Using PVAAS and Other K-12 Data to
Inform Professional Learning

How can PVAAS help me develop professional learning opportunities to enhance the professional growth of educators?

Planning and providing professional learning opportunities on an annual basis targeted to school-level needs is critical to enhancing performance results for all students. Targeted professional learning at the school level, coupled with a focus on LEA/district-level priorities, is key to enhancing the professional growth of all educators and an important role for LEA/district and school leaders.

Planning effective professional learning opportunities requires **a focus on data** to identify needs and inform targeted supports. PVAAS reports provide essential data that can be used at the beginning of the school year and throughout the school year, to inform professional learning needs!

The design of professional learning

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and our current education literature defines professional learning as:

> *"an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators . . . with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging State academic standards"*
>
> *"sustained (not stand-alone, one-day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused"*
>
> **(LEARNING FORWARD PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION)**

With that understanding, leaders must plan for professional learning to occur in a variety of ways, including formal presentations and workshops, and by creating and/or enhancing professional learning opportunities in the daily operation of the LEA/district and school. Thinking "outside the box" is the key to creative and effective planning for professional learning opportunities!

Some potential opportunities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Planned in-service time, LEA/district days, and school-based days
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Options within differentiated supervision
- Peer coaching
- Instructional coaching
- Collaborative data analysis meetings and protocols
- Webinars and online learning opportunities
- Literature reviews and book studies
- Lesson studies
- Collaborative work (collaborative planning, collaborative data analysis, etc.)
- Committee work
- Action research projects

...and many more!

Key PVAAS reports for this work

Professional learning opportunities are most effective when they are informed by data — and PVAAS is an important source of that data, available throughout the year! Several reports in PVAAS can be of particular use to the design and planning of professional learning opportunities, including:
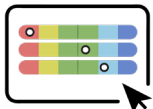
1. LEA/District and School Value-Added reports

Why this report: Provides data regarding strengths and areas for growth at the LEA/district and school level by grade, subject, and year(s).
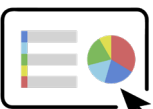
2. LEA/District and School Diagnostic reports

Why this report: Provides data regarding strengths and areas for growth at the LEA/district and school level by grade, subject, and year(s) - for students at different achievement levels.

3. LEA/District and School Growth of Student Groups reports

Why this report: Provides data regarding strengths and areas for growth at the LEA/district and school level by grade, subject, and year(s) - for student groups.

4. LEA/District and School Teacher Value-Added Summary reports

Why this report: Provides data regarding strengths and areas for growth at the teacher level by grade, subject, and year(s) and for students at different achievement levels.

Why involve PVAAS in your planning process?

Planning professional learning with PVAAS and other K-12 data in mind offers:

- An intense focus on the importance of considering growth in continuous improvement efforts

- A focus on the subject(s) that are highest priority relative to growth

- A focus on specific grade levels to support grade-level efforts and goals relative to growth

- Alignment with school and LEA/system goals and priorities, from both a growth perspective and an achievement perspective

- A common focus on initiatives, rather than an array of topics and scattered, unrelated content, moving the LEA/district and school to shared goals and accountability for improved student performance results

- A focus on specific variables (e.g., curriculum, instruction, assessment, organization) most likely to be the root causes of achievement and growth results

- An opportunity to empower educators to take responsibility for their own learning as informed through analysis of relevant data

- The enhancement or development of LEA/district and school culture that embraces data to inform all decisions, including professional learning planning

Considering Both School and LEA/District Priorities

School leaders typically have the responsibility of planning professional learning that encompasses needs specific to the school level, *and* acknowledges and provides opportunities for support and/or focus on LEA/district-level professional learning initiatives and related activities.

To that end, time allocation in finding opportunities is an important variable in determining how to address both levels of learning. School leaders must frequently find creative ways to establish additional time for professional learning opportunities, which often can be infused into already existing activities, meetings, forums, etc.

Recognizing that professional learning is much more than an event, or an established in-service day, is key to developing effective professional learning opportunities. Taking advantage of formal time that is set aside for school-based professional learning, as well as embedding the focus areas into a variety of aspects of the school, can result in more effective professional learning planning and delivery!

THE CHALLENGE OF
time allocation

School leaders must frequently find creative ways to establish additional time for professional learning opportunities, which often can be infused into already existing activities. For ideas and support in this area, check out the resource **Finding Time for Data Meetings (PDF)**.

https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/education/documents/instruction/assessment-and-accountability/pvaas/k12data/findingtimefordatameetings.pdf

How to Plan Professional Learning

1. **Determine the timeline for planning** the school's professional learning plan. Ask:
   - *Can this be aligned to the release of PVAAS data and other high-leverage data?*
   - *Can this timeline factor in the use of historical (past) data when available?*
   - *What is the LEA/district professional learning plan – in other words, how does our school's plan align with the "big picture"?*

2. **Identify time blocks available** to school leaders for school planning.

3. **Determine what PVAAS reports** will be used to identify professional learning content?
   - Value-Added Reports
   - Diagnostic Reports
   - Growth of Student Groups
   - Teacher Value-Added Summary
   - Other Reports

4. **Create opportunities to share PVAAS reports**—along with other data—with staff, to establish expectations and a common and tight focus.

5. **Provide opportunities for staff to collaborate** on possible activities and avenues for professional learning.

6. **Guide and support** both teacher leaders and staff in the process of integrating the identified professional learning targets into their everyday work.

7. **Plan for revisions** to the school-based professional learning plan, based on new data as it becomes available during the year, and based on revisiting PVAAS reports to further refine plans and opportunities.

8. **Plan for end-of-year evaluation** based on staff feedback. Use this feedback in your future planning.

Visit **pa.gov/education** for additional resources on this topic.