

# Transforming Professional Learning for Educators in Arkansas

Synthesis

**A Synthesis of Feedback and Recommendations from the Field**



**April 15, 2020**

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# Transforming Professional Learning for Educators in Arkansas:

## A Synthesis of Feedback and Recommendations from the Field

*“We really need to grow in the ways we want our students to grow...In our learning as professional educators, we have to see a bigger picture... What are the student outcomes we want to see? And then we base our professional growth on what we want to see... as they [students] walk down the aisle to graduate.”* **Arkansas Educator**

### Purpose and Context

The Office of Innovation for Education (OIE) had the distinct honor and privilege of conducting digital stakeholder engagement groups for the purpose of transforming professional learning rules for educators. At the request of the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), OIE coordinated and facilitated virtual sessions with over 200 stakeholders from across the state of Arkansas to gather input for new rules. This summary represents a synthesis of feedback from the field collected between January and March of 2020 and is supported by examples from national and global research and thought-leadership on professional learning. The purpose of this summary is two-fold. A primary purpose is to authentically represent voices from the field in Arkansas and to provide actionable recommendations to DESE based on their feedback as stakeholders. A secondary purpose is to link these recommendations to national efforts and published work related to transforming professional learning in order to offer a variety of models and considerations for continued transformation.

*“This is a nationwide effort, I suppose, but in our state specifically, we are undergoing some systemic changes to move towards student-centered learning. In order to get to that environment in a classroom with the students, we need to get our teachers and our adult learners learning in the same environment. It’s a radical change in professional development if you’re not used to it.”* **Educator, Arkansas Department of Education, 2018**

For the purpose of this work, a distinction was made between traditional professional development and professional learning. Professional learning (PL) links with the concept of powerful learning, or learning that changes you as a person and/or impacts your practice. Professional development, which often happens to teachers, “is often associated with one-time workshops, seminars, or lectures, and is typically a one-size-fits all approach. In contrast, professional learning, when designed well, is typically interactive, sustained, and customized to teachers' needs. It encourages teachers to take responsibility for their own learning and to practice what they are learning in their own teaching contexts” ( [REL, 2018](#)).

