became concerned about consistently low achievement in listening comprehension in grades K-3. For three years in a row, there had been no improvements in the percentage of students meeting proficiency in listening comprehension.

They set a goal to improve listening comprehension for all students in grades K-3 as part of their LEA strategic plan. The district engaged in a needs assessment and learned that instructional practices for teaching listening comprehension were inconsistent across the district.

RSD developed a multifaceted approach to professional learning and integrated it into their overall professional learning plan. They made sure to provide multiple pathways to professional learning that included workshops, instructional coaching, and professional learning communities. They also leveraged existing organizational and community assets to accomplish their goals.

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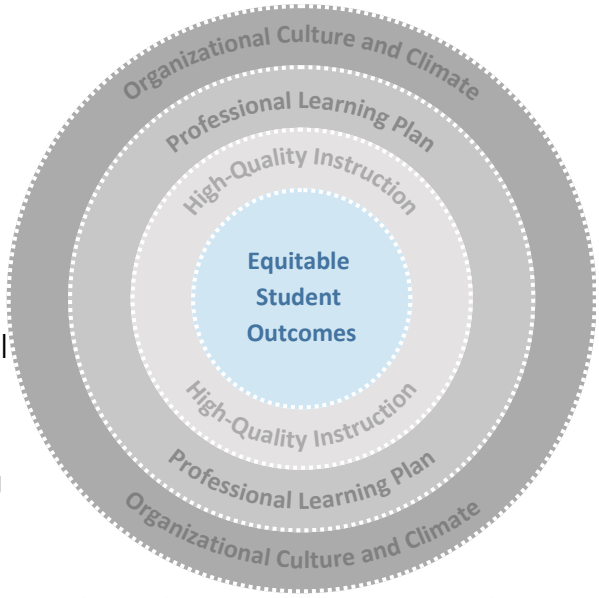
As we continue to explore each component of RIDE's HQPL framework, we will revisit this example of the Rhody School District to illustrate the key concepts in each section.

Part I - Section I: Center High-Quality Professional Learning Around Equitable Student Outcomes

Overview



When developing a professional learning system, educational leaders must keep the goal of equitable student outcomes at the forefront of the work. As outlined in RIDE's *Systems Framework for High-Quality Professional Learning*, it is crucial to center all professional learning activities with the desired equitable outcomes for students. To achieve this, leaders must clarify the meaning of equitable student outcomes and prioritize inclusivity, equity, and justice. This involves continuously considering various dimensions beyond academic achievement, such as social and emotional well-being, healthy lifestyle choices, cultural competence, graduation and post-secondary readiness, and community engagement. In addition to defining clear objectives and goals, leaders should use data to inform decision-making, embed equity principles into their work, involve diverse perspectives, prioritize culturally responsive practices, engage families and communities, and communicate their commitment to equity.

What You Need To Know

As RIDE's *Systems Framework for High-Quality Professional Learning* illustrates, all professional learning activities should consistently be focused on the desired equitable outcomes for students. A common way this is often expressed in schools is to always keep students front and center. To help educational leaders do this, it is helpful to first clarify what is intended by each of the words in the phrase *equitable student outcomes*.

Equitable

In an equitable educational system, every student has access to grade-level assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement, and educators who maintain high expectations, every day, in every class - regardless of their race, ethnicity, or any other part of their identity (The Opportunity Myth, 2020). In equitable systems, all students have access to the resources, opportunities, and support they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, regardless of their background or circumstances. This includes ensuring that students from historically marginalized or disadvantaged groups have equitable access to high-quality instruction, supportive learning environments, and enrichment opportunities that enable them to reach their full potential (Howard, T. C. 2010).

Student Outcomes

Often, when the phrase *student outcomes* is used in education, people primarily think about academic achievement. But this is one of many types of positive outcomes we desire for students. Below are examples of others:

- ***Social and Emotional Well-being:*** The development of social and emotional competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making are important outcomes we desire for students. We want all students to feel safe, supported, and valued within their school communities and beyond.

- ***Healthy Lifestyle Choices:*** Routinely adopting healthy behaviors and habits related to nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and overall well-being are also important outcomes we wish for students. These include promoting an active lifestyle, stress management, and resilience.

- ***Cultural Competence:*** An understanding and appreciation for diverse perspectives, cultures, and identities is another desired outcome we have for students. This includes being able to combat bias, prejudice, and discrimination, as well as promoting equity and social justice.

- ***Graduation and Post-Secondary Readiness:*** Ensuring that students are prepared for the next phase of their learning, particularly during key transitions, is an important outcome for students as they progress from elementary school to middle school to high school and then to college, career, and life.

- ***Community Engagement and Civic Participation:*** Additional outcomes we frequently desire for students are to be active and engaged members of their communities, contributing positively to society, and addressing local and global challenges.

What You Need To Do

Professional learning leaders should consider the following to ensure that the goal of equitable student outcomes remains central when developing a professional learning system:

- ***Data-Informed Decision Making:*** Begin by using data to identify priority needs for students, as well as disparities in student outcomes, particularly along lines of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, linguistics, gender, ability, and other characteristics. Use this information to inform the development of strategic goals for professional learning.

- ***Define Clear Objectives and Goals:*** Clearly articulate the equitable student outcomes that are desired from professional learning, such as academic achievement, social and emotional well-being, healthy lifestyle choices, cultural competence, graduation and post-secondary readiness, and community engagement.

- ***Involve Diverse Perspectives and Voices:*** Encourage the inclusion of diverse perspectives and voices in professional learning activities. Ensure that professional learning addresses issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, fostering a culture of understanding and respect among educators.

- ***Identify and Embed Equity Principles into the Work:*** Integrate key principles of equity into the design and implementation of professional learning opportunities. Emphasize the importance of providing equitable access to resources, opportunities, and support for all educators, especially those serving students from historically marginalized or disadvantaged backgrounds.

- ***Engage Family and Community Partners:*** Engage families, communities, and other invested parties in the work of professional learning to better understand the positive outcomes they desire for students. Build partnerships with community organizations, advocacy groups, and cultural institutions to support the holistic development of students and address systemic barriers to success.

- ***Communicate Leadership's Commitment:*** Demonstrate a strong leadership commitment to professional learning that is grounded in supporting student priorities, equity, and social justice in education. Advocate for policies and practices that prioritize equitable student outcomes and provide the necessary resources, support, and accountability to ensure their achievement.

Actions like those described above will play a powerful role in helping educational leaders create a system of professional learning that not only enhances educator effectiveness but also keeps the goal of equitable student outcomes for all learners at the center of the work.

Equitable Student Outcomes Checklist for Action

Data Analysis:

- What is our plan to analyze student performance data, disaggregated by demographics, to identify achievement gaps and disparities?
- How do we intend to identify priority needs for students based on data insights?
- How will we consider disparities in student outcomes along the lines of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, ability, and other characteristics?

Goal Setting:

- How do we plan to clearly articulate the equitable student outcomes we aim to achieve through our professional learning system?
- What steps are we taking to align objectives and goals with the broader goals of promoting inclusivity, equity, and justice for all students?

Inclusivity and Diversity:

- How will we ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives and voices in our professional learning system?
- What strategies do we have to address diversity, equity, and inclusion in our professional learning?

Embedding Equity Principles:

- How do we plan to integrate key principles of equity into the design and implementation of our professional learning opportunities?
- What measures will we take to provide equitable access to resources, opportunities, and support for all educators, especially those from historically marginalized or disadvantaged groups and those serving historically marginalized or disadvantaged populations?

Family and Community Engagement:

- What methods will we use to actively engage families, communities, and other invested parties in our professional learning efforts?
- How do we plan to build partnerships with community organizations to address systemic barriers to student success?

Leadership Commitment:

- How will we demonstrate strong leadership commitment to professional learning that supports student priorities, equity, and social justice in education?
- What policies and practices will we implement to prioritize equitable student outcomes and provide necessary resources and support?

Consult Additional Resources: *See additional resources available through RIDE's website.*

- Rhode Island's Blueprint for Multilingual Learner Success and Strategic Plan for Multilingual Learner Success identify sustained effective evidence-based practices to strengthen services and outcomes for Multilingual Learners (MLLs). The Blueprint specifies the systemic practices required for MLLs to succeed and is the underlying policy framework for the Strategic Plan for Multilingual Learner Success.
- The Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium's Equity Audit consists of three questionnaires for school leaders, educators, and staff to assess if the school community is creating a positive, equitable learning environment that allows students and staff to perform at their highest levels.
- Rhode Island's Social and Emotional Learning Standards are intended to assist school staff, families, and students in identifying Social and Emotional Skills that will help students succeed.
- Rhode Island's Culturally Linguistically Responsive Sustaining Educational Framework (***coming soon***) provides LEAs guidance on how to apply an equity mindset when making educational decisions impacting our Rhode Island students.

An Example of the Framework in Action: The Rhody School District

Returning to the Rhody School District example, RSD's analysis and review of listening compression data also revealed that MLLs struggled the most with listening comprehension tasks compared to other student groups. To address this finding, the district allocated three professional learning days specifically aimed at targeting this inequity. During these sessions, educators explored methods for integrating culturally responsive teaching practices, differentiated instruction techniques, and research-based strategies to support MLLs using their existing high-quality ELA curriculum materials. This approach ensured that all educators were better equipped to implement strategies within their HQCMs aimed at supporting equitable outcomes for all students. Additionally, the district implemented data-driven monitoring systems to track the progress of different student subgroups and engaged families through workshops and information sessions.

Part I - Section II: Focus High-Quality Professional Learning on High-Quality Instruction

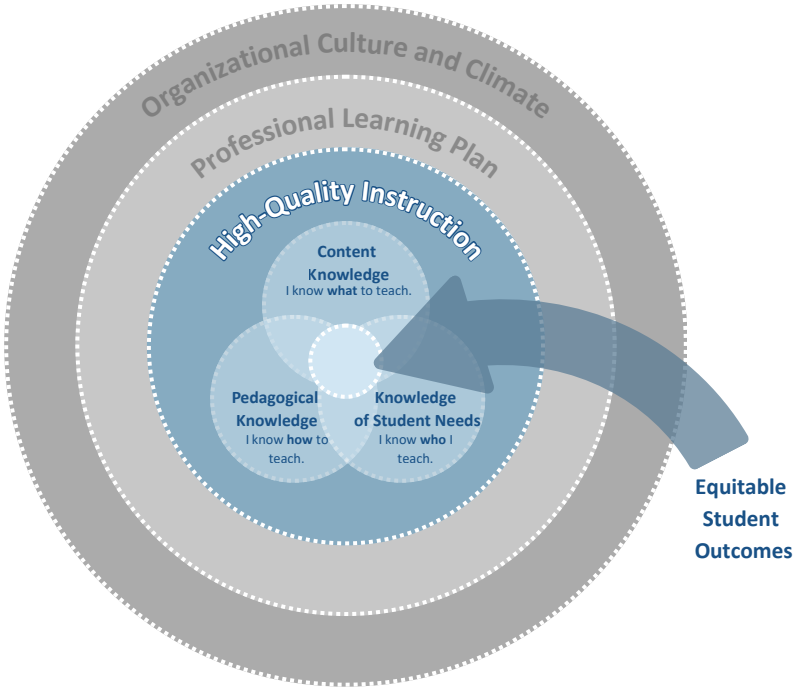
Overview

The second tier of RIDE's *Systems Framework for High-Quality Professional Learning* is high-quality instruction. Educational leaders must ensure professional learning focuses on strengthening educator content knowledge (what to teach) and developing pedagogical skills (how to teach), grounded in the knowledge of their students (whom they teach) to drive towards equitable student outcomes.

What You Need To Know

A goal in every school and district is to improve and strengthen positive outcomes for all students. Developing educators' content knowledge and pedagogical skills is crucial for fostering effective teaching practices and promoting equitable student outcomes (Guerriero, S., 2014). As mentioned previously, **achieving such large-scale improvements occurs when they are preceded by commensurate shifts in teaching practices. In other words, significant improvements in teaching practices lead to commensurate positive changes in student outcomes.** Thus, the purpose of HQPL is to drive improvements in educator practice that can have the desired positive impact on student outcomes.

Content knowledge refers to educators' deep understanding of the subject matter they teach, including key concepts, principles, and skills. When educators have a strong grasp of the content they are teaching, they can effectively scaffold learning experiences, provide clear instruction, and make meaningful connections with their students (Darling-Hammond, 2009). This deep content knowledge allows educators to understand the learning trajectory of their students, recognizing how standards build on one another to promote a coherent progression of learning. By understanding where students are in their learning journey and what they need to master next, educators can design lessons that build on prior knowledge and lead students toward more complex understanding and skills. A powerful and effective way to ensure that instruction is high-quality across classrooms is to provide educators with HQCMs. *Part II of this guidebook explores curriculum-based professional learning further.*



Pedagogical skills encompass the range of instructional strategies, assessment techniques, and social-emotional learning skills that educators employ to facilitate learning (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). By enhancing their pedagogical skills, educators can better utilize research-based teaching methods, differentiate instruction to meet diverse student needs, and create engaging and supportive learning environments.

Together, content knowledge and pedagogical skills empower educators to deliver high-quality instruction that is both academically rigorous and responsive to the needs of all learners (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

To help educational leaders strengthen instruction through HQPL, it is helpful to first clarify what is intended by high-quality instruction.

What is High-Quality Instruction?

High-quality instruction is the foundation of a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) in which all students have equitable access to effective core instruction that supports academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes. High-quality instruction encompasses engaging, differentiated, culturally responsive, and data-driven curricula, teaching practices, and learning environments (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009).

Below are five instructional shifts that RIDE has identified as essential to high-quality instruction as outlined in the Curriculum Frameworks:

Deficit-Driven → **Asset-Based**

Educators routinely leverage students' strengths and assets by activating prior knowledge and connecting new learning to students' culturally and linguistically diverse experiences while respecting individual differences.

Activity-Driven → **Goal-Based**

Educators routinely utilize a variety of strategies to ensure that students understand:

- What they are learning and what proficient work looks like;
- Why they are learning it, including how it connects to their own learning goals, what they have already learned, and what they will learn in the future; and
- How they will know when they have learned it.

Teacher-Centered → **Student-Driven**

Educators routinely use student-centered techniques and foster high levels of engagement through individual and collaborative sense-making activities that promote practice, application in increasingly sophisticated settings and contexts, and metacognitive reflection.

Limited Discourse → **Academic Rich Discourse**

Educators routinely facilitate and encourage student use of academic discourse through effective and purposeful questioning and discussion techniques that foster peer-to-peer interactions and the integration of discipline-specific language into all aspects of learning.

Materials-Driven → **Data-Driven**

Educators routinely use qualitative and quantitative assessment data (including student self-assessments) to analyze their teaching and student learning to provide timely and useful feedback to students and make necessary adjustments (e.g., adding or removing scaffolding and/or assistive technologies, identifying the need to provide intensive instruction) that improve student outcomes.

What You Need To Do

Educational leaders should consistently incorporate the aforementioned key shifts that contribute to high-quality instruction through professional learning. Here are the steps professional learning leaders can take:

- ***Shared Vision:*** Begin by co-crafting a shared vision for high-quality instruction that incorporates the key shifts. Integrate the vision into all aspects of professional learning. Design learning experiences, provide feedback, set goals, and evaluate effectiveness based on this shared vision.

