



Reestablished and Resilient

Professional *Learning* Plan: 2024-2025

Board Approved: August 21, 2024

District Professional Learning Goals Process and Product

Plan Overview:

It is exceedingly important to start this overview with a statement about the title of this document. We no longer refer to the full spectrum of architecture, support, opportunities, and environments that enable professional growth and learning as “Professional Development.” Instead, we referred to it as “**Professional Learning.**” The shift in language reflects the Howell Township Public School’s (HTPS) mission statement that all students, “. . . achieve success as skillful communicators, independent thinkers, and life-long learners.” From the newest students to the most veteran staff, everyone in HTPS is a life-long learner.

Our focus throughout this school year is to reestablish **academic striving** and **learner resilience** throughout our schools. Academic striving refers to students’ persistence to make academic growth and true learning gains. Academic striving requires productive struggle and perseverance to push through the obstacles of what we don’t know, to piece together what we do know, practice new concepts, and find mastery of new skills through purposeful and collaborative engagement. Academic striving cannot happen without learner resilience. At times, obstacles to learning may seem daunting. Working together, sharing our challenges, learning coping strategies, and leveraging healthy mindsets will provide all learners, adult and child, with a sense of resilience and commitment to learning.

Our professional learning goals for the year focus on classroom structures that support in-class academic intervention and/or extensions of learning; closing achievement gaps for over-challenged learners and enriching experiences for those most in need of challenge are the intended outcomes of the first professional learning goal. As noted above, the second goal provides professional learning experiences that support staff, and the community at large, in reestablishing a learning culture of *academic striving* and *learner resilience*. That starts with a strong commitment to developing a feeling of belonging for all and ends with rich, diverse, and cohesive school communities!

With our elementary schools restructured for long-term community involvement; academic restructuring to ensure curricular clarity, consistency, and coherence between each grade and across all schools, this plan lays out the adult learning supports necessary to capitalize on our operational reorganization.

Bruce Preston - Assistant Superintendent

Statement of Financial Priorities for Professional Learning

District / Board Goal Areas	District Professional Learning Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personalized Learning Environments ● Response to Intervention ● Student Empowerment & Wellness of All ● Sustaining a Positive Culture & Climate for Learning ● Transforming Educational Settings through Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using purposeful strategy grouping, progress monitoring, and explicit instruction to close student learning gaps and/or extend learning based on unique learning needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic Planning Alignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learner Success ■ Talent Teams ○ Desired Effects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Data confirm students are making progress towards meeting achievement goals ■ Communicates high expectations for each learner ■ Closing achievement gaps ● Reestablish school-based cultures of learning through student engagement strategies, learner resilience, and school-to-home partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic Planning Alignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learner Success ■ Talent Teams ■ Wellness ○ Desired Effects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The District is safe and inclusive of each student ■ High expectations are held for each student
Budgetary Support	
District FY23 CEU Budget \$5,000.00 District FY23 Professional Learning/In-service Budget \$7,500.00 Title IIA Funding FY22 allocated for Professional Learning Budget \$98,947.00 ESSER III ARP Accelerated Learning Coach & Educator Support Funding \$56,719.00	

