Fact Sheet #11 – Performance Standard 9: Professionalism

PROFESSIONALISM

The teacher exhibits a commitment to professional ethics and the school's mission and participates in professional growth opportunities to support student learning, and contributes to the profession.

Teacher professionalism encompasses key characteristics – professional competence, performance, and conduct – that reflect teachers' goals and purposes, capabilities, values and beliefs, and directly impact the effectiveness of teaching.[1] As a profession, teachers value and practice the principles, standards, ethics, and legal responsibilities of teaching.[2] And, as with any profession, they must be committed to and skilled in the areas of expertise that define teaching. Professionalism should reflect three essential elements of any true profession:

Three Essential Elements of Professionalism

Elements	Descriptions[3]
Professional standards and ethics of the profession	• Adhere to legal and ethical guidelines. • Adhere to standards defined for the profession. • Demonstrate professional demeanor and positive interaction with others. • Respect the diversity of ethnicity, race, gender, and special needs.
Continuous self-professional development	• Act as reflective practitioner. • Acquire and refine professional knowledge and skill. • Engage in ongoing professional renewal. • Act, as appropriate, as risk taker, stepping out of comfort zone. • Embrace practices of a life-long learner.
Contributions to the profession	• Serve as role model for other educators. • Serve on school, district, regional, and state educational committees, work groups, etc. • Participate in professional associations. • Contribute to the development of the profession (e.g., through presentations, writing).

Teaching seems to differ from many other professions and occupations in the aspect that the kind of person a teacher is, and the way he or she behaves, seem to have considerable implications for the professional practice.[4] For educators, students, and for the general public, good teaching is inconceivable as apart from the teacher's personal qualities. Teachers' daily practice is grounded in the beliefs, values, and attitudes they hold toward the profession, the students, the school, and themselves.[5] Carr posited that many of the skills featured in competence models of professional training – such as the abilities to match general curricular prescriptions to individual needs, to maintain student engagement and administer classroom management – depend on the teachers' ethical or personal qualities of empathy, care, respect, fairness, motivation, perseverance, and strong belief that they can succeed in making a difference in students' learning.[6]

Caring: Caring about students and respecting them as individuals are prevalent in the literature descriptions of effective teachers.[7] Caring is central to student learning – the glue that binds teachers and students together and makes life in classrooms meaningful.[8] Caring fosters a type of teacher-student connection that encourages possibilities for learning that may not otherwise occur.[9] Good teachers are often described as warm, friendly, and caring; conversely,

ineffective teachers often are said to create a tense classroom and are described as cold, abusive, and uncaring.[10] When students perceive that their teachers care about them, they respond by "optimizing their commitment to learning and putting forth greater efforts to reach their potential."[11] In classroom learning, when students are supported by a caring teacher, they are more likely to ask questions, to take chances, and to share their inner thoughts in creative writing and through other forms of expression.[12]

Teacher dispositions and beliefs are two other variables related to student achievement. They are important qualities that build up a teacher's professional demeanor. Carter used multiple data collection instruments, such as surveys, interviews, observations, and personal records, to develop a better understanding about the characteristics and dispositions of 99 effective teachers.[13] When these teachers were asked to list three characteristics of exceptional teachers, the most mentioned themes are as follows:

- Flexible, adaptable, will search for what works.
- Excellent management skills, organized, discipline issues, etc.
- Caring, compassionate.
- Love working with children, love children.
- Believe all children can learn at high levels, high expectations.

These exemplary teachers were then asked to report two strengths they possessed themselves. The most frequently mentioned strengths included being hard-working and dedicated, possessing excellent communication skills, being enthusiastic and energetic, and being caring and kind. Exemplary teachers regard the ethic of care and respect as a vital foundation for students' best learning and a prerequisite for effective teaching. They reach out to know their students by using multiple sources of knowledge (e.g., solicited critique, dialogues and questions, knowing students informally, knowing from

colleagues, and knowing students' cultures).[14] Several studies sought the input of students themselves in identifying characteristics of highly effective teachers.[15] These studies revealed that students described effective teachers as caring, dedicated, motivating, encouraging, nurturing, supportive, and respectful.