- ***Professional Growth Goals:*** Empower educators to set professional growth goals aligned with the shared vision for high-quality instruction. Offer resources, tools, and guidance for identifying areas of growth in content knowledge and pedagogical skills. Encourage reflection, collaboration, and ongoing learning to support these goals.

- ***Educator Evaluation:*** Align educators' improvement goals with evaluations, fostering clarity and collaboration. Offer guidance on effective teaching criteria, facilitate ongoing dialogue, and provide feedback prioritizing growth.

- ***Feedback Loops:*** Establish a culture of continuous feedback and reflection aligned with professional growth goals and the shared vision for high-quality instruction. Offer timely, specific, and constructive feedback to educators, recognizing successes alongside areas for improvement. Encourage reflection and self-assessment.

A Note on Feedback

Feedback conversations between leaders and educators are crucial for professional growth. **Effective feedback can significantly improve teaching practices and student outcomes when it is provided within a culture of trust, mutual respect, and support that enables the reception of feedback.** The feedback process should be a collaborative effort, focusing on both strengths and areas for improvement. However, feedback conversations can lead to anxiety and stress, which are detrimental to learning and improvement, as they prepare individuals for defense rather than growth. When the culture and climate of the organization are rooted in trust, mutual respect, and support, specific, actionable, and timely feedback can contribute to professional learning (Myung & Martinez, 2013). A few tips that can help feedback loops be effective are to 1) always begin giving feedback by naming what is working, 2) create space for the person receiving feedback to have a voice in the nature or topic of the feedback, 3) make sure the person receiving feedback has given permission or acknowledged readiness to receive it, and 4) always end with each participant articulating what was most helpful or valuable. *Section 4, Organizational Culture and Climate*, will explore strategies for cultivating an environment that fosters trust, mutual respect, and support.

High-Quality Instruction Checklist for Action

Shared Vision:

- What steps will we take to craft a collaborative shared vision for high-quality instruction incorporating key shifts?
- How will we integrate this vision into all aspects of professional learning?
- What strategies will we use to design learning experiences, provide feedback, set goals, and evaluate effectiveness based on the shared vision?

Professional Growth Goals:

- How will we create a system that empowers educators to set professional growth goals aligned with the shared vision for high-quality instruction?
- What resources, tools, and guidance will we share to aid educators in identifying areas of growth in content knowledge and pedagogical skills?
- How do we plan to incorporate opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and ongoing learning to support educators' growth goals?

Educator Evaluation:

- How will we foster a culture of trust and collaboration between educators and evaluators, emphasizing feedback and support?
- What opportunities will we provide for educators to participate in self-assessment and reflection as part of the evaluation process, empowering them to take ownership of their professional learning?

Feedback Loops:

- What protocols and mechanisms will we establish for providing timely and constructive feedback to educators, such as regular check-ins, classroom observations, peer reviews, or written reflections?
- How will we ensure that feedback is specific, actionable, and aligned with the professional growth goals identified by educators?
- What systems will we create to encourage a two-way feedback loop where educators can also provide input on the effectiveness of professional learning opportunities and the support provided by professional learning leaders?

Consult Additional Resources:

- The High-Quality Instructional Framework for MLLs to Thrive outlines major elements of high-quality core instruction for MLLs and establishes the non-negotiables in Rhode Island for MLL program administration, implementation, and evaluation, in addition to describing effective collaborative teaching models and outlining key considerations for interventions with an MTSS framework.

An Example of the Framework in Action: The Rhody School District

As part of their efforts to improve instruction, RSD began by collaboratively crafting a vision of what high-quality instruction looks like. They involved educators and administrators from across the district. The co-created vision served as a foundation for coaching, mentoring, and classroom walkthroughs throughout the year, ensuring that every educator was working towards the same shared vision. Informed by RIDE's five instructional shifts, this shared vision provided a clear framework for instructional improvement, directing educators' efforts toward enhancing student learning outcomes, particularly for MLLs. As part of the walkthrough tool, the district included specific "look fors" aligned with the instructional vision to provide a structured framework for administrators and instructional leaders to observe classroom practices and offer targeted feedback to educators. During every professional learning experience, educators were encouraged to connect their professional growth goals with the shared vision for high-quality instruction, with a specific focus on improving listening comprehension, particularly among MLLs. Through instructional coaching, mentorship, walkthroughs, and various other professional learning structures, educators received targeted feedback on both their content knowledge and pedagogical skills. This feedback empowered them to adapt their instructional approaches to better support MLLs in strengthening their listening comprehension skills, in line with the district's shared vision for high-quality instruction.

Part I - Section III: Develop a Professional Learning Plan

Overview

The third tier of RIDE's *Systems Framework for High-Quality Professional Learning* emphasizes how a professional learning plan enables leaders to design adult learning experiences that enhance instruction and drive equitable student outcomes.

What You Need To Know

How Adults Learn

Professional learning leaders must consider the unique needs and learning styles of adult learners in the same way educators consider the unique needs and learning styles of students. All learners bring background knowledge and preconceptions based on lived experiences to the learning environment. Since adult learners have accumulated more experiences over the years compared to children, they bring a broader base of background knowledge and preconceptions to their learning environment. This can be both beneficial and detrimental to the adult learner. Due to the neuroplasticity of the brain, the brain can change, adapt, and rewire itself, creating new connections and eliminating previous ones that are not used often (National Research Council, 2000). Adult learners who have deep knowledge of a specific topic are better able to make new connections around the topic. However, if adult learners bring faulty or biased background knowledge and preconceptions, it becomes difficult for the brain to eliminate previous connections and make room for new ones. Professional learning leaders need to be aware of their audience's preconceptions and background knowledge when developing professional learning. This will help leaders determine their point of entry, how to combat misconceptions the learner brings to the learning environment that may inhibit connections, and support learners in forming deeper knowledge of the content delivered (National Research Council, 2000).

Andragogy is a theory of adult learning that highlights the unique characteristics, motivations, and needs of adult learners (Knowles, 2014). These principles should be considered when designing professional learning for adults. Below are the key principles of andragogy:

- ***Self-Concept:*** Adults have a self-concept of being self-directed and responsible for their own decisions, so they prefer to take responsibility for their own learning.
- ***Experience:*** Adults have a wealth of life experiences that can serve as a rich resource for learning. Therefore, learning activities should draw upon these experiences and integrate them into the learning process.
- ***Readiness to Learn:*** Adults are more likely to engage in learning activities when they perceive a direct relevance and applicability to their role.
- ***Orientation to Learning:*** Adults are more problem-centered in their orientation to learning, preferring learning experiences that are task-oriented and relevant to their immediate needs.

- ***Motivation:*** While adults can be motivated by both extrinsic and intrinsic factors, they are often more intrinsically motivated, seeking learning opportunities that fulfill their personal interests, values, and goals.

- ***Learning Environment:*** Adult learners prefer a learning environment that is informal, collaborative, and respectful of their experiences and perspectives. They value opportunities for active participation, dialogue, and feedback.

- ***Respect for Learners:*** Adult learners prefer to be treated as equals and collaborators in the learning process rather than passive recipients of knowledge.

Guskey's Model of Educator Change

As mentioned in the *Overview*, the purpose of professional learning for educators is to enhance their knowledge and skills to improve the learning of all students. Professional learning is not a one-time event, but rather an ongoing process of learning, applying learning, getting feedback on the use of new practices, and then reflecting on and deepening understanding of the new knowledge and skills. **Research on changes in teaching practice indicates that educators will embrace and use new approaches and instructional practices when they experience successful implementation of the new practices and see evidence of positive learning outcomes in their students** (Guskey, 2016). As such, professional learning must intentionally focus on supporting educators to make changes in classroom practices which results in changes in student learning and ultimately changes educators' attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning (Learning Forward, 2020). One way to do this is by using Guskey's Five Critical Levels of Impact. The levels are hierarchically arranged according to increasing levels of impact, where each level builds upon the previous ones, and success at one level is generally a prerequisite for success at the higher levels. In evaluating professional learning, professional learning leaders should consider the following:

- ***Level 1 - Participant Reactions:*** Just like for students, learning for adults is most effective when it is compelling and engaging. In short, if participants like professional learning, it is more likely to be effective.

- ***Level 2 - Participant's Learning:*** Effective professional learning should teach adults new knowledge and skills that apply to their work with students.

- ***Level 3 - Organizational Support and Change:*** Professional learning is typically focused on building human capacity, but it is even more effective when it also helps strengthen and improve organizational capacity. In many cases, for new and innovative teaching practices to be implemented organizational shifts need to occur as well.

- ***Level 4 - Participant's Use of New Knowledge and Skills:*** For professional learning to be effective it needs to encourage professionals to shift and improve their practice. This requires that they have routine opportunities to use and apply what they have learned.

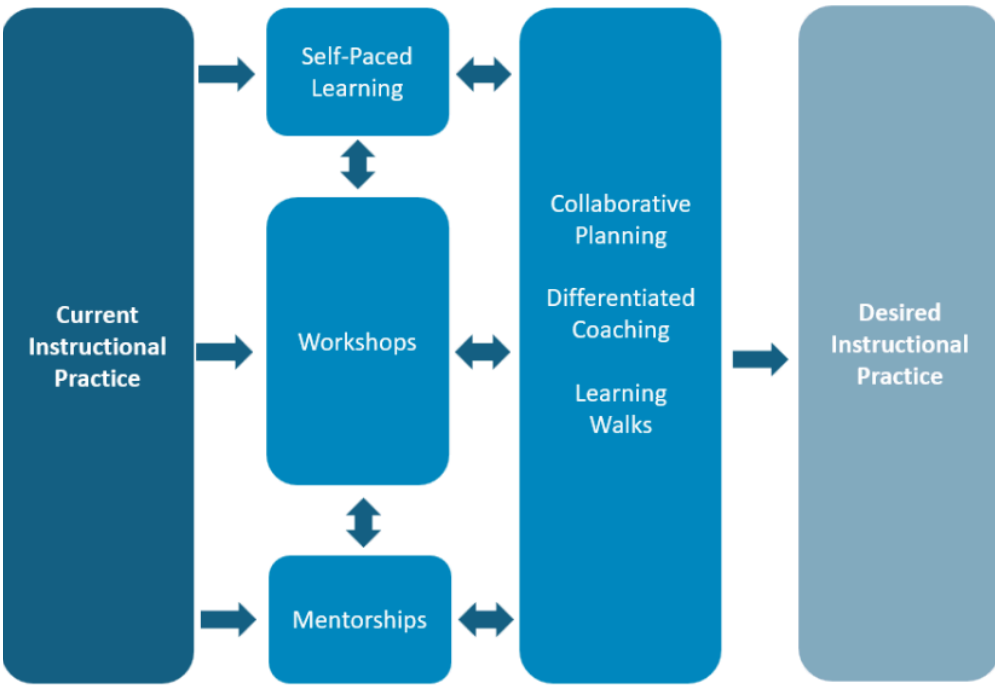
- ***Level 5 - Student Learning Outcomes:*** The main impact of a high-quality system of professional learning is to improve student outcomes. All elements of the system should always keep this in mind.

Professional Development vs. Professional Learning

Although the two terms are often used interchangeably, there is an important and useful distinction between **professional *development*** and **professional *learning***. Professional development, sometimes referred to as **training**, can be thought of as 'happening to' educators and is often associated with brief, one-time, and one-size-fits-all workshops, seminars, or lectures focused on learning discrete skills and/or performing individual tasks (e.g., blood-borne pathogen or CPI training). While professional development can influence educator practice and spark new ideas, they typically do not include all the characteristics of HQPL as outlined in the *Overview*. In contrast, professional learning is a comprehensive system of continuous learning experiences that incorporate all the characteristics of HQPL, directly impacting educator practice and equitable student outcomes. Both types of learning experiences have a role to play within a professional learning system depending on the topic and context of the learning opportunity.

Professional Learning Structures

When designing HQPL plans, leaders should consider the various structures available to meet the diverse learning needs of adults. Each structure serves a different but important role in the learning process. The figure below shows how different professional learning structures can be leveraged to arrive at desired instructional outcomes. Workshops often serve as the initial format for professional learning, providing foundational knowledge to a large group of educators. Then, leaders commonly use collaborative planning, differentiated coaching, learning walks, and mentorships to reinforce and expand upon the concepts introduced in workshops.



Regardless of the chosen professional learning structure, it is essential to establish a strong adult culture rooted in trust, mutual respect, and support. This culture should be driven by a shared vision for high-quality learning and equitable student outcomes. Workshops, mentorships, collaborative planning, coaching, and learning walks will not be successful if the school culture is rooted in fear, mistrust, and disunity. See *Section 4: Organizational Culture and Climate* for additional information on how to strengthen culture and climate in service of creating a strong professional learning system.

While the table below outlines common professional learning structures, it's important to emphasize that each structure cannot and should not exist in isolation. For example, while workshops are an important aspect of any HQPL system, when provided as stand-alone opportunities they have very limited, if any, impact. These structures should instead be thought of as puzzle pieces that connect and work together as part of a larger, cohesive system of professional learning. Part of an organization's comprehensive professional learning plan should comprise each professional learning structure working together in concert.

