

Phase 2: Utah Professional Learning Teacher and Administrator Surveys

Overview

In accordance with Utah Code Section 53A-3-701, and to meet the expectations set forth in USOE RFP MP5024-1, Learning Forward, with support from Resources for Learning and guidance from USOE, developed two customized surveys for statewide application. One was the 46-item Utah Teacher Professional Learning Survey; the other was the 45-item Utah Administrator Professional Learning Survey. The goals of these surveys were to:

- Address Utah’s additional eighth Professional Learning Standard on technology which is not addressed in the SAI;
- Gain additional information on selected SAI indicators;
- Address additional indicators of professional learning knowledge, practices and dispositions not covered specifically in the SAI;
- Explore in more detail certain aspects of professional learning knowledge and practice among Utah educators; and
- Examine attitudes and practice around several issues closely related to professional learning in Utah on which USOE was interested in collecting data.

Survey Administration

Learning Forward and USOE collaborated on all communications to districts and charters, with USOE exercising final approval. USOE sent the initial invitations to districts and charters to participate in the surveys via email from Dr. Sydnee Dickson, Deputy Superintendent, on Sept. 21, 2015. Districts and charters were asked to RSVP and upon doing so were sent instructions for taking the online surveys. Surveys were administered September 21 – October 20, 2015 (*see Appendix 4*).

Participation

Districts and charters were invited to participate in the surveys. There were 3,908 respondents to the teacher survey, with 2,754 completing all survey items. Of these teachers, 90% responded that they were in traditional schools, and 10% in charter schools. Elementary teachers comprised half of the respondents, with the other half in middle schools, high schools or “other.” A majority of the teachers were in state-tested content area teaching roles, with the remainder in non-tested content area teaching roles, special education teachers or instructional/content area coaches, and “other.” Teachers’ experience levels ranged from first-year teachers to teachers with over 25 years experience. The largest single experience group was 6-10 years with the majority of teachers reporting 4-20 years experience. Demographic information on teacher participants is summarized on Table 2.

- **Finding:** Teachers were most likely to identify *“Failure to engage users in the planning and implementation process.”* while administrators were most likely to identify *“Lack of coordination within agencies (federal, state, local).”*
- **Recommendation:** In order to reduce overlapping, duplicative or conflicting professional development requirements and programs, Utah teachers and administrators identified the following recommendations for addressing this issue:
 - **Initiate strategies to improve communication between different levels of government on requirements and programs being offered (federal, state, local).**
 - **Initiate strategies to improve coordination of priorities for professional development between different levels of government (federal, state, local) and the requirements and programs being offered at those levels.**
 - **Within all strategies developed to address this issue, Utah teachers and administrators recommended that all users be included in the process, particularly teachers and campus administrators.**

Question: What can be done to eliminate overlapping, duplicative, or conflicting professional development requirements in Utah? (Check all that apply.) (Teacher survey question #39; Administrator survey question #44)

- **Finding:** Teachers and administrators agree that, of these choices, their two top choices are *“District/charter surveys,”* and *“Advisory groups to the state/districts/charters that review all requirements from all levels.”*

Question: Agree/disagree items on state-provided professional development’s impact on educator growth and development. (Teacher survey question #40; Administrator survey question #39)

- **Finding:** Teachers and administrators agree overwhelmingly (74%, 73%) that professional development offered by the state helps educator growth and improvement. Teachers and administrators disagree that state professional development hinders educator growth and improvement (69%, 76%)⁶.
- **Finding:** One-quarter of teachers and administrators indicated that they believe professional development offered by the state has little impact on educator growth and improvement.

⁶These “agree” percentages represent a total of the “Strongly agree” and “Agree” responses of participants and the “disagree” percentages represent a total of the “Disagree” and “Strongly disagree” responses of participants.

