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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

January 3, 2012

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: Approval of the Revised Michigan Department of Education Professional Learning Policy and Michigan Department of Education Standards for Professional Learning

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE), in collaboration with Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center at the American Institutes for Research, organized a professional learning workgroup representative of various stakeholder groups to review and update Michigan Department of Education professional learning policy and standards. The revised policy statement, guidance document, and standards were presented to the State Board of Education (SBE) on November 13, 2011 and subsequently posted for public comment through December 8, 2011. Input received from State Board Members and through the public comment period has been used to make appropriate changes to the professional learning policy and the guidance document.

Public comment indicated that the revised policy and standards are improvements over previous and existing professional development policy and standards. Comment also indicated that the draft policy and guidance were too vague and general, too long and cumbersome, and lacking in clear alignment with other state initiatives. To address these concerns, the policy was revised to indicate more clear and concise connections to educator evaluations, educator certification, and the continuous school improvement process, inclusive of the development and implementation of school improvement plans. The guidance document was shortened considerably to focus on explication of the quality indicators of professional learning and the roles of the various stakeholder groups in designing, implementing, and supporting high-quality professional learning.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the Michigan Department of Education Professional Learning Policy and the Michigan Department of Education Standards for Professional Learning as attached to the Superintendent's memorandum dated January 3, 2012.

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Michigan Department of Education Professional Learning Policy

[January 2012]

Professional Learning Policy Statement

The success of Michigan's students in achieving career and college readiness by the end of high school is dependent on the ability of the education community to build, support, and sustain a highly effective corps of educators. The education community must plan and implement high-quality professional learning strategically to support a systemic approach to ensure educator effectiveness and career and college readiness for all students. Professional learning is not an isolated event or a set of events; rather, it is an ongoing support to, and driver of, the many other components of this system, including the continuous school improvement process, professional certification, educator evaluation, and the implementation of rigorous student content standards.

Professional learning is a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving educators' effectiveness in raising student achievement. Professional learning provides opportunities for professional discourse, analysis, application, and reflection. It is relevant learning that is essential to ongoing improvements in professional practice and job effectiveness.

Systemic design, development, and implementation of effective professional learning must meet the following quality indicators:

- Build upon learning goals and objectives identified and developed throughout the educator's career and aligned to the educator certification process;
- Align with Michigan's Standards for Professional Learning, rigorous student content standards, and educator performance standards and with local school improvement plans to improve job performance and student growth and proficiency;
- Engage personnel in a process of continuous improvement in which evidence and data are used to assess needs, define learning goals, design learning opportunities, and evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning on job performance and student growth and proficiency;
- Facilitate sustained, collaborative, job embedded professional learning, including opportunities to participate in communities of practice;
- Provide continuous learning to support and sustain the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the work place;
- Provide increased opportunities among stakeholder organizations for collaboration and collective support for the learning of children, youth, and adults; and
- Utilize and leverage the necessary resources for continuous professional learning, ensuring that local, state, and federal funds are aligned and in compliance with professional learning policy.

The State Board of Education recommends that each Michigan school and district establish sustained, job embedded, relevant professional learning opportunities that meet the above criteria for all school and district staff based on this Professional Learning Policy.

Michigan's Professional Learning Policy

[~~November 2011~~ January 2012]

Professional Learning Policy Statement

The success of Michigan's students in achieving career and college readiness by the end of high school is dependent on the ability of the education community to build, support, and sustain a highly effective corps of educators. The education community must develop local systems of Professional Learning, grounded in policy and standards, to support program planning and evaluation that meet the needs of local educators. plan and implement high-quality professional learning strategically to support a systemic approach to ensure educator effectiveness and career and college readiness for all students. Professional learning is not an isolated event or a set of events; rather, it is an ongoing support to, and driver of, the many other components of this system, including the continuous school improvement process, professional certification, educator evaluation, and the implementation of rigorous student content standards.

Professional learning experiences range from awareness building to in-depth application of knowledge and skills, with each of these experiences including problem solving and reflection on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process in order to improve student outcomes and job performance. Professional learning can occur in a variety of settings, including face-to-face sessions, online courses, and combinations thereof is a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving educators' effectiveness in raising student achievement. It provides opportunities for professional discourse, analysis, application, and reflection. It is relevant learning that is essential to ongoing improvements in professional practice and job effectiveness.

The Systemic design, development, and implementation of an effective professional learning system must meet the following quality indicators:

- Build from upon learning goals and objectives established during pre-service preparation and developed identified and developed throughout the educator's career and aligned to the educator certification process;
- Align with national and state standards Michigan's Standards for Professional Learning, rigorous student content standards, and educator performance standards and with local school improvement plans to improve job performance and student growth and proficiency;
- Engage personnel in a process of continuous improvement in which evidence and data are used to assess needs, define learning goals, design learning opportunities, and evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning in meeting identified learning goals on job performance and student growth and proficiency;
- Facilitate sustained, collaborative, job embedded professional learning, including opportunities to participate in communities of practice;
- Provide continuous learning to support and sustain the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the work place;
- Provide increased opportunities among stakeholder organizations for collaboration and collective responsibility support for the learning of children, youth, and adults; and
- Utilize and leverage the necessary resources for continuous professional learning, ensuring that local, state, and federal funds are aligned and in

compliance with professional learning policy.