1: Professional Learning Goals

No.	Goal / Strategic Plan Connections	Identified Group	Rationale/Sources of Evidence
1	<p>Goal: Using purposeful strategy grouping, progress monitoring, and explicit instruction to close student learning gaps.</p> <p>Desired Effect:Data confirm students are making progress towards meeting achievement goals, Teachers use the instructional model, Closing Achievement Gaps & Extending Learning</p> <p>Strategic Planning Alignment</p> <p><i>Learning Success: Over five years, ensure an inclusive learning environment with personalized support, aligned curriculum, enriched opportunities, and holistic development for diverse learners.</i></p> <p><i>Talent Teams: Over the next five years, increase talent diversity, enhance staff support, and establish collaborative partnerships to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all staff.</i></p>	<p>Learning Design Team; School Improvement Panels; Central office professional learning staff</p>	<p>Response to Intervention is a necessary and mandated structure of strategic student interventions. RTI as it is commonly known, provides a system of support and interventions, both academic and behavioral, designed to provide students with just-in-time and just-enough intervention support to change a trajectory of over challenge. Implementation requires a deep understanding of antecedent challenges, a goal for success, and a concrete plan for bridging the two.</p> <p>The plans range from Tier I interventions implemented in the classroom environment to Tier II and Tier III interventions that are implemented with more intensity and incorporate collaboration with educators outside the classroom environment. All levels of intervention require proper goal setting, identified data for progress monitoring, and a team of professionals who conduct progress updates at no more than six week intervals. This process of monitoring and adjusting the intervention plans is an area in which better data, better application of data, and structured progress update meetings will improve student performance and overall student experience.</p> <p>Instructional Coach roles have been redefined as Coaching Interventionist and they are now assigned one to every elementary, two to each middle school and early learning centers. Part of their specific role realignment is to provide coaching support for tier 1 interventions in the classroom setting. This includes planning, modeling, and limited delivery if needed. The Focus Model has also been developed and implemented to improve instructional consistency, curricular coherences across schools and between grades, and clarity of expectations and resources for all teachers. Coaches work closely with supervisors and principles to develop and deliver the focus model using professional development engagements designed for each school's specific needs.</p> <p>Evidence: Surveys, anecdotally reported evidence, SCIP/RTI/Data team agendas, daily learning plan content, School-based professional learning agendas, outcomes for students in the RTI process. Student-based evidence will be seen in improved Star and NJSLA scores</p>

2	<p>Goal: Reestablish school-based cultures of learning through student engagement strategies, learner resilience, and school-to-home partnerships</p> <p>Desired Effects: The District is safe and inclusive of each student, and High expectations are held for each student</p> <p>(Nonessential: To be written prior to publication)</p> <p>Strategic Planning Alignment</p> <p><i><u>Learning Success:</u> Over five years, ensure an inclusive learning environment with personalized support, aligned curriculum, enriched opportunities, and holistic development for diverse learners.</i></p> <p><i><u>Talent Teams:</u> Over the next five years, increase talent diversity, enhance staff support, and establish collaborative partnerships to ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all staff.</i></p> <p><i><u>Wellness:</u> Over the next five years, promote holistic student well-being through increased</i></p>	<p>Learning Design Team; School Improvement Panels; Central office professional learning staff</p>	<p>The early learning centers and the K-5 schools are all ‘new schools’ this year. There are many new students and families attending new schools. There are many new staff in our schools and schools that are new to some veteran staff. Building a sense of Day-one belonging is critical. Using the work of the first goal, schools will reestablish all the necessary relationships with a renewed and resilient focus on learning. Engagement strategies will be a part of all Focus Documents and professional learning opportunities. Likewise, schools will develop strategies to engage families in academic parental progress monitoring and partnership for strengthening school-ready behaviors. Those efforts will be organized and informed by each school’s unique academic goals.</p> <p>Evidence: Evidence of the desired effect will be seen in observations, walk throughs, aligned lesson plans, and reported as well as observed increases in student engagement. Surveys to parents will show improved perceptions of home-to-school partnerships and better understanding of school goals. Increased student engagement and parental partnerships will yield increased academic performance seen in NJSLA and Star scores.</p> <p>With increases in academic striving and strengthening learning cultures, academic stress related concerns may also present. This is why cultures of learning and engagement must also incorporate resilience training for school leadership, teachers, and students.</p>

	<i>support, restorative programs, mental health services, social engagement, and physical activity across all grade levels</i>		
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Mentoring Plan

Mission: To provide all new staff, whether new to the profession or just new to HTPS, with a community of colleagues and a network of support.

Our New Staff Academy was designed 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 Academy strives to create a learning community from, and around our new teachers. In doing so, 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. Each year's members will move together as a cohort.

Year One: You in relation to what you need to be successful

Three, three-week, themed workshop modules delivered with classroom-usable strategies

Topics* & Tentative Dates:

- Working with Parents – Fall Module
- Positive Expectations / Self Care - Winter Module
- Professionalism and Professional Reflections – Spring Module

*(*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.

The year-one experience culminates with the participants developing their own, unique, Educator's oath for the cohort.

Year-three cohort (teacher leadership) works explicitly with the year-one cohort.

Year Two: Your professional journey in relation to what you do with students

Modeling the same high leverage learning designs expected to be used for our students, 2nd year staff will unpack their personal story, understand how their self-narration of that story influences who they are becoming as a teacher, and lastly, they will learn the importance of the other characters who change the course of their story as it is unfolding. The goal of year two is to develop a sense of self-reflection and enhance teacher mindfulness about the intersection of their story with that of their students. The year-two experience culminates with participants crafting their Tiny Teaching Memoir (their teaching journey in 100 words or less.) These memoirs are published and given back to the cohort members, administrative team, and the Board of Education.

Year Three: You in relation to your colleagues

Having unpacked each professional's personal journey, year-three participant explore what teacher leadership is, what it means to them, where best-fit leadership opportunities exist, and how to support others in professionally productive ways. It is important that year-one teachers and year-three teachers spend time discussing and reflecting together. The year-three teachers complete a network of support for their year-one peers while contributing to a community of colleagues who are all experiencing their 'new-teacher' journey together. The year-three teachers have had their successes and challenges over the past two years, yet those experiences are still fresh. That makes the year-three teachers some of the best mentors for the

year-one cohort. Year-three teachers will also plan and facilitate a panel discussion with all student teachers and residents in the district. The general topic is “Things I wish I knew in my first year” and Interview Tips and Strategies.

Year Four: Teacher Leadership Opportunities

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 contributing to the growth of others, sustaining and offering 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

Module One: Fall sessions focus on observation & evaluation training, parents as partners in learning, and needs assessment for new staff.

- 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.

Module Two: Winter sessions focus on positive expectations and self-care.

- 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.

Module Three: Spring sessions focus on reflections from the past year, preparations for the next year.

- 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 Academy - Program at a Glance

August Orientation for all New Hires	Cohort 9 Topics	Cohort 8 Topics	Cohort 7 Topics
<p>Fall Module: Getting Started</p> <p>Sept 25: Introductions, Conferences & Cohort Meeting</p> <p>Oct 14: (Year 1 Specific) School-based time with mentors and new staff: Report Cards, RTI, Behaviors that Support Learning, Observations (Held during the in-service day)</p> <p>Oct 15: Observation/Evaluation (Year 2 and 3) Tiny Teaching Memoir</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Parents • Book Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative Ethics: What is it and How it Shapes the Story of You • What is Narrative Ethics and How It Can Help • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Leadership / Reflective Practices (Modeling with Observations) • Introduction to Intervention cycles and Teacher Leadership •

<p>Winter Module: Taking Care of You</p> <p>Jan 8: Behavioral Interventions and Supports</p> <p>January 15: Collective Efficacy: Confronting Challenges Together (Navigating co-teaching, Partnering with Paras, PLC Partnerships)</p> <p>January 22: Restorative Practices & 30 Minute Cohort</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Expectations: • Self-Care / Reflective Practice • Breakouts for professional partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative Ethics as Ethics of Care (Importance of Relationships) • Ethics of Self-Care / Reflective Practices (Year 3 Guided) • Carousel (SEL/Wellness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Leadership / Reflective Practices (Shaping Opportunities for Leadership) • Intervention and Assessment Cycle • Professional Learning Carousel (SEL/Wellness)
<p>Spring Module: Reflecting and Planning (Dates May Need to be Change)</p> <p>April 29: Professionalism</p> <p>May 7: Educator Oaths, Tiny Teaching Memoirs, Pre-service Celebration</p> <p>May (Meeting will be held at</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionalism / Educator Oaths • Reflections and Connections (Fortune Cookie Advice for New Staff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionalism / Educator Oaths • Reflections and Connections (Fortune Cookie Advice for New Staff) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionalism / Educator Oaths • Reflections and Connections (Fortune Cookie Advice for New Staff)

one of the May Board Meetings. Approval of CEU Hours - Certificates Awarded.			
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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, and/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 fail better
- 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 (Per the updated State Requirements: twice per week for the first four weeks for CEAS staff and twice per week for the first eight weeks for CE staff).
- 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. (2001) Making the Connection Between Increased Student Learning and Reflective Practice; Educational Horizons, & the work of Yourk-Barr, Sopmmers, Ghere, and Montie. (2006). Reflective Practice to Improve Schools: An Action Guide for Educators. Corwin Press)

- 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)

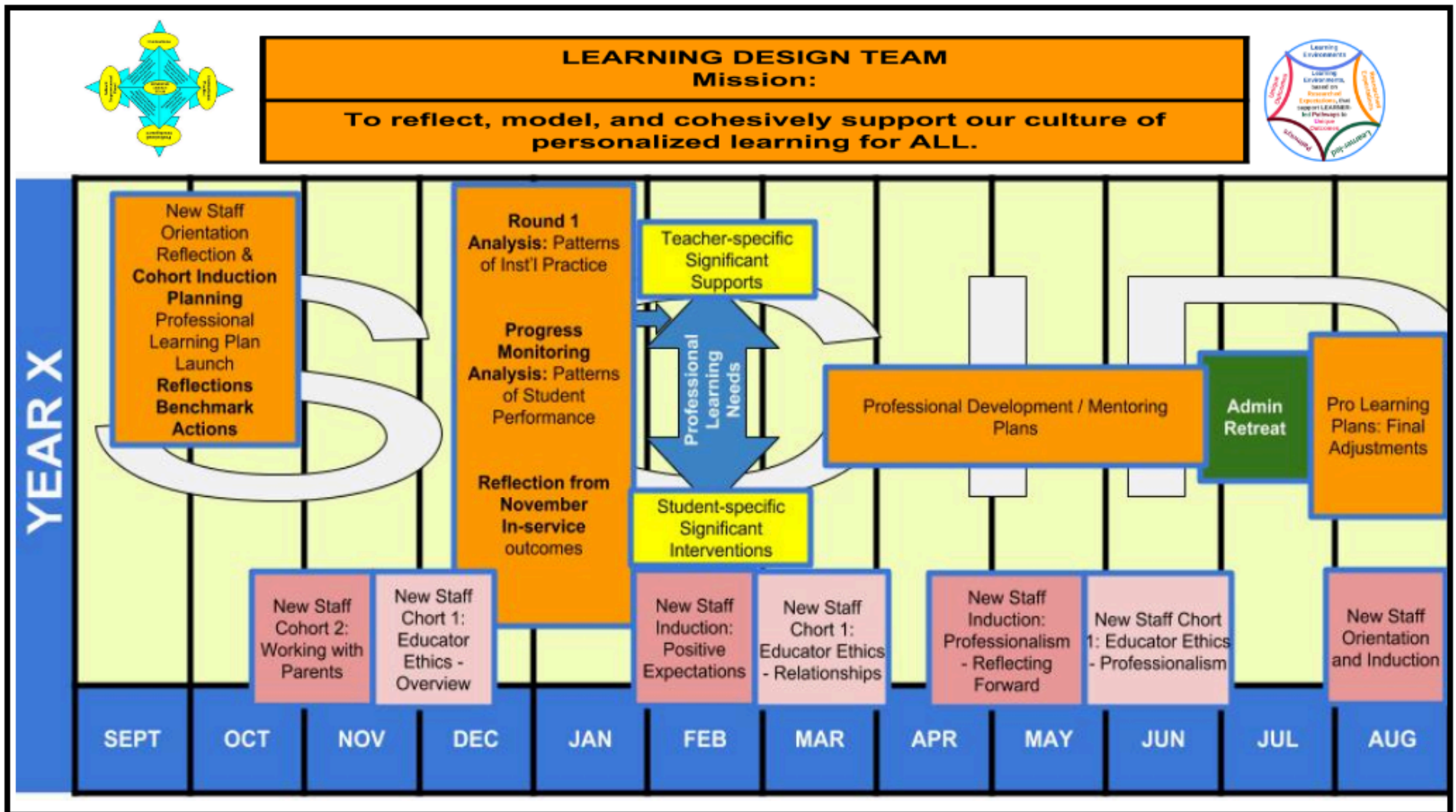
- A. Refresh on topic of latest professional learning
- B. Facilitator presents discussion in terms of professional learning experiences
- C. Open group discussion on the relationship between problem and professional learning

