



Prospect Heights School District 23 Board Memorandum Information Item

Date: February 13, 2025

Subject: Professional Development Update

Prepared by: Dr. Craig Curtis, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

The Professional Development Committee is essential in providing direction and feedback. This committee is composed of administrators, coaches, and teachers who help to provide input on the direction of offerings for professional development. We meet several times each year to plan future professional development and analyze feedback from past professional development. Members of this committee include Craig Curtis (Chair), Chris Alms, Hannah Sutter (PHEA), Alyssa Zahrt (Ike), Lisa Ravenscraft (Ross), Christen Nolfi (Sullivan), and Kim Basile (Mac).

One of our strategic plan goals is to provide job-embedded professional development aligned to 21st Century learning needs. To accomplish this, we are working at the school level and district level to provide leadership and professional development opportunities aligned to our strategic plan.

Teacher Institute Day

The Institute Day on January 6th opened with an all-staff continental breakfast and individual meetings at each building. This helped to further establish consistency between our buildings and continue a theme of “Communities of Belonging” across the district. Once we truly know students as individuals, the real work begins in getting to know them as learners. Our principals set the stage for a day of learning across their buildings that focused on a variety of collaborative learning topics within grade-level teams. Topics throughout the day included Teaching & Learning Powered by BrainPop & BrainPop, Jr., Writing Across 4th-8th Grades, i-ReadyPro Essential Lessons in Core Numeracy, Assessment with Mystery Science, and Meto Chicago Math Initiative (MCMi) Reflections & Implementation. In addition to these assigned team learning opportunities, staff members also had the opportunity to choose a couple of tailored topics that fit their individual learning needs. These self-guided, virtual learning opportunities were created and led by our phenomenal District 23 coaches Kelly Brockway (MacArthur), Kristene Ganek (Sullivan), Leslie Jasper (Ross), Lisa Schmidt (Ike), Hannah Sutter (District Tech Integration Specialist), Nina Espinos (District ML Teacher), and Denisse Valladares (District ML Teacher). Self-paced, virtual opportunities included Keynote/Pages, AI in Our Classrooms, Reimagining Assessments, Building Classroom Community, Text Engineering for MLs, Welcoming Newcomers, Precorrection, Instructional Choice, Active Student Responding, and Student-Centered Practices.

We also had a unique professional development opportunity for all of our support staff, specials/exploratory teachers, special educators, and early childhood teachers to learn about their specialty areas and meet their colleagues from other District 214 Sender schools. The area Assistant Superintendents began planning for this dynamic event last spring. We titled this day the Professional Learning Partnership. Our goal was to connect educators across district boundaries as we work to prepare students for high school and beyond. We all serve the same community, so why not work together to learn from each other? The day was a huge success for all our staff members and continues to grow with new ideas each year. We are already planning to do this again next January.

At the upcoming Institute Day in April, staff members will be visiting three stations organized around equity. We are extremely excited about collaborating with staff on these topics and know they'll be well received.

Support student learning through the implementation of robust curricula and staff support.

- Investigate new curricular materials for adoption and implementation in 2025-26.
 - All four schools have teamed to form the Math Curriculum Committee, which gathers a representative group of teachers and investigates the math standards. We have worked collaboratively and partnered with several groups to focus on best practices in mathematics for our meetings so far this year. Some of the groups include our D23 instructional coaches, Metro Chicago Math Institute (MCMi), the North Cook ROE, and Curriculum Associates. There are three meetings left this year that will be held on 2/26, 3/12, and 4/3. During our remaining meetings, we will continue to discuss best practices in math instruction and next year's math implementation.
 - The Library Media Curriculum Committee continues to meet throughout the year to review programming and curriculum. The committee is comprised of library media specialists, principals, teachers, and instructional coaches from all four buildings. There are two meetings left this year that will be held 3/4 and 4/9. During our remaining meetings, we will continue to review the Illinois Standards Aligned Instruction for Libraries (I-SAIL), brainstorm opportunities for staff members to partner in integrating the I-SAIL Standards, and complete our LMC Curriculum Maps.
 - We have completed the investigation of our Tier 2 & 3 literacy materials and will be continuing with our previous curricula at this time. We will continue our investigation in the 2027-28 school year during our regularly scheduled Reading/LA [curriculum review cycle](#).
- Support the implementation of the newly adopted curriculum for the 2024-25 school year.
 - We have convened the Science Committee, a representative committee of district teachers, to monitor the implementation of our readopted science curriculum across grade levels. Thus far, we have spent time reviewing progress, successes, and challenges across all grade levels K-8. We have also brought in a trainer on Institute Day to discuss opportunities to expand our use of assessment with Mystery Science in grades K-5. Students report all of our K-8 science curriculum as being engaging and exciting. We have one meeting remaining this year (April 10) which will be spent reviewing the successes and challenges of the curriculum as well as seeing if there are any additional needs.
 - The Early Childhood Curriculum Committee has convened several times this year. The team has received training on the Creative Curriculum Cloud (digital) and Creative Curriculum Gold (assessment) tools to ensure full implementation. In addition, their strategic collaborative instructional planning has ensured they have mapped out their curriculum over the two-year span of our early childhood program.
- Facilitate instructional rounds throughout the district to promote strong practices and identify future areas for growth.
 - We continue to expand on our Instructional Rounds each year. Instructional Rounds are considered job-embedded professional development that takes our professional learning and applies to what we see in the classroom. A few years ago, we began our Instructional Rounds process as an administrative team. We then progressed to including some of our building leadership team. Last year, we implemented Instructional Rounds across all four buildings by initiating them at the building level. As a group, teachers learn about a focus area and apply it to what they see and hear in the classrooms. The power is in the discussion after they observe classrooms for evidence. It helps everyone in the group walk away with a common understanding when there is the same area of focus. Instilling this process at the building level last year received rave reviews from staff members and truly provided a boost to professional development within the district. This year, we are continuing the process but also including our instructional coaches as leaders in the process. So far, things are going exceptionally well!