Question: How much of the professional development teachers experienced in 2014-2015 are they using in their classrooms? (Teacher survey question #42; Administrator question #33)

- **Finding: Utah teachers and administrators agree that teachers are using or will be using “Some of…” or “Most of…” of the professional development they experienced in 2014-15 to a high degree (80%, 91%). Administrators indicated the same in the focus groups. This should be considered a significantly positive finding.**

Question: How is implementation of teacher professional learning monitored in your district/charter? (Check all that apply.) (Teacher survey question #43; Administrator question #25)

- **Finding: Teachers and administrators agree that the most common methods for monitoring the implementation of professional development in Utah schools are “Classroom walkthroughs” (52%, 67%), “Formal evaluations” (55%, 61%) and “Student achievement data” (48%, 59%).**
- **Finding: A small percent of teachers (11%) and administrators (5%) reported that professional development was not monitored in their school and 14% of teachers indicated that they did not know whether it is monitored or not.**
- **Finding: Teachers reported that much of their professional development (30%) is monitored through “Feedback from colleagues in our leaning team,” a very positive finding.**

Question: What is the quality of most professional learning provided in your district/charter? (Teacher survey question #44; Administrator survey question #34)

- **Finding: Administrators tend to judge the quality of professional development provided by the district/charter higher than the teachers although the majority of administrators and a near majority of teachers judge their professional development from the district/charter to be “Excellent” (10%, 7%) or “Very good” (54%, 38%).**

Question: What is the quality of most professional learning provided by the USOE? (Teacher survey question #45; Administrator survey question #35)

- **Finding: Teachers and administrators generally agree on their opinion about professional development provided by USOE. Teachers and administrators judge their professional development from the state to be “Excellent” (6%, 4%) or “Very good” (35%, 39%). However, the largest category identified by teachers and administrators alike was “Generally adequate” (40%, 41%).**

Question: How would you assess the quality of professional development you have received in the past five years? (Teacher survey question #46; Administrator survey question #36)

- **Finding: Teachers are equally divided on whether the quality of professional development in the last five years has improved (32%) or has stayed the same (38%).**
- **Finding: Administrators overwhelmingly agree (73%) that the quality of professional learning in their district/charter has improved in the last five years.**

Utah Teacher and Administrator Professional Learning Surveys: Teacher-Specific Questions

Q5: Of the time you spent on professional development in 2014-2015, please estimate the percent of that time that fell into the following categories.

- **Finding: While it is encouraging to see that teachers reported spending over 30% of their professional development time in PLCs and with content/grade level colleagues, it should also be noted that 44% of their time is spent outside of those groups.**
- **Recommendation: Consider strategies to encourage districts/charters to increase professional development in collegial teams as a way to enhance implementation of the PL standards.**

Q7: In 2014-2015, how often would you say you were released to attend professional learning with a substitute in your class?

- **Finding: One-third of responding teachers reported never being released from class to participate in professional learning.** The datum of 33% replying *Never* echoes a concern voiced in the focus groups from some small, rural schools that they could only infrequently take advantage of release time for professional development because they had few or no substitutes available.

Q8: In which types of professional development did you participate in during the 2014-2015 school year?

- **Finding: Most professional development in Utah is school and district based.** Teachers participated in professional development sponsored by their school or district 61% and 74% respectively. This finding was confirmed by participants in the school focus groups as well.

- **Finding: PLCs are implementing the professional learning standards with fidelity in some schools in Utah, but not most or all.** In this survey 50% of responding teachers reported participating in professional learning in their PLCs. This finding is confirmed by other questions in the teacher and administrator surveys, the SAI data and the focus groups.

Q9: What impact did your professional learning have on your practice during the 2014-2015 school year?

