

Shrewsbury Professional Development Pathways: For the 2017-2018 school year, Shrewsbury is continuing its self-directed approach to professional development. The Professional Development Pathways provide educators with the opportunity to have ownership and choice over their professional development. These pathways move away from a task mindset and towards a learning mindset for educators and students. Finally, these pathways provide educators with the chance to integrate the work they are doing for professional development with their daily work with students.

Pathway #1: Making Projects Real Pathway Overview

Essential Question: How can I adjust my practice to engage students more deeply in their learning by incorporating authentic, real world projects?

Pathway Objective: In this pathway, participants will explore and experiment with authentic, real-world projects in their classrooms to deepen learning, increase engagement, and build 21st century skills. Real world projects and authentic learning are one of the tenants of Project-Based Learning, and involve the following factors:

Real-World Challenge: A question, problem, or issue that students care about and that people in the world are working on as a part of their profession or career.

Doing Professional Work: Opportunities to do what professionals do in their field related to the topic or project.

Mentors and Experts: Access to experts, mentors, or professionals that have knowledge or skills to impart to students as a part of their study or project completion.

Presenting to an Authentic Audience: Students are asked to present their projects, findings, or work to an audience outside of the classroom.

Resources in this pathway include supporting research, examples of real-world projects from different schools, tips and practical issues to consider, planning templates, and critical thinking rubrics.

Pathway #2: Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners Overview

Essential Question: How do I develop meaningful instruction and interventions to meet the needs of all students in my classroom?

Pathway Objective: In this pathway, participants will use data to develop instructional practices and/or interventions to support the learning of all students within an inclusive environment. Participants will be asked to reflect upon the formative and summative assessments that are conducted, shift instructional practices, and/or develop interventions, to target a specific group of students, and continue to collect data to document growth overtime. Participants will target their independent pathway work to focus on a specific group of students. This may include developing instructional practices that challenge advanced learners, language instruction for English language learners, specific reading instruction for struggling students, social and emotional learning for a group of students who are receiving special education services, co-teaching, executive functioning strategies for students who are struggling with organization, etc.

Resources in this pathway include accommodations, differentiation, data driven instruction, modification and specially designed instruction. Participants are encouraged to research topics of specific interest to shift instructional practices.

Pathway #3: Developing Health & Wellness Practices in our Students

Overview

Essential Question: How can I enhance my practice to meet the health and wellness needs of our students?

Pathway Objective: In this pathway, participants will work to develop a shared understanding of best practices and/or work toward improving practice as related to supporting the health and wellness needs of Shrewsbury students.

Pathway#4: Mindfulness

Overview

Essential Question: How can I adjust my practice to help my students manage stress and anxiety and improve focus and self-regulation?

Pathway Objective: In this pathway, participants will explore strategies to be used with students to help them manage stress and anxiety and improve focus and self-regulation. Studies indicate that there are a variety of positive effects from mindfulness practices. These effects include decreases in symptoms of stress and hostility and increasing attention, relaxation, self-esteem, social skills, and sleep quality, all of which have a positive impact on increasing the ability to focus on tasks, improving regulation of emotions, and relaxation, and supporting deeper learning.

Pathway#5: Growth Mindset

Overview

Essential Question: How can I adjust my practice to use, and encourage my students to develop, growth-oriented feedback and language to reinforce a focus on growth and create a motivating learning environment?

Pathway Objective: By completing this pathway, participants will develop an understanding of how the brain is like a muscle that improves with effort. Teachers and students will use appropriate growth mindset-oriented language focused on recognizing and encouraging effort rather than on general personal praise when giving feedback on a student's performance. This sustains a positive, growth-oriented, motivating learning environment. The resources in this pathway feature the work of Stanford University psychologist, Carol Dweck, and her research on how mindset affects achievement and success.

Pathway#6: Producing Quality Work

Overview

Essential Question: How can I adjust my practice to help my students produce high quality work that is worthy of a public audience?

Pathway Objective: Participants in this pathway will explore the conditions and practices that drive and support students to produce high quality work. Creating work that matters, creating and discussing the attributes of strong models of work, building a culture of kind critiquing, role of continuous revision, and presenting to a public audience will be explored.

Resources for this pathway draw largely from the work of Ron Berger and his Expeditionary Learning schools, and High Tech High.

Open-Ended Performance Task: There will be a celebration of learning at the culmination of the pathway work. Educators will respond to the essential question by demonstrating how the knowledge

gained through the pathway has enhanced their understanding of the topic and impacted their practice.

Pathway#7: Productive Discourse Overview

Essential Question: How can I adjust my practice to create a classroom culture that incorporates whole and small group discussion to encourage discourse that facilitates deeper learning?

Pathway Objective: In this pathway, participants will explore a variety of strategies that encourage class discourse and provide students with opportunities to discuss ideas, grapple with concepts, reason, and ask questions. A variety of grouping formats, techniques, and tools for facilitation will be explored.

Pathway#8: Home and School Partnerships for Learning Overview

Essential Question: How can I adjust my practice to engage guardians in school life and establish a system for clear, three-way communication between staff, students and guardians?

Pathway Objective: In this pathway, participants will utilize recent literature and case studies to build stronger home and school partnerships for learning. Educators, guardians, and students must work together to accomplish their shared goal for student success. The resources in this pathway feature Epstein's Framework of Six Different Types of Involvement, teaching cases on family involvement, and ways to leverage community based organizations to connect more families with the school. By understanding the value of home-school partnerships as well as barriers to the formation of these partnerships, participants will devise strategies to engage guardians in classroom life and establish a clear system of communication.

Pathway#9: Global Education Overview

Essential Question: How can I adjust my practice to engage students in the development of an evidence-supported position on an intercultural or international issue and take action by applying findings to the real world?

Pathway Objective: A global education is one that incorporates learning about the cultures, geographies, histories, and current issues of all the world's regions. It emphasizes the interconnectedness and diversity of peoples and histories. Global education develops students' skills to engage with their global peers and highlights actions students can take as citizens of the world.

Pathway#10: Choosing Technology Tools Overview

Essential Question: How can I adjust my practice to thoughtfully choose and utilize the best technology tool for the learning task at hand and simultaneously help my students to develop this skill?

Pathway Objective: In this pathway, participants will explore ways to effectively choose appropriate technology tools and engage students in developing strategies for choosing technology tools independently.

The plethora of educational technology tools that are currently available can be overwhelming for both teachers and students. To choose the technology tool that is more appropriate for the task at hand requires clarity of learning goals and objectives and an understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of potential tools and apps. A structured approach to evaluating tools may help both teachers and students. Resources include the ISTE (International Society for Technology in Education) Standards for students and teachers, websites that provide reviews of edtech tools, and videos on the SAMR model of technology integration. In addition, resources specifically geared toward fourth grade teachers who are embarking on the 1:2 iPad initiative are also provided.

Pathway#11: Meeting the Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs of All Students

Overview

Essential Question: How can I enhance my practice to meet the Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs of all students?

Pathway Objective: In this pathway, participants will work to develop a shared understanding of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) best practices and/or work toward improving practice as related to supporting the Mental Health needs of Shrewsbury students.

Pathway#12: Science

Overview

Essential Question: How can I adjust my teaching to engage students more deeply in their learning by incorporating practice-based science instruction?

Pathway Objective: In this pathway, participants will explore and design lessons using the 2016 Massachusetts Science Frameworks. Specific focus will be given to the 8 practices of science and engineering, helping students to use inquiry skills to construct their knowledge and understanding of the natural world. Resources in this pathway include supporting research, examples of lessons and activities, pedagogy, resources to help build content knowledge, planning templates and rubrics.

Pathway#13: Math: Developing High Quality Tasks for Grades 5–8

Overview

Essential Question: How can I adjust my math instruction to engage students more deeply in reasoning and problem solving?

Pathway Objective:

In this pathway, participants will work collaboratively to design and implement high-quality, standards-aligned math tasks to engage students more deeply in reasoning and problem solving.

(This pathway will be facilitated by Melissa McCann, Math Curriculum Coordinator, 5–8. It is open to math classroom teachers, coaches, and special educators who work with students in grades 4–8.)