

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

VISION STATEMENT

Washington Township Public Schools believes that educators must be dedicated to a plan of professional development that extends throughout the life of their professional career in education through sustained endeavors. We further believe that effective educators are life-long learners and that professional development is an on-going process of enhancing their understanding of how children develop and learn, refreshing their professional backgrounds, advancing their content knowledge, refining their skills, accessing and utilizing data, and learning about new theories and practices to ensure fulfillment of our district's mission whereby all students can effectively attain or exceed the knowledge and skills outlined in the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards* (NJCCCS) and the *Common Core State Standards* (CCSS) and essential for their future success in the global society of the 21st century.

We believe that professional development activities complement both the needs of the educator and the goals and objectives of the school district. These activities enrich student learning, thereby enabling students to function as independent thinkers and creative learners in the school community and in the global society.

In addition, we believe that a key aspect of professional development is the engagement of each educator in a collegial and collaborative dialogue with other educators and educational partners who are committed to the achievement and success of all learners. As a foundation for ensuring success, educators working under a common goal or purpose review and analyze data to determine student and programmatic strengths and needs, identify strategies and resources to assess and target needs, and engage in research to sustain continuous personal/professional improvement, advance programmatic efficacy, and optimize individual student achievement.

We believe that professional collaboration must be nurtured through a school culture and building/district leadership that place a premium on optimal student success, achievement, and wellbeing, and which foster reflective practice, continuous improvement and growth, and ongoing learning for all stakeholders. As such, school leaders at all levels must be committed to student success and the enhancement of professional practice by ensuring adequate financial support, allocation of time for collaboration, and the cultivation of a broader base of ownership and leadership among instructional stakeholders, all of which are necessary for staff to embrace initiatives as their own.

We believe that instructional experimentation designed to enhance the achievement of all students is supported in a nurturing environment, which encourages educators to learn about their work and to grow from their experiences.

In an effort to achieve the *New Jersey Professional Development Standards and Common Core State Standards*, promote instructional practices that reflect the *New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers*, ensure student attainment of the *Core Curriculum Content Standards*, and fulfill the requirements of *No Child Left Behind*, our common set of beliefs about teaching and learning is reflected in the following precepts:

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- *Professional development is a district priority for all stakeholders.*
- *Professional development responds to State standards and requirements as well as the school district's mission statement, goals, objectives, and curricula.*
- *All educational personnel are committed to assuring superiority in content knowledge, teaching, learning, leadership, and fulfillment of professional responsibilities through high quality, sustained professional development in order to meet the needs of diverse learners.*
- *Effective professional development is research-based and data-based.*
- *Effective professional development reflects an understanding of the strategies, conditions, and circumstances under which optimal adult learning takes place and therefore is comprised of a variety of topics, formats, and resources which can be tailored to the needs of specific adult learners.*
- *Professional development which includes a built-in process for reflection, evaluation, refinement, and follow-up fosters innovation, creativity, growth, and student achievement throughout the K-12 instructional program.*
- *Professional development is a shared responsibility.*
- *Individuals and organizations have the inherent responsibility to define and achieve their own excellence.*
- *School improvement results directly from personal/professional growth and collaboration among the stakeholders.*
- *Time allocation and scheduling will be flexible and creative to accommodate the diverse needs of staff and program while simultaneously supporting opportunities for staff collaboration through focused, job-embedded professional learning communities/groups.*
- *Professional development promotes and fosters an enhanced network of communication, collaboration, and partnerships among the stakeholders of the school district, with the community-at-large, and with other professional and educational organizations and resources.*