



## Plan Overview:

It is exceedingly important to start this overview with a statement about the title of this document. We submit to the board of education, as the governing body, a proposal that from this point forward we no longer refer to the full spectrum of architecture, support, opportunities, and environments that support professional growth and learning as "Professional Development." Instead, we propose it be referred to as "Professional Learning."

Such a change in language mirrors the standards, "NJ Standards for Professional Learning." This is also consistent with the language suggested by Learning Forward, the authoring organization of those standards. Similar to our shift in language from "Homework" to "Home Learning", the implication in "Professional Development" suggests that staff remain in a continual state of being 'under developed' and therefore needing 'development.' "Professional Learning" implies, and aligns with our philosophy, that everyone in the Howell Township Public Schools is a 'Learner' and, learning is a lifelong journey in which we all must engage, rather than a need born from a deficit in performance. Lastly, this language creates strong alignment with the evolution of the goals of the Education Committee.

As the goals of our Education Committee have evolved over the years, our environment of professional learning has paralleled that evolution. The Professional Learning Plan for the 2017-2018 school year continues to parallel the Committee's evolution by emphasizing **personalized learning**. You will note the plan seeks to deepen understanding of personalized learning for all staff, expand our implementation of personalized learning for all students, by crafting experiences in personalized learning for all our learners... and **we are all learners!** In short, this plan **seeks to maximize the opportunities for all learners through a forward thinking and dynamic culture focused on personalized learning environments**.

As you will read, the plan will provide you with an alignment between Howell's financial commitment to our professional learning environment and the Education Committee, District, and Board goals. The plan will then outline the overall District Goals and their intended outcomes. Professional Learning Plans now need to include our District Mentoring plan, which is both a goal within the District Professional Learning Plan, as well as it's own section of the supporting documentation. Lastly, the plan must be based on, and inclusive of each building-based Professional Learning Plan. To create greater cohesion within our professional learning environments, each school, and each department developed a professional learning plan. The development of the school / department plans and the district plan was not linear. The plans were developed through a symbiotic process of drafting and refining together. The final stages of that development occurred during our Administrative Retreat at which time several members of the Senior Administrative Team conferred with each of the buildings and departments to ensure cohesion between plans. It is important to note, those plans, and this district plan, are living documents. They will change based on needs assessments. This is critically important to ensuring a responsive and personalized professional learning environment.

Our lead team of *Professional Learning Engineers* hopes that, by now, you can read our excitement and enthusiasm for this plan, the direction in which our professional learning environments are evolving, and the future possibilities it will create for all our learners! It is with that same galvanized enthusiasm, that we submit this Professional Learning Plan for your review. We look forward to answering any questions you may have.

With all professional sincerity,

Katie Mignoli - Vice Principal, Ardena; Supervisor of Professional Learning

Jackie Moore - Supervisor of Professional Learning, Grants & Federal Programs

Bruce Preston - Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Personnel

## Statement of Financial Priorities for Professional Learning

Education / District / Board Goals	District Professional Learning Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Personalized Learning Environments</li> <li>● Response to Intervention</li> <li>● Co-Teaching</li> <li>● Student Empowerment</li> <li>● Sustaining a Positive Culture &amp; Climate for Learning</li> <li>● Transforming Educational Settings through Technology</li> <li>● Standards-aligned Student Growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Personalized Learning</li> <li>● Co-teaching</li> <li>● Learning Design Team</li> <li>● New Staff Induction Cohort</li> </ul>
<b>Budgetary Support</b>	
District In-service Budget \$10,000.00 District Professional Development \$52,500.00 Title IIA Funding \$108,083.00	

