



Learning Forward's *Standards Assessment Inventory*© FAQ

Q. What is the Standards Assessment Inventory?

A. The Standards Assessment Inventory, or SAI, is a 58 item electronic survey that assesses staff perceptions of the level of implementation in their school of the Utah Professional Learning Standards. It takes about 20 minutes to complete. It can be taken from any computer with Internet access, at school or at home.

Q. What can the SAI tell my school?

A. There are three initial questions that can be answered by the SAI:

1. What is the overall picture of professional learning in our school?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of professional learning in our school?
3. Where might we focus attention to improve the quality of professional learning in our school?

Q. How can my school use the results of the SAI?

A. There are several ways your school can make use of the SAI:

1. The SAI's most powerful use is in planning for school improvement. As you come to internalize the Utah Professional Learning Standards you will discover that although these standards address professional learning, they also encompass a great deal that we know about high impact school organization and practices. When combined with Learning Forward's Standards into Practice: Innovation Configuration Maps, your school will have an almost ready-made school improvement plan that can be monitored every year using the SAI.
2. A second powerful use of the SAI is to initiate and guide deep, on-going reflection and conversations among school staff on professional learning as an integral, job-embedded process within your school and the relationship between those practices and student success.
3. Similarly, the instrument can be used to help schools get a clearer picture of what is working for them and where they may want to focus their attention for improvement.
4. The instrument can also be used to assess whether a particular improvement effort has contributed to the quality of professional learning within a school.
5. The SAI can be used to help schools focus on the particular actions that contribute to higher-quality professional learning as guided by the items on the inventory.

Q. How might my district or charter be able to use the SAI?

A. There are also several uses school districts and charters can make of the SAI:

1. Many federal programs, especially Title II, Part A, require a needs assessment for the use of professional development funds. In addition, since the Learning Forward Professional Learning Standards are also closely aligned with the research on quality school environments and practices, they can be used as a needs assessment for school improvement.
2. Districts and charters can also use school results to organize schools with similar needs and priorities for technical assistance.
3. Districts and charters can identify schools that are strong in certain areas and may have lessons to share with other schools.
4. Over time, districts and charters can assess whether a particular improvement effort has contributed to the quality of professional learning across several schools or the district.
5. The SAI can also serve as a data-based way to recognize and/or reward schools for quality professional learning.

Q. Is this survey confidential?

A. Yes. Even though the principal/leadership team can see the number of respondents at any given time in the school, there is no way for anyone to identify individual respondents. A further safeguard is that the reports of responses are not generated for view until over 10 teachers have responded.

Q. What reports are available on the results of the survey?

A. There are two reports available the first year the survey is used. [In subsequent years there is a report comparing years.]

1. **“Standard And Question Averages”** shows the averages of the responses (0-5 scale) for each of the Utah Professional Learning Standards. This first report also shows the average response for each of the 58 items organized by standard. This can be an especially useful diagnostic tool for discussion by staff.
2. **“Frequency Counts by Standard Question”** uses bar graphs to show the frequency of responses for each question by standard.

Q. When will these reports be available to my school?

A. Reports can be accessed at the school as soon as the number of respondents exceeds 10. After that, reports are updated electronically every time a teacher completes a survey. There is usually a window of time for the staff to take the survey. At the end of that time the reports are finalized on the SAI website for confidential review.

Q. Can this survey be used to evaluate my school or individual teachers and administrators?

A. No. There is no way to identify individual respondents. As for schools, the instrument is intended for diagnostic purposes only. It was never designed as an evaluation of any sort. If a school uses the instruments longitudinally, as it is highly recommended you do, progress can be seen from one administration to the next. Such movement may be a goal

of the school, but it is an inappropriate use of the instrument to apply the results to a school or individual evaluation. The SAI is a planning tool only.

Q. Will there be technical support available during the survey period?

A. Yes. Senior consultants from Learning Forward working with USBE will be available for technical assistance by phone and online. In addition, staff at the district, charter, and state levels may be trained to offer TA if adoption is selected at any of those levels.

Q. You say we can use the results for school improvement planning. Will there be guidance and materials to lead us through this process?

A. Yes. You will have access to a customized district or charter report that analyzes your results and makes specific recommendations based on that analysis. In addition, there will be two regional workshops in Utah to train your staff in a process for using SAI results for school improvement purposes. Upon request, Learning Forward can provide national consultants with experience in using the SAI for planning purposes at all levels from the school to the state. These experts can guide schools and central offices through application of the instrument, interpretation of the results and translation into action plans for professional learning and school improvement.

Q. How is this approach to improving staff learning different from anything else we have done in the past?

A. There has been a great deal of research in the past 15 years and many schools and districts have begun to transform their ideas of the place and role of professional learning in schools. This is not just theory; it is in practice across the country. By making your professional learning standards-based there is now direction to your program that is driven by you and your teachers and can be measured and improved upon. With the inclusion of tools like the Innovation Configuration Maps (to be introduced at a later time) your professional learning can grow out of the needs identified by **your** teachers for **your** students and not just determined at the central office or the state. Your professional learning can become “job-embedded”, “data-informed” and “outcome-driven.”

Q. My staff doesn't even know what the Utah Professional Learning Standards are. They may have never seen them. How can this survey tell us about the implementation of these standards in our school?

A. High quality professional learning can be measured by the organization and practices in your school. Every school contains some, or many, of the organizational components and practices that contribute to quality professional learning. If you are interested in improving student achievement through the adoption of these proven standards and this is the first time you have administered this survey, you will get base-line data about the extent to which these practices are present in your school as perceived by your teachers and can base all improvement planning on those insights and continue to improve your plans through the conversations and discussions that will occur.

Q. If this is an “opinion” survey, how can it accurately describe what is actually being done in my school? This is essentially the teachers' and administrators' opinion.

A. Perception drives practice. That has been demonstrated for decades by research and practice. Measuring the perceptions of the teachers in your school about critical aspects of its organization, management and instructional practices is the best place to start to improve that organization and those practices. Keep in mind that the first administration of this survey will give you base-line data upon which to initiate reflection and staff conversation and serve as a basis for plans to improve those practices based on staff's deeper and broader understanding of the elements implied in the SAI and embodied in the Utah Professional Learning Standards.