VII. Inquiry Forms / Closing Remarks (5 minutes)

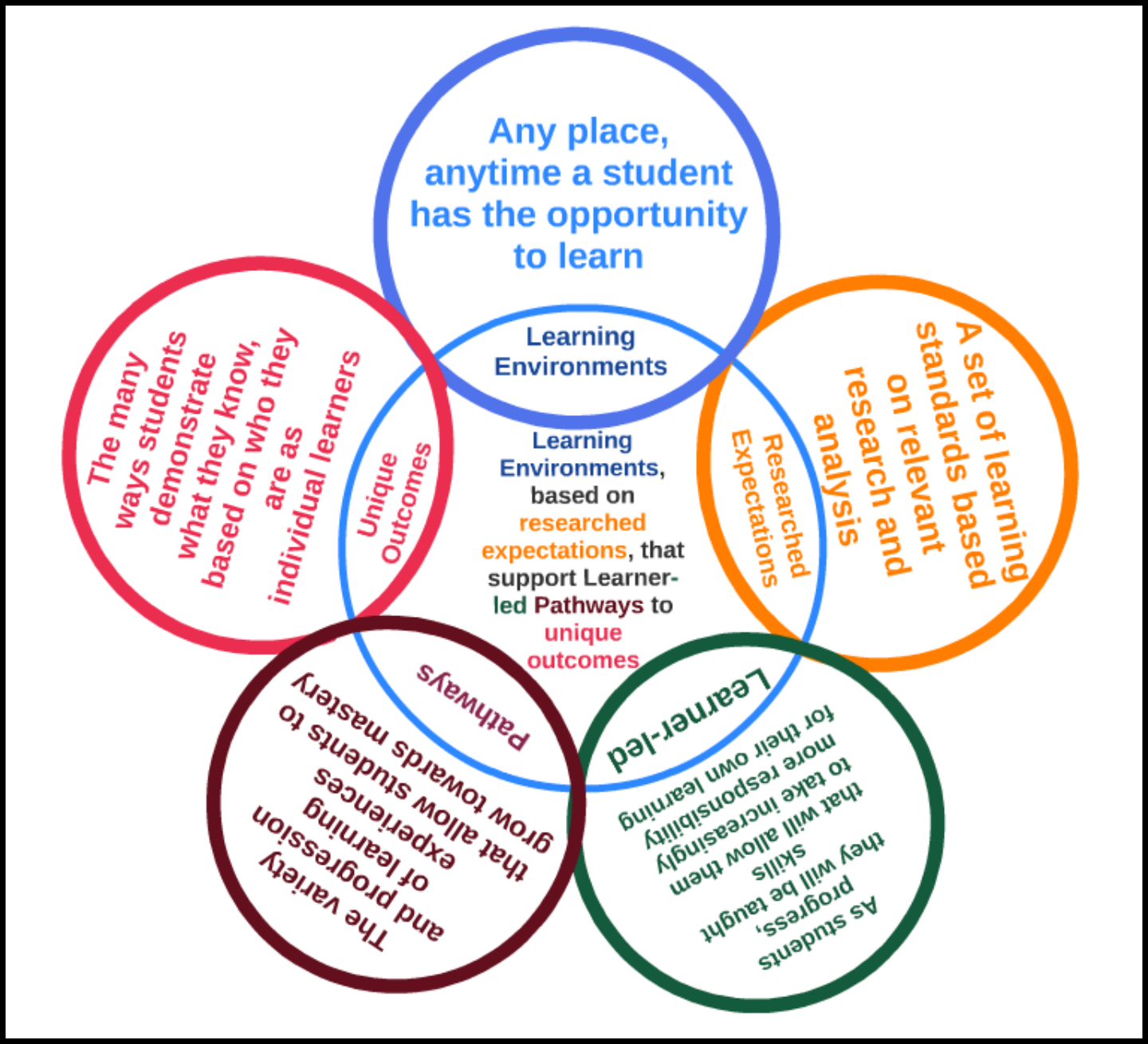
- A. All participants must fill out an inquiry form
 - 1. Usefulness of discussion
 - 2. Relevance to personal experience

3. Questions for further exploration
- B. Closing remarks by facilitator

Appendix E: Learning Design Team Visual Map (Includes Timelines and New Staff Academy, Years 1 and 2)