## 1: Professional Learning Goals

No.	Goal	Identified Group	Rationale/Sources of Evidence
1	Expand the depth of understanding and opportunities for personalized learning using personalized learning experiences. 100% of staff will experience personalized learning through their professional learning experiences resulting in 25% implementation as seen through qualitative and quantitative metrics. (baseline year)	District-Wide Staff	As our district continues to build more personalized learning environments, it is essential that the learners of our district represented by our staff experience personalized learning as part of their own professional growth. All building-based professional learning plans include alignment to one or several of our 5 identified elements of personalized learning: Learning Environments, Researched Expectations, Learner-Led, Pathways, & Unique Outcomes.
2	Improve the co-taught learning environments by creating more agile co-teaching partnerships resulting in improved student personalized experiences. Results of observation data will show 25% increase in positive co-teaching alignment with personalized learning delivery.	All co-teaching partners including, In class support, In class resource, ASI, ESL, Behavioralist, Coaches, and RTI Central office professional learning staff All appropriate supervisors	We will continue to expand application of our co-teaching goal from 2016-2017 school year. Last year we successfully saw an increase in effective co-teaching frameworks being used in our co-taught settings. It would be counterproductive to have our work with co-teaching progress without it being aligned to our goals of personalized learning. Co-teaching should strongly support, and invigorate, personalized learning environments.
3	Improve support, cohesion, collaboration and overall new-staff classroom readiness. Qualitative and Quantitative metrics will show 100% of new staff feel their successes are a result of significant support; they can contribute to the success of	All New staff: new to the profession and new to the district; Learning Design Team; School Improvement Panels; Central office professional learning staff Mentor Coordinator	New staff need the greatest professional support. This cohort structure will allow us to provide our newest staff members with organized, personalized, and responsive support. It will also allow us to provide the same level of support for those staff members joining us throughout the school year.

	others; essential resources are accessible, and have a sense of professional growth direction for the next school year.	All appropriate supervisors	
4	Improve the resources, support, and agility of our professional learning environments. 25% increase in positive quality indicators from qualitative and quantitative metrics. (Baseline Year)	Learning Design Team; School Improvement Panels; Central office professional learning staff	An architecture that allows for agile learning systems is essential to ensuring our staff experience a responsive professional learning environment. This will in turn provide increased responsive classroom environments for our students.

## 2: Professional Learning Activities

PL Goal No.	Initial Activities	Follow-up Activities (as appropriate)
1	Building-based role out in the opening days of the school year	District-wide in-service days will include staff voice and choice in determining both need and experience.
2	Develop a concept map that creates a visual connection between co-teaching, personalized learning, and our evaluation framework.	Provide feedback and professional learning opportunities through the evaluation, coaching cycle.
3	New Staff Orientation will emphasize the creation of a community of practice. It will emphasize the strength of collaborating as a community rather than engaging in independent struggle.	See Appendix E
4	In early September, the Learning Design team will meet to reflect on the opening of the school year and the professional learning needs of the district moving forward. We will also implement a new Professional Learning feedback survey that will be more closely aligned to the Standards for Professional Learning.	See Appendix E

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Mentoring Plan:**

### **Mission:**

Our New Staff Induction Cohort program was developed from a belief that new teachers - whether new to the district or new to the profession - have unique needs that require a deliberate architecture of support. The responsibility for that support structure is owned by, and a part of, both the collective and individual culture of our schools. The New Staff Induction Cohort Program strives to create a learning community from, and around our new teachers. In so doing, that community takes on a collective responsibility to honestly and earnestly help those new teachers grow in their professional practice while contributing fresh perspectives to our evolving environments. The results of these efforts provide optimal learning experiences for all our students.

### **Program Overview:**

The total length of this program is 3 years with a 4<sup>th</sup> and 5th year reunion. Each year's members will move together as a cohort.

#### **Year One: New Staff Orientation**

Six themed workshops delivered with classroom-usable strategies (first workshop is held during the New Staff Orientation).

Topics\* & Tentative Dates:

- Building a Classroom Community – September
- Working with Parents – October (early)
- Positive Expectations – February
- Professionalism – April
- A Year in Review, The Year Ahead – May

*(\*Topics will be adjusted based on timely needs, as appropriate.)*

Online surveys will be conducted after each workshop as a measure of the success and/or needed changes for those workshops. In between workshops, discussion boards will be used to create connections, continuity, reflections, and support.

#### **Year Two: Serving Your Needs While Contributing to Your New Colleagues**

The year two cohort will be given a survey to find specific topics about which they would like to further study (ie. Personalized learning, formative assessments, planning strategies, co-teaching etc...). We will conduct a minimum of 4 workshops throughout the year.

It is a goal to pair year two cohort teachers with a year one teacher as “training partners.” The goal of this partnership is to increase the collegial network of the new teachers while investing the second year teachers in giving back to the learning community. It is, additionally, the goal of this partnership that the second year teacher can help to push the first year teacher since they now have experienced what the next cohort will be experiencing.