Caring[16], self-efficacy[17], and enthusiasm[18] are just a few examples of teacher characteristics that have been demonstrated to influence both cognitive and affective learning. Classroom observations often reveal that effective teachers demonstrate more respect and caring for students than do less effective teachers.[19] Effective teachers use care and respect to build relationships with their students that are conducive to academic learning. Teachers' expressions of care not only enhance students' social skills and self-worth but also encourage their academic development.[20]When students perceive that their teachers care about them, they exert higher level of motivation, social responsibility, and affective learning[21]and they respond by "optimizing their commitment to learning and putting forth greater efforts to reach their potential."[22]

Enthusiasm and motivation: Enthusiasm and motivation are two essential attitudes that impact teacher effectiveness and, ultimately, student achievement. Enthusiasm "reflects the degree of enjoyment, excitement and pleasure that teachers typically experience in their professional activities."[23] Teachers who are more enthusiastic about teaching exhibit higher quality instructional behavior, such as monitoring student learning, providing students with more cognitive autonomy support, offering more social support to students, and using higher levels of cognitive challenge. Teacher motivation also is expressed in a range of teacher behaviors that are perceived to be conducive to student learning, such as enthusiasm in content area taught, interest about students' personal and

developmental needs, and participation in content-related activities outside of class time, and displaying value and emotion for students.[24]

Motivation and enthusiasm are contagious in classrooms. Teachers who display enthusiasm and energy in the classroom often increase student interest and motivation to learn.[25] Among various teacher variables, enthusiasm is the most powerful unique predictor of students' intrinsic motivation and vitality. The students who received instruction from an enthusiastic teacher reported greater intrinsic motivation regarding the learning material and experienced higher levels of vitality.[26] They also exhibited higher rates of on-task behavior.[27]

Efficacy: In addition, researchers found positive associations between student achievement and three types of teacher efficacy-related beliefs: academic emphasis, faculty trust in students and parents, and teachers' collective efficacy beliefs about the school system.[28] Teachers of high self-efficacy set themselves higher goals and stick to them. They invest more effort and persist longer than those low in self-efficacy. A growing body of empirical evidence supports that teachers' self-perceived abilities to accomplish desired outcomes are related to the effort they invest in teaching, the goals they set, and their persistence when setbacks occur.[29] The reviews of research on teacher self-efficacy have summarized that teachers' self-efficacy is associated with their teaching practices in classrooms and student outcomes such as students' own self-efficacy beliefs and student engagement, motivation, and achievement.[30] Compared to teachers with lower self-efficacy beliefs, teachers with stronger perceptions of self-capability tend to use more challenging teaching techniques, try innovative strategies, and employ classroom instruction that are more organized and better planned, student centered, humanistic.

Professionalism and Professional Growth:
Another key attribute of professionalism is a

commitment to continuous improvement and perpetual learning. Interestingly, effective teachers monitor and strengthen the connection between their own development and students' development.[31] Evidence indicates that teachers who receive substantial professional development can help students achieve more. For example, based on the findings of one meta-analysis, teachers who receive substantial professional development (in this instance, 49 hours) can boost their students' achievement about 21 percentile points, and this effect size is fairly consistent across content areas.[32]

Effective teachers invest in their own education. They take responsibility for their own learning, actively engage in self-directed learning based on a set of established goals and in community with like professionals, they tend to become more self-directed and take responsibility for their own learning.[33]Hammerness et al. developed a framework of teacher learning. This framework envisions that teachers need to conduct professional learning in the following five domains: a *vision* for their practice; a set of *understandings* about teaching, learning, and children; *dispositions* about how to use this knowledge; *practices* that allow them to act on their intentions and beliefs; and *tools* that support their efforts.[34]

A Framework for Teachers' Professional Improvement[35]

Domain	Description	More Detailed Descriptions
Vision	Image of what is possible and desirable in teaching	A set of images of good practice that inspire and guide professional learning and practice.

Understanding	Deep knowledge of content, pedagogy, students, and social contexts	Possess a coherent and rich conceptual map of the discipline (knowledge); an understanding of how knowledge is developed and validated within different social contexts (methods); an understanding of why the subject is important (purposes); and finally, an understanding of how one can communicate knowledge of that subject to others (form). Understand students' thinking, experiences, development, and learning processes.
Tools	Conceptual and practical resources for use	Theoretical tools include learning theories, frameworks, and ideas about teaching and learning, such as zone of proximal development, culturally relevant teaching. Practical tools include particular instructional approaches and strategies, and resources such as textbooks, assessment tools.
Practices	Developing, practicing, and enacting a beginning repertoire	The knowledge and tools mentioned above need to integrate into a set of practices. These practices include a variety of instructional activities to promote student learning, such as designing and carrying out a lesson plan, explaining concepts, implementing problem-based learning, planning debates, providing feedback, etc.
Dispositions	Habits of thinking and action regarding teaching and children	These dispositions include reflection upon practice, taking an inquiry stance, determination and persistence in working with children toward success, which may be characterized by the inclination to take responsibility for children's learning and the will to continue to seek new approaches to teaching.