Professional Learning Structures

Structure	Description	Benefits of Successful Implementation
Workshops	Workshops are typically whole-school learning experiences designed to teach educators about specific resources, materials, and strategies to build content knowledge and pedagogical skills. Workshops can also be training sessions. Keep in mind, the more specific a workshop is to participants' role, grade level, and content area, the more likely it is to be effective in improving those educators' knowledge and practice. *Research has shown that **one-time** workshops are generally ineffective in producing lasting changes in professional practices (Guskey, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). As such, professional learning leaders should ensure workshops include all the characteristics of HQPL, are of sustained duration, and are included as one part of a larger professional learning system with multiple different professional learning structures.*	Covers content around a given theme (specific topics, resources, materials, strategies) Enhances collaboration and collegiality among educators through interactive engagement Involves real-world applications and practical strategies that educators can immediately implement in their classrooms, enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of the learning experience Creates a culture of continuous learning, mutual support, and reflective practice

Structure	Description	Benefits of Successful Implementation
Differentiated Coaching	Coaching is when leaders observe educators and provide non-evaluative, actionable, content, cognitive, and curriculum-specific feedback. Ideally, all educators should receive coaching, regardless of their tenure in their role or experience level with instructional materials. A variety of educators can provide formal or informal coaching, including but not limited to peers, instructional coaches, and building administrators. Educators who are newer to the profession or newer to the instructional materials should receive coaching more frequently (e.g., weekly) while more experienced educators may receive coaching less often (e.g., monthly or quarterly). Observations occur during classroom instruction, with feedback provided as soon after the observation as possible.	Provides individualized support and guidance specific to the needs of the educator to foster personal professional learning Enables educators to address areas for improvement and capitalize on their strengths Fosters a culture of continuous learning, mutual support, and reflective practice Empowers educators to take risks, experiment with innovative approaches, and refine their teaching skills over time Promotes collaboration and collegiality among educators

Structure	Description	Benefits of Successful Implementation
Collaborative Planning	Collaborative planning sessions are when small groups of educators in the same grade band or content area examine, internalize, discuss, differentiate, and practice units, lessons, and tasks. They analyze relevant qualitative and quantitative data, especially student work, to determine strengths and gaps in student learning and plan for how they will support students in core instruction and intervention time. In Rhode Island, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Common Planning Time (CPTs) are often used interchangeably to describe the time dedicated to examining, internalizing, discussing, differentiating, and practicing lessons. **Regardless of what this time is called, it is important to note that common planning times are not faculty meetings, nor are they the place to address a laundry list of administrative tasks (recess duty, permission slips for field trips, superintendent visit schedule, etc.).** Instead, this time should be used for ongoing, structured efforts to improve teaching practices and student learning outcomes.	Enhances collaboration and collegiality among educators through interactive engagement around expertise and insights, brainstorming of innovative ideas, sharing successful strategies, and troubleshooting challenges; all while fostering collective wisdom Creates a culture of continuous learning, mutual support, and reflective practice Facilitates the alignment of instructional goals and priorities Ensures a cohesive approach to teaching and learning to improve student outcomes

Structure	Description	Benefits of Successful Implementation
Learning Walks	Brief, non-evaluative, data-driven classroom visits that utilize a data-collection tool with clear and explicit look-fors. Ideally, these look-fors should be aligned with a school-wide focus or gap and aligned with a shared vision of what excellent instruction looks like, sounds like, and feels like. Data from the learning walks should be normed, used to guide and develop future professional learning opportunities, and provide informal, non-evaluative feedback. **Ideally, all educators should receive learning walk visits, regardless of their tenure in their role or experience level with their instructional materials.** A variety of educators can conduct learning walks, including but not limited to peers, instructional coaches, and principals. Learning walks should happen frequently and be a regular, predictable routine within a school system. It is recommended school leaders conduct learning walks weekly and do so together in pairs to calibrate what they are looking for and interpret what they are observing. **For learning walks to be effective as a form of professional learning, feedback must always be provided to the educator, ideally immediately following the learning walk.** One way to create a sustainable learning walk practice within your system is to allocate 60 minutes per week by observing six classrooms for ten minutes per week.	Opportunities to observe teaching practices and student interactions firsthand to gain insight for improvement Fosters a culture of continuous learning, mutual support, and reflective practice Creates collaboration and collegiality among educators Facilitates meaningful conversations among educators leading to deeper understanding of best practices and instructional priorities Serves as an accountability structure to inform professional learning initiatives, support school improvement efforts, and provide feedback to improve instructional practices

Structure	Description	Benefits of Successful Implementation
Mentorship	A mentorship program is designed to provide support and guidance to educators who are typically, but not always, in the early stages of their careers or new to a school or district. Generally, experienced and effective educators within the school or district serve as mentors, offering their expertise and leadership to help newer educators navigate the profession. These mentorship relationships are characterized by regular meetings and check-ins, during which mentors and educators discuss teaching practices, curriculum internalization, and other professional topics. Mentors can conduct classroom observations to provide non-evaluative feedback and support an educator's growth.	Provides individualized support and guidance specific to the needs of the educator to foster personal and professional learning Develops leadership skills for the mentor Fosters a culture of continuous learning, mutual support, and reflective practice Enhances diversity and inclusion helping to cultivate a more equitable and inclusive educational environment Creates collaboration and collegiality among educators
Self-Paced Learning	Self-paced (asynchronous) professional learning provides educators with flexibility and autonomy in their professional learning journey. In this format, educators have access to resources, materials, and learning activities that they can engage with at their own pace and on their own schedule. Self-paced programs often include opportunities for reflection and self-assessment, enabling educators to monitor their progress and set goals for their continued growth. *Research has found a varied impact of self-paced learning on professional practice (International Journal of Self-Directed Learning, 2009). Successful self-paced learning requires clear goals, resource access, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulatory skills like goal-setting and progress monitoring. Prioritizing these elements can enhance effectiveness and promote meaningful professional growth when included as one part of a larger professional learning system with multiple different professional learning structures.*	Empowers educators to have agency in their learning and professional growth Offers flexibility to engage in learning at their convenience Personalizes learning experiences to match learning preferences, strengths, and areas for growth Fosters a culture of continuous learning, mutual support, and reflective practice Creates collaboration and collegiality among educators within online communities

What You Need To Do

Creating a professional learning plan is the next step within the *Systems Framework for High-Quality Professional Learning*. RIDE recommends professional learning teams read through each step and substep and use the *Checklist for Action* to help assess strengths and areas for improvement. As teams begin to plan, it is important for them to identify the assets and resources at their disposal and how to allocate them best. To ensure alignment with the RIPLS, each recommended step is aligned with one or more RIPLS standards. While the RIPLS offer descriptors of an ideal professional learning system, the *Checklist for Action* provides actionable guidance to help educators meet those standards.

Recommended Steps	Recommended Sub-Steps	Checklist for Action
Step 1: Set Goals for Professional Learning *RIPLS 1, RIPLS 2*	**Reflect** on the current state of the professional learning system.	• Does our school/district have a collective definition and shared belief about HQPL? • What about our current professional learning system is working? What is not working? • What is our long-term plan for professional learning? • Will change be welcome in our building or district? Why or why not? If not, what in our culture and climate needs to change? • Has your district recently engaged in a comprehensive needs assessment that might inform goal setting for professional learning? *Note: All CSI schools are required to conduct needs assessments that inform their school improvement plans.*

	Analyze student and educator data to determine what needs to be prioritized through professional learning.	• What specific sources of qualitative and quantitative data (educator and student data) need to be analyzed and interpreted to determine professional learning needs? Examples include:
		  ◦ Student data
		  ◦ Educator evaluation data
		  ◦ Professional growth goals
		  ◦ Surveys
		  ◦ Needs assessment
		• What insights do the data provide regarding student and educator needs and how can we align professional learning initiatives accordingly?
		• Are there specific trends or patterns in the data that indicate areas where additional support or development is necessary for student and educator success?

	Identify the priorities that will inform professional learning goals.	• How do professional learning goals align with the LEA strategic plan and are they a part of the school improvement plan? • What are our overarching data-driven professional learning goals? • Do the professional learning goals articulate a coherent rationale that connects learning to equitable student outcomes?

	Backward map to identify benchmarks necessary to meet the identified end goal.	• What is our end goal? What benchmarks need to be met along the way? • How and when will the professional learning plan be communicated to educators? • Do we need to allocate more time for professional learning? If yes, what changes need to occur in order to increase PL time? • When can professional learning occur during the school day/week/month/year in order to meet identified benchmarks and goals?
	Build leadership and capacity within the school team to help plan and facilitate professional learning experiences.	• How can we foster leadership skills within our school team to support the facilitation of professional learning experiences? • What strategies can we implement to empower team members to take on leadership roles in guiding professional learning initiatives? • In what ways can we collaboratively build capacity among team members to effectively facilitate and sustain professional learning opportunities within our school community?

Step 2: Design Professional Learning
 	
RIPLS 1, *RIPLS 2*, *RIPLS 3*, *RIPLS 5*, *RIPLS 6*, *RIPLS 7*, *RIPLS 8*
	Identify and allocate resources aligned with district goals and tailored to the needs of educators.	• Have we identified the resources available in the following areas that can support the development of the professional learning plan?
		  ◦ *Time resources* - e.g., school schedules, educator contracts
		  ◦ *Financial resources* - e.g., Federal funds, state and local grants, local foundations and trusts, etc.
		  ◦ *Human resources* - e.g., internal staff expertise, etc.
		  ◦ *Technology resources* - e.g., educational technology systems, learning management systems, software, etc.
		  ◦ *High-quality curriculum materials* - e.g., recently adopted HQCMs, etc. (*See Part II of this document*)
		  ◦ *Assessment resources* - e.g., assessment banks and platforms, etc.
		  ◦ *Policy supports* - specific policies that inform professional learning.
		• Have we optimized the equitable allocation of all resources?
		• Have we identified the professional learning structure(s) that best support the implementation of the professional learning plan?
		  ◦ Workshop
		  ◦ Collaborative Planning
		  ◦ Differentiated Coaching
		  ◦ Learning Walks/Walkthroughs
		  ◦ Mentorship
		  ◦ Self-Paced

	Differentiate professional learning experiences to meet the needs of all adult learners.	• How will professional learning connect to educators' daily work? • How will professional learning support emerging and developing educators? How will it challenge effective educators? • How will professional learning develop and build leadership capacity in effective and highly effective educators?

	Incorporate educator **voice and choice.**	• How can input from educators be gathered to understand professional learning needs and interests? • How can professional learning connect to professional growth goals? • How can educators be involved in the planning and design of professional learning?
	Consider **adult learning theories** in the design of learning experiences.	• How can content and delivery methods align with adult learners' motivation, diverse learning styles, and goals? • How can opportunities for modeling, practice, and collaboration be embedded within professional learning? • How can educators' prior knowledge and experiences be leveraged throughout professional learning?
Step 3: Implement Professional Learning *RIPLS 4, RIPLS 5, RIPLS 8*	Attend to the **culture of learning.**	• How did participants react to professional learning as outlined in Guskey's Level 1: Participant Reactions? • How will professional learning be designed to create an inclusive, welcoming, and non-judgmental environment? • How will participants be recognized and celebrated throughout the learning process? • How will a growth mindset and commitment to lifelong learning be modeled by facilitators?
	Collect real-time data.	• Did participants acquire the intended knowledge or skill as outlined in Level 2: Participant Learning? • What is the purpose or intended outcome of professional learning and how will success be measured? • How can the acquisition of intended knowledge and skills by participants be assessed, and what steps will be taken if they are not progressing? • How will participant engagement be evaluated, and what strategies will be employed to re-engage them if they become disengaged?
	Incorporate moments for **reflection.**	• Are opportunities provided for participants to analyze data collaboratively, share observations, and co-construct meaning together? • Are structured reflection prompts or peer discussions incorporated into professional learning? • How can participants be encouraged to engage in metacognition, reflecting on their own thinking processes throughout the learning journey?
	Incorporate **two-way feedback**.	• Are norms or guidelines established to foster constructive feedback and respectful dialogue among participants? • What methods or platforms are available to facilitate reciprocal feedback exchanges? • At what intervals and through which means will feedback be gathered during the professional learning journey, and how will this data inform future actions?

Step 4: Assess and Improve Professional Learning *RIPLS 2, RIPLS 3, RIPLS 4*	**Analyze, reflect, and respond** to data gathered during the professional learning experience.	• Did professional learning impact the organization as outlined in Guskey's Level 3: Organization Support and Change? • What patterns, trends, or insights are evident from the analysis of collected data? Are there notable strengths, weaknesses, or areas for improvement? • What were the intended goals and objectives of the professional learning session, and to what extent were they achieved? How can this be determined? • How has professional learning impacted educator practice and instructional strategies as outlined by Guskey's Level 4: Participants Use of Knowledge and Skills? • What was the impact of professional learning on students as outlined in Guskey's Level 5: Student Learning Outcomes? Are there observable shifts in classroom practices or student engagement attributable to professional learning efforts?
	Follow up with invested parties based on the data analysis.	• Are there identified areas requiring additional support or follow-up? • What concrete steps will be undertaken in response to the insights gleaned from data analysis and reflection? • Who will be tasked with executing these actions, and what is the proposed timeline for their completion?
	Set new goals based on the analyzed data for future professional learning.	• What are the most critical or urgent new goals identified from the data for future professional learning? • What specific steps are required to accomplish these newly established goals? Who will assume responsibility, and what support will be required? • How will progress toward the new goals be tracked and assessed over time? Are there mechanisms in place for continuous reflection and adaptation based on feedback and data analysis?

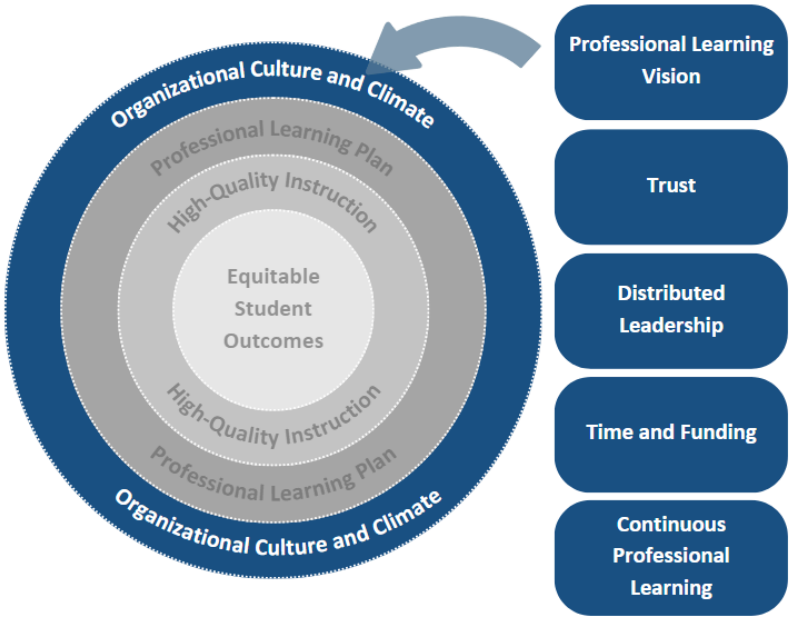
An Example of the Framework in Action: The Rhody School District

As mentioned previously, RSD integrated their focus on professional learning around listening comprehension and MLL support into their LEA strategic plan. Throughout the year, RSD building leaders leveraged distributive leadership to identify individuals capable of leading workshops, mentorship programs, instructional coaching sessions, walkthroughs, and collaborative planning sessions. The principal, assistant principal, and instructional coaches developed a comprehensive schedule for professional learning. They crafted a flexible scope and sequence to guide professional learning towards the year's goals. The team shared the schedule, scope, sequence, and vision for high-quality instruction with all staff members. Regular data collection and debriefing sessions provided insights to identify areas of strength and improvement, enabling strategy adjustments to ensure continuous progress.

Part I - Section IV: Organizational Culture and Climate

Overview

High-quality professional learning is one of the major levers that drive educator growth and development and subsequently strengthen equitable student outcomes, *and*, even the best designed professional learning plan can encounter challenges to implementation that limit its effectiveness.



While recognizing the existence of challenges in a professional learning system is critical in contributing to a culture of trust and transparency, it is equally important to challenge existing mindsets that surround these challenges from deficit-based to asset-based. An organization's culture and climate play a pivotal role in this process. A positive and supportive culture grounded in trust, mutual respect, and support fosters an environment where individuals feel empowered to question assumptions about challenges, explore new ideas, and engage in meaningful dialogue. As such, cultivating a school climate that embraces creative thinking and problem-solving becomes essential to addressing these challenges. When educators feel encouraged to innovate and collaborate, they are more likely to adopt new practices and embrace change, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for students.

This section is purposefully designed to support professional learning leaders in addressing the needs identified during the needs assessment process. Focusing on strengthening organizational climate and culture through a systems approach, empowers leaders to implement strategic changes that promote effective professional learning and cultivate a supportive environment for educators.

A positive and supportive culture grounded in trust, mutual respect, and support fosters an environment where individuals feel empowered to question assumptions about challenges, explore new ideas, and engage in meaningful dialogue. As such, cultivating a school climate that embraces creative thinking and problem-solving becomes essential to addressing these challenges. When educators feel encouraged to innovate and collaborate, they are more likely to adopt new practices and embrace change, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for students.