### **Year Three: Action Research**

The members of the third year cohort will evaluate the direction of their own professional growth and determine a specific focus for their third year teaching experience. They will research that focus, implement the practice, analyze the results, and present them at the end of the year. The emphasis in this third year is to instill in the emerging professional a practical understanding and appreciation for reflection, evaluation, research, implementation, and public practice as part of a master educator’s growth process.

### **Year Four: Reunion**

The cohort program provides a strong structure of support and community for the first three years of a teacher’s experience. The research, however, is clear that attrition rates are highest in the first three to five years. This only accounts for those teachers leaving the job, but what about those teachers that stay? Are they still supported, focused, and growing, or have they stagnated and lost direction? A system of reconnecting will be put in place for the 4th year cohort. The emphasis will be on evaluating growth during the time, sustaining meaningful personalized support, and setting goals for the next phase of each individual’s career.

### **Mentors:**

- Each new teacher (first year in the profession) will be assigned a mentor.
- All mentors will attend a training workshop held during the New Staff Orientation.
- Mentors will have three more meetings after the initial workshop held throughout the school year

### **Meeting one: Needs assessment**

- When: After the first month of school
- Purpose: To hear feedback about the start of the school year. Specific focus of that feedback will be regarding their transition into the school year as both teacher and mentor. The group will use a Reflective Practice Protocol (see appendix A) to discuss

and resolve any issues or difficult situations they have encountered with their new teacher. This time will also be used to discuss the upcoming events around the building and how we can best support our new teachers prior to, and during those events.

### **Meeting Two: Mid Year Check in**

- When: Early December
- Purpose: Open discussion of successes – and how to sustain them – and challenges – and how to mitigate them. This time will also be used to discuss the upcoming events around the building and how we can best support our new teachers prior to, and during those events.

### **Meeting Three: A Year in Review**

- When: Mid May
- Purpose: This meeting will be designed for the mentors to provide feedback to their School Improvement Panels, and through them to our Learning Design Team, based on their experience over the past year. Their feedback will be used as one measure of the overall success of the cohort program.

Mentors will be invited to attend the workshops held throughout the year (see below).

All of the meetings and workshops are designed to support these individuals through a systemic approach so that they can best meet the needs of our newest teachers...so that those new teachers can best meet the needs of our students.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Program Timelines: New Staff Induction Cohort - Year One at a Glance

### August / September:

- New Teacher Orientation
- Mentor Meeting: Expectations / Meeting the Needs of a New Teacher
- Workshop: Building a Classroom Community (September) / Reflective Practice Groups
- Follow up with a needs assessment
- Continue online discussion through Schoology to support and discuss emerging topics while transitioning from Building a Classroom community to Partnering with Parents.

### November (early):

- Mentors Meeting: Needs Assessment / Feedback / Upcoming Events
- Workshop: Working with Parents / Reflective Practice Groups
- Continue online discussion through Schoology to support and discuss emerging topics while transitioning from Partnering with Parents to Positive Expectations.
- Follow up with a needs assessment

### December (early):

Mentors

Mid-Year Check in: Open Discussion

### February:

- Workshops: Positive Expectations / Reflective Practice Groups
- Follow up with online exit survey
- Continue online discussion board transitioning from Positive Expectations to Professionalism
- Follow up with a needs assessment

### May:

- Workshops: Professionalism / A Year in Review, a Year Ahead
- Continue online discussion board will have all first year cohort teachers writing a letter to next year's year-one cohort. The letter will be a letter of support and advice.
- As part of the following year's New Teacher Orientation, all new teachers will have a chance to read and discuss the letters from those that will then be the year two cohort.

**Appendix B:**  
**Expectations and Roles for New Teachers:**

New Teachers are considered to be any teacher that is new to this district, regardless if they are new to the profession or they are coming to our district from a previous teaching position. Only those teachers who are entering their first year as teachers will have a formal mentor. Every new teacher, however, will participate in the first year cohort workshops. Teachers new to the profession will continue through Years 2, 3, and 4, as a cohort. Each year is tailored to meet the professional needs of those teachers based on the developmental phases of their career. Experienced teachers who are new to the district will be invited to participate in Years 2, 3, 4 for professional development hours but they will not be required to participate.