Effective teachers continuously practice self-reflection, self-evaluation and self-critique as learning tools. They are curious about the art and science of teaching and about themselves as effective teachers. They often portray themselves as students of learning. They learn by continuously studying their classroom experiences in an effort to improve practice. They constantly improve lessons, think about how to reach particular children, and seek and try out new approaches in the classroom to better meet the needs of their learners.[36] Reflection constitutes a disciplined way of thinking that entails calling into question one's existing beliefs and routines in light of new evidence and altering teaching behaviors accordingly.[37] By examining, or reexamining, the content and context of their own behaviors in the classroom they are able to refine or even alter what they do and how they do it. Some researchers define reflective teachers as introspective. They seek a greater understanding of teaching through scholarly study and professional reading. Effective teachers invite feedback; by eliciting information and criticism from others, they broaden their perspectives and gain insight to what may have been previously missed. Through reflective practice, effective teachers monitor their teaching because they have a strong commitment to students learning and want to make a difference in the lives of students.[38]

Professionalism and Contributing to the Profession: Effective teachers act individually and collectively to advance the teaching profession, and act as shapers, promoters, and well-informed critics of educational policies, instructional innovations, and internal changes that impact on student learning.[39]Effective teachers are willing to share their ideas and assist other teachers with difficulties. They volunteer to lead work teams and to be mentors to new teachers. Effective teachers are informal leaders on the cutting edge of reform who are not afraid to take risks to improve education for all students.[40] Their opinions usually contribute to effecting positive changes at school or district level. A teacher can contribute to the teaching

profession by engaging in various types of study, inquiry, and even experimentations to develop personal best practices. Individually, teachers are powerful resources to enrich the professional knowledge base about academic standards, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment by reflecting and sharing personal knowledge of "what works" and "what does not work." Collectively, teachers can network with professional associations and collaborate with social/business agencies to advance overall school improvement.

Research also has found that an effective teacher:

- Links professional growth goals to professional development opportunities.[41]
- Is empowered to make changes to enhance learning experiences, resulting in better student retention, attendance, and academic success.[42]
- Selects professional development offerings that relate to the content area or population of students taught, resulting in higher levels of student academic success.[43]
- Is cognizant of the legal issues associated with educational records, and respects and maintains confidentiality.[44]

Sample Performance Indicators for the Professional Knowledge of Teachers
- Carries out duties in accordance with federal and state laws, Code of Ethics, and established state and local school board policies, regulations, and practices.
- Maintains professional demeanor and behavior (e.g., appearance, punctuality and attendance).
- Respects and maintains confidentiality.
- Evaluates and identifies areas of personal strengths and weaknesses related to professional skills and their impact on student learning and sets goals for improvement.
- Participates in ongoing professional growth activities based on identified areas for

improvement (e.g., mentoring, peer coaching, course work, conferences) and incorporates learning into classroom activities.
- Demonstrates flexibility in adapting to school change.
- Engages in activities outside the classroom intended for school and student enhancement.

Sample Student Evidence that Teacher has met the Criteria for Proficiency
- Provide thoughtful feedback to teacher about new ideas and strategies tried by the teacher.
- Report that the teacher regularly adapts instruction to improve learning.
- Report that the teacher allows them to actively participate in lessons.
- Improve learning and achievement related to the teacher's learning.
- Report that the teacher and others at the school work together to support student learning.
- Offer their input toward school improvement through the teacher.

Sample Conference Prompts
- What impact, if any, have professional interactions with colleagues such as collaboration, coaching, mentoring, or participating in professional learning community activities had on your professional development this year?
- How do you incorporate your professional reading and reflection into your professional practice?
- What has been your most meaningful professional learning experience this year?
- How has participation in professional learning impacted student achievement?
- How have you been involved in the school improvement process this year?
- In what ways has your practice been influenced by the school improvement process, if at all?

- How has student achievement been impacted by implementing the school improvement plan?

[1] *The role of teacher professionalism in education*. (n.d.). Retrieved June 1, 2009, from http://students.ed.uiuc.edu/vallicel/Teacher_Professionalism.html.

[2] Fullan, M. G. (1993). Why teachers must become change agents. *Educational Leadership, 50*(6), 12-17.