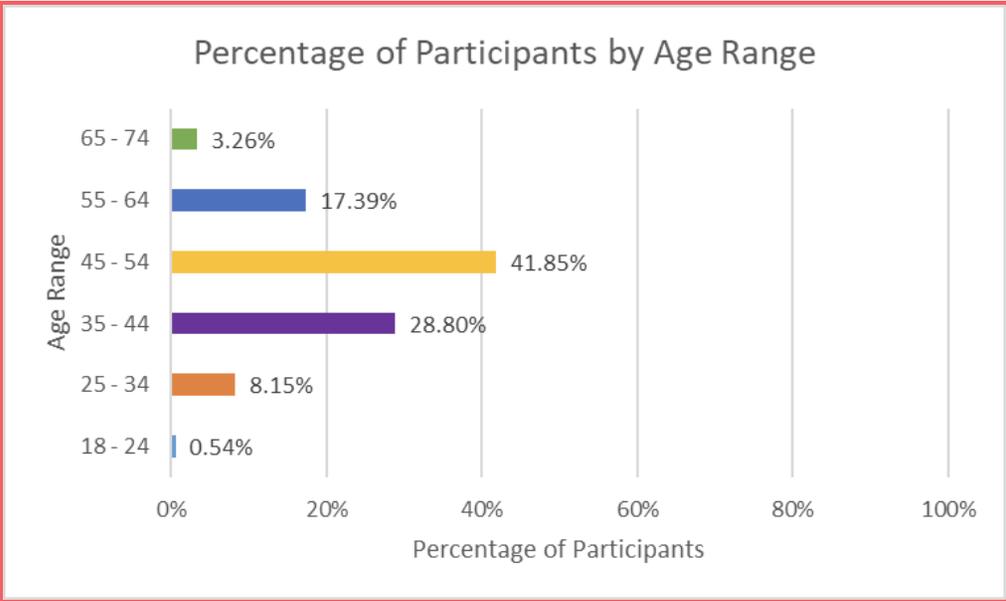
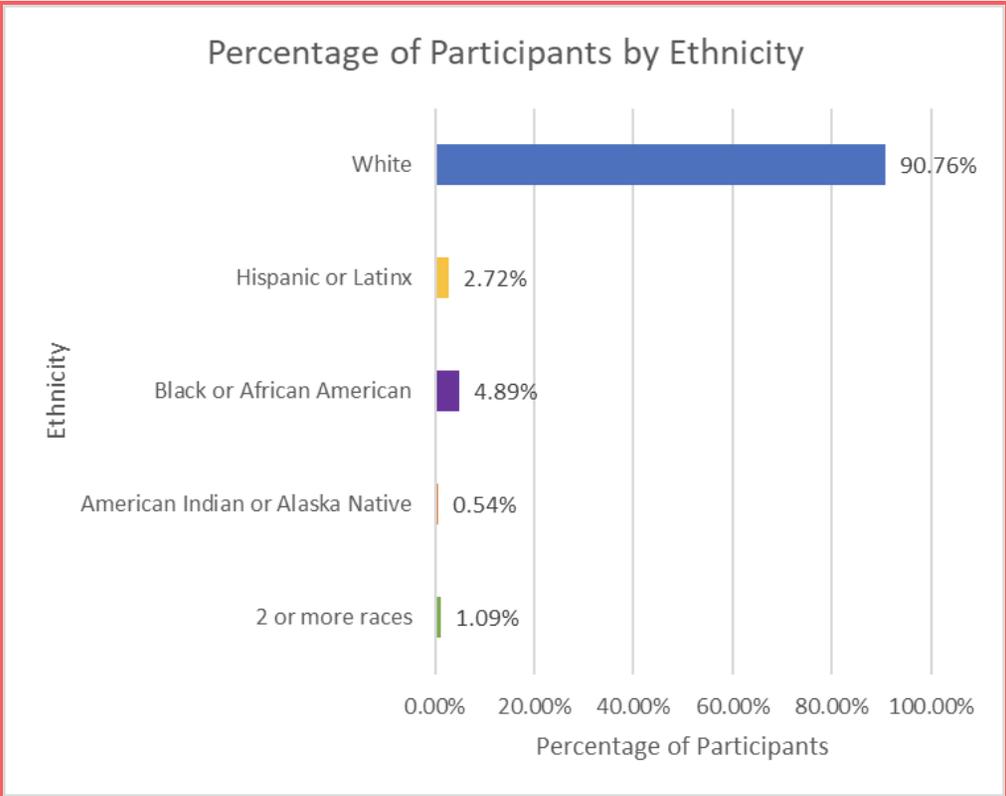
# Stakeholder Groups

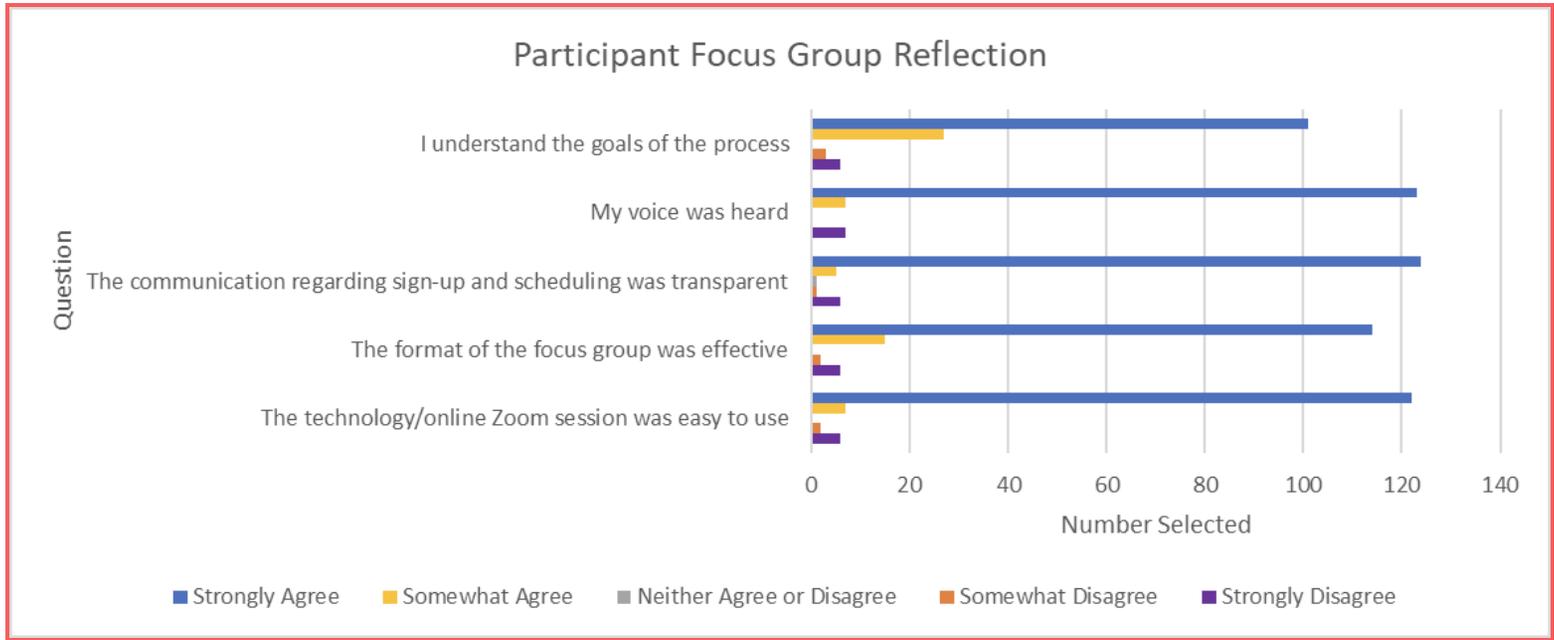
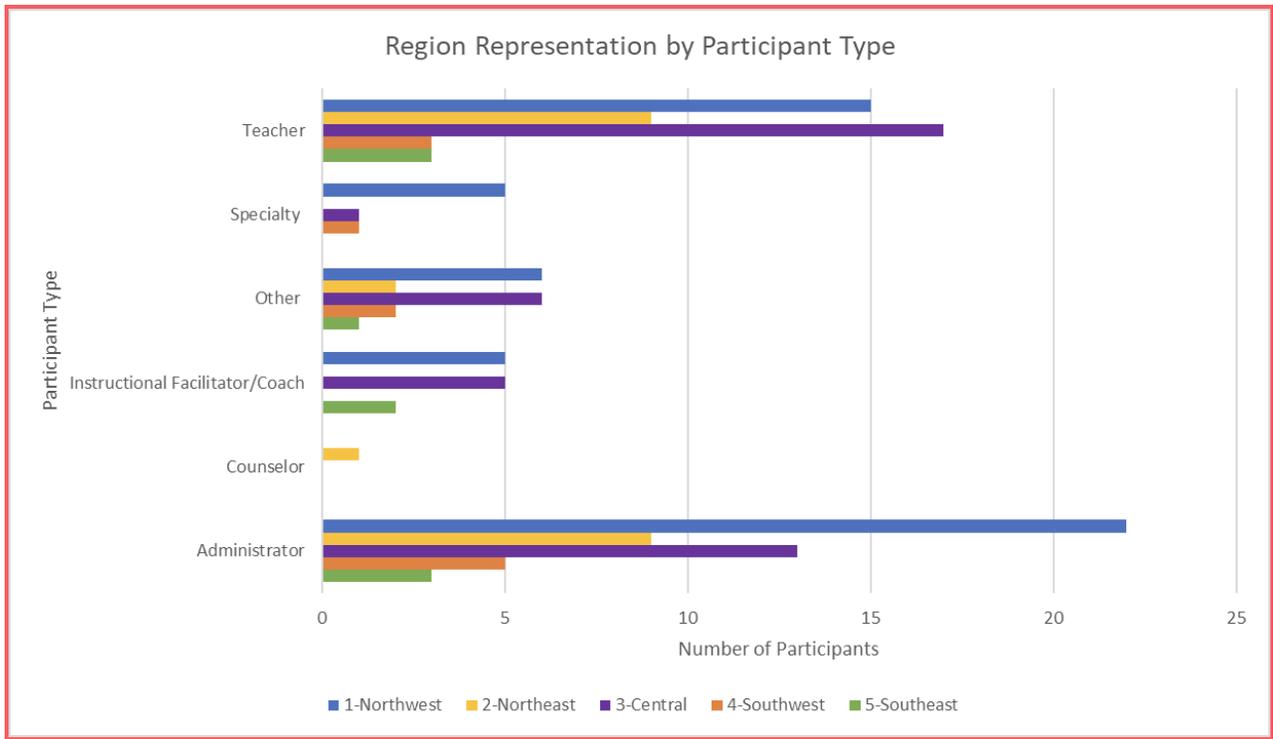
## *Design*