Creating Organizational Culture and Climate: Progressing from Obstacles to Opportunities

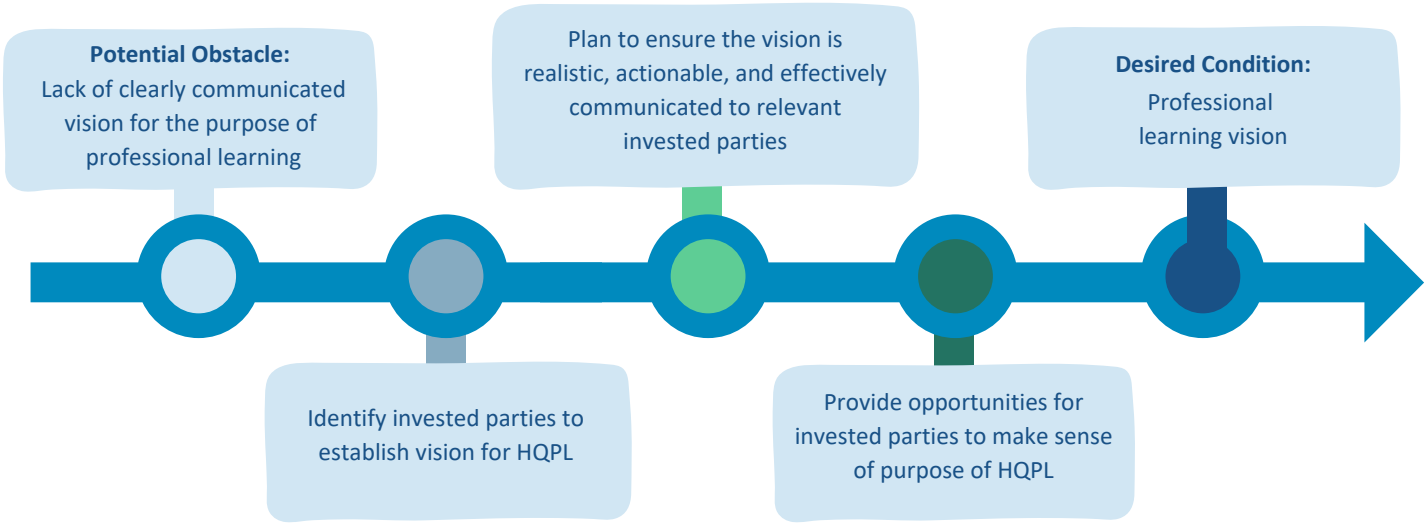
1. Professional Learning Vision

One of the common pitfalls of professional learning is a lack of a shared vision for professional learning. Holding time for educator learning without a clear vision of how professional learning will impact instruction is like sending your team on a road trip without a map—they're moving, and they know where they want to go, but they're not sure how to get there. A lack of shared vision can impact the following:

- Collaborative learning time is overrun by competing priorities, becoming a space for administrative tasks and updates.
- Educators do not see how the professional learning time connects to their daily instruction or their students' needs. There is an underlying sense of compliance rather than genuine buy-in.
- The connection between professional learning activities and schoolwide priorities remains unclear, leaving educators unable to see how their efforts contribute to broader goals for the school community.

Without a clear direction, there are no progress monitoring routines, resulting in a lack of meaningful feedback for both facilitators and educators (Instruction Partners, 2024).

Vision setting is a strategic process where an organization defines its long-term goals through a clear, inspirational vision statement. A shared professional learning vision, which should align and cohere with the school's mission and instructional vision, guides all professional learning decisions and activities. It ensures that efforts are directed toward common objectives and motivates members by illustrating how their roles contribute to larger outcomes. Effective vision setting involves collaborative efforts to ensure the vision resonates with all invested parties and adapts to future challenges, thereby shaping the organizational culture.



Professional Learning Vision Checklist for Action

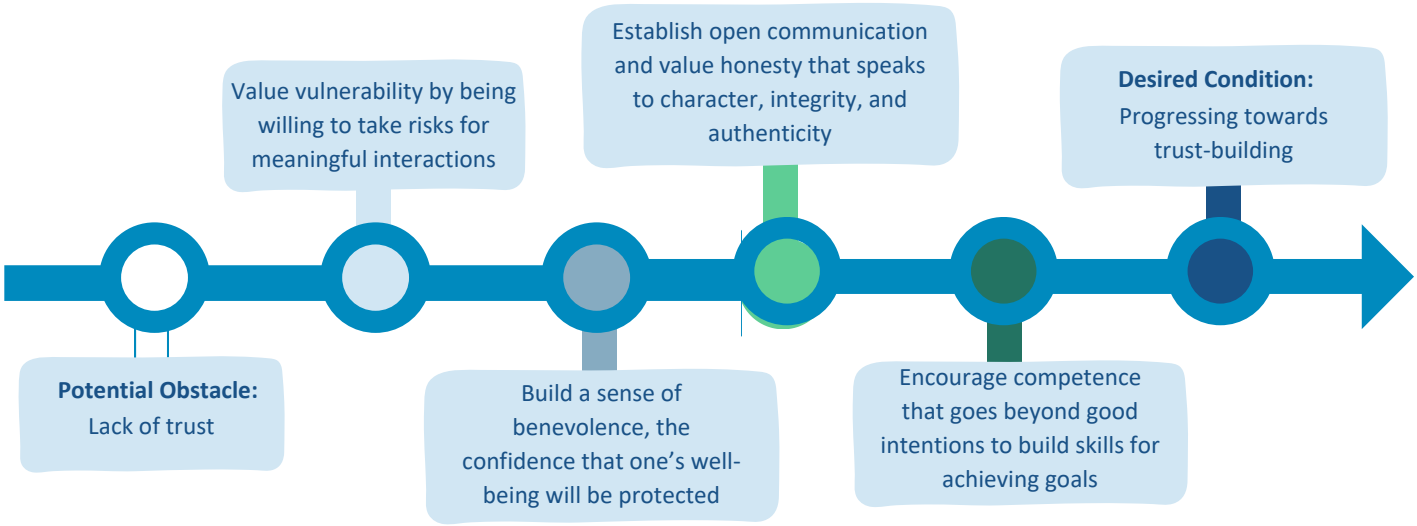
- Have all invested parties contributed to creating a professional learning vision?
- What are the professional learning goals for our organization? How do these goals connect to the professional learning vision?
- Do we have a plan to communicate the professional learning vision to multiple invested parties?
- What strategies can we employ to better align professional learning activities with schoolwide priorities and goals?
- Does our organization support a culture of trust, collaboration, transparency, risk-taking, and vulnerability? How do we know?
- Does our culture reflect leaders participating in the learning alongside their educators?

2. Trust

A second common pitfall that impacts HQPL systems is the absence of trust. Trust is a critical element in both school effectiveness and the development of emerging organizational cultures. Tschannen-Moran, M., and Gareis, C. R. (2015) define trust as the willingness to make oneself vulnerable, based on the belief that one's interests or something one cares about will not be harmed. Research suggests that school leaders must foster and maintain trust to lead schools effectively. Importantly, trust has both interpersonal and task-oriented dimensions. Therefore, principals must engage collegially with educators in ways that are consistently honest, open, and benevolent, while also reliably demonstrating sound knowledge and competent decision-making skills in administering academic programs (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

Trust plays a pivotal role in how leadership practices influence professional learning. Studies show that strong leadership, combined with trust, enhances the development of a shared sense of purpose, collaborative work, a collective focus on student learning, and engagement in reflective dialogue (Zheng X. et al., 2016). There is a direct correlation between leadership and educator collaboration. Effective leadership fosters positive professional learning by building a shared vision, facilitating staff collaboration and communication, and providing relational support. When educators perceive that they receive ample support from their leadership, they are more inclined to embrace new ideas and engage more in professional activities.

Building trust is crucial for both educator-to-educator and leader-to-educator interactions. In schools where trust among colleagues is high, educators collaborate more authentically and effectively. This trust also supports leader-educator interactions, necessitating that leaders be trustworthy—consistent in their words and actions, showing respect and regard for their colleagues, and promoting the school vision through their actions. Furthermore, leaders can implement various strategies to maintain a trusting environment in schools, such as diagnosing and addressing trust issues among staff and mediating trust breakdowns.



Trust Checklist for Action

- Have we collected data to assess the current level of trust among our staff?
- Have we intentionally engaged in activities geared toward building trust?
- Have we implemented a process to help educators build their knowledge and teaching skills?
- What structures and practices support teacher collaboration to improve teaching practices?

3. Distributed Leadership with Roles and Responsibilities

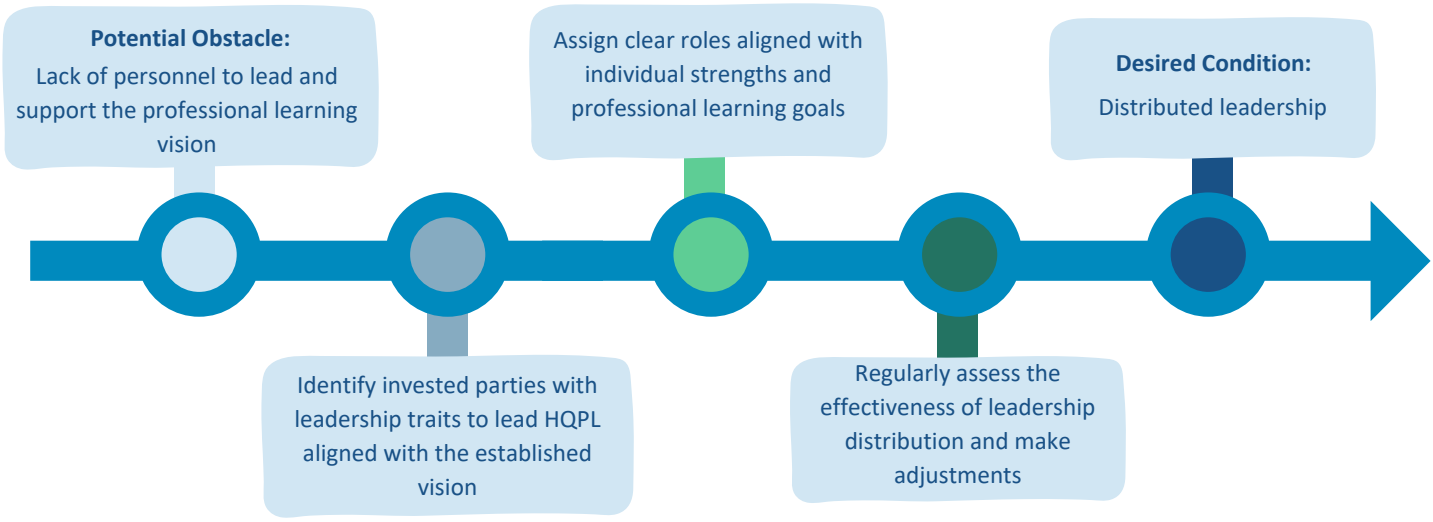
Distributed Leadership

A third pitfall of HQPL systems is a lack of distributed leadership that can hinder the effective implementation and sustainability of professional learning initiatives. In effective professional learning systems, distributed leadership is used as an inclusive approach to school leadership that builds organizational culture and climate. This model shifts focus from viewing the principal as a singular leader to recognizing the collective leadership roles played by educators, staff, students, parents, and community members. Distributed leadership fosters collaboration, enhances problem-solving, and supports the sharing of expertise, which collectively improves school and student outcomes by leveraging the diverse capabilities of the entire school community.

Distributive leadership can also address potential staffing challenges in school systems which is a common challenge many schools and districts currently face. By optimizing the use of personnel and enhancing collaborative efforts, this leadership model ensures that roles are shared among staff members and tasks are distributed based on individual strengths and expertise. This approach enables schools to utilize their teams more effectively, work towards a shared vision, foster innovation, and improve resource management. Additionally, empowering staff through distributive leadership increases their sense of ownership and investment in professional learning initiatives.

Roles and Responsibilities

For distributed leadership to work efficiently, all staff members must understand their roles and responsibilities in the attainment of HQPL through establishing clear roles and responsibilities.



Distributed Leadership Checklist for Action

- How does leadership involve invested parties in taking ownership and accountability to accomplish the professional learning vision?
- What structures are in place for invested parties to share their action steps and obstacles they face in reaching the professional learning vision?
- Can you describe the decision-making process followed by the invested parties to ensure different perspectives are taken into consideration?
- How are roles and responsibilities distributed to ensure that invested parties are held accountable?
- What structures and practices are used to measure and monitor the impact of distributed leadership on achieving HQPL?

Roles and Responsibilities Checklist for Action

- Who is responsible for providing professional learning? Are these leaders the best fit to drive various outcomes? Do they have the content knowledge and expertise to drive the work? How do I know?
- How are roles and responsibilities within the professional learning system clearly defined and communicated to all stakeholders?
- Which learning experiences are best facilitated by educators from the school? District? Outside professional learning providers?
- How do leaders use educator data to identify staff with expertise in a specific content area that would be well-suited to provide professional learning to colleagues?

4. Time and Funding

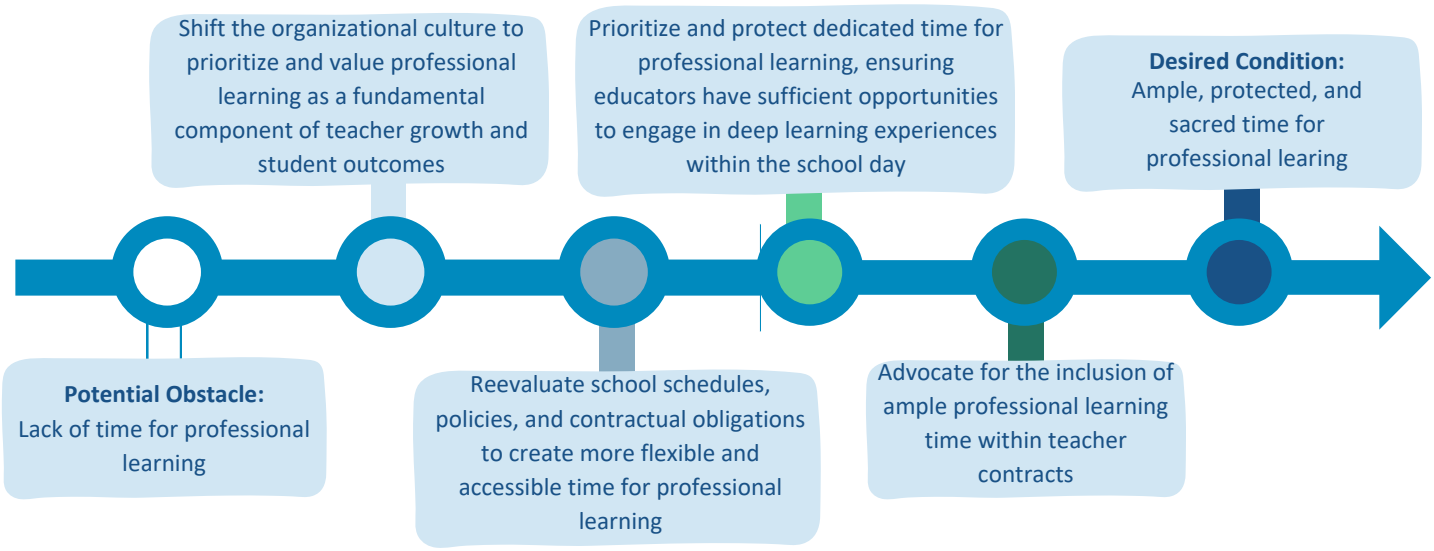
Time

Educators' time is precious and constrained. Research on professional learning has concluded that, while there is no magic number of hours needed for professional learning, educators need time to develop, absorb, discuss, and practice new knowledge (Garet et al., 2001). Thus, professional learning that involves significant numbers of contact hours over a sustained period of time is typically associated with effectiveness (Guskey, 2009). In direct tension with the research, time is the most frequently reported challenge and barrier in the implementation of professional learning systems in Rhode Island schools. The demands of policies, school schedules, and lack of educator contract time for professional learning place considerable constraints on the available time for educators to engage in focused professional learning.