- **Finding: Utah teachers generally have positive attitudes toward the professional development in which they have participated, indicating that it has helped them become better teachers and contributed to the success of their students.**
- **Finding: Many teachers (42%) indicated that their professional development was not based "... on my identified individual needs."** Furthermore, a large number of teachers (43%) indicated that there was professional development they needed in 2014-15 that they did not get. Finally, a majority of teachers (54%) indicated that they received professional development in 2014-15 that they did not need.
- **Recommendation: Develop strategies to build the capacity in districts/charters to include teachers throughout the professional development needs assessment and planning processes.**
- **Recommendation: Decrease instances of professional development that is either not needed or not wanted by teachers by including teachers' backgrounds, experience levels, and learning needs when making decisions about selecting and designing professional development experiences, and seek their input in this selection and design process.** (42% of teachers responded with "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" that their professional development was "...based on my identified individual needs." This is reinforced with the moderately low scores (3.5) of two items on the SAI in the Learning Designs standard (*Indicator 30 – In my school, teachers' backgrounds, experience levels, and learning needs are considered when professional learning is planned and designed.* and *Indicator 36 – "Teachers' input is taken into consideration when planning schoolwide professional learning."*)

Q10: How involved were you in planning, budgeting, and evaluating your professional development in 2014-2015?

- **Finding: Many teachers in Utah schools reported that they are not included in planning professional development nor are they a part of the decision making**

process for professional development. (*"I participated in the decisions ... I should receive"* - 39% *Seldom or Never*; *"I participated in developing my school's ... plan"* - 57% *Seldom or Never*; *"I participated in decisions about ... resources were allocated"* - 72% *Seldom or Never*)

- **Finding: A majority of teachers in Utah schools do not feel that they are involved in the evaluation of professional learning in their schools.** (*"I participated in evaluating the quality ..."* - 55% *Seldom or Never*; *"I participated in evaluating the impact ... on my teaching"* - 53% *Seldom or Never*; *"I participated in evaluating the impact ... on student achievement"* - 49% *Seldom or Never*)
- **Note:** These two findings reiterate the recommendation in Q. 9 **adding inclusion of teachers in the evaluation of professional development.** (This evaluation recommendation is reinforced by the SAI with the low score (3.3) on indicator #23 in the Data standard, *"In my school, teachers have the opportunity to evaluate each professional learning experience to determine its value and impact on student learning."*)
- **Finding: Most Utah teachers reported that they implemented most of what they learned in professional development in their classrooms and were likely to share what they learned with colleagues.**
- **Recommendation: Explore more deeply the degree to which districts/charters include follow-up as a regular part of their professional learning cycle. A way to support districts/charters where follow-up is weak or lacking would be to provide resources and incentives to ensure this important step in realizing high quality, impactful professional learning.** (*"There was follow-up ... to the professional development I experienced."* 38% *Seldom or Never*, 30% *Sometimes*)

Q12: How would you assess your school's professional learning priorities?

- **Finding: Utah teachers reported mixed feelings about the stability of professional learning priorities in their schools.** Even though 41% reported that their school priorities change every year (*Always or Frequently*), most agree that the reasons for those changes are understandable, with 43% reporting that the changes occur only after they have been successfully addressed.
- **Finding: A large number of teachers are not aware when their school's professional learning priorities change or why.** The finding that 26% of responding teachers do not know whether their school's professional development priorities are part of a *"... consistent 3-5 year professional improvement plan."* speaks to the earlier evidence that most teachers do not feel a part of the professional learning development and evaluation cycle.

Q13: Do you participate in a professional learning community or professional learning team?

- **Note:** The large percentage (86%) responding yes to this question is at odds with other data collected in all parts of this study. Therefore:
- **Recommendation: Study professional learning communities across the state to determine the degree to which they align with the definition of professional learning communities as depicted in research, commonly accepted literature, and proven practice.**

Q14: Which actions are regular components of your professional learning community/team-based learning cycle? (Check all that apply.)

- **Finding: A majority of teachers responding to this item reported that their professional learning communities or learning teams pursue a research-based professional learning cycle.** (49% - 78% on a seven element cycle) The one possible exception is *"Accessing external expertise when necessary to build expertise of the learning team."*(34%). This is in contrast to the relatively low score of 3.4 on indicator 29 in the Data standard on the SAI *"In my school, how to assess the effectiveness of the professional learning is determined before the professional learning is planned."* USOE may want to explore this particular finding more in depth through a detailed examination of professional learning communities across the state.