The State Board of Education recommends that each Michigan school and district establish sustained, job embedded professional learning opportunities that meet the above criteria for all school and district staff based on this Professional Learning Policy.

Michigan Department
of Education
Professional Learning
Policy:
*Standards for
Professional Learning*

[January 2012]

Standards for Professional Learning

1. **LEARNING COMMUNITIES:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
2. **LEADERSHIP:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.
3. **RESOURCES:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.
4. **DATA:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.
5. **LEARNING DESIGNS:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.
6. **IMPLEMENTATION:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.
7. **OUTCOMES:** Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

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Michigan Department
of Education
Professional Learning
Policy:
Supporting Guidance

[January 2012]

Professional Learning Indicators and Outcomes

The seven quality indicators in Michigan's Professional Learning Policy define the elements of an effective professional learning system that contribute most directly to student achievement. Each indicator delineates the outcomes or ways of implementing the indicator as observable behaviors of individuals or groups in the educational community. These behaviors exemplify the highest commitment to the delivery of quality instruction, demonstrate the processes of continuous improvement emblematic of the most successful schools, and endorse existing standards of professional learning from state and national organizations.

INDICATOR 1: Build upon learning goals and objectives developed throughout the educator's career and aligned to the educator certification process;

- ❖ **Outcome: 1.A.** Develop an individual development plan aligned with student needs and improvement plans.
- ❖ **Outcome: 1.B.** Support and engage in professional learning consistent with research and best practice.
- ❖ **Outcome: 1.C.** Maintain certification through continuous professional learning.

INDICATOR 2: Align with Michigan's Standards for Professional Learning, rigorous student content standards, and educator performance standards and with local school improvement plans to improve job performance and student growth and proficiency;

- ❖ **Outcome 2.A.** Align improvement plans with student content standards and adult performance standards in order to improve job performance and student proficiency and growth.
- ❖ **Outcome 2.B.** Align professional learning with standards for adult learning in order to improve job performance and student proficiency and growth.

INDICATOR 3: Engage personnel in a process of continuous improvement in which evidence and data are used to assess needs, define learning goals, design learning opportunities, and evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning on job performance and student growth and proficiency.

- ❖ **Outcome 3.A.** Utilize multiple types of evidence and data for decision-making.
- ❖ **Outcome 3.B.** Design and provide professional learning consistent with data analysis.
- ❖ **Outcome 3.C.** Evaluate and reflect on the effectiveness of professional learning on job performance and student proficiency and growth.
- ❖ **Outcome 3.D.** Support the continuous improvement process.

INDICATOR 4: Facilitate sustained, collaborative, job-embedded professional learning, including opportunities to participate in communities of practice.

- ❖ **Outcome 4.A.** Create the conditions to support ongoing, collaborative, job-embedded professional learning for continuous improvement.
- ❖ **Outcome 4.B.** Engage in job-embedded professional learning in order to establish collective responsibility for job performance and student proficiency and growth.

INDICATOR 5: Provide continuous learning to support and sustain the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the work place.

- ❖ **Outcome 5A:** Engage in and provide opportunities for follow-up, feedback, and reflection to support transfer of knowledge and skills into practice as part of ongoing professional learning.
- ❖ **Outcome 5B:** Share knowledge, skills, and resources acquired from professional learning in order to improve and sustain job performance and student proficiency and growth.

INDICATOR 6: Provide increased opportunities among stakeholder organizations for collaboration and collective support for the learning of children, youth, and adults.

- ❖ **Outcome 6.A.** Collaborate regularly with education stakeholders and organizations to support professional learning to improve job performance and student proficiency and growth.
- ❖ **Outcome 6.B.** Establish collective responsibility for leadership in support of professional learning to improve job performance and student proficiency and growth.

INDICATOR 7: Utilize and leverage the necessary resources for continuous professional learning, ensuring that local, state, and federal funds are aligned and in compliance with professional learning policy.

- ❖ **Outcome 7.A.** Support the use of resources to maintain continuous professional learning.
- ❖ **Outcome 7.B.** Collaborate with stakeholders to identify and provide resources.
- ❖ **Outcome 7.C.** Align and use local, state and federal resources to support continuous professional learning.

Professional Learning Roles

Michigan's Professional Learning Policy, inclusive of the indicators and outcomes outlined above, applies to education stakeholders who have a responsibility to undertake and/or support the professional learning of teachers, leaders and other education and support personnel.

The quality indicators of a professional learning system depend on the efforts of individuals and teams in the fifteen roles defined below. These roles fall along a continuum from direct to indirect impact on student academic outcomes. At one end of the continuum are those stakeholders who have direct impact on student learning including teachers who work directly with students on a daily basis, school and district administrators who maintain positive academic environments where students can achieve. Along the continuum are paraprofessionals, academic support staff, support personnel, local school boards, family, and community members who provide a variety of support for professional and student learning. At the far end of the continuum are regional providers, the Michigan Department of Education, institutions of higher education, alternate route providers, professional organizations, and external providers who support professional learning and enhance the process of educating students in a more general sense.

