

What are the West Virginia Professional Growth Guides?

The Professional Growth Guides were developed to provide West Virginia educators a resource which may be utilized to assist in advancing the professional practices of classroom teachers. The Professional Growth Guides bring together the West Virginia Professional Teaching Standards and the West Virginia Educator Evaluation System into a single set of documents which supplies educators with a variety of information and resources which may be employed to improve professional practice within a given professional standard.

How can classroom teachers utilize the West Virginia Professional Growth Guides?

Teachers who desire to improve their own professional practice within any of the West Virginia Professional Teaching Standards may refer to the appropriate growth guides to find assistance. The growth guides provide concrete examples of professional practices which are observed / demonstrated within the classrooms of highly successful teachers. Specifically, the growth guides delineate some of the practices of Accomplished and Distinguished West Virginia teachers. Additionally, teachers will find a long list of other resources (websites, books, scholarly articles, etc.) which may be sought out and referenced for even further assistance with improving professional practice.

How can school principals utilize the West Virginia Professional Growth Guides?

School principals are tasked with the completion of an annual evaluation for each of the classroom teachers in their school. The West Virginia Professional Growth Guides provide principals with concrete examples of professional practices which are observable within the classrooms of highly successful teachers. Principals may reference these guides prior to conducting observations in a teacher's classroom. Principals may also find the numerous other resources recorded within the guides useful when providing additional support to educators who may be struggling in some aspect of their professional practice.

Stakeholders for the West Virginia Professional Growth Guides

The following professional educators contributed to the creation of the West Virginia Professional Growth Guides:

Erin Sponaugle (2014 WV State Teacher of the Year)	Berkeley County Schools
Michelle Burk (Teacher)	Kanawha County Schools
Kelly Haynes (Principal)	Kanawha County Schools
Melissa Lawrence (Principal)	Kanawha County Schools
John Patrick (Teacher)	Kanawha County Schools
Tab Mathis (Principal)	Tyler County Schools
Trent Danowski (Project Lead)	West Virginia Department of Education
Dr. Monica Beane	West Virginia Department of Education
Victoria Crist (Intern)	West Virginia Department of Education
Monica DellaMea	West Virginia Department of Education
Teresa Hammond	West Virginia Department of Education
Glenna Heinlein	West Virginia Department of Education
Mindy Miesner	West Virginia Center for Professional Development
Joey Wiseman	West Virginia Department of Education

STANDARD 2: THE LEARNER AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Element 2.1. - The teacher understands and responds to the unique characteristics of learners

Description:

The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the underlying principles of how students develop and learn and creates an environment that supports the learning of all students. The teacher sets high expectations based on a conceptual understanding of what is developmentally appropriate for all students. The teacher establishes a learner-centered culture that allows all students to be successful while respecting their differences in learning styles, as well as socio-economic, cultural, and developmental characteristics. Respect for diversity is apparent in the design of the learning environment - the activities and tasks, the materials and student groupings – to ensure student learning.

Connection to College & Career Readiness / Next Generation Standards:

Connections to Professional Teaching Standard 2 – The Learner and the Learning Environment

- The teacher creates a learning environment which supports the students' personal, intellectual, ethical, and social growth.
- Integration of developmentally appropriate content is utilized to provide rigor based upon the students' prior experiences, knowledge, and developmental levels.
- Teachers guide students in becoming self-directed learners. College and Career-ready students within the higher programmatic levels demonstrate academic independence through their ability to seek out and use a variety of resources to assist them in completing assigned tasks.

Professional practices within this standard-element:

At the Distinguished Level

A teacher's positive interactions with students clearly demonstrates that the teacher develops a rapport with individual students. The teacher calls all students by name. The teacher gathers, maintains, and refers to (as needed) a database of "other" student information like birthdays, major interests, etc. The teacher's dialogue and interactions with the students demonstrates that he/she takes the time to get to know the students individually, and uses that knowledge to appropriately connect with the students or to motivate them. The teacher may greet the students at the door to begin each day or class period. Basic personal information about the teacher is shared as a means of strengthening rapport with students. Classroom rules and expectations are clearly communicated and posted within the classroom. The teacher attends and participates in student IEP/504/SAT plan meetings, and demonstrates understanding of student IEP/504/SAT plans through daily lesson plans and activities. Differentiated learning activities are a daily occurrence in the classroom. The teacher makes connections with the parents/families of the students, and collaborates with fellow teachers and/or school counselors in an effort to determine effective methods for instructing students.

At the Accomplished Level

A teacher's interactions with students are respectful, positive, and appropriate for the age and needs of the individual student, and support student growth. The teacher calls all students by name. Interactions with the students are positive; students are greeted with a smile and the teacher is always polite. Empathy is demonstrated during times of student difficulty. Classroom rules and expectations are clearly communicated and posted within the classroom. The teacher attends student IEP/504/SAT plan meetings, and demonstrates awareness of student IEP/504/SAT plans through daily lesson plans and activities. Differentiated learning activities are a daily occurrence in the classroom.

Common Misconceptions or Difficulties:

Emulating highly successful teachers without the prerequisite work.

Successful teachers often utilize the rapport and relationships they have built over the years to conduct classrooms that appear more casual in nature. Newer teachers who are still focused on improving classroom management should not make the mistake of assuming a casual classroom environment will result in successful teaching. Instead, talk with these successful veteran teachers to learn how they built classroom systems and rapport with students that allows them to conduct their classroom in the way they do now. Getting to a place where you can freely use more casual interaction requires prerequisite work on the part of the teacher.