Over the course of twelve weeks, from January through March of 2020, OIE coordinated and conducted twenty-three digital groups and two one-on-one sessions using Zoom technology. With the help of DESE, over 600 stakeholders supporting education were invited to participate in the digital stakeholder groups. Stakeholders were contacted by both DESE and OIE, and OIE coordinated the invitations based on participants' availability and role in the education system (e.g., teacher, administrator, counselor, etc.). Using a set of slides shared in advance and during the Zoom sessions, participants in like roles were guided through a semi-structured set of questions. Following the Zoom session, participants had the option to add to their input by completing a followup survey. In addition to receiving the slide deck with the discussion questions ahead of time, participants were provided a process timeline and an optional set of current research and policy documents to review. DESE staff graciously offered their time to OIE to vet the questions and format ahead of time by participating in trial Zoom sessions. These strategies allowed OIE to continuously improve the quality of the experience for stakeholders. Time spent with groups varied; however, most group sessions were between 45-75 minutes.

## *Demographics/Representativeness*

To document representativeness, educators were asked to answer a set of questions when registering for a focus group. The information collected via registration was compiled and analyzed to assess the extent to which necessary groups and areas were appropriately represented. Throughout the 12-weeks that Zoom sessions were taking place, staff at OIE continued to reach out to additional stakeholder groups, most notably teachers, to ensure key stakeholders were represented. Following each focus group, participants received a reflection survey where they were able to give feedback on the process. Some key demographics and focus group insights are represented in the charts below.





## Voices from the Field in Arkansas

Across the stakeholder groups, educators were asked questions from the following semi-structured set:

1. Share some of the most powerful learning you have experienced. What did it look like, sound like, feel like?
2. Share some learning experiences that were not as powerful. What were some of its characteristics?
3. What are some things you appreciate about current professional learning (what supports you and your context)?
4. What aspects of the current rules might be important to hold onto to support professional learning or as guard rails?
5. What are some barriers that get in the way of professional learning that matter to you and the field? What would you change?
6. How might you design professional learning rules if you were to start from a clean slate with no barriers and unlimited resources?
7. What might be some non-negotiables for you to ensure professional learning is powerful learning? What can't be left out? What might you prioritize and why?

From the question set and stakeholder responses, the findings are organized around the following themes and sub-themes, offered as questions:

- What are the elements of Powerful Professional Learning?
  - What supports are needed for Powerful Professional Learning?
- What are some ways professional learning might transform?
  - What are some policy implications?
  - What are some non-negotiables for Professional Learning rules to support powerful learning?