Time can also be a challenge for professional learning facilitators. Professional learning facilitators need significant time to prepare for sessions to ensure they can effectively support and guide educators through the learning process. If the facilitators don't have enough time to prepare, they will be ill-equipped to anticipate and address educators' misconceptions and needs. Without such preparation, collaborative learning time risks becoming superficial sessions. For educators, this means a missed opportunity to actively practice and internalize new strategies or concepts in a supportive environment. Educators may have a high-level understanding of the content, but when it comes to implementing strategies with students, they struggle due to insufficient hands-on experience with the materials during professional learning (Instruction Partners, 2024).

Research on professional learning has concluded that, while there is no magic number of hours needed for professional learning, educators need time to develop, absorb, discuss, and practice new knowledge. Thus, professional learning that involves significant numbers of contact hours over a sustained period of time is typically associated with effectiveness.

Overcoming this pitfall requires more than just careful scheduling. It requires an organizational cultural shift towards valuing professional learning as a catalyst for educator growth, student outcomes, and the overall development of educational practices. **There must be a shared understanding and belief that every minute allocated for professional learning is as valuable for educators as classroom time is for students.**



A Note on 200-RICR-20-10-2
Secondary Design: Middle and High School Learning Environments and the Rhode Island Diploma System

Rhode Island's secondary regulations mandate that all certified middle and high school educators engage in professional learning to maintain educator quality and certification. These regulations specify requirements for common planning time, to ensure that educators dedicate focused time each week for collaborative instructional planning, student achievement analysis, and professional development.

2.4.4 Professional Learning

- *All certified educators in middle-level and high schools shall participate in professional learning as described by Rhode Island's Regulations on educator quality and certification.*

2.4.5 Common Planning Time

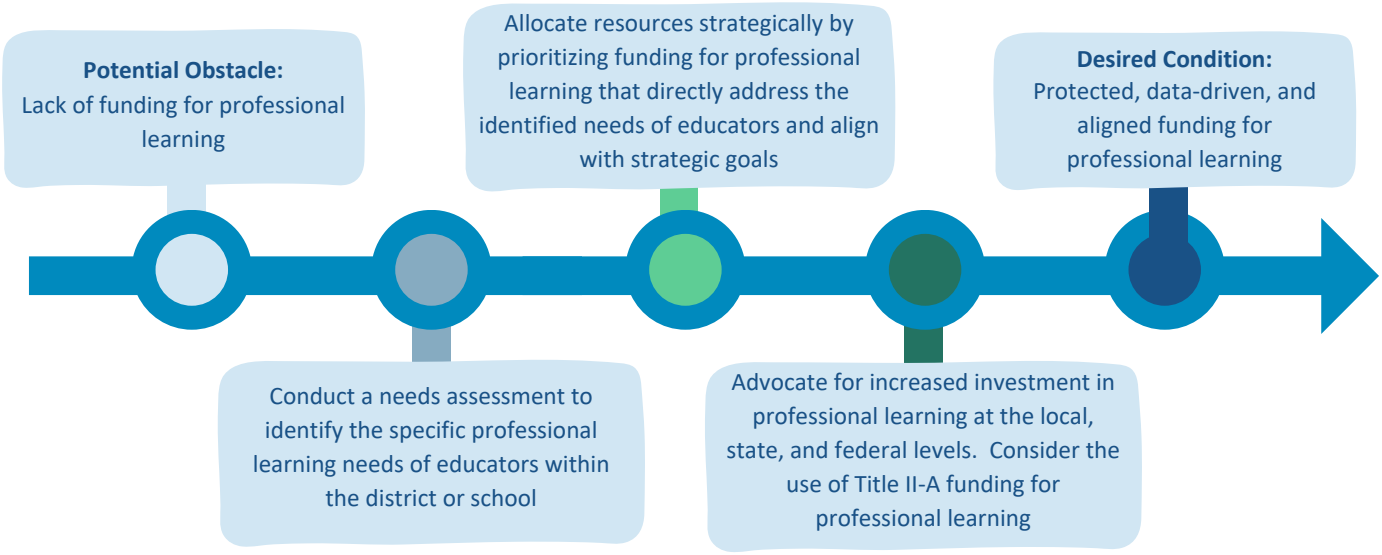
- *A. Common planning time shall be used by teams of teachers, administrators, and other educators for the substantive planning of instruction, looking at student achievement data, addressing student needs, and group or embedded professional development.*

- *B. Common planning time must provide for at least one (1) hour per week at the high school level and at least two (2) hours per week at the middle level, focused on the priority areas of vertical articulation, ELA, Math, graduation by proficiency, and personalization.*

- *C. This common planning time must be in addition to individual faculty planning time and locally determined professional development requirements. As established in Subchapter 05 Part 1 of this Chapter, Regulations Governing the School Calendar and Length of the School Day, common planning time does not qualify as "instructional time" for the purposes of compliance with the required length of the school day.*

Funding

Securing adequate funding for professional learning can pose a challenge for schools and districts, primarily due to limited resources and competing priorities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Many schools operate with tight budgets, which often restrict the amount of funding available for professional learning initiatives (Birman et al., 2000). Additionally, the allocation of funds for professional learning may not always align with the identified needs of educators or the strategic goals of the school or district. Moreover, fluctuations in economic conditions or shifts in educational policies at the state or federal level can further exacerbate challenges related to funding stability and predictability. These challenges highlight the importance of advocating for increased investment in professional learning. Districts and schools can also work to allocate resources strategically by aligning funding decisions with the identified needs of educators and the strategic goals of the school or district. This may involve reallocating funds from less critical areas to prioritize professional learning initiatives. Schools can leverage Title I, II, and IV funds for professional learning activities. Utilizing in-house expertise is another effective strategy; by identifying educators or administrators with specific skills to lead professional learning opportunities, schools can reduce the need for external or third-party consultants. Developing peer coaching programs and establishing professional learning communities (PLCs) can further support continuous, collaborative professional growth among educators.



A Note on Title II-A Funding

The purpose of Title II, Part A is to increase student achievement consistent with the challenging State academic standards; improve the quality and effectiveness of educators, principals, and other school leaders; increase the number of educators, principals, and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective educators, principals, and other school leaders (U.S. Department of Education, 2023). The funding intends to support educators in their work to improve the overall quality of instruction and ensure equity of educational opportunity for all students. Schools and districts should consider the specific needs of their educators and students and choose professional learning opportunities that will directly impact student achievement. Under Title II, Part A, schools and districts should prioritize professional learning opportunities tailored to the unique needs of their educators to ensure a direct impact on student achievement.

Time Checklist for Action

- How do our current systems prioritize professional learning time? If they do not, what must change?
- Is there dedicated and consistent time for educators and leaders to meet regularly? If not, what must change?
- How are leaders communicating to educators how professional learning time is prioritized and spent? Are these rationales connected to the vision, goals, and of relevance to educators?
- How are district and building leaders advocating for and collaborating with union leaders for ample professional learning time in contracts?

Funding Checklist for Action

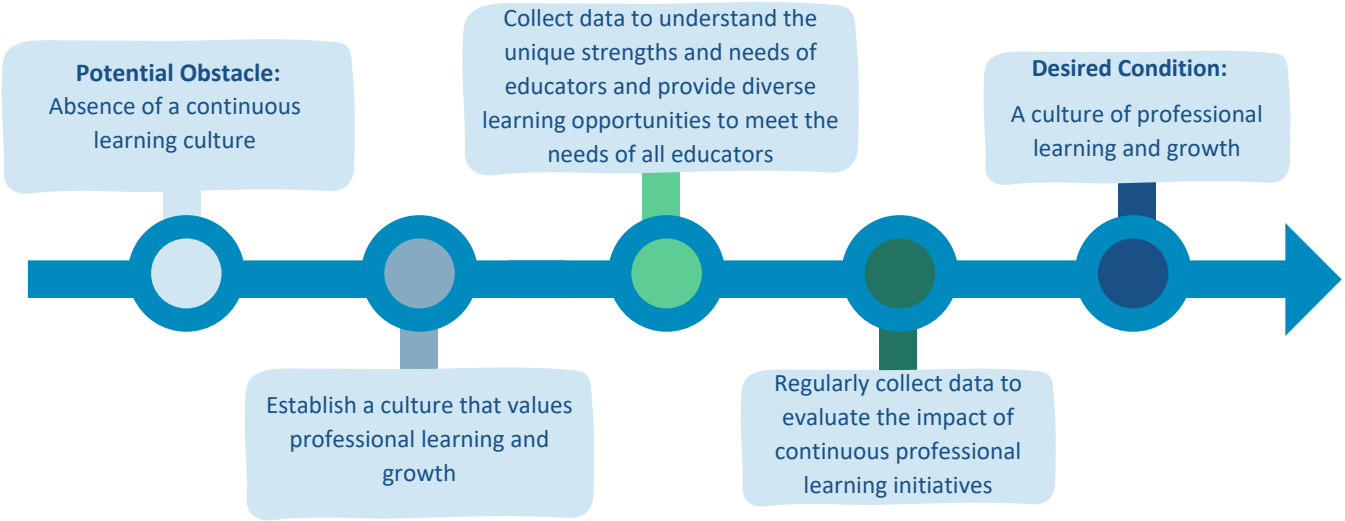
- What specific challenges do we face in securing adequate funding for professional learning?
- To what extent does the allocation of funds for professional learning align with the identified needs of educators and the strategic goals of our school or district?
- What steps can we take to strategically reallocate and/or braid funds and prioritize professional learning initiatives within our schools and districts to ensure alignment with the identified needs of educators and the strategic goals of our educational community?
- Have we considered how to best utilize Title II, Part A funds toward professional learning?

5. Continuous Professional Learning

Developing a culture of continuous learning requires an organizational culture that values learning, has leadership support, provides learning resources, and works toward a clear and shared professional learning vision. Leadership commitment and support are particularly important, as they set the tone for the importance of learning and growth within the organization. Moreover, the availability of professional learning opportunities, access to coaching, and the presence of a supportive work environment contribute significantly to fostering a culture of continuous learning (Uy et al., 2024). Establishing a continuous learning culture comes with its own challenges, such as resistance to change, time constraints, budget limitations, and competing priorities that may interfere with learning initiatives. Careful planning and coordination are needed to ensure equitable access to learning for all staff to address skill gaps and align continuous learning initiatives with the vision and goals.

Leadership commitment and support are particularly important, as they set the tone for the importance of learning and growth within the organization. Moreover, the availability of professional learning opportunities, access to coaching, and the presence of a supportive work environment contribute significantly to fostering a culture of continuous learning.

Leaders who champion a variety of professional learning strategies, such as learning walks, PLCs, coaching, mentoring, workshops, etc., are more successful in establishing environments that foster ongoing skill and knowledge development. Leaders who endorse and prioritize continuous professional learning by allocating resources, fostering psychological safety, and promoting knowledge sharing inspire educators to participate in continuous improvement and innovation. It is crucial that, along with formal learning opportunities, there is space and time for informal learning. Informal learning can be self-directed learning, peer interactions, or on-the-job experiences, which contribute to skill development and knowledge acquisition.



Continuous Professional Learning Checklist for Action

- What measures are taken to ensure that individuals responsible for providing professional learning receive the necessary support to carry out their roles effectively?
- Who is responsible for providing professional learning? How can distributed leadership be used to build capacity?
- What structures do we have in place to provide real-time coaching and feedback to PL facilitators?
- What structures exist for collaborative reflection and discussion around student data?
- How do we provide professional learning opportunities and support for educators to use data to inform their instructional practices effectively?
- What types of data are currently collected at both the grade and school levels? How are these data collected, organized, and analyzed to inform decision-making?

An Example of the Framework in Action: The Rhody School District

Finally, as a central component of developing and implementing a professional learning plan around listening comprehension for all K-3 learners including MLLs, RSD leaders routinely reflected on the organizational considerations necessary to drive equitable student outcomes and educator effectiveness in these (and other) areas. The shared instructional vision was ingrained within the school community and infused into all professional learning experiences. This collective vision reinforced the importance of prioritizing professional learning time. Building leaders ensured that staff were not burdened with additional duties during collaborative planning time. Schedules were designed to provide professional learning leaders ample preparation time. Distributed leadership strategies cultivated expertise and collaboration among staff. Clear structures were established for timely coaching and feedback, promoting continuous improvement and shared responsibility among all parties, thus fostering a culture of continuous learning.

Part II: Curriculum-Based Professional Learning Using High-Quality Curriculum Materials

Overview

Part I of this guidebook introduced a framework for teams across Rhode Island to develop **comprehensive** professional learning systems to meet the needs of their students and educators.

Part II builds on this by focusing on the **specific considerations for creating high-quality systems of professional learning related to the implementation and use of high-quality curriculum materials (HQCM).**

In 2019, RIGL§ 16.22.30-33 was passed, requiring all Rhode Island LEAs to adopt HQCMs in K-12 schools that are: (1) aligned with academic standards, (2) aligned with curriculum frameworks, and (3) aligned with statewide standardized tests (e.g., RICAS, PSAT/SAT), where applicable. **Once districts and schools adopt these HQCMs, educators need high-quality curriculum-based professional learning (CBPL) to support effective implementation.** Part II of this guidebook assists professional learning planners in providing this support.

Many HQCMs include initial professional learning from third-party vendors. However, ongoing professional learning is typically necessary to sustain effective implementation. **Using this framework and guidebook alongside vendor-provided professional learning ensures that all professional learning experiences are high-quality and well-integrated into a school or district's broader plan.**

Each of the following sections aligns with those in Part I, outlining what professional learning leaders **need to know** and **what they need to do** to strengthen each component **through the lens of CBPL**. Before diving into CBPL-specific guidance, we review RIDE's definitions of HQCMs and CBPL, their importance, and how HQCM implementation steps align with the overall system of professional learning in schools and districts.

What are High-Quality Curriculum Materials?

High-quality curriculum is essential to ensure that materials meet rigorous standards, are grounded in research-based practices, and include materials that are designed to meet the needs of diverse learners (Darling-Hammond, 2017). When materials are identified as high-quality, schools are relieved of the task of creating resources from scratch—resources that often lack rigorous vetting to ensure they align with standards, are evidence-based, and support diverse learners.

RIDE uses a few factors to determine if materials are high-quality, primarily using information from EdReports, a non-profit, independent organization that uses teams of trained educators to conduct reviews of K-12 English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science curricula. Informed by EdReports as a baseline, RIDE's list of HQCM includes only curricula that are:

- aligned with academic standards;
- aligned with the curriculum frameworks; and
- aligned with the statewide standardized test(s) (i.e. RICAS, PSAT/SAT), where applicable.

