

Professional Learning Guidelines
Supporting the Implementation of GaPSC Rule
505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS Effective
July 1, 2017

Professional Learning Guidelines

The intent of the Professional Learning Guidelines is to provide support for all current Georgia educators in the implementation of the revised GaPSC (Georgia Professional Standards Commission) Rule [505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#).

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Overview/Background

*“Professional Learning is fundamental to all things that are most important in our profession.”
(Kelly Henson, Georgia Professional Standards Commission)*

Effective July 1, 2017, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) will implement revised GaPSC Rule [505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#) which will have a substantive impact on educator certificate renewal beginning with certificates expiring in 2018. The previous rule with the same title and name was rescinded by the GaPSC effective July 1, 2014.

In an effort to underscore the significance of the new Renewal Requirements Rule and the emphasis it places on the importance of high quality job-embedded professional learning occurring in all Georgia schools, a brief look at the beginning of our state’s changing beliefs and attitudes regarding professional learning is warranted.

The genesis of the new Renewal Requirements Rule began in 2010 when the Georgia House of Representatives House Study Committee on Professional Learning was formed. This Committee consisted of members of the House of Representatives, Georgia Professional Standards Commission, Georgia Department of Education, Regional Educational Service Agencies, and Local Units of Administration (LUAs). The Committee was formed to study the state of Professional Learning in Georgia and its relationship to certificate renewal. With the goal of improving schools and teaching, the Committee was tasked with making recommendations for improvements leading to improved student learning. Specifically, the Committee was charged with studying and making recommendations on:

1. The roles of state agencies, local school systems, regional educational service agencies, college and universities, and other organizations in providing high quality professional learning focused on improving schools and teaching, resulting in improved student learning.
2. The effectiveness of current professional learning renewal requirements on school improvement and student learning; and
3. The adequacy of the current professional learning activities delivery system.

An outcome of this study was HB1307 which resulted in the Georgia General Assembly voting to temporarily suspend Professional Learning Unit (PLU) Requirements for certificate renewal. HB1307, which was signed into law and became effective July 1, 2010, inserted the following language into O.C.G.A. 20-2-200:

“from July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2015, no professional learning requirements shall be required for certificate renewal for clear renewable certificates for certificated personnel or for certificate renewal for paraprofessionals”.

As a result of the suspension of the PLU Requirements for certificate renewal, the GaPSC modified its Standard Renewal Requirements during this period. The General Assembly took action in spring 2015 to extend the suspension of PLUs through June 30, 2017, to eliminate confusion that could result from returning to the PLU system only to eliminate PLUs beginning July 1, 2017.

At the conclusion of its work, the House Committee on Professional Learning made a number of recommendations regarding professional learning. These include:

1. Establish certification renewal rules requiring the demonstration of the impact of professional learning on educator performance and/or student achievement
2. Revise professional learning rules that recognize that educators need time to improve their knowledge, skills, and dispositions, and that such professional learning best occurs in a job-embedded context, with colleagues, and sustained over time
3. Revised rules should recognize that it is the responsibility of principals, district leaders, and state leaders to ensure that teachers have the opportunity for professional learning that meets these criteria
4. GaDOE rules should be aligned with new GaPSC certification renewal rules, requiring the demonstration of the impact of professional learning on educator and student performance
5. GaDOE, in cooperation with its educational partners, develop guidelines and provide support for the use of data for instructional improvement for both teachers and leaders
6. Revision of the leader evaluation instrument should address the proficiency of leaders in developing the organizational culture and the job-embedded professional learning necessary for the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. There should be a formalized link between the results of educator evaluations and prescribed professional learning.
7. Adoption of the following definition of professional learning by the State Board of Education:
“Professional learning is the means by which teachers, administrators and other school and system employees acquire, enhance and refine the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to create and support high levels of learning for all students.”

Recommendations of the GaPSC Professional Learning Task Force Regarding Certification Renewal Requirements

In June 2013, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) created a Professional Learning Task Force comprised of forty (40) representative Georgia educators to address the recommendation of the House Study Committee to establish certification renewal rules requiring the demonstration of the impact of professional learning on educator performance and/or student achievement. The charge of the Task Force was to develop a new system for linking professional learning to educator performance and certificate renewal. In the spring of 2014, the GaPSC Professional Learning Task Force made the following recommendations to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

1. Stop using Professional Learning Units (PLUs) as evidence of professional learning. PLUs are based on the number of clock hours of a specific activity and are used to count “seat time”. Professional Learning research does not support a focus on “seat time”.
2. In lieu of counting PLUs, the focus of professional learning should be based on professional judgments made by the educator, colleagues, and supervisor.
3. Link professional learning, educator performance, and certificate renewal. The state evaluation system, Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES), provides data plus additional evidence to support professional learning that identifies areas of needed growth. The use of other data for those not covered under the state evaluation system should also be utilized to identify areas of needed growth and support of professional learning.
4. The primary location of professional learning will move from workshops to job-embedded learning where educators are collaboratively working on work that leads to improved teaching and increased student learning.
5. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) become the primary vehicle for professional learning.
6. Educators will have Professional Learning Goals (PLGs) to accomplish. The professional learning to support these goals will be collaboratively developed by the educator, colleagues, and supervisor.
7. Specific educators will have formal Professional Learning Plans (PLPs) to be collaboratively developed by the educator, colleagues, and supervisor. The following educators will have formal PLPs: all Induction Level teachers, educators placed in a position for which they are not fully certified at the Professional Level, educators who are absent from the profession for one year or more and return, educators who are in a new position or from out of state, and educators with a Needs Development, Ineffective, or Unsatisfactory rating will have a Remediation Plan with an embedded PLP.

