



Transform Schools and Drive Student Success through Comprehensive Professional Development

In today's educational landscape, the need for comprehensive approaches that address both academic needs and non-academic barriers to student success has never been more critical. Catapult Learning, a leader in educational services, has been at the forefront of transforming schools for almost 50 years through its innovative professional

development solutions. By equipping educators with the tools and strategies necessary to address the diverse needs of students, Catapult Learning's timely and relevant professional development not only improves academic outcomes but also fosters non-academic growth, ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive measure of student success.



The Role of Professional Development in School Transformation

Empowering Educators for Academic Excellence

Professional development (PD) is a cornerstone of educational improvement. Catapult Learning's PD services focus on addressing non-academic barriers to learning, enhancing instructional practices for all learners, aligning teaching strategies with current educational standards, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement among educators. Research has consistently shown that effective professional development is directly linked to improved student achievement. A report by the Learning Policy Institute¹ indicates that teachers who participate in high-quality PD can significantly boost student achievement, with studies showing an average gain of 21 percentile points.

Catapult Learning's approach combines engaging workshops, webinars, and asynchronous professional learning coursework with personalized coaching and mentoring support. This powerful combination of services ensures that educators can implement new strategies effectively, both in the classroom and school-wide. This personalized support is crucial in helping educators address the unique challenges of their specific student populations, leading to better academic and behavioral outcomes.

High-quality PD =
Increased Student
Achievement



75%

of school districts believe that coaching and mentoring are the most effective forms of professional development for supporting teacher retention.²

Building Leadership for Positive Impact

Effective school leadership is critical for sustaining and scaling the positive impacts of professional development. Catapult Learning offers a full range of professional learning opportunities designed to empower school leaders with the skills necessary to support teachers, drive school-wide initiatives, and foster a culture of excellence. According to a report by the Wallace Foundation (2022), strong school leadership is linked to improved student outcomes, "second only to teaching, in school factors that affect student learning."³

Leadership plays a crucial and unparalleled role in driving educational success. Leaders who prioritize professional development and create a supportive environment for teachers contribute significantly to the overall success of the school. This comprehensive approach ensures that improvements are not only made but are also sustained over time.

Bridging the Gap Between Non-Academic and Academic Success

Academic success is often hindered by non-academic barriers such as behavioral issues, emotional challenges, and lack of engagement. Catapult Learning recognizes that addressing these barriers is essential for fostering an environment where students can thrive academically.

The interconnection between non-academic and academic success cannot be overstated. When students' non-academic needs are addressed, they are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and capable of achieving academic success.⁴ Catapult Learning's PD solutions acknowledge this connection, equipping educators with the knowledge and tools to support the whole child.

Districts that emphasize community engagement and improving school climate have reported positive impacts on student academic performance. By fostering a supportive environment and addressing non-academic needs, schools can create conditions that enhance both the academic and emotional development of students.⁵



Impact of Professional Development on Student Outcomes

Academic Gains

Ongoing and relevant professional development has been shown to significantly improve academic performance across various metrics. Research consistently affirms that effective professional development leads to significant academic improvements for students. According to a study by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) teachers who engaged in sustained PD focused on content knowledge and pedagogy were more effective in increasing student achievement in subjects like math and reading.⁶

Students at schools with (teachers that had) higher average engagement with PD saw:

improved **reading** achievement at

4x 

improved **math** achievement at

30x 

the rate of students at schools with lower average engagement.⁷

Non-Academic Improvements

In addition to academic successes, the benefits of professional development extend beyond test scores. PD also contributes to improvements in students' behavior, social and emotional competence, and engagement. PD partnerships that incorporate resiliency strategies help teachers create more inclusive and supportive classroom environments, which in turn promote students' emotional well-being and interpersonal skills.

Moreover, professional development that focuses on culturally responsive teaching and equity in education has been linked to improved student engagement and reduced achievement gaps among diverse student populations.⁸ Teachers equipped with strategies to address the diverse needs of their students are better able to foster a sense of belonging and support for all learners, leading to better attendance, participation, and overall school experience.

Long-Term Success

The long-term impact of professional development on student outcomes is perhaps the most compelling argument for its necessity. When teachers engage in continuous professional growth, the benefits ripple throughout students' academic careers and beyond. A report by the Learning Policy Institute⁹ highlights that students taught by teachers who have participated in sustained, content-specific PD are more likely to enroll in advanced coursework, score higher on college entrance exams, and complete college degrees.

Additionally, the soft skills developed through effective teaching—such as critical thinking, communication, and collaboration—are crucial for success in the workforce and society. Teachers who are well-versed in fostering these skills contribute to the development of well-rounded individuals capable of navigating the complexities of the modern world.

Conclusion

Catapult Learning's professional development solutions represent a transformative approach, meeting the needs of all educators supporting the whole child. By addressing both academic and non-academic barriers to success, our services ensure that students are not only equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to excel academically but are also supported in their overall well-being. Additionally, by building strong leadership within schools, Catapult Learning's PD helps sustain and amplify these positive impacts, offering a proven pathway to comprehensive student success.



The Path Forward

Adopting a balanced, comprehensive approach to professional development that encompasses addressing non-academic barriers, instructional excellence, and leadership development empowers educators to meet and overcome the diverse challenges they face. This integrated approach fortifies learning environments and offers vital support for educators, providing a robust and efficacious pathway to enhanced student outcomes and comprehensive school transformation.



About Catapult Learning

Catapult Learning, a division of FullBloom, provides intervention programs for students and professional development solutions for teachers in K-12 schools, executed by a team of experienced coaches. Our professional development services strengthen the capacity of teachers and leaders to raise and sustain student achievement. Our intervention programs support struggling learners with instruction tailored to each student's unique needs around core subjects and building student resiliency. Across the country, Catapult Learning partners with 500+ school districts to produce positive outcomes that promote academic and professional growth. Catapult Learning is accredited by Cognia and has earned its 2022 System of Distinction honor. catapultlearning.com/pd

¹ Learning Policy Institute. (2017). "Effective Teacher Professional Development." https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf

² https://www.frontlineeducation.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/K12_Lens_2024_Annual_Trends_Report.pdf

³ <https://wallacefoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/How-Principals-Affect-Students-and-Schools.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/education/articles/10.3389/feduc.2019.00057/full>

⁵ 2024 Trends in K-12 Education report <https://www.hanoverresearch.com/reports-and-briefs/k-12-education/2024-trends-in-k-12-education/>

⁶ Learning Policy Institute. (2017). "Effective Teacher Professional Development." https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf

⁷ Darling-Hammond, L., Hyster, M. E., Gardner, M. (2017). Effective Teacher Professional Development. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/media/476/download?inline&file=Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf

⁸ <https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/resources/culturally-responsive-teaching.pdf>

⁹ Learning Policy Institute. (2017). "Effective Teacher Professional Development." https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf