

# Cluster 6 – Professionalism

## Professionalism

Schools are, above all, environments to promote the learning of students; they are also places for the intellectual engagement of teachers, so they can better promote the learning of their students. Schools are, in other words, learning organizations for teachers, with potential realized when teachers regard themselves as members of a professional community. This community is characterized by mutual support and respect as well as by recognition of responsibility to constantly seek improvement within their practice and contribute to the life of the school and the broader professional community. Inevitably, teachers' duties extend beyond the doors of their classrooms and include activities related to the entire school, larger district, or both. These activities include service on school and district curriculum committees or engagement with parent-teacher organizations. With experience, teachers assume leadership roles in these activities or others, and in their school communities in general.

As in other professions, the complexity of teaching requires continued growth and development in order for teachers to keep their knowledge and skills current. Continuing to stay informed and develop skills allows teachers to become more effective, exercise leadership among their colleagues, and constantly refine their understanding of how to engage students in learning. Thus, growth in content and content-specific pedagogy is essential to good

teaching. To the extent technology is an aid to student learning, it's essential teachers stay abreast of developments in that area as well.

Networking with colleagues through activities such as joint planning, study groups, and lesson study provides opportunities for teachers to learn from one another. In particular, sharing perspectives while jointly examining student work can provide insight to the cognitive processes of individual students. These activities allow for job-embedded professional development. In addition, professional educators increase their effectiveness in the classroom by belonging to professional organizations (at the regional, state, or even national level), reading professional journals, and attending educational conferences, workshops, or university classes. As they gain experience and expertise, educators find ways to contribute to their colleagues and to the profession.



### Cluster 6 Focus Areas

#### **CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

and improvement are valued and consistently demonstrated through an inquiry-based, growth-focused, and results-oriented approach to professional engagement.

#### **COLLABORATION**

with colleagues occurs frequently, involves active engagement, and is characterized by commitment and trust.

#### **HONESTY & INTEGRITY**

are consistently evident in the teacher's work and in interactions with colleagues, families, community members, and students.



## Considerations

- How do teachers engage with the professional community (within the school and beyond) and demonstrate their commitment to ongoing professional learning?
- In what ways do teachers collaborate productively with one another?
- How can teachers be supported to contribute to the intellectual life of the school?
- What might be some ways the teacher engages in professional learning and takes a leadership role in the school to promote the welfare of students?
- How do teachers support a strong school culture and a climate of trust for staff, students, and families?

## Indicators

- Collaboration with colleagues for joint planning, and school/district and community initiatives (4d)
- Active engagement in workshops, courses, and activities to improve practice (1d, 4e)
- Integrity and honesty in dealing with colleagues and parents on behalf of students (4f)

Expert teachers also demonstrate professionalism in service both to students and to the profession. Teaching at the highest levels of performance requires teachers remain focused on students,

putting them first regardless of how this stance might challenge long-held assumptions, past practice, or simply an easier or more convenient procedure. For example, dialogue around issues surrounding the appropriate use of homework is certain to be spirited and reveal teachers' deep belief about student learning and how best to support it.

Accomplished teachers have a strong moral compass and are guided by the best interest of each student, even when this ethos involves challenging long-established school policies or procedures. They display professionalism in a number of ways. For example, they conduct interactions with colleagues in a manner notable for honesty and integrity. Furthermore, they know their students' needs and can readily access resources that may extend beyond the classroom. Seeking greater flexibility in how school rules and policies are applied, expert teachers advocate for their students in ways that might challenge traditional views and the educational establishment. They also display professionalism in approaches to problem-solving and decision-making, with student needs constantly in mind. Finally, accomplished teachers consistently adhere to school and district policies and procedures but are willing to work to improve those that may be outdated or ineffective.



## Cluster 6 - Professionalism

UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
<p>The teacher makes no attempt to continue with professional learning or engage with the professional community to advance the interests of students, through some combination of the following:</p>	<p>The teacher makes sporadic or inconsistent attempts to continue with professional learning or engage with the professional community to advance the interests of students, through some combination of the following:</p>	<p>The teacher makes genuine attempts to continue with professional learning and to engage with the professional community to advance the interests of students, through some combination of the following:</p>	<p>The teacher demonstrates a deep commitment to continuing professional learning and engages regularly with the professional community to advance the interests of students, through some combination of the following, in addition to elements listed under Proficient:</p>
<p>The teacher's relationships with colleagues are characterized by negativity and lack of trust.</p>	<p>The teacher has cordial relationships with colleagues and is trusted by them.</p>	<p>The teacher has supportive, collaborative, and trusting relationships with colleagues and is known for having high standards of integrity.</p>	<p>The teacher takes initiative and a leadership role in organizing collaborative projects.</p>
<p>The teacher avoids involvement both in school activities and in district and community projects.</p>	<p>When asked, the teacher participates in school activities as well as district and community projects.</p>	<p>The teacher frequently volunteers to participate in school events and in school, district, and community projects.</p>	<p>The teacher regularly contributes to and leads significant district and community projects.</p>
<p>The teacher ignores or avoids opportunities to participate in activities for professional learning.</p>	<p>The teacher participates in professional activities when they are required or provided by the district.</p>	<p>The teacher seeks opportunities for continued professional development.</p>	<p>The teacher takes a leadership role in finding opportunities for continued professional development and in contributing to professional organizations.</p>
<p>The teacher declines to participate in team and departmental decision making, except when required by superiors.</p>	<p>The teacher participates minimally in team and departmental decision making.</p>	<p>The teacher actively participates in team and departmental decision making.</p>	<p>The teacher takes a leadership role in team and departmental decision making and enjoys the trust of colleagues in terms of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality.</p>
<p>The teacher does not prioritize the needs of students and operates in a self-serving manner.</p>	<p>The teacher notices the needs of students but is inconsistent in addressing them.</p>	<p>The teacher actively addresses student needs and actively works to provide opportunities for student success.</p>	<p>The teacher makes a concerted effort to ensure opportunities are available for all students to be successful, even when these efforts challenge school or district policies.</p>
<p>The teacher ignores school and district regulations.</p>	<p>The teacher minimally complies with school and district regulations.</p>	<p>The teacher completely complies with the letter, as well as the spirit, of school and district regulations.</p>	<p>The teacher makes material suggestions for the improvement of school and district regulations.</p>