8. Principals and Superintendents will attest that professional learning is occurring and that it is a continuous improvement process for all educators within the school/system.
9. In addition of assurance through attestation that professional learning is occurring and is a continuous improvement process, the following additional measures will be utilized: Title II-A monitoring and TKES/LKES educator and student performance data.

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) initiated revised GaPSC Rule [505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#) in January 2015. This Rule will have a substantive impact on educator certificate renewal beginning with certificates expiring in 2018.

Purpose

A new coherent system for professional learning in Georgia will be created by the implementation of Georgia Professional Standards Commission Rule [505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#). This new system will require a shift in our beliefs and attitudes in regards to how we “do” professional learning as it is a significant departure from the old way of “collecting” hours and seat time. Our focus is now not one of emphasizing seat time, but one of emphasizing the intentional learning occurring within professional learning. This new Rule will have a fundamental impact and change in the way we **think** about professional learning, **implement** professional learning, **monitor** professional learning, and **evaluate** professional learning. The future face of professional learning in Georgia is job-embedded, collaborative, and focused on improved teaching and increased student learning.

To address the intended purpose of Georgia Professional Standards Commission Rule [505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#), our mindset will have to change to one of improving practice to address the learning needs of students. The professional needs of the teacher, the needs of the classroom, and the needs of the student should be the foundational basis for all professional learning occurring within our schools and systems, and other organizations including state agencies and universities. Specifically, “....professional learning should be focused toward school improvement leading to improved teaching and increased student learning”, (505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS, Section 1 - Purpose). The professional learning occurring within our schools/systems will still need to be tracked and monitored, but most importantly and in stark contrast to the past, the sole evidence of the occurrence of professional learning will not be with the awarding of Professional Learning Units (PLUs).

The goal of certificate renewal and professional learning in Georgia is for educators within a local unit of administration (LUA) to work together to enhance established educational goals for the individual educator, the school, and the LUA to assist students in meetings state standards for student achievement. All certificate holders employed by a Georgia LUA will be required to have written Professional Learning Plans (PLPs) or Professional Learning Goals (PLGs). Professional Learning Plans (PLPs) will clearly outline the requirements for the professional growth of an educator as well as define the support for the educator’s growth provided by the school or system. Educators who are not required to have PLPs will be required to have written Profession Learning Goals (PLGs) which will outline identified areas for educator growth.

Professional Learning approved for certificate renewal must be standards-based and designed around national professional learning standards as outlined by Learning Forward (formerly the National Staff Development Council). This is a requirement for the design of all school and system learning communities, selection of workshops supporting learning communities, and any other professional learning designed for certified educators in Georgia. You can access Learning Forward’s *Standards for Professional Learning* by clicking [here](#).

Professional learning occurring within a LUA or any organization that requires employees to be certified will be [job-embedded](#) and will take place within a [Professional Learning Community \(PLC\)](#). The PLC will be the primary vehicle for professional learning. PLCs operate under the

assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators (2015). (Retrieved from “All Things PLC” <http://www.allthingsplc.info/about>.) Workshops, when needed, will support the work of job-embedded professional learning done within learning communities, not replace it.

Changes in Certification Renewal at a Glance

Then	Now
Seat time, counted through the Professional Learning Unit (10 hours of seat time =1 PLU)	Continuing participation in a professional learning community to strengthen practice
Participating in classes, trainings, and workshops	Establishing written professional learning goals or writing a professional learning plan
Participating in training conducted away from the job as the primary means of delivery	Primarily job-embedded professional learning in the context of the professional learning community
“Packaged” training sessions	Customized off-site professional learning that is designed to complement and support job-embedded professional learning
Isolated individual development	Strategic individual development and organizational development
Professional learning that is linked to the number of clock hours completed	Professional learning that is linked to improved educator performance and increased student achievement

Written Professional Learning Plans

A written professional learning plan is a new requirement for some educators connected to recertification. The written professional learning plan is developed based on student learning data, performance evaluation data, and school improvement goals. The purpose of a written professional learning plan is to clearly define the goals, actions, and expected results of professional learning. Developing a plan for professional learning is a recommended practice for effective professional learning. It is encouraged for all educators, but not required. It is required for Induction level teachers to ensure a clear understanding of effective professional learning strategies. The following educators are required to develop a written professional learning plan.

- Educators in positions requiring them to hold non-renewable certificates
- Educators in service or leadership field with fewer than three (3) years satisfactory experience
- Educators who were not employed by a Georgia LUA at the time of their most recent certification
- Educators who have less than one (1) year experience in Georgia
 - Educators who received any unremediated annual summative evaluation ratings of Needs Development, Unsatisfactory, or Ineffective during the previous validity period

Written Professional Learning Goals

All educators who do not develop a formal written professional learning plan are required to develop written professional learning goals (PLGs). PLGs are based on student learning data, performance evaluation data, and school improvement goals. The purpose of the PLGs is to drive job-embedded learning for the educator.