[3] Adapted from Fullan, M. G. (1993).

[4] Carr, D. (2009). *Professionalism and ethics in teaching.* New York: Routledge.

[5] Vartuli, S. (2005). Beliefs: The heart of teaching. *Young Children, 60,* 76-86.

[6] Carr, D. (2009).

[7] Cassidy, W. & Bates, A. (2005). "Drop-outs" and "push-outs": Finding hope at a school that actualizes the ethic of care. *American Journal of Education, 112,* 66-101.; Chaskin, R. J., & Rauner, D. M. (1995). Youth and caring: An introduction. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(9), 667-674.; Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools.* New York: Teachers College Press.

[8] Noblit, G. W., Rogers, D. L., & McCadden, B. M. (1995). In the meantime: The possibilities of caring. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(9), 680-685.

[9] Peart, N. A., & Campbell, F. A. (1999). At-risk students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education, 5*(3), 269-284.

[10] Walls, R. T., Nardi, A. H., von Minden, A. M., & Hoffman, N. (2002). The characteristics of effective and ineffective teachers. *Teacher education quarterly*, *29*(1), 39-48.

[11] Lumpkin, A. (2007). Caring teachers: The key to student learning. *Kappa Delta Pi Record, 43*(4), 158-160.

[12] Cassidy, W. & Bates, A. (2005).

[13] Carter, P. J. (2003). *A review of highly effective teachers in Hamilton County: Analysis of current trends and implications for improvement.* Chattanooga, TN: Public Education Foundation. Retrieved November 7, 2008, from http://pef. ddngroupb.com/.

[14] Collinson, V., Killeavy, M., & Stephenson, H. J. (1999). Exemplary teachers: Practicing an ethic of care in England, Ireland, and the United States. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education, 5* (4), 349-366.

[15] Aronson, R. (2001). *At-risk students defy the odds: Overcoming barriers to educational success.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.; Corbett, D. & Wilson, B. (2004). What urban students say about good teaching. *Educational Leadership, 60*(1), 18-22.; Engel, D. E. (1994). School leavers in American society: Interviews with school dropouts/stopouts. In R. C. Morris (Ed.). *Using what we know about at-risk Youth,* pp. 3-22. Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing.; Ferguson, R. F. (2002*). What doesn't meet the eye: Understanding and addressing racial disparities in high-achieving suburban schools.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

[16] Lumpkin, A. (2007); Walls, R. T. et al. (2002).

[17] Goddard, R. G., Hoy, W. K., & Hoy, A. W. (2004). Collective efficacy: Theoretical development, empirical evidence, and future directions. *Educational Researcher, 33*(3), 3-13.; Hoy, W., Tarter, J., & Hoy. A. W. (2006). Academic optimism of schools: A force for student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 43*(3), 425-446.

[18] Kunter, M., Tsai Y., Klusmann, U., Brunner, M., Krauss, S., & Baumert, J. (2008). Students' and mathematics teachers' perceptions of teacher enthusiasm and instruction. *Learning and Instruction, 18*, 468-482.; Patrick, H., Ryan, A. M., & Kaplan, A. (2007). Early adolescents' perceptions of the classroom social environment, motivational beliefs, and engagement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(1), 83-98.

[19] Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., Tucker, P. D., & Hindman, J. L. (2008). What is the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement? An exploratory study. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 20*(3-4), 165-184.

[20] Noblit, G. W., et al. (1995).

[21] Comedena, M. E., Hunt, S. K., & Simonds, C. J. (2007). The effects of teacher clarity, non-verbal immediacy, and caring on student motivation, affective and cognitive learning. *Communication Research Reports, 24*(3), 241-248.; Wentzel, K. R. (1997). Student motivation in middle school: The role of perceived pedagogical caring. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 89*(3), 411-419.

[22] Lumpkin, A. (2007). p.160

[23] Kunter, M., et al., 2008, p.470.

[24] Long, J. F., & Hoy, A. W. (2006).

[25] Patrick, B. C., et al. (2000).

[26] Kunter et al., (2008).

[27] Bettencourt, E. M., Gillett, M. H., Gall, M. D., & Hull, R. E (1983). Effects of teacher enthusiasm training on student on-task behavior and achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 20*(3), 435-450.; Mastin, V. (1963). Teacher enthusiasm. *Journal of Educational Research, 56*, 385-386.

[28] Hoy, W., et al. (2006).