**Expectations & Roles for New Teachers:**

- Become knowledgeable about, and participate in, the cohort experience
- Welcome informal support from mentors on a daily basis
- Meet with the mentor at least once a week for a one hour session of formal feedback, in addition to informal meetings and informal feedback
- Keep a log of weekly meetings and maintain a reflective journal
- Participate in the professional learning community of your department, team, or other designation
- Maintain confidentiality of the mentor – new teacher relationship
- Be open, candid, and be willing to share as well as try new ideas
- Be willing to try again
- Provide honest feedback about this program
- Admit when you are struggling, seek help, and implement changes

## Appendix C: Criteria and Expectations for Mentors

### **Criteria for Mentors:**

- A Minimum of 4 years of teaching experience and have tenure status in this district
- Submit the Mentor Teacher Application Form with the required recommendations
- Skillful communicator and can adapt to different communication styles
- Current on and implements the best educational practices and are committed to constant learning about the art and science of teaching
- Committed to collegial practices and models professional experimentation to elevate the overall opportunities for student success
- Has a proven track record for successful classroom practice and for preserving and building confidence with resistant students
- Is able to commit the time required
- Demonstrates a broad repertoire of teaching skills and an understanding of the District's standards and expectations
- Flexible and organized
- Demonstrates a commitment to personal professional development and an openness to new ideas and methodology

### **Expectations for Mentors:**

- Mentors will be available for a minimum of one hour per week to work with the new teacher
- Mentors will attend all mentor meetings - 4 in total – as well as all the cohort workshops (6 in total). They will also participate in the online discussion forums.
- Because the wisdom of the experienced teacher is essential to this process, all mentors are expected to take a proactive, participatory role in each meeting and in the discussion board topics.
- Mentors will be open to peer-observations by the new teacher. There will be a minimum of 1 toward the end of September with a conferencing follow up after the observation.
- Mentors will observe the new teacher as needed with a minimum of 2 times early in the school year. The focus of the first is classroom management; the focus of the second is planning and implementation. Conferencing follow-ups will be done after the observation.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the mentor – new teacher relationship
- Mentors will be given release time, with prior approval, to complete the expectations for observations. Conferences should be done during common planning or after school.
- Mentors and new teachers will maintain logs that document their time together for both accounting and accountability purposes. These logs will have single-phrase descriptions of the topics covered during these meetings.