Requirements for Renewable Certificates and Renewable Licenses

Renewable Certificates

Table 1 illustrates the renewal requirements of Georgia’s renewable certificates: Standard Professional, Performance-Based Professional, Advanced Professional, Lead Professional, and Life. These certificates are valid for a five (5) year period, with the exception of the Life certificate. Induction certificates are only renewable in the specific circumstances outlined in GaPSC Rule

[505-2-.04 INDUCTION CERTIFICATE](#); however, successful completion of professional learning requirements is one of several requirements to move from Induction to Professional Certification. Educators with Induction Certificates are required to have a written Professional Learning Plan (PLP) to support professional growth over the course of the induction period.

There are certain exceptions to the following requirements that are detailed in the GaPSC Rule [505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#). The exceptions are listed below.

Educators who also hold valid National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification at the time of renewal in a field comparable to the one held on their Georgia educator certificate
Educators who also hold valid Georgia Master teacher certification at the time of renewal

Although a written PLP or written PLGs are not required for these exceptions, the assumption is that these professionals are engaged in continuing professional learning that leads to improved teaching and increased student learning.

Table 1 Renewable Certificate Recertification Requirements

	Employed in LUA	Criminal Record Check	Minimum of two level 3 or level 4 annual performance ratings on TKES	Minimum number of Level 4 annual performance ratings and no rating below 3 within the 5 years of renewal	Engage in professional learning on a continuing basis	Written Professional Learning Plan (PLP)	Written Professional Learning Goals (PLG)
Performance-Based Professional Certificate	X	X	X		X	effective for professional learning	X
Standard Professional Certificate	X	X			X		X
Certificate Advanced Professional	X	X		X	X		X
Lead Professional Certificate	X	X		X	X		X
Life Certificate	X	X			X		

Renewal Cycle: July 1 – June 30

Grace Period: July 1 – September 30

Certificate Expiration: October 1

If not renewed by the end of the grace period, the certificate is expired.

Understanding the Requirements

1. **Employed in LUA:** The table above is to be used by educators who are currently employed in a Local Unit of Administration. This includes educators who are employed by a Georgia school district, state agencies (e.g., GaDOE, RESAs, GLRS, etc.), and colleges and universities.
2. **Criminal Record Check:** All educators who work in a Georgia LUA, including state chartered special schools and commission charter schools, are required to complete a criminal record check. The criminal record check must be a FBI background check unless the educator has completed the FBI background check while employed by the current LUA. In this case, the Georgia criminal history check will satisfy the requirement.
3. **Evaluation Requirements:** As recommended by the House Study Committee for Professional Learning, certification renewal rules require the demonstration of the impact of professional learning on educator performance and/or student achievement. The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) provides data to measure the impact of professional learning on educator performance and/or student achievement. In order to renew, educators evaluated using TKES must meet minimum evaluation requirements based on the certificate held at the time of recertification.

The Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) is a system of multiple measures, which together provide a stronger assessment of building leader effectiveness than each of the measures alone. Educators evaluated using LKES must meet minimum evaluation requirements in order to recertify.

Educators not evaluated using TKES/LKES do have performance evaluations. Goals for these educators are established and assessed using the LUA's performance evaluation system.

LUAs are encouraged to use additional sources of data to inform development of PLPs and PLGs. Summative performance data is the minimum required, but using additional data sources assures stronger PLPs and PLGs.

4. **Engage in continuing professional learning:** As professionals, educators engage in professional learning to acquire, enhance, and refine their knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to create and support high levels of learning for all students. In order to renew, all educators are expected to engage in professional learning continuously. This professional learning requirement is a necessary part of the profession. The quantity (PLUs) of professional learning is no longer measured. The quality of professional learning is measured by evaluation requirements as well as other process data.
5. **Written Professional Learning Plan (PLP):** The purpose of a written professional learning plan is to clearly define the goals, actions, and expected results of professional

learning. Developing a plan for professional learning is a recommended practice for effective professional learning. It is encouraged for all educators, but not required. It is required for Induction level teachers to ensure a clear understanding of effective professional learning strategies. The Written PLP is a support mechanism for educators meant to guide professional learning. Some LUAs may determine that all of their educators should develop PLPs rather than just goals. LUAs may create requirements beyond state requirements, but may never require less than what is required by the state.

6. **Written Professional Learning Goals (PLG):** All educators must establish and strive to meet goals for professional learning. The goals are a portion of the PLP. These goals drive the identification of job-embedded professional learning in which educators engage.

Requirements for Renewable Licenses

Table 2 illustrates the renewal requirements of Georgia’s renewable licenses: Adjunct, Educational Interpreter, Non-Instructional Aide, Paraprofessional, and Support Personnel. These licenses are valid for a five (5) year period during which time the following requirements must be met. Please note that this table includes hyperlinks to additional GaPSC rules as needed.

Table 2 Renewable License Certification Requirements

	Employed in LUA	Criminal Record Check	Specialized License Requirements
Service Certificate (Speech and Language Pathology, Audiology, School Psychology, School Counseling, and School Social Work)	X	X	505-2-.148 SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY 505-2-.140 AUDIOLOGY 505-2-.146 SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY 505-2-.144 SCHOOL COUNSELING 505-2-.147 SCHOOL COUNSELING
Adjunct License	X	X	Renewal Requirements Determined by the LUA
Educational Interpreter License	X	X	505-2-.16 EDUCATIONAL INTERPRETER LICENSE
Non-Instructional Aide License	X	X	505-2-.17 NON-INSTRUCTIONAL AIDE
Support Personnel License	X	X	Renewal Requirements Determined by the LUA

Recertification Application Process

For Georgia educators employed by a Georgia LUA, the LUA electronically submits the renewal application. The LUA attests that professional learning requirements have been met by the educator. Information about the online procedures is available to authorized school system personnel on the GaPSC web site at www.gapsc.org.