Q15: When does your professional learning community/team meet to collaborate on curriculum and instruction? (Check all that apply.)

- **Finding: A minority of responding teachers report their professional learning community meets during the school day.** (35% - the professional learning standards emphasize that the majority of teachers' professional development should occur during the school day and be job-embedded.) This supports the low score (3.2) on SAI indicator 18 *"In my school, time is available for teachers during the school day for professional learning."*
- **Recommendation: Emphasize to districts/charters the value of making professional learning an integral part of the teachers' daily work and provide resources to help them design professional learning into the school day.**

Q16: How often does your professional learning community/team meet?

- **Finding: More teachers (45%) reported that they meet in their PLCs "Once per week" than any other time. A small percentage (20%) reported meeting "Daily" or "Several times per week."** The SAI indicator 2 in the Learning

Communities standard, “*Learning communities in my school met several time per week to collaborate on how to improve student learning.*” scored a moderately low 3.6. This is generally insufficient collaborative time to maintain a robust professional learning community.

- **Recommendation: Impress upon districts and charters the critical role that regular collaboration between learning team members plays in improving teacher and student learning, and make resources available for finding time for professional learning communities to meet during the regular contract day.**

Q17: Do you have job-embedded professional learning in your school?

- **Finding: A large percentage (71%) of Utah teachers are either not sure what “job-embedded professional learning” is (59%) or reported that they do not experience it in their schools (12%).**

Q18: In which types of job-embedded professional learning have you participated?

- **Finding: A majority of teachers reported having participated in six of the seven job-embedded professional learning experiences that make up the professional learning cycle** (as described in the literature and prescribed by Learning Forward).

General finding concerning Professional Learning Communities: It is unclear the extent to which authentic professional learning communities are being implemented with fidelity in Utah schools. Although 86% of teachers reported they are in a PLC or learning team, and that their PLCs and learning teams follow the main tasks in the PLC learning cycle, most meet no more than once per week and only 35% reported that they meet during the school day. 59% are not sure what “job-embedded professional learning” is, and yet a large percent reported participating in all but one of the seven job-embedded types of professional learning put to them in Question 18.

Q25: In your school, do teachers have the opportunity to evaluate professional learning experiences to determine its value and impact on student learning?

- **Finding: Many teachers reported that they do not have a great deal of opportunity to evaluate professional learning to determine its value on impact on student learning.** 37% of teachers report that they *Seldom* or *Never* have this opportunity. This percentage increases to 65% when *Sometimes* is included.
- **Recommendation: Investigate the extent to which districts and charters are including teachers in the evaluation of the value and impact of professional learning.**

- **Recommendation: Establish a state cluster to provide focused attention to districts and charters that need assistance in their efforts to include teachers in the evaluation of the value and impact of professional learning.**

Q27: How much choice do you believe you should have in your district/charter about the professional development in which you participate?

- **Finding: Teachers want “quite a lot” more choice about the professional development in which they participate.** In question 26 of the teacher survey, 19% of the teachers responded that they had “Quite a lot” of choice about the professional learning in which they participated last year. In this question, 64% say that they should have “Quite a lot” of choice. There is a discrepancy between the choice teachers perceive they have about their own professional development and the amount of choice they want.

Q41: Does professional development offered by your district/charter help, hinder, or have little impact on educator growth and improvement?

- **Finding: Teachers agree that professional development offered by their district/charter helps educator growth and improvement and disagree that it hinders educator growth and improvement.**
- **Finding: One-quarter of teachers indicated that they believe that professional development offered by their district/charter has little impact on educator growth and improvement.**

Utah Teacher and Administrator Professional Learning Surveys: Administrator-Specific Questions

Q6: Approximately what percentage of your organization’s budget is allocated to professional development?

- **Finding: Approximately 60% of administrators reported a professional development budget of less than 10%.**
- **Finding: A significant percentage (27%) of administrators did not know what part of their organization’s budget was dedicated to professional development** (Note: 70% of respondents were principals.) This finding is consistent with the low score of 3.2 on the SAI on indicator 17 in the Resource standard, *“Professional learning expenses... are openly discussed in my school.”*

Q7: What went into the calculation of the percentage you provided in Question 6?