- Promote a culture of leadership and collaboration through coaching with the support of Cognitive Coaching, Adaptive Schools, and Key2Ed/Facilitated IEP strategies implementation.
 - This long-standing goal has continued to positively impact our ability to meet the changing needs of our students, families, and educational community. With an increased focus on Tier I (Core) instruction, the availability of supportive coaching is a more effective method of professional development. Investing in people and collaborative working relationships is an exciting step forward in our professional development planning. Our instructional coaches have been an integral part of the success we are having in all of our content areas for our new teachers as well as our more experienced staff.
 - Dr. Sroka, Cominique Guza, and I are focusing on support for all our coaches through professional development. Our special education coaches, instructional coaches, district ML teachers, and psychologists have been participating in NSSEO's Adaptive Schools, Collaborative Coaching, and Presentation Skills training through the Thinking Collaborative that has been taking place throughout the year.
 - Dr. Sroka and I have teamed up with our role-alike colleagues in Mount Prospect School District 57 to come up with a Coaching Connections program where we bring our coaches together to learn and collaborate to support them in their roles. This year, we expanded to invite River Trails School District 26 to participate in the partnership. This has been a tremendous success and we plan to continue this work again next school year.

Continue MTSS identification and implementation of Tier II and Tier III interventions for reading, writing, and math.

- Increase acceleration and gifted/enrichment opportunities, equalizing the selection and placement process where disparities exist.
 - We continue to assess both our enrichment and intervention processes within the district at an ongoing rate. We have partnered with D214 and other sender districts to ensure alignment with our practices.
- Review and assess the correlation between interventions and impact.
 - We continue to assess both our enrichment and intervention processes within the district at an ongoing rate. We have partnered with D214 and other sender districts to ensure alignment with our practices.

Continue MTSS identification and implementation of Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III strategies for social, emotional, and behavioral interventions.

- Support staff in serving Tier I students with EL, SEL, and behavioral needs. Continue MTSS - SEL Tier 2 & 3 Committee.
 - Throughout the school year, the district's MTSS Committee has continued to meet with the goal of supporting staff with the instruction and implementation of Tier I, II, and III strategies across the district. This year's focus has been on consistency across buildings, providing building leadership teams time to prioritize and complete their action plans, and also update district plans to put in place for future years.
- Improve prevention and response to absences by implementing the North Cook Student Advocate Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP) position.
 - The district has facilitated a partnership through the North Cook Student Advocate Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP) to improve prevention and response to absences this year. The program was initiated at MacArthur Middle School with a few students also rolling over to other schools based on the size of caseload and siblings with similar absence patterns. By

establishing relationships with specific students and families, our dedicated ALOP representative can focus on connections and meeting the needs of students and families throughout the school day in all aspects of life.

Facilitate ongoing program development with a focus on equity and inclusion.

- Conduct ML Program audit including development of our program/support for newcomers.
 - We continue to monitor the Multilingual (ML) Program within the district as we ensure the success and engagement of all students. Thus far, we have updated our [Multilingual Program Plan](#), which includes placement and support for all students within District 23. Additionally, we have improved our programming for newcomers by purchasing supplemental materials through Continental Educational Publisher titled, “Ready, Set, Go! Newcomers”. Our support for newcomers does not stop at school. We have increased support for newcomer families through our two outstanding District Multilingual Teachers, Denisse Valladares and Nina Espinos. Together, these two staff members act as liaisons between newcomer families and the school to ensure strong, positive relationships and check in on families throughout the year. Here is a link to our [Multilingual Liaison Program Plan](#).
- Review health curriculum for reinforcement of day-to-day safety.
 - Throughout the year, our physical education departments have continued to examine ways to better implement health curriculum throughout their programs. Particularly at Ross/Sullivan, the physical education team has worked to more regularly implement health curriculum on a rotating basis between classes. This will ensure all students experience this necessary component of the curriculum each year.
- Expand access to our community’s world cultures and global studies.
 - This year, we have expanded access to world cultures and global studies in various ways throughout the district. For the third straight year, we are planning to improve upon our already successful D23 Heritage Night. Last year’s event highlighting 23 countries within D23 boundaries was just the tip of the iceberg as we look to expand on its success. This year will bring student participation, increased family participation, and even a bit of Zumba to top off the evening. We also continued to engage families through our BPAC events this year, and improved participation by extending invitations to newcomers to attend our Carnival of Resources event, which was a great success. Perhaps, the biggest success of all in this area comes from Ross and Sullivan schools this year. Thanks to the talent and creativity of Mrs. Laurie Travis, we were able to implement a new class called IDEAS (Inquiry, Discovery, Exploration, and Awareness Station). The class has brought a new level of engagement to students by helping them explore their curiosities in all things. Part of the curriculum is derived around civics and culture, which makes it the perfect opportunity for our 2nd through 5th graders to lean into the Heritage Night Event. Hopefully, you’ll be able to join us to see all they’ve accomplished!
- Monitor integration, diversity, and inclusion within specialized courses and extracurricular activities including expanding inclusive options for ALL to participate.
 - We continue to monitor enrollment patterns within our specialized courses and extracurricular activities to ensure integration, diversity, and inclusion including expanding inclusive options for ALL to participate.

In summary, we work very hard to provide opportunities for staff to engage in meaningful and relevant topics that can positively impact the teaching and learning occurring in District 23.

Should you have any questions regarding professional development in our district, please contact Dr. Craig Curtis.