

STANDARD INDICATOR 5.1

PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION

The teacher collaborates with other professionals to improve school effectiveness.

The National Board advocates proactive and creative roles for teachers. Those functions involve analyzing and constructing curricula, coordinating instruction, contributing to the professional development of staff, and participating in other policy decisions fundamental to the development of highly productive learning communities.

Although state authorities and local leadership establish broad goals, objectives, and priorities for districts and schools, accomplished teachers share responsibility with their colleagues and administrators in determining what constitutes valuable learning for students. Educators understand their legal obligation to carry out public policy as represented in state statutes and regulations, school board directives, court decisions, and other procedural documents—and they bear those mandates in mind while acting as professionals. Accomplished teachers thereby take the initiative to analyze curricula critically, identify new priorities, and communicate necessary changes to the school community. To perform that work effectively, teachers must have a thorough knowledge of their students and curricula as well as a willingness to question conventions and work collaboratively with educational stakeholders.

Developing curricula and coordinating instruction are key functions shared by teachers and administrators. Accomplished teachers work with other educators to plan instructional programs that promote continuity and support equitable learning experiences for all students. They help integrate plans for students with general and exceptional needs by thinking strategically across grade levels, academic tracks, and subject areas. Teachers work closely with administrators and staff to navigate systems, structures, and schedules so they can implement improvements that modify organizational and curricular aspects of instruction cohesively. Accomplished teachers understand the technical requirements of a well-coordinated curriculum, possess the interpersonal skills needed to work in groups, and exhibit a readiness to join their efforts in the interest of school communities. Those qualities enable educators to participate effectively in planning and decision making in teams, departments, and other educational units outside the classroom, laboratory, or studio.

Accomplished teachers also are involved in the arrangement of student services, uniting educators with a wide variety of specializations to ensure that instructional experiences remain productive and coherent. They help teachers partner to support inclusive education and create appropriate learning environments for students with a range of exceptional needs—those who face physical disabilities, sensory impairment, or behavioral challenges, as well as those who are gifted and talented. Accomplished educators foster cooperation among teachers and counselors of ELs, and others who offer high-quality programs featuring English as a new language, bilingual education, and English immersion. Importantly, they uphold the requirements of compensatory education with a similar sense of vigilance and dedication. Accomplished teachers are adept at working in tandem with other educators to provide students with the attention they need.

In addition to developing curricula and coordinating instruction schoolwide, accomplished educators work with one another to strengthen their teaching practices. They observe colleagues in the classroom, engage in pedagogical discussions, and collaborate to improve their teaching methods, and explore new instructional strategies. Accomplished instructors may focus on different aspects of their practice, based on opportunity, need, and disposition; however, they share a common commitment to pursuing teaching excellence in concert with their peers.

Schools that thrive and flourish emphasize a similar process of continuous improvement. Accomplished teachers in those schools help their colleagues identify and resolve problems while encouraging them to experiment with different teaching methods and forms of instructional organization. They work as teacher leaders, strengthening professional development and advocating improvements. Educators in less successful schools strive to promote the

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same traits of excellence—to build systems, develop networks, and foster a culture of innovation that will help their schools prosper.

Accomplished teachers undertake a variety of projects to pursue all those goals, participating actively in their learning communities to promote progress and achievement. For example, they may mentor novices, form study groups, demonstrate new methodologies, serve on school and district policy councils, or engage in scholarly inquiry and artistic expression. Teachers work with their colleagues as members of a team, sharing their knowledge and skills while contributing to the ongoing development of strong schools. Alongside their administrators and other school leaders, they assume responsibility for the quality of their schools' instructional programs. This set of expectations is integral to the mission of accomplished teachers. It characterizes a professional approach to teaching and distinguishes the educational field as a whole.

Adapted from NBPTS, *What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*, 2nd ed. (2016, pp. 35–37).

Key Elements of Teacher Practice Related to Standard Indicator 5.1

- Readiness to work enthusiastically with others to engage in the analysis and construction of curriculum, in the coordination of instruction, in the professional development of staff, and in many other school-site policy decisions fundamental to the creation of highly productive learning communities;
- Attention to issues of equity of learning experiences for students that require schoolwide collaboration in planning the instructional program to ensure continuity of learning experiences for students;
- Active participant in the coordination of services to students (special needs, compensatory education, English as a second language).
- A team spirit and willingness to share knowledge and skill with others, such as mentoring novices, serving on school and district policy councils, demonstrating new methodologies, engaging in various forms of scholarly [inquiry](#) and artistic activity, or forming study groups; and
- Collaborative work on schoolwide improvements, and assumption of leadership roles within and outside the learning community when possible.