It is important to note that while having a 'green-rated' curriculum as outlined by the above factors is a solid foundation, it is not sufficient to ensure alignment with local instructional priorities and student needs. The curriculum adoption process must also consider an LEA's instructional vision, diverse student needs, culturally responsive and sustaining education (CRSE), and the inclusion of foundational reading skills within ELA curriculums.

Furthermore, it's important to note that 'green-rated' HQCM for Rhode Island districts have only been identified for ELA and Mathematics and EdReports has identified a select few 'green-rated' HQCMs for Science. This means content areas that do not have 'green-rated' materials must conduct their own exploration and evaluation of materials independently. Below are tools and resources that can be used to support this process:

- ***Social Studies*:** The Rhode Island Social Studies Review Tool for Selecting High-Quality Curriculum Materials is designed to be used when assessing core and supplemental instructional materials for selection and adoption at the school or LEA level or to review existing Social Studies instructional materials. While this rubric is specifically designed for Social Studies, the content within the rubric can be transferred to other content areas and can be used as a foundational tool for curriculum review.

- ***World Languages*:** The World Languages Curriculum Framework includes tools, resources, and guidance for selecting and implementing World Language curricula. *See Section 2, Part 5 and Part 6.*

- ***The Arts:*** The Arts Curriculum Framework includes tools, resources, and guidance for selecting and implementing Arts curricula. See section *Selecting High-Quality Curriculum Materials for the Arts.*

- RIDE has developed HQCM Review Tools to support local teams in reviewing materials as part of the curriculum selection process to ensure alignment with the requirements of high-quality curriculum selection and legislation. The use of these review tools, within the selection process, is designed to support LEA teams in becoming critical consumers of curriculum materials.

What are the competencies needed to effectively implement HQCM?

The Rhode Island High-Quality Curriculum Materials (HQCM) Professional Learning Educator Competencies (***coming soon***) articulate the key knowledge, mindsets, and skills educators should possess in order to effectively implement high-quality curriculum materials. These competencies guide the practices and professional learning opportunities for both current in-service educators as well as Education Preparation Providers (EPPs) and aspiring educators.

Professional learning leaders should use the competencies as part of their larger professional learning plan to:

- Support educators in understanding the **why** and **how** of HQCM and how it contributes to better learning outcomes for all students
- Support educators in understanding how to effectively plan for instruction using HQCM
- Support educators in understanding how to effectively deliver instruction using HQCM

What is Curriculum-Based Professional Learning and why is it important?

As introduced above, CBPL refers to professional learning around the use of specific curriculum materials. Such professional learning is designed to enhance educator knowledge, skills, and practices related to curriculum design, implementation, and assessment. Given this, CBPL should be informed by RIDE's Curriculum Frameworks and any HQCMs that have been adopted. CBPL typically includes collaborative learning experiences aimed at empowering and supporting educators to effectively internalize and implement curriculum resources, enhance instructional effectiveness, differentiate instruction, and promote equitable student outcomes.

Providing educators access to HQCM is a foundational step to improving equitable student outcomes (Steiner, Magee & Jensen, 2018); however, access alone is only the first step. Comprehensive and sustained professional learning efforts are necessary to support educators in effectively utilizing HQCM to enhance student outcomes. A study by Supovitz, Sirinides, and May (2010) examined the impact of CBPL on educators' instructional practices.

They found that while many professional learning experiences provided initial exposure to HQCM, the depth and sustained support needed for full implementation was often lacking. Educators reported needing more ongoing support, coaching, and opportunities for collaboration to effectively integrate HQCM into their teaching practices.

Comprehensive and sustained professional learning efforts are necessary to support educators in effectively utilizing HQCM to enhance student outcomes.

In a significant finding, RAND researchers (2023) reported that in Rhode Island, the use of standards-aligned curriculum materials in ELA and math by educators has doubled from 2019 to 2023. The increase in the usage of HQIM, encouraged by school leaders, needs to be examined further. The study shows that more educators are using the materials for about 50% of their instructional time, while a lower percentage reported using them for about 75% of the time. Additionally, about 50% of Rhode Island educators found the materials too challenging for the majority of their students. The perception that students find the materials demanding suggests that educators need more ongoing, job-embedded support in scaffolding and enriching learning for students who need them, **without compromising the rigor of the grade-level content**.

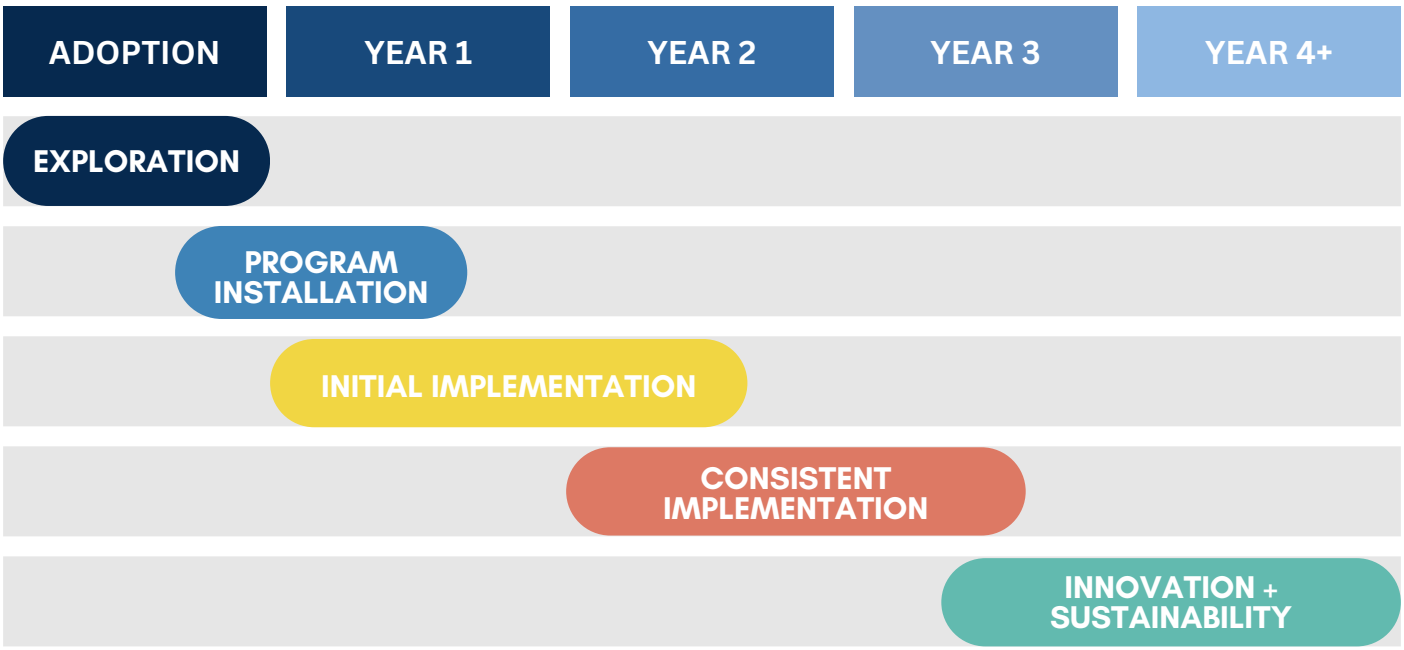
RAND researchers highlighted that about 30-40% of educators reported engaging in collaborative learning and workshops more than 50% of the time. In contrast, only 12% of educators in Rhode Island received coaching to improve their practice. This indicates that educators in Rhode Island would benefit from sustained and job-embedded professional learning. The importance of sustained and job-embedded professional learning for the successful implementation of HQCM is well documented (Borko, 2004; Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Guskey, 2002; Desimone, 2009; Wei et al., 2009). **The researchers found that one-time workshops or brief training sessions were less effective in producing lasting changes in instructional practices compared to more intensive and ongoing support structures.** These studies suggest that while introductory professional learning on HQCM may provide initial exposure, it may not always offer the depth of support needed for full implementation. Therefore, it is critical to implement comprehensive and ongoing CBPL to support educators in effectively using HQCM.

What are the steps of HQCM implementation and how do they fit into a professional learning plan?

Effective implementation of HQCMs is a marathon, not a sprint, replete with rocky pavement along the way. Decades of research on implementation science reveal that people tend to move through a set of well-defined but nonlinear stages when implementing a new program, including new HQCMs (Fixsen, 2009). Understanding the different stages of the HQCM implementation journey and what educators should focus on during each stage can make navigating it less overwhelming.

In general, it will take three or more years to effectively implement a new curriculum once it has been selected and purchased. The chart below documents the journey from Year 1 (establishing structures and policies; using materials) to Year 2 (routinizing structures, policies, and practices; skillfully using materials) to years three and beyond (adapting, innovating, and sustaining) (CCSSO, 2024). Given this information, it is essential professional learning leaders and teams consider what educators need when implementing new HQCMs, as well as how this fits into the larger professional learning system and plans. In other words, effective implementation requires HQPL that aligns with other professional learning activities. Thus, as mentioned, the sections below provide guidance on how to integrate CBPL into a broader professional learning system and plan.

THE FIVE STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION



EXPLORATION
Review and selection of HQCM with key staff and invested parties.

PROGRAM INSTALLATION
Educators have access to HQCM, leaders establish or revise systems and structures for support.

INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION
Leaders set and monitor expectations for implementation and educators use the materials as intended.

CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION
HQCM become integrated into regular practices, policies, and procedures; educators skillfully use HQCM

INNOVATION + SUSTAINABILITY
Educators make smart adaptations to the materials so all students can access meaningful grade-level instruction every day.

Adapted from CCSSO, 2024

Part II - Section I: Center Professional Learning for HQCMs Around Equitable Student Outcomes

Overview

Having access to HQCM is an important component of increasing equitable access to a rigorous education that prepares every student for college and career. Research has shown that effective professional learning focused on high-quality curriculum can lead to improved instructional practices and student achievement (Desimone et al., 2002). When educators engage in ongoing learning opportunities that focus on understanding and implementing a curriculum effectively, they are better equipped to design learning experiences that meet the needs of all learners, including those from marginalized or underserved communities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Additionally, CBPL enables educators to critically examine and adapt instructional materials to ensure they are culturally responsive and relevant to the lived experiences of their students. By promoting culturally relevant pedagogy and inclusive teaching practices, CBPL contributes to creating a more equitable learning environment where all students have the opportunity to succeed.

Instructional Coherence

Instructional coherence means every element of an instructional program - from core instruction to interventions to adjusted or extended time to the assessments used to measure learning - all work in concert, not in opposition, to advance the same set of priorities, goals, and grade-level student experiences. Students who struggle in their general education classrooms academically often receive a range of interventions to help them catch up (e.g. intervention blocks, tutoring, after-school programs, and summer school). Oftentimes, these interventions do not align with what students are learning in their core instruction. This makes it harder for students to make the connections they need to understand grade-level content. As such, professional learning plays a critical role in fostering instructional coherence by providing educators with the knowledge, skills, and collaborative opportunities needed to align all instructional elements effectively (CCSSO, 2024).

A related aspect of coherence is also access. Materials must be well-organized and easy to access for all staff. A common challenge schools and districts face when adopting third-party materials is making all digital and print materials easy for staff to access and use. When access is difficult, educators are less likely to use the provided resources, thus depriving students of the opportunity to engage with them.

What You Need To Know

High-quality curriculum materials are not created with your specific students in mind. Therefore, it is important to consider the unique and diverse needs of your students when exploring, vetting, adopting, and launching any curricula. While HQCMs serve as a valuable foundation, it's essential to recognize that they too have limitations and require supplementation to fully address students' needs and enhance learning experiences. In addition to the information outlined in Part I, professional learning leaders should consider the following in regard to CBPL:

- ***Critical Evaluation:*** Educators must critically assess instructional materials for accuracy, bias, inclusivity, accessibility, and cultural relevance. One way this can be done is by conducting an equity audit such as The Culturally Responsive English Language Arts Scorecard published by NYU Metro Center. The Scorecard helps parents, educators, students, and community members determine the extent to which their schools' English Language Arts curricula are (or are not) culturally responsive. While this audit is specific to English Language Arts, the content of the Scorecard can be transferable across a range of contents and subject areas. RIDE's review tools for cultural responsiveness and multilingual learners are also useful.

- ***Supplementation:*** Recognizing HQCM limitations and the need for supplementation is essential to ensure student access and equitable outcomes. Professional learning should assist educators in understanding and acknowledging limitations in the curriculum and help build skills in effectively supplementing materials to meet students' needs while maintaining grade-level standards and rigor as a part of implementation efforts.

What You Need To Do

To ensure that the goal of equitable student outcomes remains central when delivering CBPL, educational leaders should strive to support their educators in thoughtfully adapting and supplementing HQCMs to keep equitable student outcomes at the center and critically evaluate for access, rigor, accuracy, bias, inclusivity, and cultural relevance. Professional learning leaders should use the *Checklist for Action* on the next page when centering HQPL around equitable student outcomes.

Center Professional Learning for HQCMs Around Equitable Student Outcomes Checklist for Action

Evaluate HQCM for Diversity and Inclusivity:

- Does our professional learning plan include opportunities to evaluate how well the HQCM reflects the cultural backgrounds and experiences of our students? If not, what needs to change?
- Does our professional learning include opportunities to evaluate whether the HQCM provides options for differentiation to meet diverse student needs? If not, what needs to change?
- What professional learning is needed to ensure the HQCM are accessible for students with varying abilities, learning styles, and language proficiencies?

Involve Diverse Perspectives and Voices:

- How is the incorporation of diverse perspectives and voices prioritized within professional learning activities centered around HQCM, promoting inclusivity and equity?
- How are discussions designed to specifically address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, fostering an environment of mutual understanding and respect among educators engaging with HQCM?
- In what ways do the professional learning activities surrounding HQCM encourage educators to reflect on their own biases and assumptions, promoting a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives?

Communicate Leadership's Commitment:

- How does leadership demonstrate a strong commitment to professional learning that aligns with supporting student priorities, equity, and social justice, particularly within the context of HQCM?
- How do leaders advocate for policies and practices that prioritize equitable student outcomes, ensuring that resources, support, and accountability mechanisms are in place to achieve them?
- How are leaders actively involved in fostering a culture of equity and social justice within professional learning initiatives focused on HQCM, both through their actions and their communication?