If an educator has met all other requirements, but has not met professional learning requirements, the LUA may request a one-year Non-Renewable Professional Certificate to allow the educator time to complete all remaining renewal requirements.

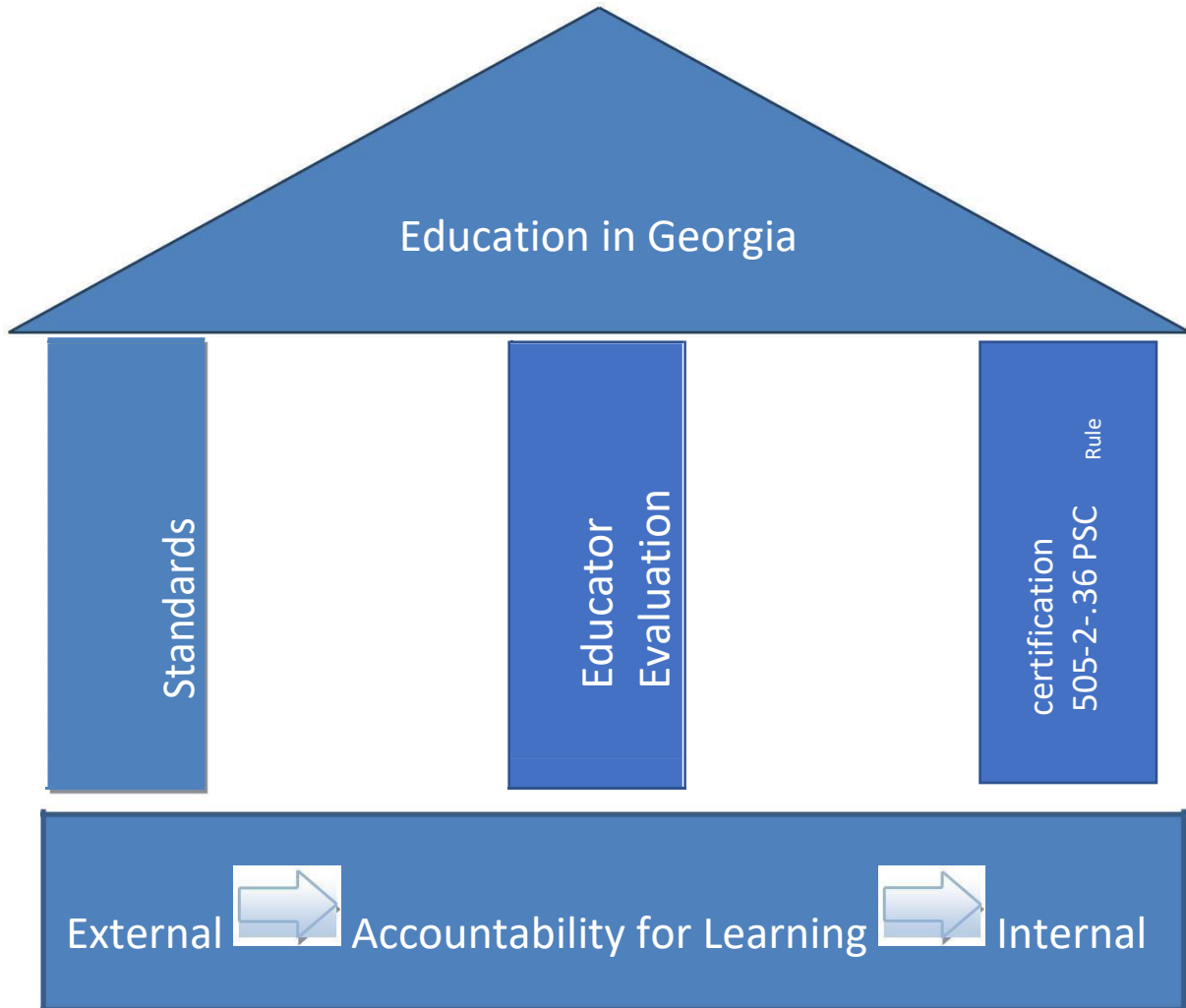
For educators not employed by a Georgia LUA in a position requiring GaPSC certification may apply for renewal according to procedures outlined on www.gapsc.com.

An educator who has received any combination of two (2) Unsatisfactory, Ineffective or Needs Development annual performance evaluations during the previous five (5)-year validity cycle that have not been satisfactorily remediated by the employing Georgia LUA shall not be entitled to any certificate except for a Waiver in any field (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.43 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION](#)). Waiver certificates must be requested by an employing Georgia LUA and are issued at the discretion of the GaPSC (See GaPSC Rule [505-2-.13 WAIVER CERTIFICATE](#)).

Your Transition to the New Rule

We are not made wise by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility of our future.

George Bernard Shaw



For over a decade, education legislation, policies and guidelines have undergone changes that have reshaped the structures designed to support the foundation of education in Georgia. These changes have impacted Georgia educators at philosophical levels.

Two primary support structures to the educational foundation in Georgia that have undergone unprecedented change are the curriculum standards that define content mastery for Georgia students and the standards that define performance quality for Georgia educators. The reshaping of Georgia's student curriculum and teacher evaluation process was called for and

recognized as a need toward professional growth for many educators; however, these changes challenged philosophical beliefs for most educators. At the core of every educator is found a commitment to their students. This commitment is driven by philosophical beliefs about learning.