The questions frame voices from the field and are designed to integrate both the questions asked of stakeholders, and the emphasis gathered from their responses. For example, the question-What are some policy implications?- captures both what stakeholders might change, and what they might hold onto regarding current PL rules.

## What are the elements of Powerful Professional Learning

Stakeholders were asked to consider their own experiences to provide examples and non-examples of powerful learning. In particular, participants focused on learning that was new, addressed current problems of practice, and could be applied immediately, learning that they had to act on or try, particularly in their own classroom or learning environment. Synthesizing their input, stakeholders noted professional learning is powerful when:

- Personal and Mastery- or Competency-based, described as
  - Ownership is individual and shared through needs-assessments, choice, voice, and co-design
  - Learning experiences are designed to be personally meaningful and relevant to the students or learners currently being served
  - Efforts are focused to improve teaching and positively impact student learning
  - Learning is flexible and designed to advance educators along professional pathways
  - Honors teachers' prior learning, is flexible, and based on essential standards/skills/competencies
- Challenging learning and learning that challenges current practice
  - Encourages new thinking, creativity, and connects to new ideas.
  - Stretches the learner
- Resourcing Expertise from the Field
  - Across different contexts--practitioners lead the learning
  - Teachers are an untapped resource
- Integrated into and honors learning communities
  - Built on local context
  - Connected to regional, state, and national/international communities
  - Is both formal and informal
- Part of a larger system of continuous improvement
  - That is responsive to and incorporates ongoing cycles of inquiry, collaboration, planning, and reflecting, and
  - Includes peer and expert coaching and modeling, feedback, and team learning

The following section offers a synthesis of examples and supporting research and models to illuminate each theme.



school and district level, varied. Many teachers expressed wanting more ownership, “I wish it was more up to the teachers discretion on what they choose and what they need to grow professionally,” and desired learning that was more aligned with short- and long-term areas of growth as part of their Professional Growth Plan (PGP).

*Learning experiences are designed to be personally meaningful and relevant to the students or learners currently being served*

Nearly every stakeholder group discussed relevance. How relevance was defined or explained differed; however, a key commonality was that the learning was relevant when it was appropriate and timely, met a current need, and designed at the individual level, either by the educator or in conjunction with a coach or mentor. For teachers, that need was directly connected to students’ needs and was often described as an opportunity to customize, tailor, or personalize learning their learning to their context. When time spent was relevant to the needs of the teacher and students, it was by default, meaningful. Meaningful learning was also described as learning that had a strong sense of why (connected to bigger vision), offered new perspectives, allowed educators to follow their own interests and passions, engaged follow-up, and felt purposeful. As one teacher expressed, powerful learning is “learning that was directed toward my own personal needs [it was] developed for me personally. It was meaningful. It aligned with my beliefs about education or passions within education.” And another educator expressed, “powerful experiences that I've had involve learning that met my specific needs at that time.” One teacher summed up the general consensus among teachers with this quote saying powerful learning is “empowering districts and co-ops and schools to customize their professional development for what their teachers in their setting need. Not everyone in every building in every district needs the same type of professional development. We are past that point... We've certainly realized we're past that point for kids.... So we really are trying to equip our schools with the ability to customize learning for kids or have a variety of options. And I think we need to do that for professional learning as well.”

*Efforts are focused to improve teaching and positively impact student learning*

Educators expressed that time spent away from students for their own learning or development should have a direct impact on student learning. Teachers and administrators expressed wanting it to be “based on something that's going to improve student learning in my classroom.” As one teacher shared, it's important to know, “did the learning impact the instruction enough to impact student learning through evidence, be it CFA scores, test scores, student products or performance or did the learning change the culture in a positive way?” Educators across the state, and from varied roles, expressed a need to improve both the quality (discussed more later) and alignment of professional learning to student outcomes. “We can't...teach a one-size-fits-all anymore. It's got to be differentiated and it's so I'm always looking for things that ...I can monitor and adjust but also see based on not only the student data, but how they use it or didn't use it in class [and] what works and what doesn't. So I'm always on the lookout for that as far as helping me to be a better teacher and equip my students to learn.”