- **Finding: There was a relatively even distribution across all areas except “Memberships” (21%) and “Teacher salary increments” (4%). All other categories were included by over 30% of administrators with “Staff...” (55%), “Substitutes” (57%), and “Supplies ...” (59%) constituting the most included expenditures.**
- **Finding: The three most often identified expenditures for professional development were “Staff” (55%), “Supplies to support ...” (59%) and “Substitutes” (57%).**
- **Finding: In the “Other” category, conference fees were most often identified as an additional professional development expenditure.**

Q8: Approximately what percentage of your organization’s professional development budget comes from the following sources?

- **Finding: Administrators reported that at least 60% of their organization’s professional development budget comes from their districts/charters. State and federal funds are almost equal around 30% together with a smaller amount identified as “Other.”**

Q9: In school year 2014-15, how many full calendar days were dedicated to professional development? (Combine any half days into full days; round up remaining half days.)

- **Finding: Nearly 45% of administrators reported that between 3 and 5 full calendar days were dedicated to professional development, while 38% reported more than five days.**

Q10: In school year 2014-15, how many late-start or early-dismissal days did the district/charter have for professional development?

- **Finding: Administrators reported that about 30% of them do not use late-start or early-dismissal days for professional development and about 35% have more than five a year. The remainder reported between 1 and 5.**

Q12: Estimate the percentage of professional development facilitated by different providers during the 2014-2015 school year.

- **Finding: Most professional development in Utah districts/charters is provided by the district or charter internally. Independent consultants provide the second most and USOE third. Other providers are negligible (identified as less than 10%).**

Q21: What percentage of schools in your district create their own schedules, in whole or in part, to support teacher professional development?

- **Finding: A considerable number of district administrators (69%) reported that they have schools that do not create their own schedules, in whole or in part, to support professional development.**

Q23: Who is primarily responsible for choosing the providers of professional development in your district/charter?

- **Finding: Administrators reported that the majority of providers of professional development in their districts/charters were “*Campus administrators*” (28%), “*District/charter professional development committees*” (25%) and “*Superintendents*” (21%).**

Q29: In your district/charter, do you have methods/strategies to link professional development to student learning?

- **Finding: While most administrators (70%) reported that they employ methods/strategies to link professional development to student learning in their districts/charters, 15% responded with “*No*” or “*We don’t know how to do that yet.*” and another 15% responded with “*Don’t know.*”**
- **Recommendation: Distinguish individual district/charter performance as it relates to organized strategies for tying professional development to student learning.**
- **Recommendation: Elevate the districts/charter exemplars and scale their best practices.**
- **Recommendation: Target state support and resources to districts/charters that need help in this area and connect, as possible, to state exemplars.**

Q31: In most of our schools (or charter), the professional learning plan includes an evaluation of the effectiveness of each professional learning experience (T/F)

- **Finding: A majority of administrators (59%) reported that their school professional learning plans include an evaluation of the effectiveness of each professional learning experience or those experiences that teachers are expected to use in their classrooms.**
- **Finding: A considerable number of reporting schools may not have school plans that evaluate the effectiveness of their professional development.**
Twenty percent of administrators indicate that their plans do not include such evaluations and 20% of administrators indicate that they do not know whether their school plans include such evaluations.

- **Recommendation: Investigate how professional development is evaluated in Utah districts/charters and take steps to ensure that evaluation data is gathered and used to improve professional development and student learning.**

Q38: Indicate your level of agreement with statements regarding federal and state professional development requirements.