Learning is personal. Educators have a deep respect for the learning process and recognize a life-long commitment to this process. Continuous learning and change are commonplace attributes of effective educators. Effective educators know that their personal and professional growth has a direct connection to the personal growth and learning process for their students. In response to this knowledge, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission has reshaped an additional primary support structure for Georgia educators through the new certification process, GaPSC Rule [505-2-.36 RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS](#). These new guidelines professionalize the learning process for educators and recognize their commitment to Georgia students. There is a shift toward internal accountability for educators as opposed to external accountability counted through units of learning. Internal accountability allows Georgia educators to recognize their areas of instructional expertise and seek knowledge to strengthen their areas of need.

While Professional Learning accountability was monitored through time spent learning, regardless of the content, professional Learning accountability is now monitored through personal and professional learning targeted to meet the needs of Georgia students and the schools and districts who serve them. This shift in accountability monitoring is focused specifically on the curriculum standards that define student content mastery and the standards that define educator quality. This shift recognizes and supports the work of effective educators in Georgia. The shift in Professional Learning accountability professionalizes the work of educators in Georgia; however, there is a shift. And with a shift, there is change.

This portion of the guidelines is designed to help educators maintain and strengthen their effectiveness through the new certification rules, having responsibility for their professional future. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission knows that successful implementation of the renewal rule involves more than publishing and sharing the printed rule – the human element is recognized. The following information provides all educators with relevant research, resources, and scenarios that support the change process. This research, the resources, and scenarios will be beneficial to teachers, administrators, and central office personnel alike as they shift their professional accountability with the certification rule changes.

Research and Resources:

Many educational thought leaders provide insight into an intentional change process that is necessary to support an educational shift of this depth as we redesign certification renewal in Georgia. You will find examples of this research referenced below and are encouraged to be intentional as you plan to support your educators through this new rule change.

[Stages of Concern \(SEDL\)](#)

Helping administrators and teacher leaders assess and respond to the worries, attitudes, and perceptions of the new rule.

[Levels of Use \(SEDL\)](#)

Helping administrators and teacher leaders lead colleagues through the changes defined by the new rule.

[The Change \(Fullan\)](#)

Helping administrators and teacher leaders lead to sustained improvement in student achievement through the new certification rule.

Figure 1 Professional Learning Communities – Characteristics, Structural Conditions, and Supports – Kruse, Seashore Louis, Bryk

Characteristics of PLC	Structural Conditions that Support PLC	Support for PLC
<p>1. Shared values and norms.</p> <p>An agreed upon set of core beliefs, values, and norms provides the foundation for teaching and learning.</p>	<p>1. Time is created for collaborative work.</p> <p>Regular blocks of time during the school day devoted to professional learning and school improvement for team and task groups.</p>	<p>1. Administrators and teachers are open to improvement.</p> <p>Improvement is viewed as routine. There is support for risk-taking.</p>
<p>2. Collaborative work.</p> <p>Mutual learning and discussion of classroom practice and performance. Sharing ideas, joint planning, setting common expectations.</p>	<p>2. Physical barriers to the PLC have been neutralized when possible.</p> <p>Creation of common work spaces. Arranging for close physical proximity to encourage collaborative work.</p>	<p>2. Levels of trust and respect are high.</p> <p>Expertise is honored, and there is a sense of loyalty and commitment. There is predictability because of commonly agreed upon norms, values, and beliefs.</p>
<p>3. Deprivatization of practice.</p> <p>Practice is open. Coaching and mentoring is the norm. Teaching problems are brought to the table. Successes are displayed.</p>	<p>3. The administration and the faculty understand the interdependence of teaching roles.</p> <p>Collaborative work is predictable and recurring. Teachers plan, teach, and problem-solve together.</p>	<p>3. Leadership is supportive of the work of the PLC.</p> <p>Leader actions signify support. Leaders focus on, learn about, and become experts in the learning community.</p>
<p>4. Collective focus on student learning.</p> <p>The collective conscience of the school puts student learning first.</p>	<p>4. Teachers are empowered to work in a PLC.</p> <p>Individual autonomy is put aside in favor of group autonomy. The impact of collective decisions and work is the focus. The school too is empowered to work as an autonomous unit.</p>	<p>4. Socialization of new teachers and administrators has been thoughtfully designed into the PLCs work.</p> <p>Orientation of new members is thorough. New members quickly know the processes and the work of the school.</p>
<p>5. Use of reflective dialogue is part of the school’s culture.</p> <p>Public conversations that foster self-awareness focus on teaching practice and student learning. Isolation is reduced as teachers take on a school-wide focus.</p>	<p>5. Communication structures to support collaborative work are in place.</p> <p>Structures are in place and routines have been created that foster school-wide communication.</p>	<p>5. The cognitive/skill base of the faculty is strong.</p> <p>Expertise within the faculty is valued. Sharing knowledge is the norm, and ongoing learning is routine.</p>

Scenarios and Professional Learning Planning with Goals

Professional Learning Plan (PLP) and Professional Learning Goals (PLG):

The following scenarios are presented through the lens of various educators. You are encouraged to review each of them and consider their use of a Professional Learning Goals and Planning as defined on the following rubric:

