

10 Questions to Ask When Choosing Professional Growth Management Software

*Choosing the Best Professional Growth
System for Your District*





While several professional growth tools exist, not all of them are created equal. We believe in maintaining transparency with the districts we serve, so we've provided some important questions you should ask any company (us included) — and how our Frontline Professional Growth solution addresses those questions.

1. Does the system enable you to use the rubric of your choice?

With Frontline Professional Growth, you can use the rubric your district or state has adopted. We have partnerships to offer the SOAR Teaching Frames® and the Stronge Effectiveness Performance Evaluation System, and are the exclusive digital provider of the Danielson Framework for Teaching Evaluation Instrument, 2011 and 2013 editions. If you adapt or change your rubric down the road, our system is configurable so it can grow and adapt with you.

2. Does the tool allow for different classifications of employees to be evaluated?

Teachers probably come to mind first, but also consider the many other employees at your district: principals, administrative staff, nutritional staff, bus drivers and many others.

With Frontline Professional Growth, you can build processes for different employees — certified and classified staff alike. This means you can complete all your evaluations and associated professional learning in one system.

3. Do you need a system to manage formative or summative evaluations — or both?

Frontline Professional Growth allows for both types. Throughout the year, formative feedback can be provided on an ongoing basis from multiple evaluators, and educators can upload supporting artifacts for review throughout the year. Information from formative feedback can inform the summative rating — a composite score based on the weighting you choose to apply to areas of practice on your rubric. And annual data can be pulled into the next school year, so it's easy to see growth over time and use that data to inform decision-making.

4. Does the system allow for collaboration among peers and mentors and mentees?

Collaboration is essential for learning, and Frontline Professional Growth offers many opportunities for it. Based on interests and needs, educators can either join closed groups within the district or connect with educators from across the country. In these groups, educators can share resources, including video on which peers can provide time-stamped feedback. Only one teacher for advanced math or science in a given building? Now they can connect with a network of peers!

5. Does the evaluation system link to relevant learning opportunities?

With Frontline Professional Growth, you can link learning opportunities to your rubric and suggest professional learning based on evaluation results. Educators can align professional goals to performance criteria, self-assess their outcomes on the rubric and pursue learning that is applicable to them — whether it be to advance areas of strength, or to address areas that were rated for improvement.

Evaluators can propose learning activities as well. In this way, evaluation becomes a collaborative process, giving the educator voice and choice in their professional learning and growth.

6. Does it enable you to align professional development to your strategic goals and track progress on those goals?

Frontline Professional Growth lets you align all PD activities taking place to state, district, building or individual goals — so everything you're doing advances your strategic initiatives.

7. Does the system allow for educators to propose professional learning opportunities that are of interest to them?

Rather than guessing what educators need most or taking a one-size-fits-all approach, consider enabling educators to submit proposals for learning opportunities of any kind — online, conferences, in-district and others. Frontline Professional Growth makes it easy with custom workflows.

For example, a teacher could request to attend an external conference. In that case, processes specific to your district can be set up to ensure all necessary approvals are obtained and expenses are accounted for — and if your district also uses Frontline Absence & Time, you can automatically record an absence and request a substitute.

Educators can then be prompted to show evidence of completion, submit their expenses and reflect on what they learned and the impact it will have on their classroom.

8. Does it allow for benchmarking against national data?


The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) calls for professional development that is sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven and classroom-focused. With Frontline Professional Growth, you can compare how your own professional learning meets each of these criteria and compare data to benchmarks compiled by the Frontline Research & Learning Institute. Now it's possible to see how your district compares to other districts of similar size, in the same area or in the nation as a whole — and then receive recommendations to help you reach your goals.

9. Does the system allow educators to self-select learning and attain competency-based micro-credentials?

With Frontline Professional Growth, educators have voice and choice in their learning based on personal goals, building goals and district goals. Just-in-time learning is available through videos and courses on a range of topics, and educators can earn micro-credentials by demonstrating competency in an area or skill. The goal is to promote teacher agency in personal learning and growth.

10. Does the solution link to your absence system to enable automatic substitute requests and track PD-related absences?

Research has shown that [1 in 5 teacher absences are for professionally-related reasons](#) — and more than half of those are for professional development (that's 10% of all absences!). With Frontline Professional Growth, when a request for professional development that requires time away from school is approved, the system auto-generates an absence and substitute request in Frontline Absence & Time.



This allows for better planning and more lead time, so you can ensure that classrooms are always adequately staffed when educators are planning to be out of the building. Additionally, tracking tools enable you to monitor your PD-related absences and expenses to determine if those could be avoided with different learning opportunities.

“Having pieces of evaluation and professional development now all tied together, it really allows us to have the most strategic and powerful impact you can have on the classroom, which ultimately comes back to the most optimal learning that’s taking place. Having professional development and evaluation really gives you key information on how a teacher is doing in the classroom, really allows you to tweak the system. We’re a successful system, and I think part of that success comes directly from the products that we have used with Frontline.”

– **Dale Fisher**, Deerfield Public School District 109, Illinois



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For more information on our Professional Growth solution, please visit:

www.FrontlineEducation.com/ChoosePG

About Frontline Education

Frontline Education is the leading provider of school administration software, empowering strategic K-12 leaders with the right tools, data and insights to proactively manage human capital, business operations, student information and special education.

Educational organizations representing over 80,000 schools and millions of educators, administrators and support personnel have partnered with Frontline Education in their efforts to develop the next generation of learners. Frontline is dedicated to driving engagement across K-12 school systems and supporting the continuous improvement of employee effectiveness and efficiency with solutions for proactive recruiting and hiring, absence and time, professional growth, student information systems, special education, school health management, payroll, benefits and financial management.

Frontline Education corporate headquarters are in Malvern, PA, with offices in Roseville, CA; Salinas, CA; Andover, MA; Walled Lake, MI; Rockville Centre, NY; Williamsville, NY; Brecksville, OH and Austin, TX.