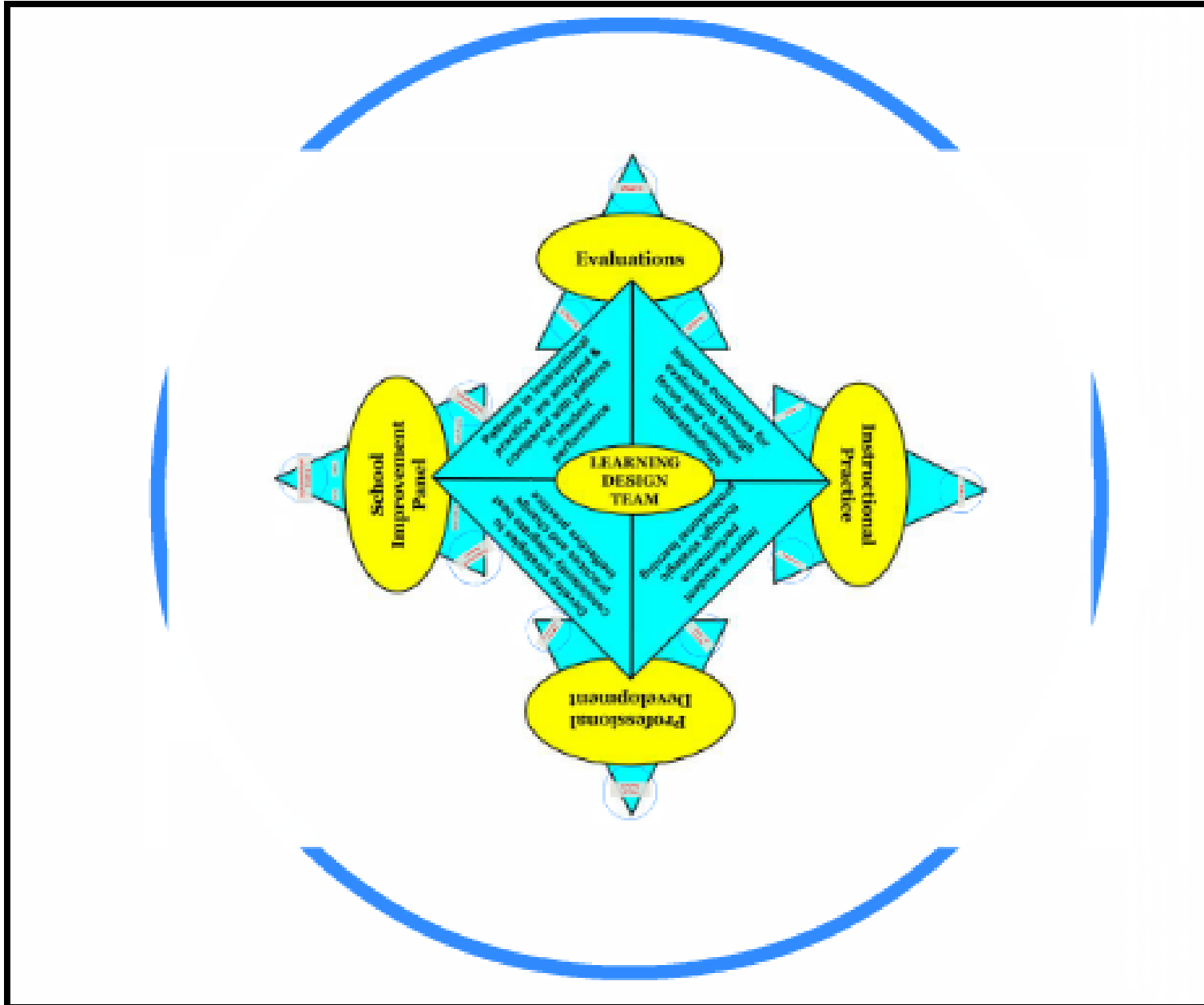
Appendix F:
Personalized Learning Framework