[29] Bandura, A. (1997*). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control.* New York: W. H. Freeman.; Schwarzer, R., & Hallum, S. (2008). Perceived teacher self-efficacy as a predictor of job stress and burnout: Mediation analyses. *Applied Psychology: An International Review, 57*, 152-171.; Tschannen-Moran, M., & McMaster, P. (2009). Sources of self-efficacy: Four professional development formats and their relationship to self-efficacy and implementation of new teaching strategy. *The Elementary School Journal, 110*(2), 228-245.

[30] Goddard, R. G. et al. (2004); Shahid, J., & Thompson, D. (2001); Tschannen-Moran, M., & McMaster, P. (2009).

[31] Fullan, M. G. (1993). Why teachers must become change agents. *Educational Leadership, 50*(6), 12-17.

[32]Yoon, K. S., Duncan, T., Lee, S. W., Scarloss, B., & Shapley, K. L. (2007, December). *Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement.* Washington, DC: Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest.

[33]Cercone, K. (2008). Characteristics of adult learners with implications for online learning design. *AACE Journal, 16* (2), 137-159.

[34]Hammerness, K., Darling-Hammond, L., Bransford, J., Berliner, D., Cochran-Smith, M., McDonald, M., et al. (2005). How teachers learn and develop. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Ed.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do*, pp. 358-389.San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.p.385

[35] Adapted from Hammerness., et al. (2005).

[36]Stronge, J. H. (2007). *Qualities of effective teachers (2ⁿᵈ Ed.).*Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

[37]*Valli, L. (1997). Listening to other voices: A description of teacher reflection in the United States.Peabody Journal of Education, 72(1), 67-88.*

[38]Jay, J. K. (2002). Points on a continuum: An expert/novice study of pedagogical reason. *The Professional Educator, 24*(2), 63-74.; Spalding, E. & Wilson, A. (2002).Demystifying reflection: A study of pedagogical strategies that encourage reflective journal writing.*Teachers College Record, 104,* 1393-1421. Retrieved March 7, 2009 from the Single Journals database; Stronge, J. H. (2007).

[39]Little, J. W. (1993).Teachers' professional development in a climate of educational reform. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 15*(2), 129-151.

[40]Stronge, J. H. (2007).

[41]Danielson, C. (2001). New trends in teacher evaluation.*Educational Leadership, 5*(5), 12-15.; Guskey, T. R. (2002). Does it make a difference? Evaluating professional development.*Educational Leadership, 59*(6), 45-51.

[42]*ISTE research reports: Overview: Research on IT [informational technology] in education*. (n.d.). Retrieved on September 22, 2002, from http://www.iste.org /research/reports /tlcu/overview.html.

[43]Camphire, G. (2001). Are our teachers good enough? *SEDLetter, 13*(2). Retrieved November 12, 2001, from http://www.sedl.org/pubs/sedletter/v13n2/1.htm.;School Board News. (1997). Teacher quality is key to student achievement (electronic version). *American School Board Journal.*Retrieved November 21, 2000, from http://www.asbj.com/achievement/ci/ci3.htm.

[44]Collinson, V., Killeavy, M., & Stephenson, H. J. (1999). Exemplary teachers: Practicing an ethic of care in England, Ireland, and the United States*. Journal for a Just and Caring Education, 5* (4), 349-366.

Teacher Self-Assessment Checklist
Performance Standard 9: Professionalism

Quality		Level IV	Level III	Level II	Level I
Enthusiasm	Show joy for the content material.				
	Take pleasure in teaching.				
	Demonstrate interest about students' personal and developmental needs.				
Professional Standards and Ethics of the Profession	Adhere to legal and ethical guidelines, standards for the profession, and local school board policies.				
	Demonstrate professional demeanor and positive interaction with others.				
Professional Development	Involve in acts of searching and inquiring to find a solution that will solve problems encountered.				
	Demonstrate involvement in learning activities inside and outside school.				
	Assess and audit the gaps in professional practice.				
	Incorporate learning from professional development activities into classroom practice.				
Contribution to the learning community	Find, implement, and share new instructional strategies.				
	Network, share practices through dialogue, modeling, and demonstration within and across schools.				
	Share practices through mentoring, coaching, team teaching and shadowing.				
	Support school change and initiatives.				
Reflective Practice	Know areas of personal strengths and weaknesses.				
	Compare instructional practice to the best practices supported by extant research.				
	Engage in structured reflection and inquire into own practice.				
	Be analytical and evaluative about professional knowledge.				
	Set high expectations for personal classroom performance.				
	Demonstrate high efficacy.				