Worrying that getting to know students on a personal level will lead them to take advantage of you/ not respect you.

While it is certainly up to each teacher's individual comfort level to determine how much they want to share, any veteran teacher will tell you that building these relationships is both helpful and important in creating a productive and successful classroom environment. When students see you as a human, with emotions, struggles, families, etc., they often are able to better identify with you and understand your professional desires to teach them. This leads them to respect you more rather than take advantage of you, as long as you maintain your role as a friendly, caring teacher, rather than as a friend.

Getting to know student only half-heartedly.

This is particularly an issue for teachers working with middle and high school age students. Students are quickly able to see when you are not genuine in your efforts to build relationships or when you choose to get to know only some students and not others. It is important to be both professional and consistent with all students in your efforts to avoid them backfiring in unexpected ways.

Professional Development Strategies:

- As an individual or group
 - » *Create a list of strategies that connect this standard element to your grade and/or subject*
 - » *Observe a peer and describe promising practices. Follow up with an interview of that peer to learn how they developed their student relationships*
 - » *Request support and feedback from a colleague or academic coach*

- As a group
 - » *Discuss this standard element within the context of your school goals*
 - » *Review existing practices as they relate to this standard element and brainstorm new practices*
 - » *List steps which can be taken to improve professional practice within this standard element*

Resources:

- Websites & Videos
 - » *Educational Impact* (www.educationalimpact.com) – Resources include a wide range of professional development modules/videos. Content aligned specifically to the West Virginia Professional Teaching Standards is available. Contact your school principal or your District / RESA central office to inquire about availability at your school.
 - » *Edutopia* (<http://www.edutopia.org/teacher-development>) – A comprehensive website and online community that increases knowledge, sharing, and adoption of what works in K-12 education.
 - » *EngageNY* (www.engageny.org) - Resource topics include: The Common Core Standards, Teacher/Leader Effectiveness, Data Driven Instruction, Professional Development (All Grade Levels), and a Video Library.
 - » *Achieve The Core* (www.achievethecore.org) – Resource topics include Common Core instructional resources for ELA/Literacy and Mathematics, Leadership Tools relating to the Common Core Standards.
 - » *School Improvement Network* (<http://www.schoolimprovement.com>)- Professional learning resources designed to help teachers and administrators become even more effective in their educational practices.
 - » *TeacherTube* (www.teachertube.com) – Video, audio, and document resources on a wide range of searchable topics.
 - » *Teacher Vision* (<http://www.teachervision.com/pro-dev/resource/5778.html>) – A wide range of professional development resources for educators including articles, lesson plans, and other resources from notable publishers and experts in the field.
 - » *The Teaching Channel* (www.teachingchannel.org) – Videos and other resources searchable by topic.
 - » *All Things PLC* (www.allthingsplc.info) – Variety of research articles, documents, tools, and other resources.
- Readings
 - » *Burden, Paul and Byrd, David. (2015). Methods of Effective Teaching: Meeting the Needs of All Students. Pearson Education.*
 - » *Danielson, Charlotte. (2007). Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. See: The Classroom and the Classroom Environment*
 - » *Goodwin, Bryan and Hubbell, Elizabeth Ross. (2013). The 12 Touchstones of Good Teaching: A Checklist for Staying Focused Everyday. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. See: Be Demanding: Articulate and Maintain High Expectations for Learning; Be Supportive: Provide a Nurturing Learning Environment*
 - » *Harwell, Joan and Jackson, Rebecca. (2008). The Complete Learning Disabilities Handbook: Ready-to-Use Strategies and Activities for Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.*
 - » *Lemov, Doug. (2010). Teach Like A Champion. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Techniques that directly apply to this indicator: Vegas, No Warnings, Positive Framing, Precise Praise, Warm/Strict, The J-Factor, Emotional Constancy, Explain Everything, Normalize Error, Props, and Strong Voice*
 - » *Pearson Higher Education. (2009). Characteristics of Young Learners. Pearson Education. Retrieved from http://www.pearsonhighered.com/assets/hip/us/hip_us_pearsonhighered/samplechapter/0205535488.pdf*

- Planning Resources
 - » *Office of Early Learning, West Virginia Department of Education. Guidance Documents for PreK-5th Grade levels*
<http://wvde.state.wv.us/oel/>
 - » *Office of Secondary Learning, West Virginia Department of Education. Resources for Standards-based Units, Project-based Learning, Standards-based Instruction, and 21st Century Instruction are available.*
<http://wvde.state.wv.us/instruction/>
 - » *West Virginia Center for Professional Development. Resources include, but are not limited to, the following trainings:*
 - Teacher Academy-Provides research-based materials and instructional strategies to help strengthen teaching
 - Coaching/Mentoring Programs-Guides professional development of educational leaders to improve school and classroom practices
 - Advanced Placement Summer Institutes-Learning and support for teachers of Advanced Placement Courses
 - Safe and Supportive Schools-Addresses aspects of school climate and culture using WVDE's School Climate Survey and the WVEIS Discipline Module
 - Infusing Technology-Helps educators transform the use of technological tools into powerful devices for instruction and student engagement in order to increase critical thinking, reasoning, and problem solving skills
 - National Board Certification Support-Ongoing support for NBC candidates throughout the process of completing the four (4) components

Please visit <http://www.wvcpd.org> for more information on training topics, dates, locations, and times.