*Learning is flexible and designed to advance educators along professional pathways*

In addition to being part of an ongoing PGP, educators across different roles and points in their career expressed the need to offer enough flexibility and forward-thinking design in order to connect learning to professional pathways. Educators expressed value in aligning professional learning with licensure distinctions along a continuum, including those offered by the recent updates to professional licensure, and earning microcredentials or badges that may allow an educator to distinguish themselves along a pathway or as part of a set of competencies. Most of all, educators want to see that the time, energy, and resources they give to their professional learning is part of a bigger picture and that there is individual flexibility.... “My

ideal professional learning rules would contain a menu of selections with spiraled learning. PGPs can be multiple years, and I think they should be. There are always (and should always) be required elements--like suicide prevention, etc.--but I think teachers should have the ability and the power to choose their PGP path and move forward like an academy. My academy at this point would be a Linguistics Path because I am currently tasked with teaching Phonics First.” One educator emphasized that the current opportunities to flexibly meet teachers needs and to tie that to pathways, is still not understood by many districts. So while the flexibility to meet teachers’ needs exist to an extent in the current rules, districts are not aware of or “taking advantage of some of the flexibility.” In fact, across several teacher-level focus groups, participants asked for more information on the current requirements and rotations, and were not aware of some of the more recent opportunities, such as the career continuum, or flexible ways they could meet their needs. Several educators were serving in districts that required 60 hours of PD, which along with other requirements allowed little time for pursuing a personal pathway. Across the focus groups, educators asked for “personalized, professional learning pathways that were data-driven, based on student learning needs, and adult performance” and leveraging of teachers who have certified or taken advantage of credentialing or badging to be trainers.

*Honors teachers’ prior learning, is flexible, and based on essential standards/skills/competencies*

While Educators across the focus groups stressed the importance of having minimum requirements and required rotations especially around topics that impact student health and safety, they also expressed excitement about opportunities to focus on learning versus compliance. Many participants commented that the current rules encouraged compliance and meeting hours, versus powerful learning that impacted the educator and the students. Increased flexibility and an emphasis on learning that honors prior learning and allows new learning to be evidenced in a variety of ways based on essential standards/skills and competencies was an exciting option for many stakeholders. Across the group, educators felt that their prior learning was not acknowledged within the current PL system. Educators described having to sit through learning they already mastered. Compliance was mentioned throughout the stakeholder groups. Commonly, they said they are willing and eager to demonstrate what they already know and can do, and prefer to spend time moving forward on new learning.

Educators acknowledged that structured PD days are not aligned for the type of inquiry and demonstration of learning that looks for mastery, instead of required hours, credits, or days. Some expressed the concern that the state would need to guide districts and schools in a way that would allow for this type of learning, and yet others felt the state really needed to instead offer districts the flexibility, rather than guide or require. Most district days and some days spent learning outside of the district or school as well are still planned for PD not PL and exist for a full day of “sit and get.” This theme is also tied to quality, which is discussed more in the next section. Educators in several focus groups discussed wanting to leverage evidence of learning. “Whether it is teachers sharing their learning and in collaborative sessions, implementing in the classroom...showing alignment to a PGP goal.” “If we looked at it from a competency-based perspective teachers could have more choice. For example, maybe some competencies would be required and others would allow for choice. Some could test out completely after demonstrating competency and others you would go deeper after demonstration of competency.” Another educator shared, “I would blend competency-based PD with required learning modules. Things such as the child maltreatment and suicide prevention can be completed online, while our flexible hours would need to be relevant to our classroom and we would need to demonstrate competency of learning.”

