

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:

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STANDARD 2: THE LEARNER AND THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Element 2.2. - The teacher establishes and maintains a safe and appropriate learning environment

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 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. The learning environment is characterized by effective classroom procedures, appropriate use of technology, and efficient management of behaviors and physical space.

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

The teacher guides students in the creation of classroom rules and expectations reinforcing a learner-centered culture in the classroom. This culture respects the various learning styles, as well as the cultural and developmental characteristics of all students in the classroom. The rules and expectations are posted within the classroom. The teacher reinforces rules and expectations by modeling the underlying values implicit within them (i.e. respect for persons & ideas, appropriate social interactions, etc.). The teacher maintains an environment where student mistakes (academic or otherwise) are part of the learning experience. Students are comfortable asking the teacher questions / for assistance. The arrangement of classroom materials (desks, cabinets, supplies) demonstrate organization that is both purposeful and highly functional. The classroom is arranged to maximize the available space and eliminates clutter or other physical obstructions, especially in areas of high student movement. Students can access the materials / supplies they need for daily activities in an efficient manner which increases instructional time.

At the Accomplished Level

The teacher creates and implements classroom rules and expectations reinforcing a learner-centered culture in the classroom. This culture respects the various learning styles, as well as the cultural and developmental characteristics, of all students in the classroom. The rules and expectations are posted within the classroom. The teacher reinforces rules and expectations by modeling the underlying values implicit within them (i.e. respect for persons & ideas, appropriate social interactions, etc.). The teacher maintains an environment where student mistakes (academic or otherwise) are part of the learning experience. Students are comfortable asking the teacher questions / for assistance. The arrangement of classroom materials (desks, cabinets, supplies) demonstrate organization that is functional. Classroom is orderly and allows for students to move safely around the room.

Common Misconceptions or Difficulties:

Shouldn't my students just know how to act?

While certain norms may seem obvious to the teacher, it's important not to assume that students know how to act. Students come from a variety of backgrounds and what may seem obvious to the teacher is not so obvious to the student. For example, when a teacher gets an email from a student that seems curt and not proofread, instead of assuming the student didn't care enough to write something better, the teacher might consider establishing norms for appropriate email communication.

I have so much to cover today so can't I just skip the protocol?

Consistency is critical in setting and maintaining high behavior expectations. If a teacher has a protocol students must use when emailing (salutation, use of capital letters, no text-speak, etc.) then ALL emails must be held to that standard. If a student sees that another student is not maintaining the norms but is still getting a response, the behavior system loses integrity and the student-teacher relationship could be weakened.

I can't control how students treat each other.

As Carol Lieber says in her seminal text, *Getting Classroom Management Right*, "Creating norms for positive group behavior begins with what you do, not what students do" (100). It is important to paint a picture for students of your expectations about how they should interact. Make it clear what you expect, saying, for example, "I'm counting on everyone to encourage and support each other," or "You don't need to be friends with everyone, but I do expect you to be friendly with everyone." Then, involve students in contributing to the development of group norms and provide practice and feedback to students on how well they are sticking to the norms. Throughout the semester, you may want to revisit the norms to ask students if they are working for the class or if adjustments are needed.

Furtive intimidation

Not all unsafe aspects of a classroom are easy to detect. Sometimes teachers know there is some sneaky bullying taking place, but they can't figure out its source, and no one wants to "snitch." In this case, teachers must make an effort to attend not only to their instruction but to bring out their best reconnaissance skills: tuning in to where students look and how they respond to one another—especially before and after class and during group or partner work--, noticing differences in the classroom climate when a given student is absent, investigating social scenes outside of the classroom, checking out

Facebook, Instagram, or other social networks, holding top-secret one-on-one meetings with students to get information, asking students to write anonymously about how things are going, and talking with colleagues who teach the same students about student interactions. Once you have zeroed in on the problem, plan strategically how you can help to turn the bully's or queen bee's actions around, keeping in mind that this student has his or her own needs and will need support in changing the behavior. Whatever you do, don't let it go without addressing it.

Professional Development Strategies:

- As an individual or group
 - » *Observe a peer and describe promising practices*
 - » *Request support and feedback from a colleague or academic coach*
 - » *Survey your students and see if they can articulate your rules / expectations*
 - » *Interview a focus group of students to understand how they perceive your rules / expectations*
- As a group
 - » *Discuss this standard element within the context of your school's 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
 - » Bloom, Lisa. (2008). *Classroom Management: Creating Positive Outcomes for All Students*. Merrill/Pearson.
 - » Garrett, Tracy. (2014). *Effective Classroom Management: The Essentials*. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University
 - » Lemov, Doug. (2010). *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques That Put Students on the Path to College*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. See: *Creating a Strong Classroom Culture, Setting and Maintaining High Behavioral Expectations, and Improving Your Pacing: Additional Techniques for Creating Positive Rhythm in a Classroom*
 - » Lieber, C. (2009). *Getting Classroom Management Right: Guided Discipline and Personalized Support in Secondary Schools*. Cambridge, MA: *Educators for Social Responsibility*
 - » Marzano, R.J., with Marzano, J.S. & Pickering, D.J. (2003). *Classroom Management that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Every Teacher*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD
 - » Ming-Tak, Hue and Wai-Shing, Li. (2008). *Classroom Management: Creating a Positive Learning Environment*. Hong Kong University Press
 - » Savage, Marsha and Tom. (2010). *Successful Classroom Management and Discipline: Teaching Self-Control and Responsibility*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

- 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.