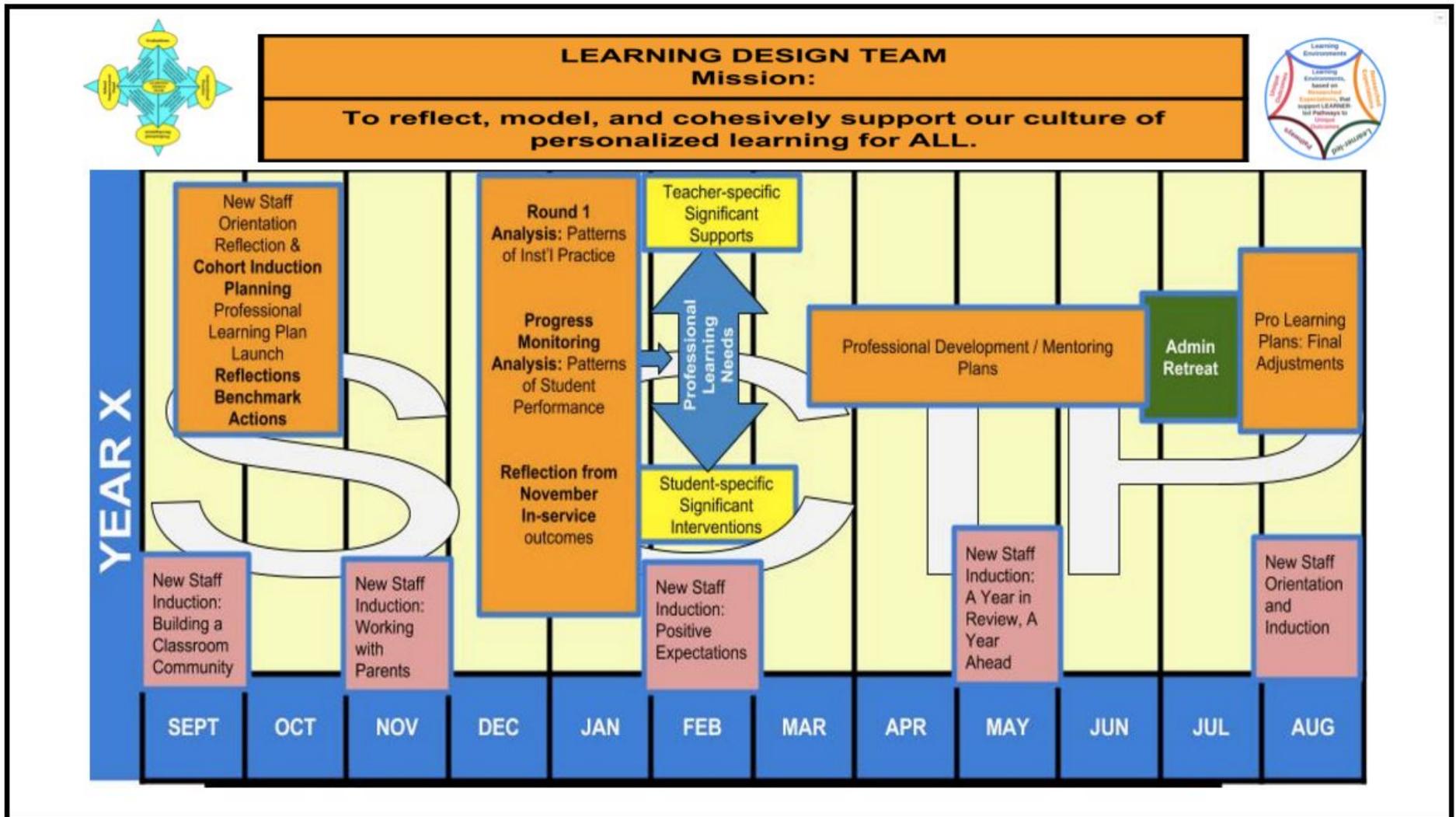
**Appendix D:**  
**Reflective Practice Protocol**

**\_(Based on work by Chase, Germundsen, Brownstein, and Distad: Making the Connection Between Increased Student Learning and Reflective Practice; Educational Horizons, Spring 2001. & the work of Yourk-Barr, Sopmmers, Ghere, and Montie: Reflective Practice to Improve Schools: An Action Guide for Educators; Corwin Press, 2006)**