Questions for Reflection and Planning

- In what ways do I collaborate with others in and outside my content area to support student learning and coordinate services?
- In what ways do I use the knowledge that other school professionals have on content, instructional strategies, and students to inform my own practice?
- How do I build effective relationships with colleagues that are based on mutual support and cooperation?
- How do I contribute to work with colleagues that promotes and fosters a positive, solution-oriented work environment?
- How do I work with others to contribute to the success of schoolwide improvement?
- What opportunities are there for me to take a leadership role within and outside the learning community?
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5.1 LEVEL 1	
Standard Indicator 5.1. Professional Collaboration. The teacher contributes to school effectiveness by collaborating with other professionals on activities that support school improvement and student learning.	
Level 1, Ineffective	
Performance-Level Descriptors	<p>The teacher does not attend, or attends only when required, collaborative activities that contribute to school improvement and student learning. Teacher is frequently unprepared or unwilling to contribute productively to collaborative professional conversations.</p> <p>The teacher does not work with other educators in the planning and implementation of instructional practices and other supports and interventions designed to promote continuity and equitable learning experiences for all students.</p>
Critical Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The teacher does not participate on instructional teams nor use advice from colleagues to improve practice to meet the needs of all learners. ■ The teacher participates in the coordination of services to students (special needs, compensatory education, English as a second language) only when directed. ■ Although there are resources and personnel available in the school to assist with the needs of the English language learners, the teacher does not use the support to better meet these students' needs. ■ The teacher does not participate in professional development in support of learner development and growth.
Possible Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ When attending the monthly meeting to share reading data and discuss successes and challenges, one of the second-grade teachers arrives without data and does not participate in the analysis with her colleagues. ■ The teacher attends the required meetings to discuss progress toward the IEP goals of one of his special needs students but brings no supporting data or student work and is a passive participant, offering little to no input about student progress and making no contributions in determining next steps in the coordination of services for the student. ■ When a Chinese-speaking student who is currently working with little to no ability to understand and communicate using English is assigned to the fifth-grade classroom, the teacher states: "This is beyond my professional responsibilities" and makes no effort to seek out the assistance from those with expertise in this area. ■ The high school history teacher attends professional development about using reading strategies in the content area, but does not participate in the training activities or implement the new strategies in the classroom designed to assist students who are having difficulty in accessing the complex texts that are used on a daily basis. ■ As the implementation of the agreed-upon schoolwide focus on thinking maps began, no evidence of application was seen in the teacher's room.
Implications for Professional Learning (adapted from InTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)	<i>Develop the ability to:</i> Deepen collaborative engagement with colleagues.

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Teaching practice is advanced through professional learning that will, for example:

Build skills in working collaboratively.

- Seek feedback and mentoring to improve active listening, empathy, reframing, and perspective taking as part of a process to effectively participate in learning communities.

Build skills in dialogue.

- Use structured input (e.g., workshops, in-person or online courses, webinars, social media) to develop skills in listening, reflection, and synthesis to facilitate dialogue and debate issues.

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5.1 LEVEL 2

Standard Indicator 5.1. Professional Collaboration. The teacher contributes to school effectiveness by collaborating with other professionals on activities that support school improvement and student learning.

Level 2, Developing

Performance-Level Descriptors

The teacher attends and participates in collaborative professional activities that contribute to school improvement and student learning, such as analyzing and constructing curriculum, instruction and assessments, contributing to the professional development of staff, or participating in other processes and decisions fundamental to the development of highly functioning learning communities. The teacher is sometimes unprepared to contribute to these collaborative professional conversations.

When invited or required, the teacher participates with other educators in the planning and implementation of instructional practices and other supports and interventions designed to promote continuity and equitable learning experiences for all students.

Critical Attributes

- The teacher participates in instructional teams and uses advice from colleagues to improve practice to meet the needs of all learners when invited or required to do so.
- The teacher participates in the coordination of services to students (special needs, compensatory education, English as a second language) only when required.
- The teacher uses resources and personnel available in the school to assist with the needs of ELs.
- The teacher participates in or works to create professional development to support learner development and growth when invited or required to do so.

Possible Examples

- The teacher attends the third-grade [professional learning community](#) meetings, brings the requested information, and sometimes shares strategies with colleagues.
- The teacher collaborates with the special education teacher, completing the required paperwork, but does not actively participate in the discussion of progress or next steps.
- The teacher participates in schoolwide activities only when asked by the principal.
- The teacher went to the technology conference when he was strongly encouraged by his content area team.

Implications for Professional Learning
(adapted from INTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)

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Build skills in working collaboratively.

- Seek feedback and mentoring to improve active listening, empathy, reframing, and perspective taking as part of a process to build and effectively participate in learning communities.

Build skills in dialogue.

- Use structured input (e.g., workshops, in-person or online courses, webinars, social media) to develop skills in listening, reflection, and synthesis to facilitate dialogue and debate issues.

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5.1 LEVEL 3**Standard Indicator 5.1. Professional Collaboration. The teacher contributes to school effectiveness by collaborating with other professionals on activities that support school improvement and student learning.****Level 3, Effective**

Performance-Level Descriptors

The teacher is prepared for, and contributes productively to, collaborative professional activities that contribute to school improvement and student learning, such as analyzing and constructing curriculum, instruction and assessments, contributing to the professional development of staff, or participating in other processes and decisions fundamental to the development of highly functioning learning communities.