Appendix G: Personalized Learning Resources Map

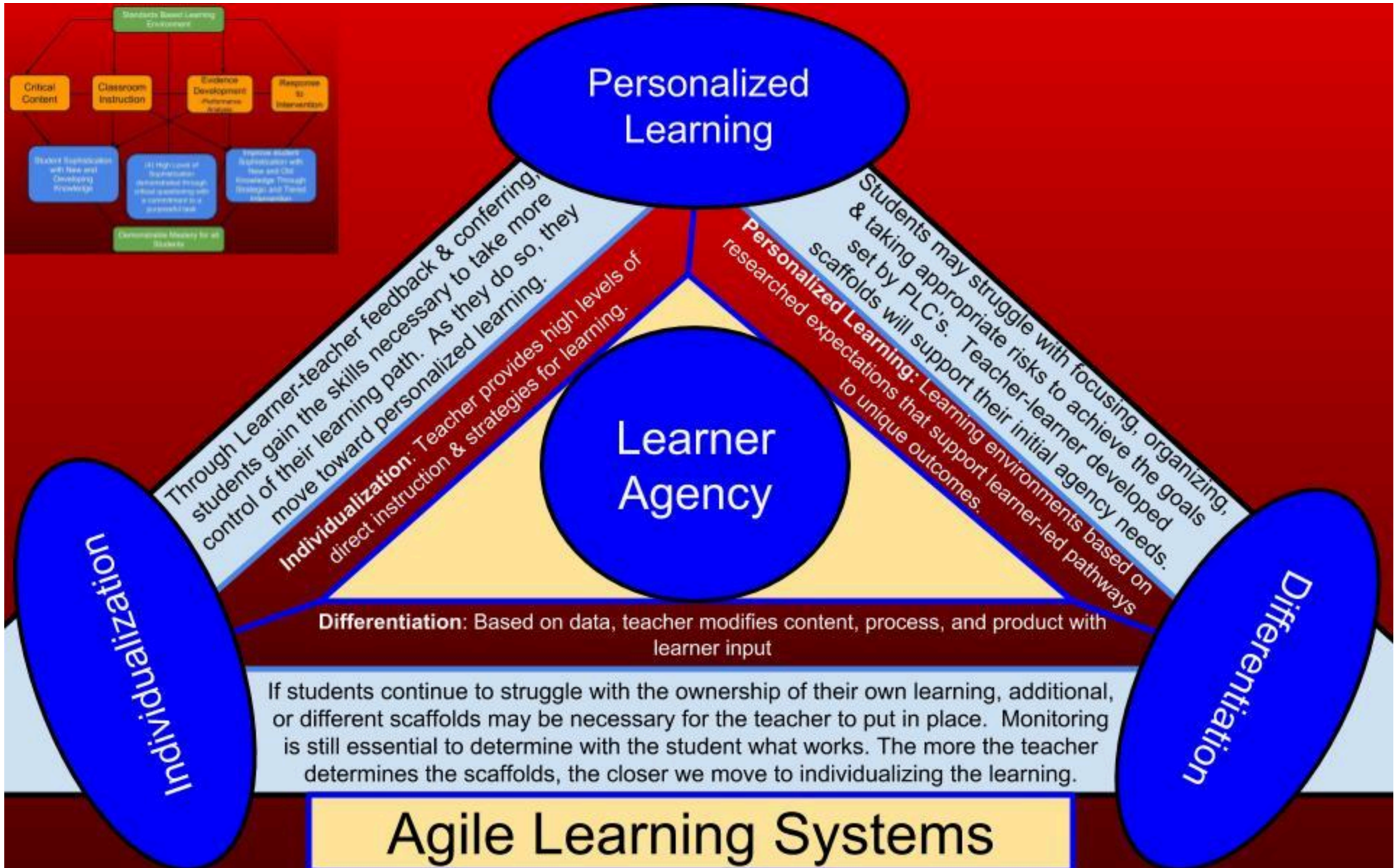


Appendix H:
Visual Map of Agile Professional Learning
Environments



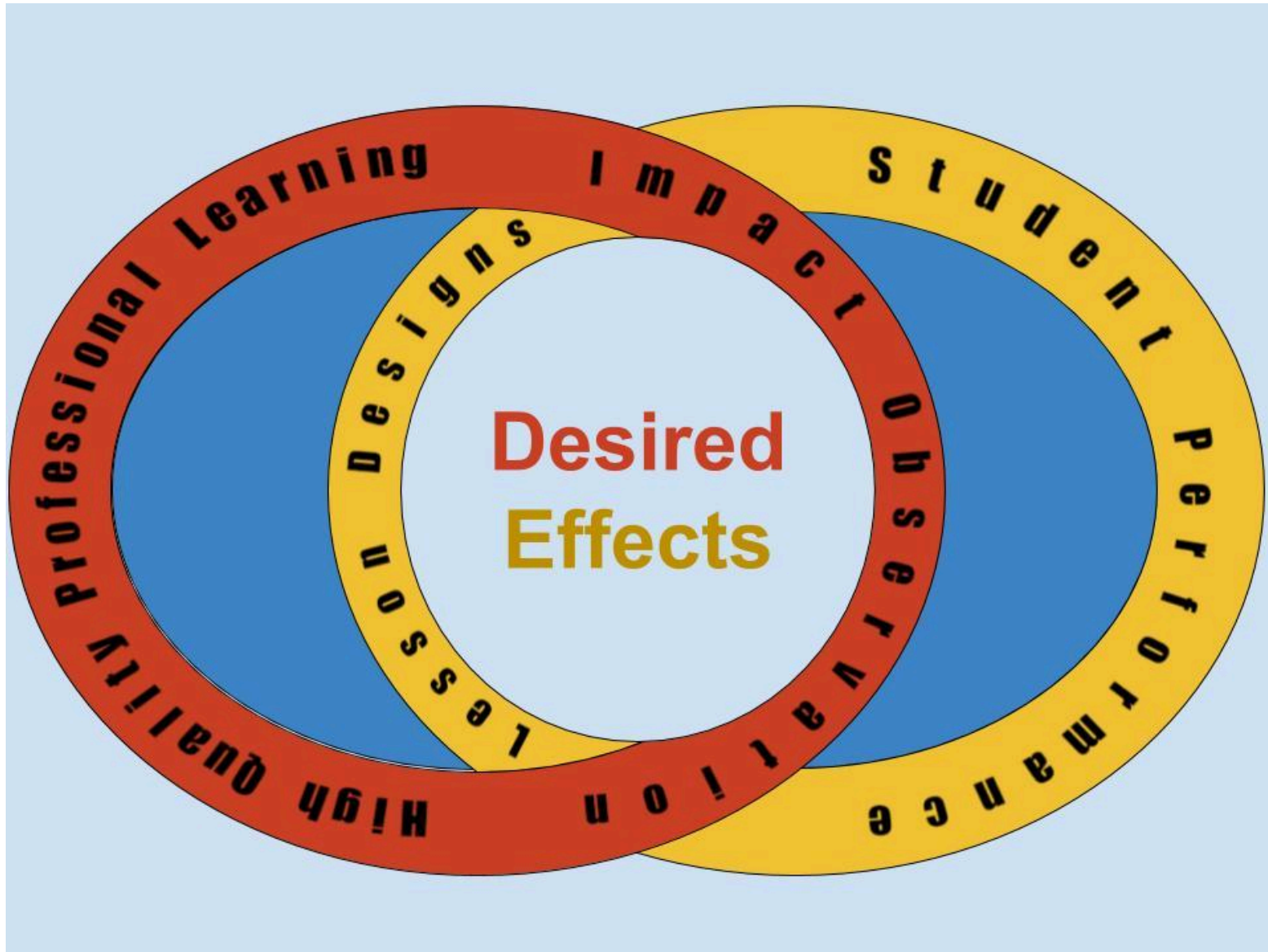
Agile Learning Systems
Personalized, Individualized, Differentiated
Infographic

Depicts the continuum of learning needs from learners with the most agency (personalized) to those learners with the least agency (individualized).



Impact Map

A concept map to think through the connections between 5 elements: high quality professional learning, clear desired effects, lesson designs, student performance, and observations. The map supports thinking and discussing the connections between those 5 impact elements.



Impact Bridge

The research on professional learning is clear: professional learning should result in a positive change for our students. Author Jim Knight exemplifies that belief by proposing “...Impact Schools, where every aspect of professional learning is designed to have an unmistakable, positive impact on teaching and student learning.” (*Unmistakable Impact: a Partnership Approach for Dramatically Improving Instruction*. Corwin, 2011. Pg. 6).

The concept map to the right is designed to facilitate SCIP dialogues and shared understanding of precisely what impact professional learning is having, where within a continuum that impact is occurring, and how to move the impact closer to the desired effect of that impact. It is an attempt to bridge any impact gap between professional learning and student success.