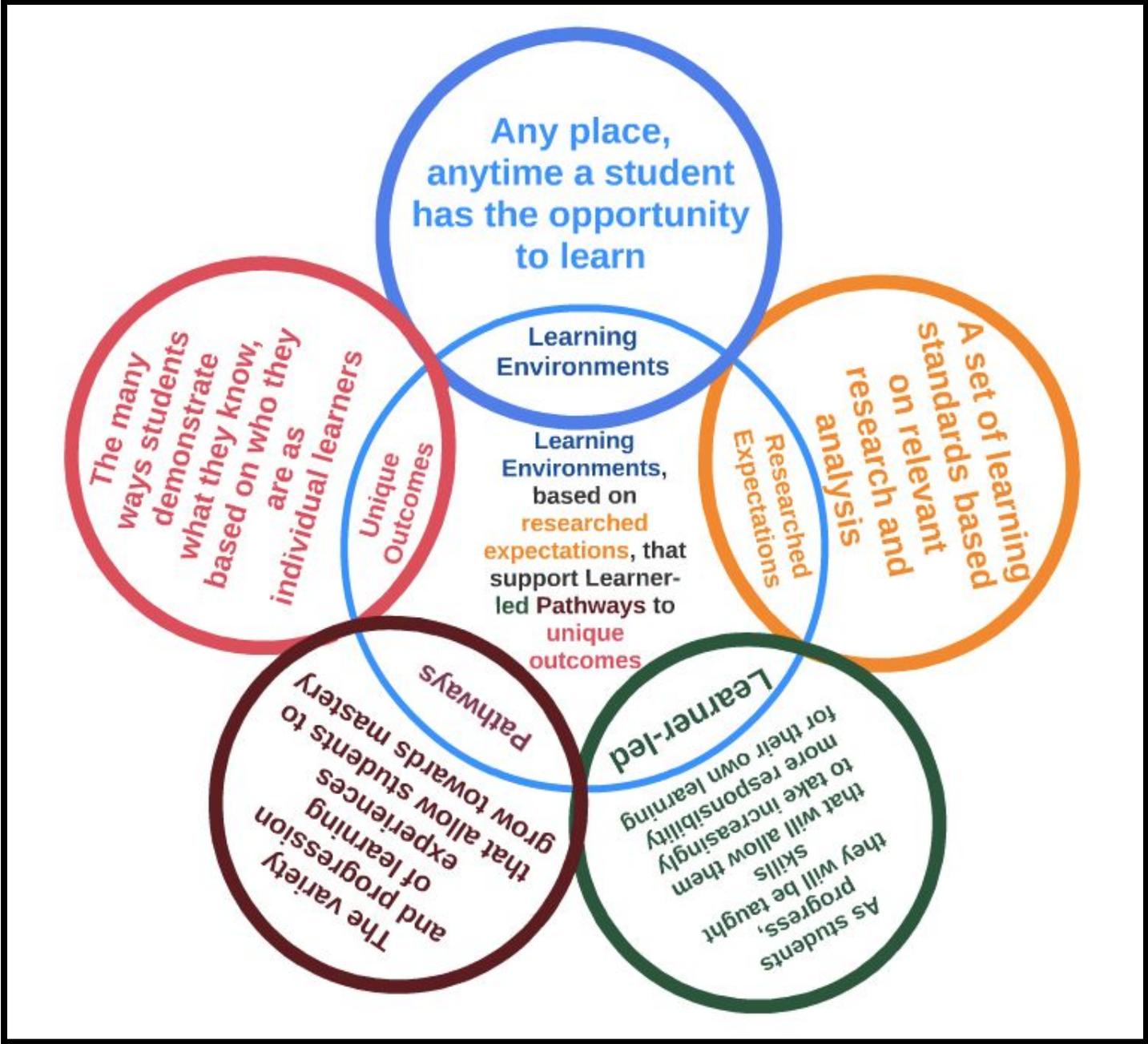
- I. Presentation of Problem / Concern (10 minutes)
  - A. Each person presents a classroom problem or concern
  - B. No one should speak for more than two minutes
  - C. No one should mention any names of students or other teachers
  
- II. Group Choice (10 minutes)
  - A. The group will choose one concern on which it would like to focus
  - B. Those who presented the concern will elaborate and provide more details
  - C. Information-seeking questions for those presenting can now be asked
  
- III. Hypothesize (5 minutes)
  - A. Participants will spend this time brainstorming variables which may have caused the problem
  - B. Participants should also brainstorm solutions to the problem and consider reasoning
  
- IV. Discussion and Solutions (15 minutes)
  - A. Possible alternative causations are presented
    1. These are possible catalysts which may not have been realized by those involved.
    2. Reasons for belief must be supplied
  - B. Possible solutions are presented
    1. All ideas hold value and so they are valued
    2. All solutions must provide reasoning for (ie. Pedagogy, data, article)

- V. Summation of Discussion (5 minutes)
  - A. Facilitator will summarize problem
    - 1. Causes
    - 2. Solutions
    - 3. Participant overall investment in problem
  
- VI. Contextual Relevance to Latest Professional Learning Experience (10 minutes)
  - A. Refresh on topic of latest professional learning
  - B. Facilitator presents discussion in terms of professional learning experiences
  - C. Open group discussion on the relationship between problem and professional learning
  
- VII. Inquiry Forms / Closing Remarks (5 minutes)
  - A. All participants must fill out an inquiry form
    - 1. Usefulness of discussion
    - 2. Relevance to personal experience
    - 3. Questions for further exploration
  - B. Closing remarks by facilitator

## Appendix E: Learning Design Team Visual Map (Includes Timelines and New Staff Induction Cohort)



**Appendix F:**  
**Personalized Learning Framework**



# Appendix G: Personalized Learning Resources Map



**Appendix H:  
Visual Map of Agile Professional Learning  
Environments**