- **Finding: Administrators are divided over whether federal professional development requirements assist educators in enhancing student learning.** (41% “Strongly agree” or “Agree” and 32% “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree”)
- **Finding: A considerable percentage of administrators do not know whether federal requirements assist educators in enhancing student learning (27%) or hinder (29%) or overlap with state and district/charter requirements (36%).**
- **Finding: A large number of administrators (48%) agree that federal professional development requirements are redundant or overlap state and district/charter requirements, but are divided over whether state professional development requirements are redundant or overlap district/charter requirements.** 41% “Strongly agree” or “Agree” and 31% “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree”.
- **Finding: A small percentage of administrators (12%) reported that their district/charters do not have professional development requirements or that they did not know whether their districts/charters had requirements (7%).**
- **Finding: A considerable majority of administrators agree that their district professional development requirements assist educators in enhancing student learning. (86%)**

Professional Learning Focus Groups: Data Analysis and Recommendations

There was a considerable degree of agreement by district and school administrators on all questions from the focus group protocols. Much of what these district and school leaders had to say reinforced the data collected through the SAI and the Utah Professional Learning Surveys. These observations have lent validity to the overall observations about professional learning in Utah and the summary of recommendations presented later in this study. See Appendix 6 for the Focus Group Protocol and the questions used with district and school administrators in these focus groups.

How Professional Development Works

Professional Development Vision

All school and district leaders agreed that their organization's vision for professional development was to help teachers increase their professional knowledge and instructional skills in order to increase student success. For these leaders "... *professional development must be aligned to how it is going to help student learning.*" These groups of educators most often point to their PLCs as the most powerful actualization of this vision. This vision has been developed in a variety of ways. All traditional districts reported that there is a district level vision that comes from the central office for all schools and that each school also has the opportunity to develop a vision specific to the needs of their teachers and students. This is most often developed by the school administrators and sometimes teacher leaders. Charter schools reported the professional development vision being led by the school leadership team which often includes administrators, team leaders and counselors. These comments by local administrators support the high score (4.4) Utah teachers gave to indicator 1 under the Learning Communities standard on the SAI, "*My school system has policies and procedures that support the vision for learning communities in schools.*" These focus group discussions were also in strong support of the high score (4.3) Utah teachers gave to indicator 11 under the Leadership standard on the SAI, "*My school's leaders regard professional learning as a top priority for all staff.*"

Organization and Delivery

Professional development plans are most often based on teacher surveys and other anecdotal feedback directly from teachers, teacher evaluation data and examination of student achievement data.

Decision making about professional development is most usually divided between the district office and the schools. Charters reported that their professional development decision-making rarely involve their governing bodies directly. At both the district, school and charter levels the overall impression is that professional development

decision-making is mostly top down with little direct teacher input. This lack of regular, direct participation of teachers in planning and evaluating professional learning was also indicated indirectly in the focus groups when they described how professional development is organized and delivered in their organizations. This lack of regular, direct participation by teachers in planning and evaluating professional learning was emphasized by Utah teachers in both the SAI and the statewide teacher survey.

Recommendation: Encourage districts/charters to increase the ownership of professional learning by including classroom teachers in all aspects of professional learning planning, implementation, evaluation and decision-making. Resources and technical assistance from USOE on ways to incorporate teachers into this process will be needed by districts/charters.

These administrators pointed out that districts and charters do not get much funding for professional development from the state, and they considered this problematic. Several emphasized the need for resources that could increase the time school leaders have to support their teachers' learning, particularly in PLCs (creating time to collaborate, mentors, coaches, etc.), which is lacking in many cases now. There is some local funding for professional development, but most districts and charters indicated that they must rely heavily on federal title funds. Most districts and charters reported that professional development was not a line item in their budgets.

Recommendation: Present an updated budget proposal to the Utah State Legislature requesting direct funding of professional learning based on needs identified by the state's districts and charters.

Recommendation: Consider developing a state policy requiring that local districts and charters include professional development funding as a line item in their annual budgets based on a comprehensive annual needs assessment.

There are numerous indicators from the SAI that are supported by the focus groups discussion of how professional development is organized and delivered, both high and low scoring indicators. These include: Resources Standard, indicators 17, 18 and 19; and Data Standard, indicator 23.

