

Professional Development

The questions are critical:

- How much money does a district actually spend on professional development?
- What is the impact on student achievement?
- How does the professional development affect classroom practice?
- How does it affect teacher and principal perspectives?

A Comprehensive Professional Development Audit, a methodology developed by the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) will answer these questions.

A comprehensive professional development audit serves several functions, all of which promote and enable a more systematic and tailored agenda for professional development. First, it provides a means to ensure that professional development is driven by student achievement data and district standards. Second, it provides both a baseline and a vehicle for differentiating professional development according to the needs of individual schools. Third, it enables participants and providers to evaluate quality, impact and needed new directions. Fourth, it enables professional development to be analyzed in terms of its relationship to student achievement results, human resources needs and financial allocations.

There are several elements to the methodology for the professional development audit. These include interviews (both individual interviews and group focus groups), surveys, classroom observations (at multiple points over the school year), the examination of protocols, artifacts and curricula materials, and the development and analysis of a relational database to examine the relationship between the data on student achievement, human resources, finances and professional development services.

Based on an analysis of professional development priorities of the recent past, current priorities and those that are projected for the near future, recommendations may be made for the professional development audit focus. For example, in year one, the emphasis could be on literacy; in year two, on Mathematics; in year three, on Science; and in year four, the audit could be an incorporated management practice that enables the district to examine and make mid-course corrections in subsets of each of these areas on an ongoing basis.

A comprehensive professional development audit depends upon a successful partnership of many different constituents within the school community. As with any substantive component of school and district improvement, is best accomplished when it is done with people, and not to them.

[2008 Landmark CTAC Audit Shows Link between Professional Development and Student Achievement](#)