



“Our goal: All teachers in all schools will experience high-quality professional learning as part of their daily work by 2007.”

Professional Learning

The Iowa Staff Development Council Advocacy Statement

The Iowa Staff Development Council (ISDC) is a non-profit professional organization that advocates for quality professional development in Iowa schools. It is an affiliate of the National Staff Development Council. Our local affiliate consists of members from across the state including teachers, administrators, consultants, representatives of K-12 education organizations, higher education, and area education agencies.

The Board of the Iowa Staff Development Council is committed to advancing policy and fiscal support to ensure that quality professional development is provided to Iowa teachers. The most fundamental rationale for high quality professional development is to increase teacher quality. Teacher quality is one of the most important factors in accomplishing gains in student achievement. There is an emerging understanding regarding the nature of the achievement gap for Iowa's students and what to do about it. ISDC recognizes that not all students in Iowa are learning at acceptable levels and there is a critical need for improved instructional practices that are the result of effective professional development for teachers.

Iowa teachers have always been dedicated to quality education for all of their students. Iowa's teachers are faced with continuing challenges to help every child succeed. The Iowa Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program and related policies have established important procedures and capacity-building supports to create a system for delivering professional development, that when fully supported and implemented, has great potential for increasing student learning.

High quality professional development that is research-based and aligned to the achievement needs of students is a critical variable in meeting the ultimate goals for increased student achievement required by the No Child Left Behind Act.

The Iowa Staff Development Council and the National Staff Development Council Standards for Professional Development closely align with the Teacher Quality Program and the work underway to establish professional development systems in Iowa. ISDC recommends that state legislators continue to support the Teacher Quality legislation by:

- Fully funding the required components of the Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Act.
- Providing fiscal resources directly to school districts to support collaborative school and district-wide training, teacher time for engagement in professional development (support for substitutes, early release time, etc.), and necessary resources for highly qualified content trainers.
- Funding additional professional development time for local districts.

- Supporting capacity building efforts such as the Iowa Teacher Development Academies to prepare teachers, administrators, and others to deliver and support training in research based content.
- Create infrastructure at the local level to support daily opportunities for teachers to improve their skills to meet the needs of Iowa's students.

If Iowa is to have a highly skilled teacher in every classroom, educational leaders and policy makers must be powerful advocates for a point of view that sees teaching as a complex and intellectually demanding task which requires the same type of rigorous preparation and career-long learning we expect from lawyers and doctors. We must not settle for anything less if we seek to create Iowa schools in which all students learn at high levels.