Professional Learning Communities

All participating district and school administrators reported the use of professional learning communities in their schools. Support and enthusiasm for PLCs was very high among all administrators. This reinforces the high scores given by Utah teachers on all items on the Leadership standard of the SAI.

The most common PLC groupings were grade level and content-based although other groupings were mentioned such as cross-grade PLCs (e.g. grades 1-3, grades 4-6). Some

districts and charters reported having difficulty including all faculty in a PLC, especially counselors, media specialists and some content teachers in middle and high schools.

A wide range of PLC meeting times and duration were reported. Administrators confirmed that after school and early release days were the most common PLC meeting times as reflected in the statewide teacher survey. Most reported PLC meetings no more than once per week for an average of an hour, and some only monthly or quarterly. This may call into question the moderate score of 3.6 on indicator 2 under the Learning Communities standard on the SAI that *“Learning communities in my school meet several times per week to collaborate on how to improve student learning.”*

These administrators confirmed the considerable amount of training they and their teachers have had on PLCs reported in the statewide surveys. *“I would say 85% of our teachers have had multiple training sessions on PLCs.” “... training on various aspects of PLCs and associated skills are part of our district and most school annual plans.”*

All participating administrators agreed that they have many PLCs that are of high quality and that are making a considerable difference in their classrooms, while others are struggling. *“Some of ours really grasp a vision and use data and collaborate and share concepts, and other are more defaulting to a department meeting and it is not as impactful on student learning.”* Overall these administrators believe that PLCs are having a positive impact and that there is potential for even more impact. *“... there is real value to the PLCs and they have an impact.”* All participating administrators would agree. Most of the evidence for this impact is anecdotal however. There is little mention of evaluation of the impact of PLCs outside of looking at student data – which is indirect at best. This is verified in the SAI and statewide survey data.

Recommendation: Provide districts and charters with resources and training on how to conduct and use authentic evaluations of professional development implementation and impact.

Utah Professional Learning Technology Standard

Administrators in these focus groups believe that their teachers are progressing toward authentic use of technology in the classroom. Progress varies, however. Some schools are much further along than others but there are plans for bringing the latter along. *“... we now have teachers along the spectrum of implementation, reaching the higher levels of Bloom’s. But we are all over the map with what we do.”* Administrators believe that professional development is central to ensuring this progress. *“PD is the real key. When we get requests for technology (training) we always look at how we are going to support implementation through our PD.”*

Administrators reported a wide range of technology use to extend instruction as well as instruction that would not be possible or practical without the technology.

- *“... she (principal’s daughter) does more hands-on experiential type learning than ever in the past.”*
- *“It helps with student learning styles – you are teaching them in different ways.”*
- *“This year focused on training for technology to meet the standards set by the state.*
- *“Another thing teachers are able to do is tie assessments to specific standards. They are able to analyze and drill down to see what standards students have mastered and what they still need help with.”*
- *“You can do that without technology but it would be much more time consuming and not nearly at the level it is done (with technology).”*

Most of the recommendations from administrators about how the state could improve the use of technology by teachers revolved around the type of training offered by the state and around funding.

- *“Seems like training provided is very basic – teachers tell me that they could have taught it. If it was more applicable and up to date, that would be helpful.”*
- *“If the state develops more rigorous tech standards, they need to provide PD on how to meet those expectations. We need clear support in developing a vision for statewide use of technology.”*
- *“We’ve had to combine resources and fight tooth and nail for the money to do this. Ability to keep technology current. Funding is extremely important for us and we’ve had to convince the board and members of the community to help. So we would like more financial support from the state.”*
- *“We are a small rural district with limited resources. Funding and support from the state would be so incredibly helpful!”*

Recommendation: Consider additional funding from the Utah State Legislature to keep technology tools in the schools up-to-date and to provide professional development resources and support to expand and extend teachers’ authentic use of technology for enhanced instruction.

Beliefs About Professional Development

Professional Development and Student Success

Participating education leaders were unanimous in their belief that there is a direct and powerful connection between professional learning and student success. *“... professional*