Professional Learning Plan Rubric

Strongest Collaboration			Non-existent Collaboration
<p>(a)</p> <p>In collaboration with colleagues and administration, a needs assessment is completed and the educators define individual and team goals. The PLP AND/OR PLG(s) is developed to align with school and team goals for student achievement. The PLP AND/OR PLG is uploaded on the electronic platform and goals are discussed with administration and at regular PLC meetings. PLG's are monitored and refined throughout the school year based on current data.</p>	<p>(b)</p> <p>In collaboration with colleagues, a needs assessment is completed and the educators define individual and team goals. The PLP AND/OR PLG(s) is developed to align with school and team goals for student achievement. The PLP AND/OR PLG is uploaded on the electronic platform and goals are discussed with administration. PLG's are monitored and discussed throughout the school year.</p>	<p>(c)</p> <p>Based on a needs assessment, the PLP AND/OR PLG is developed and uploaded on the electronic platform and discussed with administration. The needs assessment incorporated colleague input and at least one Professional Learning Goal (PLG) is aligned with colleague goals to promote student achievement.</p>	<p>(d)</p> <p>Based on a needs assessment, the PLP AND/OR PLG is developed and uploaded on the electronic platform.</p>

Scenarios:

External Provider and The Hydrangea School District (HSD)

At the district level, district leaders began to engage in reflective dialogue as part of their district improvement planning process. From this dialogue, one of the needs identified stemmed from assessment initiative changes at the state, district, school, and classroom level. District leaders contacted their regional education service agency for guidance and input. Initial conversation brought about a desire to emphasize performance based assessments in preparation for the changes in state level assessment expectations aligned to the state curriculum standards.

Additional dialogue was held with administrators and teachers within the district. Student achievement data to include formative and summative assessment practices at the classroom, school, and district levels were reviewed. Through data triangulation (perception data, student achievement data, and process data) the decision was collectively made to define a district focus: Teachers teaching students to be successful with the new assessment expectations.

The district began a unique journey. Instead of working with their regional education service agency to come and deliver pre-defined training on performance based assessment strategies, the district invited the agency representatives to partner with them in focusing on assessment. Together, the agency and district leaders met with school leaders and explored performance based assessment strategies and current practices. Following school leader input, the district leaders and agency representatives began working with teacher leaders and classroom teachers to more clearly understand and implement the new assessment expectations. All along the way, leader and teacher concerns were considered and the overall plan evolved.

From pre-planning to post-planning, every educator in HSD focused on performance based assessment. During administrative and teacher professional learning community meetings, assessment questions and prompts were discussed and feedback was given to strengthen the work shared; student work samples were shared and questioning techniques were considered and refined. A twitter account was established and educators shared their question and prompt designs for feedback among colleagues across the district.

Following post-planning, the cycle began again. District leaders and their agency representatives engaged in reflective dialogue as part of their district improvement planning process.....

Understanding Teacher Evaluation Standards and the Jasmine School District (JSD)

As the Professional Learning Director, Sharon was working with her district leader colleagues to implement one of the district goals; full implementation of the new teacher evaluation process. As part of the district implementation plan for this goal, district leaders and school leaders were engaging in walk-throughs using the evaluation tool in small groups. After a walk-through, district and school leaders were discussing observations as compared to the evaluation standards to strengthen inter-rater reliability. District leaders aspired to strengthen everyone's understanding of the evaluation standards and tools.

After several weeks and many inter-rater reliability sessions, one standard emerged as a constant discussion point. During every discussion, school administrators and teacher leaders asked questions about how differentiation is demonstrated in the classroom. District leaders met with all administrators and intentionally engaged in reflective dialogue about the differentiation standard that is part of the teacher evaluation process. During this dialogue, the state rubric was reviewed that supported the evaluation standard. School administrators returned to their schools and held similar conversations with their teacher leaders and classroom teachers. Following these school based sessions focused on differentiation, it became apparent to district leaders that there was not a common definition or understanding of differentiation as demonstrated in classrooms across the district. Considering the expectations of the new evaluation tool (school process data), dialogue held across the district (perception data), and the classroom observation data (student achievement data and demographic data), district leaders triangulated all data sets and established a district Professional Learning Goal focused on developing a common definition of differentiation.

In late fall, district leaders sought expertise from two outside consultants. The consultants first led district leaders and school based leaders in performance based differentiation training to help develop a common understanding of the standard. After the consultants increased the knowledge base with district leaders, they began to participate in inter-rater reliability walk-through sessions in district schools. Time was dedicated to the school administrators and teacher leaders to develop their cognitive and skill base associated with differentiation. Following administrative and teacher leader training, the consultants and trained teacher leaders began working with classroom teachers using the same process. Classroom teachers increased their knowledge base of the differentiation standard and began observing colleagues as differentiation strategies were implemented across schools.

In February, district and school leaders began to notice a shift in their dialogue regarding their shared walk-throughs. The questions focused on an academically challenging environment. District leaders knew their next steps in the district goal of implementing the new teacher evaluation process.....

Mr. Scott, High School Principal

At the School Level, Scotty Scott serves Summit County High School as their Principal. Mr. Scott has a strong vision for his school and desires to establish structural conditions that support an effective professional learning community. He has a strong moral purpose and desires to make a difference in the lives of his students and educators. Mr. Scott knows that his role as primary leader at SCHS has the potential to promote and sustain a strong learning culture among his stakeholders.

In early summer, Mr. Scott takes a reflective look at his school and his guiding vision. He considers his administrative evaluation process (school process data) and reviews the associated standards. He recognizes his strengths and the result of intentional actions toward improvement; he also recognizes areas for growth. Mr. Scott looks at student achievement data, formative and summative. He reviews disaggregated data to determine sub group strengths and weakness and considers comparable data (demographic data). He then turns his reflective thoughts to survey data he has collected throughout the previous school year from various stakeholders that comprise his school (perception data). Considering all data sets, Mr. Scott defines two specific areas that he needs to focus on in the upcoming school year; 1. School Climate 2. Communication and Community Relations.

Having identified his perceived growth goals, Mr. Scott contacts his mentor. Mr. Scott has worked with his administrative mentor for several years and trusts her guidance. He shares his thoughts with his mentor and she encourages him to begin thinking about specific actions that will improve the climate of SCHS. Mr. Scott's mentor shares how she strategically evaluated communication pathways at her school and found some success. She also challenged Mr. Scott to define some short term goals associated with building relationships within his school community.

As Mr. Scott continues to reflect over his school's data and his conversation with his mentor, he reaches out to his leadership team at SCHS. This team is comprised of teacher leaders who have been empowered by Mr. Scott to make collective decisions on behalf of the educators at SCHS. Together, Mr. Scott and his team of teacher leaders engage in reflective dialogue focusing on the two areas Mr. Scott has identified for improvement. He listens to his teacher leaders and their thoughts toward improving the climate of their school and he shares a desire to improve teacher morale while maintaining high student standards.

With input from his mentor and trusted teacher leaders, Mr. Scott develops his Professional Learning Plan (PLP) and includes improving School Climate along with Communication and Community Relations as two of his Professional Learning Goals (PLG) for the upcoming school year. In collaboration with his leadership team, Mr. Scott develops several short term goals and a monitoring plan for his defined PLG's and he schedules a meeting with his direct supervisor to review and refine his PLP. Mr. Scott feels confident that his plan will promote his vision for SCHS through an effective learning community of educators focused on student success.

Mr. Xavier, High School Science Teacher

In the Classroom, Mr. Xavier is known to his high school Environmental Studies and Biology students as Mr. X. Mr. X is visiting a colleague from the Math department at his school to observe her differentiation strategies. This is his third peer observation since the beginning of the school year.

In late spring of last school year, Mr. X met with his supervising principal to review his performance. As they discussed the various data sets gathered to support Mr. Xavier's evaluation, both agreed his performance met expectations. One area of growth that was identified was the differentiation standard as defined by the teacher evaluation process. Mr. X knew he was able to establish a great relationship with his students and he felt confident with his content; however, he realized that beyond grouping his students for laboratory settings he was unsure how to identify and meet students' individual needs. Differentiation became a Professional Learning Goal (PLG) for Mr. Xavier.

Following the meeting with his administrator, Mr. X continued to reflect on his instructional practices and began talking with his colleagues about their understanding of differentiation. During a conversation with one of the math teachers in his building, both teachers realized they had established differentiation as a PLG on the next school year's PLP. With a common goal for improvement, they began to research differentiation and engage in dialogue about what they learned. Over the summer, both attended a district hosted training session on differentiation and began to understand the process of meeting student needs through strategies that promote critical and creative thinking.

At the beginning of the school year, Mr. X met with a few trusted colleagues in the Science department and they collaboratively refined the Professional Learning Plan that would guide their work throughout the school year. In addition to the Science student achievement goals that were defined, Mr. X chose to continue with his goal to strengthen his use of differentiated strategies in his classroom and shared this with his Science colleagues. One of his colleagues served as a teacher leader for the department and she agreed to help Mr. X with his goals.

Peer observation was one of the strategies that Mr. X and his teacher leader colleague agreed to implement. The teacher leader invited Mr. X to visit her classroom and observe a lesson she had designed and tailored to address individual learning needs and interests. She explained to Mr. X how she grouped her students based on interest and assessment performance, she shared the activities selected to support the content standard and explained how she had aligned the specific activities with her students' learning needs, and she asked Mr. X to help her evaluate the four differentiated assignments she had designed to assess student understanding of the content. The rich dialogue that Mr. X and his colleague engaged in prior to and following his observation of her classroom was invaluable; both learned a great deal about differentiation and recognized the impact their work had on the student's performance during the class.

Mr. X also visited another teacher leader's classroom in the math department with a focus on differentiation. He found the experience very helpful and enjoyed talking with the students about the learning they were engaged in. This helped Mr. X realize the impact of differentiation on student motivation and performance.

During Mr. X's third peer observation, he visited his math colleague who had the same PLG and had attended the summer training with him. Mr. X saw much of what they had learned over the summer together come to life in the math classroom and he recognized the intentional attention to grouping and formative assessments. Following his observation, Mr. X invited his colleague to visit his classroom.

Mr. X has been working all year to strengthen his use of differentiation strategies in his classroom. During one of the walk-through's that his administrator conducted during second semester, Mr. X was commended on his use of strategies that provided his students the opportunity to learn by engaging them in critical and creative thinking and challenging activities tailored to address individual learning needs and interests. After reading his administrators comment, Mr. X reflected on the intentional learning he had engaged in and the help his colleagues had provided in strengthening his understanding of differentiation. While he knew his understanding of differentiation would continue, Mr. X was pleased with his progress and especially pleased with his students' response to the strategies.