Instructional Coherence:

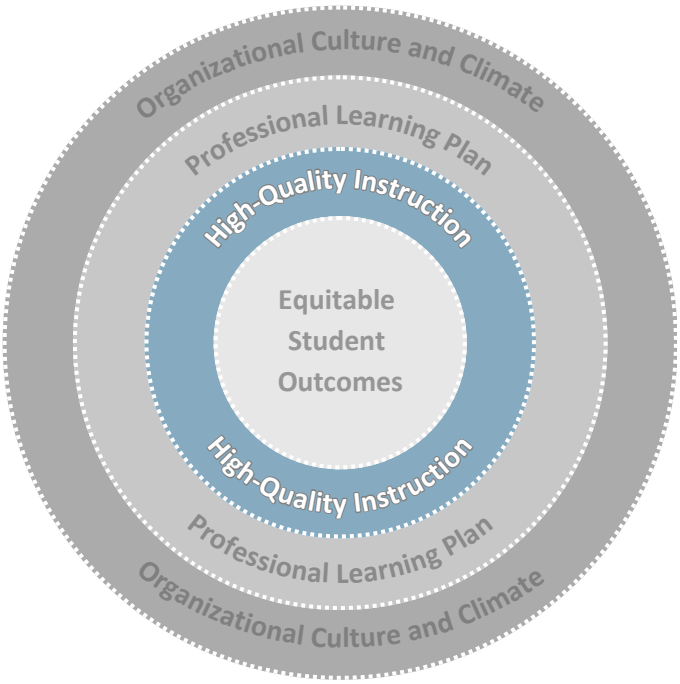
- What supports are already included within the core HQCMs?
- What professional learning is needed to determine if and how Tier II materials align with core materials?
- What elements of coherence should be present if a material is separate from the core?

Consult Additional Resources: *See additional resources available through RIDE's website.*

- RIDE's CRSE Review Tools are intended to be used by teams of educators and district leaders to understand the degree to which a set of curriculum materials is reflective of student identities, lived experiences, and instructional needs from a global context.
- The Culturally Responsive English Language Arts Scorecard helps families, educators, students, and community members determine the extent to which their schools' English Language Arts curricula are (or are not) culturally responsive. While this audit is specific to English Language Arts, the content of the Scorecard can be transferable across a range of contents and subject areas.

Part II - Section II: Focus Curriculum-Based Professional Learning on High-Quality Instruction

Overview



While HQCMs are essential to providing all students the opportunity to learn what they need for success in college and a career of their choosing, high-quality instruction is also needed. Standards define what students should know and be able to do. High-quality curriculum materials aligned to standards provide educators with a roadmap and tools for how students can acquire that knowledge and skill. It is high-quality instruction that makes the curriculum come alive for students. High-quality instruction gives all students access and opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills defined by the standards with a culturally responsive and sustaining approach.

What You Need to Know

As discussed in Part I, translating a high-quality curriculum into high-quality instruction involves much more than unpacking a curriculum box and diving in. This is because no single set of materials can be a perfect match for the needs of all the students that educators will be responsible for teaching. Therefore, educators must intentionally prepare to translate high-quality curriculum materials into high-quality instruction. Professional learning leaders should consider the following:

- ***Vision Setting:*** A clear and collaborative shared vision for what exceptional instruction looks like, sounds like, and feels like is essential to high-quality instruction using HQCM. This alignment will promote consistency and accountability throughout schools and districts.

- ***Goal Setting***: Goal setting is essential for accountability in curriculum implementation, driving progress, and identifying areas needing support. It also fosters professional learning by encouraging reflection and the pursuit of resources to enhance instructional effectiveness. Start by defining your goals and aligning them with your system's mission, values, and overall objectives. Examine the core beliefs that support these goals to maintain a meaningful approach. Establish what success looks like both in the long term and within the first year, setting clear benchmarks for evaluation and adjustment. A helpful resource for goal setting is the Curriculum Support Guide Workbook (beginning on page 31) by Instruction Partners.

- ***Collaborative Planning:*** Dedicating time and space for educators to engage in collaborative planning sessions around the implementation of HQCMs and a shared vision for high-quality instruction ensures that all team members are aligned, time is used efficiently and effectively, and instructional practices are consistently improved.

What You Need to Do

To sustain effective implementation of HQCMs, as well as ensure that all students have equitable opportunities to learn and prosper through instructional coherence, it is essential that educators are familiar with and routinely use instructional practices and methods that are research- and evidence-based. Below are instructional practices that are essential to effective teaching and learning and are common across all disciplines and curriculum frameworks. In addition to the *Checklist for Action* outlined in Part I, professional learning leaders should consider the following for CBPL: *(see next page)*

Focus Curriculum-Based Professional Learning on High-Quality Instruction Checklist for Action

Lesson Preparation:

- How does our professional learning plan support educators in using preparation protocols to effectively internalize all components of HQCMs?
- What specific strategies are provided during professional learning to support educators in deeply understanding and effectively delivering lessons?
- What professional learning is needed to support educators in supplementing HQCMs based on their evaluation of content while maintaining rigorous grade-level standards?

Asset-Based Stance:

- How can professional learning opportunities support educators in leveraging students' strengths and assets?
- How can professional learning help educators activate prior knowledge and connect new learning to diverse experiences?
- How can professional learning assist educators in respecting individual differences in their teaching approaches?

Clear Learning Goals:

- Do professional learning opportunities support educators in being able to clearly know and understand what students are learning and why it's important?
- How does professional learning equip educators with an understanding of what proficient student work looks like?
- How does professional learning support educators in assisting students to recognize when they have achieved their learning goals?

Student-Centered Engagement:

- Does professional learning focus on ensuring teaching techniques are student-centered?
- How can professional learning promote individual and collaborative sense-making activities?
- What strategies can professional learning employ to support educators in fostering high levels of student engagement?
- How can professional learning encourage educators to leverage metacognitive reflection in students?

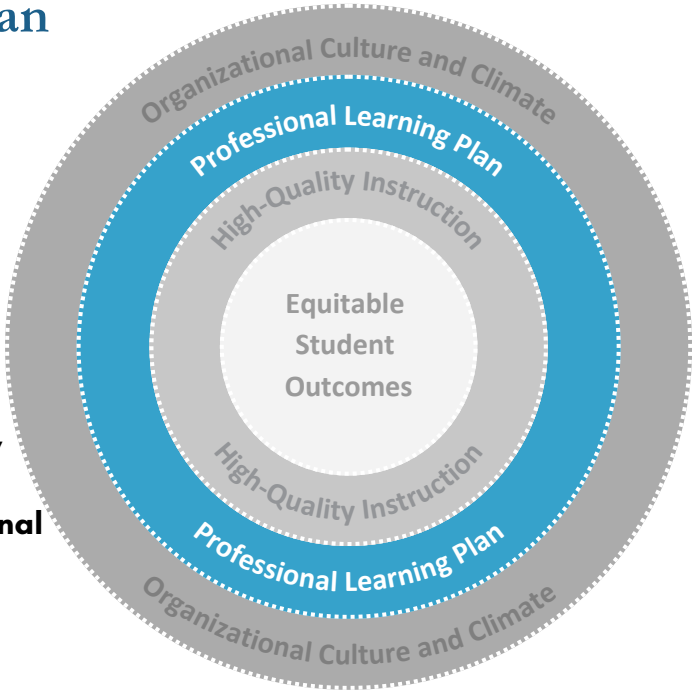
Academic Discourse:

- How does professional learning support the facilitation and encouragement of student use of academic discourse?
- What questioning and discussion techniques can professional learning help educators employ to foster rich peer-to-peer interactions?
- How can professional learning assist in integrating content-specific language into all aspects of learning?

Formative Assessment:

- Is professional learning guiding educators in the utilization of qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction?
- How does professional learning support educators in analyzing qualitative and quantitative assessment data, including student self-assessments?
- What modifications can professional learning help educators implement based on assessment data to enhance student outcomes?
- How does professional learning assist us in delivering timely and constructive feedback to students?

Part II - Section III: Develop a Curriculum-Based Professional Learning Plan



Overview

Curriculum-based professional learning should seamlessly integrate into an LEA's overarching professional learning plan, ensuring alignment with broader district and LEA goals, initiatives, and school improvement plans. **It should complement, rather than overshadow, the focus of HQPL, serving as an essential component within professional learning structures.**

What You Need to Know

- ***Integrated Learning:*** Professional learning topics should never be isolated. Districts and schools often juggle multiple priorities (e.g., social-emotional learning, multi-language learner differentiation, equity initiatives). **Instead of tackling these priorities separately, professional learning plans should strategically integrate elements from all areas.** For instance, a school focusing on supporting multilingual learners could embed that professional learning within the context of strengthening HQCM protocols. By identifying connections between priorities, educators can streamline efforts and develop cohesive strategies that address multiple objectives simultaneously.

- ***Diverse Structures:*** Utilize a variety of professional learning structures, as outlined in *Part I Section 3: Creating a Professional Learning Plan*. A CBPL plan should incorporate diverse approaches to professional learning such as workshops, coaching, collaborative PLCs, and learning walks. This ensures that professional learning is ongoing, consistent, accessible, job-embedded, relevant, and meaningful.

- ***Sacred and Dedicated Time:*** Professional learning plans should guarantee that educators have dedicated time during their workdays for CBPL. These plans should pinpoint specific times within the school day, week, month, and year in which collaborative learning can occur. It is essential not only to embed time within the plan but also to foster a culture that respects and prioritizes the sanctity of CBPL time. This means avoiding rescheduling or pulling educators away for other tasks during their CBPL sessions.

What You Need to Do

Professional learning leaders should ideally work with a professional learning team to craft a professional learning plan, as outlined in *Part I Section 3: Creating a Professional Learning Plan*. While crafting these plans, professional learning leaders should ensure alignment with school improvement plans and consider how to integrate HQCMs as part of their larger professional learning plan.

Develop a Curriculum-Based Professional Learning Plan Checklist for Action

Integrated Learning:

- Are CBPL topics being addressed in isolation or are they strategically integrated into broader priorities to streamline efforts and develop cohesive strategies?
- How are we ensuring that CBPL incorporates elements from multiple areas (e.g., social-emotional learning, multilingual learner differentiation, equity initiatives)?
- How are educators encouraged to identify connections between different priorities?

Diverse Structures:

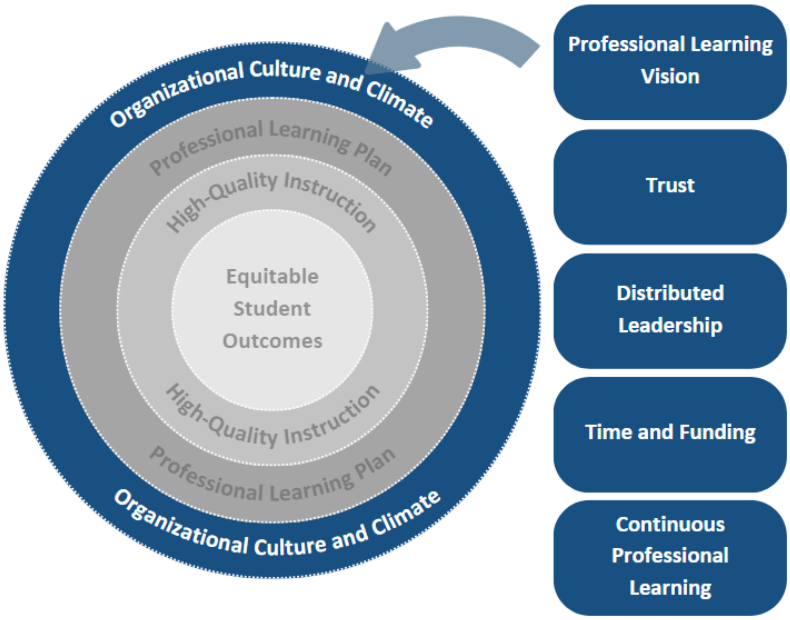
- Does our CBPL plan incorporate diverse approaches such as workshops, coaching, collaborative planning, and learning walks as outlined in *Part I*, *Section 3*?
- Are we ensuring that CBPL is accessible, job-embedded, relevant, and meaningful through these diverse approaches?

Sacred and Dedicated Time:

- Is CBPL happening and are the intended participants attending?
- Is CBPL time directly integrated into the school schedule?
- Has a culture been fostered that values and respects CBPL time as sacred and essential for professional growth?
- How are interruptions, such as rescheduling or pulling educators away for other tasks, avoided during CBPL sessions?
- Have clear roles, responsibilities, and protocols been established for professional learning to structure the time effectively and maximize productivity?

Part II - Section IV: Consider Organizational Culture and Climate

Overview



Change is inherently challenging, and this is especially true when the adoption of new instructional materials requires educators to adjust their teaching practices, curriculum delivery methods, and their mindsets. Resistance to change can arise from various factors, including fear of the unknown, perceived loss of autonomy, skepticism about the effectiveness of the new approach, and most notably, especially with HQCM implementation, fear of taking a risk and trying something new for the first time. This is where the importance of school and district climate and culture becomes essential. When school and district cultures prioritize collaboration, professional growth, and continuous improvement, educators are more likely to feel supported in implementing HQCM for the first time and successfully develop an asset-based mindset around the use of the materials. Moreover, a strong climate and culture provide the necessary support systems, resources, and structures to navigate the complexities of change, ultimately leading to stronger teaching practices and improved student outcomes.

What You Need to Know

- ***Assessment of Readiness and Impact:*** Evaluate CBPL's readiness for integration within the district, considering factors like existing culture, capacity for change, and potential barriers such as resistance from invested parties. Assess how CBPL will impact the school community, including educators, students, and families.

- ***Invested Party Engagement and Buy-In:*** Engage key parties from the outset of the CBPL implementation process, seeking their input, feedback, and endorsement. Identify influential individuals within the school community who can champion CBPL and build coalitions of support around the initiative.

- ***Understanding the Challenge:*** Recognize that implementing CBPL will require significant adjustments for educators, including shifts in teaching practices, curriculum delivery methods, and mindset. Provide support and resources to help educators adapt to these changes and embrace CBPL effectively.

- ***Support Systems for Success:*** Ensure that CBPL is supported by adequate resources, structures, and professional learning opportunities within the school and district. Prioritize collaboration among educators, ongoing professional growth, and a commitment to continuous improvement to enhance teaching practices and student outcomes.

- ***Empowerment and Involvement:*** Empower educators to actively participate in the CBPL implementation process by involving them in decision-making, soliciting their input, and fostering a sense of ownership and accountability. Encourage collaboration and innovation at all levels of the organization to drive the successful integration of CBPL.

- ***Managing Resistance and Obstacles:*** Anticipate potential sources of resistance to CBPL and proactively address them through transparent communication and support. Provide learning opportunities and resources to help individuals and teams overcome challenges and adapt to the changes associated with CBPL.

- ***Celebrating Successes and Milestones:*** Celebrate achievements and milestones throughout the CBPL implementation journey. Recognize the efforts and contributions of individuals and teams who have embraced CBPL and made meaningful progress toward its goals. Use these successes to inspire and motivate continued engagement and commitment to CBPL.

What You Need to Do

Creating a positive and supportive environment within the school and district is foundational when exploring, adopting, implementing, and innovating with HQCM. For a detailed *Checklist for Action*, refer to *Part I Section 4: Organizational Climate and Culture*. Additionally, the following *Checklist for Action* can be considered to support CBPL:

Consider Organizational Culture and Climate Checklist for Action

- What factors, including existing culture, capacity for change, and potential barriers (e.g., resistance from invested parties), should be considered when implementing CBPL?
- How can any changes be clearly and explicitly grounded in purpose and alignment with vision and strategic plans to provide a compelling rationale?
- What steps should be taken to ensure all educators receive HQCMs before the school year starts, and how should misaligned materials be removed from classrooms?
- Who should be identified as implementation champions at both the district and school levels to oversee local implementation of materials and professional learning?
- Who should be responsible for implementing the professional learning plan, and what should the content, features, and structures of the plan be based on?
- How should lesson internalization policies be updated to encourage educators to tailor lessons to their specific students' needs?
- In what ways are assessment and grading policies aligned with and support the use of HQCM assessments as part of a comprehensive assessment system?