The teacher actively collaborates with other educators in the planning and implementation of instructional practices and other supports and interventions designed to promote continuity and equitable learning experiences for all students.

Critical Attributes

- The teacher collaborates with colleagues on instructional teams to seek and offer feedback that supports learners and improve practice.
- The teacher participates in the coordination of services to students (special needs, compensatory education, English as a second language) through exchanging information, advice, and resources with colleagues.
- The teacher seeks out resources and personnel available in the school to assist with the needs of ELs and collaborates with others in implementing strategies to better meet these students' needs.
- The teacher engages in schoolwide decision making with colleagues to identify common goals and monitor and evaluate progress toward these goals.
- The teacher actively participates in or works to develop professional development to support learner development and growth.

Possible Examples

- The teacher is an active participant in the grade-level **professional learning community** and comes prepared with student data and strategies to share.
- The mathematics teacher seeks out opportunities to collaborate with the art teacher to extend and enhance her students' thinking in mathematics.
- During the schoolwide review of student data on the quarterly assessment, the teacher shared his analysis of the results with some initial thinking about probable causes and possible next steps to improve the learning.
- The teacher participates in a book study that meets monthly to focus on topics about enhancing **formative assessment** practices to better identify the needs of her students.

Implications for Professional Learning
(adapted from InTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)

Develop the ability to: Deepen collaborative engagement with colleagues.

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Teaching practice is advanced through professional learning that will, for example:

Build skills in working collaboratively.

- Seek feedback to improve active listening, empathy, reframing, and perspective taking as part of a process to build and effectively participate in learning communities.

Build skills in dialogue.

- Use structured input (e.g., workshops, in-person or online courses, webinars, social media) to develop skills in listening, reflection, and synthesis to facilitate dialogue and debate issues.
- Use technology to build collaborative skills.

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5.1 LEVEL 4

Standard Indicator 5.1. Professional Collaboration. The teacher contributes to school effectiveness by collaborating with other professionals on activities that support school improvement and student learning.

Level 4, Distinguished

Performance-Level Descriptors

The teacher initiates, is prepared for, and productively contributes to, collaborative professional activities that contribute to school improvement and student learning, such as analyzing and constructing curriculum, instruction and assessments, contributing to the professional development of staff, or participating in other processes and decisions fundamental to the development of highly functioning learning communities. The teacher will often take a leadership role in these structures and conversations.

The teacher advocates for, and actively contributes to, the collaborative planning and implementation of instructional practices and other supports and interventions designed to ensure continuity and equitable learning experiences for all students.

Critical Attributes

- The teacher collaborates with colleagues, sometimes initiating meetings, and brings innovative practices that meet learner needs to the instructional team and supports colleagues in their use and in analyzing their effectiveness.
- The teacher participates in the coordination of services to students (special needs, compensatory education, English as a second language) through exchanging information, advice, and resources with colleagues and families.
- The teacher seeks out personnel and resources available in and outside the school to assist with the needs of ELs and collaborates with others in implementing strategies and developing resources to better meet these students' needs.
- The teacher advocates for continuous evaluation and improvement of schoolwide goals to ensure alignment with learner needs.
- The teacher actively participates in and presents/facilitates professional development to support learner development and growth.

Possible Examples

- A teacher organizes and facilitates a monthly meeting that brings teachers together across disciplines to explore alternative strategies to benefit hard-to-reach students.
- A teacher works regularly with ELs, special education, and speech teachers and community personnel to gain ideas and strategies to better connect with her struggling students and ELs to improve access to learning.
- After a meeting that resulted in some heated disagreement, a teacher offered to do some additional research and organize a follow-up meeting of key stakeholders in the discussion.
- A teacher offers to represent the school at the district science meeting, gathers her colleagues' ideas and questions to share with others at the meeting, and prepares mini-workshops to share strategies on the basis of what she learned at the meeting.

Implications for Professional Learning
(adapted from InTASC Learning Progressions 1.0)

Develop the ability to: Deepen collaborate engagement with colleagues and develop leadership skills in various collaborative contexts.

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Build skills in working collaboratively.

- Seek feedback to improve active listening, empathy, reframing, and perspective taking as part of a process to build and effectively participate in learning communities.

Build skills in dialogue.

- Use structured input (e.g., workshops, in-person or online courses, webinars, social media) to develop skills in listening, reflection, and synthesis to facilitate dialogue and debate issues.
- Use technology to build collaborative skills.

Strengthen analysis and reflection on strengths and weaknesses in collaborative work.

- Seek feedback from colleagues on the use of strategies to support collaboration.
- Participate in a professional organization to develop leadership skills (e.g., evaluation and problem solving).
- Read current literature on leadership and learn how to apply these strategies to collaborative processes in schools.