The professional learning roles include:

1. Teacher

Teachers are licensed professionals, such as pre-K-12 general and special education teachers, bilingual instructors, career and technical instructors, and lead teachers (coaches, mentors, department heads) who have primary responsibility for the learning process and academic outcomes of students. They advocate, nurture, and sustain a classroom culture and instructional program conducive to student learning. They engage in continuous professional learning that improves professional practice to support the learning needs of all students.

2. Building Administrator

Building administrators include principals, assistant principals, and others in leadership roles who are responsible for advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. They are engaged in continuous professional learning that supports school improvement.

3. District Administrator

District administrators include the superintendent and central office leadership staff who are responsible for advocating, supporting, and sustaining a district culture conducive to student learning and staff professional growth. They are engaged in continuous professional learning that improves professional practice in support of district and school improvement efforts.

4. Paraprofessional

Paraprofessionals are instructional or teaching assistants, associate teachers, or classroom aides who have demonstrated specific competencies as outlined in state and federal legislation and work under the supervision of certified school professionals or others serving in the lead teacher role. Paraprofessionals work in educational settings including schools, early childhood programs, and out-of-school time programs, and they interact directly with, but do not have the primary responsibility for, a group of students. In collaboration with teachers, they support academic achievement and the personal needs of students and their families. Their professional learning is aligned with and dependent on the learning goals for students.

5. Academic Support Staff

Academic Support Staff include counselors, school nurses, therapists, psychologists, media specialists, and social workers. They provide ancillary services and resources, in collaboration with the teacher, to support student development. They are engaged in continuous professional learning that improves professional practice to support student development.

6. Support Personnel

Support personnel include administrative assistants, transportation and food service personnel, library aides, building and grounds security staff, and custodians. Support personnel interact with students, families, community members, and organizations on a regular, but non-instructional basis, including the supervision of children during non-instructional times. Their professional learning impacts the school and district educational environment, improves their job performance, and aligns with district and school improvement efforts.

7. Local School Board

Local School Boards include community members who promote learning and achievement within the district and throughout the community. Local school boards adopt policy and allocate resources to support and sustain continuous professional learning to meet district improvement goals.

8. Family

Family includes parents, grandparents, guardians, caregivers, mentors, and advocates who support student learning and are involved in the continuous school improvement process. They advocate for and support professional learning of district and school personnel, recognizing the importance of dedicated time and resources. They are involved in continuous learning to increase their knowledge and skills specific to child development and school improvement.

9. Community

Community includes businesses, social services agencies, health care providers, advocacy groups, museums, libraries, and individual volunteers. The community works with schools to provide support for both staff and students by removing obstacles to learning, encouraging high academic achievement, and empowering students to stay in school and achieve in life. They also work with school systems to provide needed resources to support student achievement and staff professional learning.

10. Regional Provider

Regional providers include Intermediate School Districts, Regional Education Service Agencies, Michigan Mathematics & Science Center Networks, Regional Data Initiatives, the Michigan Virtual University/Learn Port, Literacy Centers, and Early Childhood Regional Centers. They provide technical assistance, professional learning, and direct service to students in a variety of settings to support district and school efforts within one or more service areas. Regional providers engage in relevant and timely professional learning. They design and implement professional learning aligned with state policy and specifications.

11. Michigan Department of Education

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) includes state level decision-makers who develop and implement policy, specifications and programs; provide information, assistance, and professional learning resources; and evaluate programs to support academic achievement in Michigan's educational system. The MDE collaborates with stakeholders to develop, implement, and sustain an effective system of professional learning. MDE staff engage in continuous professional learning to support school improvement efforts throughout the state.

12. Institutions of Higher Education

Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) include community colleges, universities, and other public and private postsecondary schools that focus on educator preparation and continuing professional learning.

These institutions contribute to the educational research base and provide a variety of programs that develop content, leadership, and instructional expertise. IHEs collaborate with districts and schools to ensure research is relevant and practical to the field. IHEs engage in relevant and timely professional learning, as well as contributing to the design and implementation of professional learning aligned with state policy and specifications.

13. Alternate Route Provider

Alternate Route Providers include those entities, which may include professional organizations and IHEs, that provide training, educator preparation, and ongoing professional learning to teachers and administrators outside of a traditional preparation program.

14. Professional Organization

A professional organization includes members and affiliates that come together for a specific purpose, content area, or educational role. They advocate for, and communicate about, policy and provide opportunities for networking and professional learning through a variety of designs and modalities. The members engage in relevant and timely professional learning to support student learning and organizational effectiveness.

15. External Provider

External providers include vendors, organizations, and individuals that provide general or targeted professional learning to support educators at all levels of the educational system. Many providers work with school partners and other stakeholders to identify and address the most critical learning needs for students and personnel; develop or provide programs or resources to address learning needs; and assess the implementation of programs, strategies, or tools. External providers design and implement professional learning aligned with state policy, specifications, and local improvement plans.

Professional Learning Tools and Resources

A rich array of tools and resources designed to support the professional learning policy and standards will be available online at a later date.