Consult Additional Resources:

- Tools like the Curriculum Implementation Change Framework (CICF) can help leaders strengthen curricular implementation by understanding, in a systematic way, how educators use their materials and what educators and leaders think about the materials.

Conclusion

The effective integration of HQCMs into professional learning plans is essential for driving equitable student outcomes across Rhode Island districts and schools. **As outlined throughout this guide, the implementation of HQCMs necessitates more than just their provision; it requires a strategic and comprehensive approach to professional learning.** The research highlights that while HQCMs offer a solid foundation, sustained and targeted professional learning is critical for maximizing impact. By aligning professional learning initiatives with the unique needs of educators and students, and by particularly focusing on CBPL, districts can ensure that educators are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively utilize HQCMs in their classrooms.

Moreover, by embedding CBPL within a broader system of professional learning, districts can foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, ultimately advancing educational equity and enhancing student outcomes. This comprehensive approach acknowledges the interconnectedness between professional learning, high-quality curriculum materials, and evidence-based instructional practices, and their collective role in driving positive educational outcomes for all students.

Key Terms and Definitions

Andragogy: An adult learning theory that identifies characteristics of adult learners such as self-concept, prior life experience, motivation and readiness to learn, and preferred learning environments (Knowles, 2014).

Collaborative Planning: Small groups of educators engage with lessons and with data to differentiate, internalize, and practice delivery.

Content Knowledge: educators' deep understanding of the subject matter they teach, including key concepts, principles, and skills.

Curriculum-Based Professional Learning: Professional learning that focuses on the understanding and use of specific curriculum materials and enhances educator knowledge, skills, and practices, related to curriculum design, implementation and assessment.

Data-Informed: The use of diverse data points, including equity data, to make decisions about professional learning systems.

Differentiated Coaching: Engaging with another educator to provide or receive non-evaluative, actionable, and content-specific feedback.

Distributed Leadership: An inclusive approach to school leadership that builds organizational culture and climate, shifting the perspective of principal-as-sole-leader to recognizing the collective leadership roles played by educators, staff, students, parents, and community members.

Diverse: Including many different types of people, including race, gender, age, sexual orientation, culture, beliefs, and many other criteria.

Equitable: All students have access to grade-level resources, opportunities, and support they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Equitable Student Outcomes: Equitable student outcomes include outcomes in academic areas as well as social and emotional well-being, healthy lifestyle choices, cultural competence, graduation and post-secondary readiness, and community engagement. Equitable student outcomes strive to eliminate inequities in access, participation, and achievement.

High-Quality Curricular Materials: Materials that meet rigorous standards, are grounded in research-based practices, and include materials that are designed to meet the needs of diverse learners (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

High-Quality Instruction: High-quality instruction encompasses engaging, differentiated, culturally responsive, and data-driven curricula, teaching practices, and learning environments (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). High-quality instruction supports multiple educator shifts, including from a deficit-driven lens to an asset-based lens; from an activity-driven classroom to a goal-based classroom; from a teacher-centered classroom to a student-driven classroom; from limited discourse to academic rich discourse; and from a materials-driven learning environment to a data-driven one.

Checklists for Action

The *Checklists for Action* have been compiled below from each section for ease of reference. We recommend professional learning teams either 1) have individuals complete the checklists separately and share and discuss their responses as a team, or 2) have the team go through the checklists and discuss each item one at a time. The *Checklists for Action* are intended to help teams identify what steps they need to take to move forward with their professional learning planning.

Part I: High-Quality Professional Learning

Equitable Student Outcomes Checklist for Action

Data Analysis:

- What is our plan to analyze student performance data, disaggregated by demographics, to identify achievement gaps and disparities?
- How do we intend to identify priority needs for students based on data insights?
- How will we consider disparities in student outcomes along the lines of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, ability, and other characteristics?

Goal Setting:

- How do we plan to clearly articulate the equitable student outcomes we aim to achieve through our professional learning system?
- What steps are we taking to align objectives and goals with the broader goals of promoting inclusivity, equity, and justice for all students?

Inclusivity and Diversity:

- How will we ensure the inclusion of diverse perspectives and voices in our professional learning system?
- What strategies do we have to address diversity, equity, and inclusion in our professional learning?

Embedding Equity Principles:

- How do we plan to integrate key principles of equity into the design and implementation of our professional learning opportunities?
- What measures will we take to provide equitable access to resources, opportunities, and support for all educators, especially those from historically marginalized or disadvantaged groups and those serving historically marginalized or disadvantaged populations?

Family and Community Engagement:

- What methods will we use to actively engage families, communities, and other invested parties in our professional learning efforts?
- How do we plan to build partnerships with community organizations to address systemic barriers to student success?

Leadership Commitment:

- How will we demonstrate strong leadership commitment to professional learning that supports student priorities, equity, and social justice in education?
- What policies and practices will we implement to prioritize equitable student outcomes and provide necessary resources and support?

Consult Additional Resources: *See additional resources available through RIDE's website.*

- Rhode Island's Blueprint for Multilingual Learner Success and Strategic Plan for Multilingual Learner Success identify sustained effective evidence-based practices to strengthen services and outcomes for Multilingual Learners (MLLs). The Blueprint specifies the systemic practices required for MLLs to succeed and is the underlying policy framework for the Strategic Plan for Multilingual Learner Success.
- The Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium's Equity Audit consists of three questionnaires for school leaders, educators, and staff to assess if the school community is creating a positive, equitable learning environment that allows students and staff to perform at their highest levels.
- Rhode Island's Social and Emotional Learning Standards are intended to assist school staff, families, and students in identifying Social and Emotional Skills that will help students succeed.
- Rhode Island's Culturally Linguistically Responsive Sustaining Educational Framework (***coming soon***) provides LEAs guidance on how to apply an equity mindset when making educational decisions impacting our Rhode Island students.

High-Quality Instruction Checklist for Action

Shared Vision:

- What steps will we take to craft a collaborative shared vision for high-quality instruction incorporating key shifts?
- How will we integrate this vision into all aspects of professional learning?
- What strategies will we use to design learning experiences, provide feedback, set goals, and evaluate effectiveness based on the shared vision?

Professional Growth Goals:

- How will we create a system that empowers educators to set professional growth goals aligned with the shared vision for high-quality instruction?
- What resources, tools, and guidance will we share to aid educators in identifying areas of growth in content knowledge and pedagogical skills?
- How do we plan to incorporate opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and ongoing learning to support educators' growth goals?

Educator Evaluation:

- How will we foster a culture of trust and collaboration between educators and evaluators, emphasizing feedback and support?
- What opportunities will we provide for educators to participate in self-assessment and reflection as part of the evaluation process, empowering them to take ownership of their professional learning?

Feedback Loops:

- What protocols and mechanisms will we establish for providing timely and constructive feedback to educators, such as regular check-ins, classroom observations, peer reviews, or written reflections?
- How will we ensure that feedback is specific, actionable, and aligned with the professional growth goals identified by educators?
- What systems will we create to encourage a two-way feedback loop where educators can also provide input on the effectiveness of professional learning opportunities and the support provided by professional learning leaders?

Consult Additional Resources:

- The High-Quality Instructional Framework for MLLs to Thrive outlines major elements of high-quality core instruction for MLLs and establishes the non-negotiables in Rhode Island for MLL program administration, implementation, and evaluation, in addition to describing effective collaborative teaching models and outlining key considerations for interventions with an MTSS framework.

Professional Learning Vision Checklist for Action

- Have all invested parties contributed to creating a professional learning vision?
- What are the professional learning goals for our organization? How do these goals connect to the professional learning vision?
- Do we have a plan to communicate the professional learning vision to multiple invested parties?
- What strategies can we employ to better align professional learning activities with schoolwide priorities and goals?
- Does our organization support a culture of trust, collaboration, transparency, risk-taking, and vulnerability? How do we know?
- Does our culture reflect leaders participating in the learning alongside their educators?

Trust Checklist for Action

- Have we collected data to assess the current level of trust among our staff?
- Have we intentionally engaged in activities geared toward building trust?
- Have we implemented a process to help educators build their knowledge and teaching skills?
- What structures and practices support teacher collaboration to improve teaching practices?

Distributed Leadership Checklist for Action

- How does leadership involve invested parties in taking ownership and accountability to accomplish the professional learning vision?
- What structures are in place for invested parties to share their action steps and obstacles they face in reaching the professional learning vision?
- Can you describe the decision-making process followed by the invested parties to ensure different perspectives are taken into consideration?
- How are roles and responsibilities distributed to ensure that invested parties are held accountable?
- What structures and practices are used to measure and monitor the impact of distributed leadership on achieving HQPL?

Roles and Responsibilities Checklist for Action

- Who is responsible for providing professional learning? Are these leaders the best fit to drive various outcomes? Do they have the content knowledge and expertise to drive the work? How do I know?
- How are roles and responsibilities within the professional learning system clearly defined and communicated to all stakeholders?
- Which learning experiences are best facilitated by educators from the school? District? Outside professional learning providers?

How do leaders use educator data to identify staff with expertise in a specific content area that would be well-suited to provide professional learning to colleagues?

Time Checklist for Action

- How do our current systems prioritize professional learning time? If they do not, what must change?
- Is there dedicated and consistent time for educators and leaders to meet regularly? If not, what must change?
- How are leaders communicating to educators how professional learning time is prioritized and spent? Are these rationales connected to the vision, goals, and of relevance to educators?
- How are district and building leaders advocating for and collaborating with union leaders for ample professional learning time in contracts?

Funding Checklist for Action

- What specific challenges do we face in securing adequate funding for professional learning?
- To what extent does the allocation of funds for professional learning align with the identified needs of educators and the strategic goals of our school or district?
- What steps can we take to strategically reallocate funds and prioritize professional learning initiatives within our schools and districts to ensure alignment with the identified needs of educators and the strategic goals of our educational community?
- Have we considered how to best utilize Title II-A funds toward professional learning?

Continuous Professional Learning Checklist for Action

- What measures are taken to ensure that individuals responsible for providing professional learning receive the necessary support to carry out their roles effectively?
- Who is responsible for providing professional learning? How can distributed leadership be used to build capacity?
- What structures do we have in place to provide real-time coaching and feedback to PL facilitators?
- What structures exist for collaborative reflection and discussion around student data?
- How do we provide professional learning opportunities and support for educators to use data to inform their instructional practices effectively?
- What types of data are currently collected at both the grade and school levels? How are these data collected, organized, and analyzed to inform decision-making?

Part II: Curriculum-Based Professional Learning

Center Professional Learning for HQCMs Around Equitable Student Outcomes Checklist for Action

Evaluate HQCM for Diversity and Inclusivity:

- Does our professional learning plan include opportunities to evaluate how well the HQCM reflects the cultural backgrounds and experiences of our students? If not, what needs to change?
- Does our professional learning include opportunities to evaluate whether the HQCM provides options for differentiation to meet diverse student needs? If not, what needs to change?
- What professional learning is needed to ensure the HQCM are accessible for students with varying abilities, learning styles, and language proficiencies?

Involve Diverse Perspectives and Voices:

- How is the incorporation of diverse perspectives and voices prioritized within professional learning activities centered around HQCM, promoting inclusivity and equity?
- How are discussions designed to specifically address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, fostering an environment of mutual understanding and respect among educators engaging with HQCM?
- In what ways do the professional learning activities surrounding HQCM encourage educators to reflect on their own biases and assumptions, promoting a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives?

Communicate Leadership's Commitment:

- How does leadership demonstrate a strong commitment to professional learning that aligns with supporting student priorities, equity, and social justice, particularly within the context of HQCM?
- How do leaders advocate for policies and practices that prioritize equitable student outcomes, ensuring that resources, support, and accountability mechanisms are in place to achieve them?
- How are leaders actively involved in fostering a culture of equity and social justice within professional learning initiatives focused on HQCM, both through their actions and their communication?

Instructional Coherence:

- What professional learning is needed to determine if and how Tier II materials align with core materials?
- What supports are already included within the core HQCMs?
- What elements of coherence should be present if a material is separate from the core?

Consult Additional Resources: *See additional resources available through RIDE's website.*

- RIDE's CRSE Review Tools are intended to be used by teams of educators and district leaders to understand the degree to which a set of curriculum materials is reflective of student identities, lived experiences, and instructional needs from a global context.
- The Culturally Responsive English Language Arts Scorecard helps families, educators, students, and community members determine the extent to which their schools' English Language Arts curricula are (or are not) culturally responsive. While this audit is specific to English Language Arts, the content of the Scorecard can be transferable across a range of contents and subject areas.

Focus Curriculum-Based Professional Learning on High-Quality Instruction Checklist for Action

Lesson Preparation:

- How does our professional learning plan support educators in using preparation protocols to effectively internalize all components of HQCMs?
- What specific strategies are provided during professional learning to support educators in deeply understanding and effectively delivering lessons?
- What professional learning is needed to support educators in supplementing HQCMs based on their evaluation of content while maintaining rigorous grade-level standards?

Asset-Based Stance:

- How can professional learning opportunities support educators in leveraging students' strengths and assets?
- How can professional learning help educators activate prior knowledge and connect new learning to diverse experiences?
- How can professional learning assist educators in respecting individual differences in their teaching approaches?

Clear Learning Goals:

- Do professional learning opportunities support educators in being able to clearly know and understand what students are learning and why it's important?
- How does professional learning equip educators with an understanding of what proficient student work looks like?
- How does professional learning support educators in assisting students to recognize when they have achieved their learning goals?

Student-Centered Engagement:

- Does professional learning focus on ensuring teaching techniques are student-centered?
- How can professional learning promote individual and collaborative sense-making activities?
- What strategies can professional learning employ to support educators in fostering high levels of student engagement?
- How can professional learning encourage educators to leverage metacognitive reflection in students?

Academic Discourse:

- How does professional learning support the facilitation and encouragement of student use of academic discourse?
- What questioning and discussion techniques can professional learning help educators employ to foster rich peer-to-peer interactions?
- How can professional learning assist in integrating content-specific language into all aspects of learning?

Formative Assessment:

- Is professional learning guiding educators in the utilization of qualitative and quantitative data to inform instruction?
- How does professional learning support educators in analyzing qualitative and quantitative assessment data, including student self-assessments?
- What modifications can professional learning help educators implement based on assessment data to enhance student outcomes?
- How does professional learning assist us in delivering timely and constructive feedback to students?

Develop a Curriculum-Based Professional Learning Plan Checklist for Action

Integrated Learning:

- Are CBPL topics being addressed in isolation or are they strategically integrated into broader priorities to streamline efforts and develop cohesive strategies?
- How are we ensuring that CBPL incorporates elements from multiple areas (e.g., social-emotional learning, multilingual learner differentiation, equity initiatives)?
- How are educators encouraged to identify connections between different priorities?

Diverse Structures:

- Does our CBPL plan incorporate diverse approaches such as workshops, coaching, collaborative planning, and learning walks as outlined in *Part I*, *Section 3*?
- Are we ensuring that CBPL is accessible, job-embedded, relevant, and meaningful through these diverse approaches?

Sacred and Dedicated Time:

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