NSDC DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NSDC Proposed Amendments to Section 9101 (34) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

(34) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT— The term “professional development” means a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in raising student achievement —

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

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

2. is conducted among educators at the school and facilitated by well-prepared school principals and/or school-based professional development coaches, mentors, master teachers, or other teacher leaders;

3. primarily occurs several times per week among established teams of teachers, principals, and other instructional staff members where the teams of educators engage in a continuous cycle of improvement that —
   (i) evaluates student, teacher, and school learning needs through a thorough review of data on teacher and student performance;
   (ii) defines a clear set of educator learning goals based on the rigorous analysis of the data;
   (iii) achieves the educator learning goals identified in subsection (A)(3)(ii) by implementing coherent, sustained, and evidenced-based learning strategies, such as lesson study and the development of formative assessments, that improve instructional effectiveness and student achievement;
   (iv) provides job-embedded coaching or other forms of assistance to support the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the classroom;
   (v) regularly assesses the effectiveness of the professional development in achieving identified learning goals, improving teaching, and assisting all students in meeting challenging state academic achievement standards;
   (vi) informs ongoing improvements in teaching and student learning; and
   (vii) that may be supported by external assistance.

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

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

2. advance the ongoing school-based professional development; and

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

Copyright © 2009 National Staff Development Council. Call 800-727-7288. E-mail NSDCoffice@nsdc.org