Mrs. Stamps, New Elementary Teacher

As a first year teacher assigned to fifth grade, Mrs. Stamps is anxious and excited to begin her teaching career at Gardenia Elementary School (GES). She was hired in June and invited to meet with her principal and mentor. The three met for lunch and talked about family and summer plans. After lunch, they traveled to GES and the principal walked with Mrs. Stamps and her mentor to Mrs. Stamps' classroom while they talked about the history of the school building and the summer renovations in progress. Mrs. Stamps' principal left for a district level meeting and she was able to spend some time with her mentor; asking all of those new teacher questions.

Mrs. Stamps' mentor talked with her about the school. She shared the vision for learning supported by their principal and she also discussed the norms that guided the daily work in serving their students and community. Mrs. Stamps asked her mentor for help with her Professional Learning Plan and explained to her that she was required to have a PLP for three years in support of her induction level certificate. The mentor explained that all teachers at GES have a PLP and use it as a living document to guide their daily work with students and colleagues.

Mrs. Stamps' mentor shared the district and school defined goals with her and explained how and why the existing district and school goals were set; the mentor shared that she would be working with Mrs. Stamps throughout the year as those goals were implemented and monitored. In addition, Mrs. Stamps mentor encouraged her to engage in the teacher evaluation process needs assessment and they made plans to get together in three weeks to discuss the results.

Mrs. Stamps had been trained on the educator evaluation process during her last year in college and was familiar with the standard based expectations. She began to reflect over all she had learned through college and focused on her time during field placement and student teaching. As she considered each of the evaluation standards, she struggled to self-assess and wondered how other new teachers felt about this process. She was eager to meet with her mentor again and hoped she could trust her and talk openly with her about the process.

As planned, Mrs. Stamps and her mentor met to discuss the teacher evaluation process; specifically, the needs assessment. The mentor began talking with Mrs. Stamps about how the standard rubrics worked and how she was able to translate the expectations defined in the standards into her lesson planning and classroom. She also shared that she imagined it would be difficult to self-assess for the first time and explained that the first time she used the rubric, she struggled some. This made Mrs. Stamps more comfortable and she was relieved to share her self-assessment and talk about her understanding of the standards so far. The mentor assured Mrs. Stamps that they would gain a deeper understanding of the expectations together and hoped they could visit each other's classrooms to observe and give each other feedback. The mentor also encouraged Mrs. Stamps to choose a standard to focus on throughout the year.

Pre-planning arrived and with it the energy and excitement that greets a new school year. Mrs. Stamps was especially excited as this was her first class. She could not wait to meet her students, colleagues, and parents. Amid the bustle of pre-planning, Mrs. Stamps was glad she had engaged in some self-reflection over the summer with her mentor because her team met together to develop their Professional Learning Plan. Mrs. Stamps felt comfortable talking about what she had learned over the summer from her mentor about the district and school-wide goals and she shared with her team a professional goal she had set to support the Instructional Strategies evaluation standard. All team members also shared their focus area, and they each agreed to discuss their research and progress toward meeting their individual goals weekly during professional dialogue, PLC sessions.

After the first week of school, Mrs. Stamps was reflecting. While exhausted, she knew she was where she was meant to be. She adored her students and was so very impressed with the professionalism demonstrated by her colleagues. She decided to write her mentor a note thanking her for helping make her first few weeks as a teacher so fulfilling. She also made a note in her calendar to schedule an appointment with her principal to discuss her Professional Learning Plan.

Text Recommendations to Support Implementation:

- Bradley, J. (2015). *Designing schools for meaningful professional learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
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- DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & DuFour, R. (2002). *Getting started: Reculturing schools to become professional learning communities*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.
- DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & DuFour, R. (2005). *On common ground: The power of professional learning communities*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
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- Easton, L. B. (2009). *Protocols for professional learning*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
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- Fogarty, R. & Pete, B. (2007). *From staff room to classroom: A guide for planning and coaching professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin and NSDC.
- Fullen, M., Hord, S., & Von Frank, V. (2015). *Reach the highest standard in professional learning: Implementation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin and Learning Forward.
- Glaude, C. (2005). *Protocols for professional learning conversations: Cultivating the art and discipline*. Courtenay, BC: Connections Publishing.
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- Hord, S., Roussin, J. L., & Sommers, W. A. (2010). *Guiding professional learning communities: Inspiration, challenge, surprise, and meaning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press,
- Hord, S. & Summers, W. A. (2008). *Leading professional learning communities: Voices from research and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, NASSP, & NSDC.
- Jolly, A. (2008). *Team to teach: A facilitator's guide to professional learning teams*. Oxford, OH: NSDC.
- Joyce, B. & Calhoun, E. (2010). *Models of professional development: A celebration of educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Joyce, B. & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Killion, J. (2008). *Assessing impact: Evaluating Staff Development* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin & NSDC.
- Learning Forward (2011). *Standards for Professional Learning*. Oxford, OH: Author.
- Murray, J. (2014). *Designing and implementing effective professional learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- National School Reform Faculty Resource Book. Harmony Education Center. Bloomington, IN: www.nsrffharmony.org.
- Pete, B. M. & Fogarty, R. J. (2010). *From staff room to classroom II: The one-minute professional development planner*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Von Frank, V. (2008). *Finding time for professional learning*. Oxford, OH: NSDC.
- Yendol-Hoppey, D. & Dana, Nancy Fichtman. (2010). *Powerful professional development: Building expertise within the four walls of your school*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
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