

Governor's Education Advisory Council Recommendations for Academic Year 2020-21 Professional Learning

Overall recommendations from research that result in changes to educator practice and improvements in student learning outcomes. These recommendations were developed with input and guidance from the Deans of the Colleges of Education at the University of Michigan and Michigan State University.

Professional Learning should be:

1. **Relevant.** Research shows that effective professional learning on instructional strategies should be based on the instructional area (e.g., mathematics), should use the materials teachers are using, should involve local colleagues, and be related to local context.
2. **Supportive of new teachers.** Ensure new teachers receive appropriate professional learning to increase the retention of teachers in the profession and reduce teacher migration in the first 5 years.
3. **Focused on quality and sustainability.** Frequency is not as important as the quality of the content and delivery. Listen to all educational personnel about the quality, amount, and relevancy of professional learning. Information & training can be emailed or posted; professional learning should be focused on engaging with one another, but does not always need to be in person
4. **Needs-driven.** Allow all educational personnel to exercise choice about engaging in professional learning to ensure it is based on their own needs and/or the needs of the community.
5. **Inclusive.** All roles in the school community need to be considered: paraprofessionals, counselors, librarians, social workers, etc., AND professional learning must be relevant to those roles.
6. **Purposeful.** Content must be tied to either a long or short term plan with built-in progress monitoring, sustained and job-embedded. There must be a willingness to adjust or change course if the plan is not working or not being implemented in a way that is best for staff growth. There is time considered for educators to think about, receive input on, and make changes to their practice.
7. **Peer-based.** All educational personnel and the educational community include many experts. Whenever possible and feasible, professional learning should be developed and delivered by those who are expected to engage in the professional learning and have the appropriate background and experiences to deliver content. If there is an area outside of the peer skill set within the district, outside experts should be engaged.
8. **Collaborative.** Offer professional learning that provides opportunity for peer-based collaboration, coaching, reflection, discussion. Encourage learning within a school; people learn best with the people they will be working with.

9. **Flexible.** Given that funding may be challenging this year, districts should offer as much flexibility (time and location) as possible when designing and offering professional learning opportunities.
10. **Culturally-relevant.** Professional learning should be explicitly focused on supporting all students and connected to the subject matter they teach.
11. **Focused on Anti-Racism/Anti Bias and Social Justice.** Most importantly, it is past time for ALL educational personnel, regardless of the population they serve, to engage in learning to understand racism, systemic oppression of all targeted/marginalized groups, white privilege, implicit bias, and restorative practices.

Topical Recommendations:

Professional Learning should focus on:

1. **Trauma-Informed Education.** All educational personnel must learn how trauma affects behavior, learning and teaching.
2. **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Leadership.** This includes:
 - a. How to relate to and support all students
 - b. Understanding the realities of student home-life and how it impacts learning, particularly when engaging in virtual education.
 - c. Recognizing that our own internal bias causes harm to our students.
3. **Building Home Supports/Relationships.** Educating parents/communicating with parents.
4. **Building Virtual Learning Skills.** Teaching students to effectively learn online.
5. **Assessment and Feedback.** Educators need to understand how to engage students in formative and summative assessment using an online platform and provide relevant feedback to improve learning.
6. **Work/Life Balance.** All educational staff will need to understand how to maintain work/life balance while working remotely. Additionally, educators will need to understand how to support students with time management and staying on track when learning at home or in a blended environment.
7. **Instructional Resources:** Utilizing available and curated resources to support students and staff, such as [Free and Low Cost Online Professional Learning Options Approved for Certificate Renewal and Progression](#) and the [Michigan eLibrary](#)

Definitions:

All Educational Personnel: ELL teachers, Special Education teachers, School Librarians and non-teaching staff (counselors, social workers, paraprofessionals, etc.).

All Students: from diverse backgrounds: socio-economic, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, individuals with disabilities, etc.

Trauma-informed: “Trauma-informed education includes examining the influence and impact on students in our schools of factors such as racism (explicit, implicit, and systematic; and microaggressions) as well as poverty, peer victimization, community violence, and bullying.” (from this [Edutopia piece](#))

Implicit Bias: Thoughts and feelings are “implicit” if we are unaware of them or mistaken about their nature. We have a bias when, rather than being neutral, we have a preference for (or aversion to) a person or group of people. Thus, we use the term “implicit bias” to describe when we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge. (Perception Institute)

White Privilege: The level of societal advantage that comes with being seen as the norm in America, automatically conferred irrespective of wealth, gender or other factors.

<https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf>