

# Key Considerations for Professional Learning Providers in the District of Columbia

## Introduction

Professional learning has the potential to be an effective tool to increase the effectiveness of our educator workforce and to support educators in renewing their District of Columbia (DC) educator credential. However, for professional learning to provide the support and growth educators seek, it must be high quality. This guidance is designed to provide key considerations that professional learning providers may use when developing professional learning opportunities to help ensure that those opportunities are high quality.

## Professional learning activities for OSSE educator credential renewal

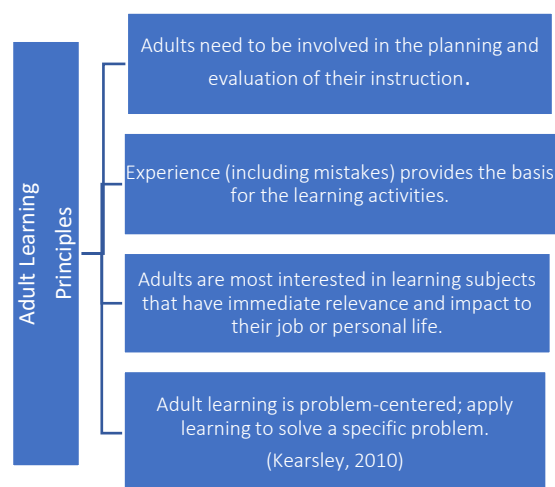
The Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) Division of Teaching and Learning (TAL) does not pre-approve professional learning activities or providers for K-12 and adult educators for the purposes of educator credential renewal.

OSSE requires that the content of professional learning activities accepted for the purposes of renewing a DC K-12 or adult educator credential aligns with one or more of the following focus areas.

- Increases content knowledge and competence in the specific subject area of the credential;
- Increases effective instruction and methodologies;
- Increases school leadership strategies and skills;
- Increases knowledge of curriculum and standards;
- Improves school, community and family engagement;
- Increases knowledge of educational best practices and trends;
- Increases knowledge of resources and services for schools;
- Increases strategies and skills for meeting the needs of diverse learners; and/or
- Increases strategies and skills for effectively using educational technology

## Principles of effective professional learning

Effective professional learning opportunities should also align with the principles of **adult learning theory** or andragogy. Adult learning theories are based on the premise that adults learn differently than children. Here are four assumptions based on the principles of adult learning theory that illustrate your needs as an adult learner.



Based on these theories, providers should develop professional learning activities that meet the following best practices and are aligned with the definition of professional learning in the federal law governing elementary and secondary

education in the United States, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, reauthorized in 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

- Provide a **content focus**. High-quality professional learning that focuses on teaching strategies associated with specific curriculum content which supports teacher learning within teachers' classroom contexts. This element includes an intentional focus on discipline-specific curriculum development and pedagogies in areas such as mathematics, science or literacy.
- Incorporate **active learning**. Active learning engages teachers directly in designing and trying out teaching strategies, providing them an opportunity to engage in the same style of learning they are designing for their students. Such professional development uses authentic artifacts, interactive activities and other strategies to provide deeply embedded, highly contextualized professional learning. This approach moves away from traditional learning models and environments that are lecture based and have no direct connection to teachers' classrooms and students.
- Support **collaboration**. High-quality professional learning creates space for teachers to share ideas and collaborate in their learning, often in job-embedded contexts. By working collaboratively, teachers can create communities that positively change the culture and instruction of their entire grade level, department, school and/or district.
- Use **models of effective practice**. Curricular models and modeling of instruction provide teachers with a clear vision of what best practices look like. Teachers may view models that include lesson plans, unit plans, sample student work, observations of peer teachers and video or written cases of teaching.
- Provide **coaching and expert support**. Coaching and expert support involve the sharing of expertise about content and evidence-based practices, focused directly on teachers' individual needs.
- Offer **feedback and reflection**. High-quality professional learning frequently provides built-in time for teachers to think about, receive input on and make changes to their practice by facilitating reflection and soliciting feedback. Feedback and reflection both help teachers to thoughtfully move toward the expert visions of practice.
- Are of **sustained duration**. Effective professional development provides teachers with adequate time to learn, practice, implement and reflect upon new strategies that facilitate changes in their practice (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner and 2017).

#### [Specific requirements for professional learning activities for child-care providers](#)

Please note that consistent with the DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR 5-A139), all paid staff of an OSSE-licensed child development facility who serve infants, toddlers and/or preschoolers and whose duties or responsibilities include the care of enrolled children are required to receive specialized training via continuing education and/or professional learning activities. For more information about the professional learning opportunities that OSSE's Division of Early Learning (DEL) provides, please see: [osse.dc.gov/publication/trainer-approval-program-tap-process](https://osse.dc.gov/publication/trainer-approval-program-tap-process) .