Educators wondered if both the requirements of the state, along with districts and schools, could “include key components of topics versus strictly a time or course requirement...[which could] encourage a focus on essential standards versus just compliance seat time.” Educators referenced learning methods they use with their own students to exemplify this idea, which included: standards-based, based on key competencies, and a comparison to a

model “like RTI for teachers.” Teachers also expressed that learner-centered principles, such as allowing for personalization of pace, path, and place were equally important for adult learners.

### ***Challenging and challenges current practice***

Across the stakeholder groups, educators discussed the value of experiences that stretched or challenged them as a learner. “Usually it is something I haven’t heard about before, it is fresh and new. Usually for me takes place in a group of colleagues that share my enthusiasm for the learning. [It is] hard, but not so hard I can’t work through it.” Stakeholders also discussed PL as learning that allows for development of teacher capacity and encourages efficacy. One educator shared, “some of my most powerful experiences... I experienced or observed something that opened my eyes to things that I previously either did not know or was not including in my practice, [for example] standards-based practices and PLCs.”

### ***Resourcing expertise from the field***

*“Our school is designing PD with teacher led sessions. Teachers are able to learn from each other and discuss what works well for our population of learners.”*

#### *Across different contexts--practitioners lead the learning*

Educators described their colleagues as the most untapped potential for PL in their schools, districts, regions, and states. Not only is their potential untapped, it is also a barrier to retention and recruitment. Several educators shared that other professionals experience a different level of professionalism and they would like to be more trusted to lead their own learning and support the learning of their colleagues. Teachers feel because they work with students on the ground every day, that they should work together more. According to participants, a key barrier to this is the structure of the school day and school year and an emphasis on programs and experts no longer in the field. “And so I see that as being sometimes...the most meaningful... that teacher to teacher. It's not some so-called expert.”

#### *Teachers are an untapped resource*

Teachers expressed that they could not only offer learning based on growth areas of PGPs for their fellow teachers, but they could also be tapped for teaching requirements, after they demonstrated mastery. Educators across the group said they are eager to lead learning in their own schools and districts, and across the state. A leader described a recent PD day, “we did a survey of the back to school training, [we asked] what was their most favorite thing or what was the thing they liked most and it was the ED camp that we did that was completely teacher led. We [leaders] just kind of facilitated and organized it.”

### ***Integrated with diverse learning communities and engages collaborative inquiry***

*Built on local context and connected to local, regional, state, and national/international communities*

Another theme that emerged was that of coherence--district and school improvement plans should drive PL. Participants said this would look different among districts, but is an important component for improving student learning. Educators expressed eagerness to collaborate and network with others within and outside of their schools, districts, and organizations. They expressed the notion that there is power in working with others to build a better program and that they are eager to be a part of PDs that help them improve teaching and learning. Educators, especially administrators, encouraged more PL that involved learning from those “outside our own district.” Educators want more team learning teams that are ongoing, experiential, and part of an inquiry process...“the most powerful way to learn is to see and to experience it.”

*Is both formal and informal and often network-based (associated closely with Peer learning, teacher-led learning)*

“Powerful learning is... Professional learning Networks (PLNs), Online (Twitter), Arkansas Leadership Academy, experiential learning through mistakes and growing in the profession.” Several educators, especially teachers, stressed that they sought out learning that they needed in order to improve student learning, whether they received PD credit for it or not. Some examples included being a part of online networks, reaching out to colleagues from other schools and districts, attending state and national conferences, or reading the latest research and conducting inquiry in their own classroom. Much of this learning was informal; however, educators said this learning could be better integrated with formal learning and networking opportunities, as part of an ongoing PL plan. For example, one teacher leader shared, “some of the most powerful learning that I’ve had is when I collaborate with other schools to solve current issues within the school, even though that might look different at each school.” Some teachers expressed that in their districts and schools less traditional ways of learning were incorporated into their requirements; while others said they were not aware of recent flexibilities that allowed for more anytime, anywhere learning that may be informal or network-based.

### ***Part of a larger system of continuous improvement***

*“We really need a structure that says, professional development is the way we do business and it's small and it's frequent and it's tied into the day to day. So my idea would be that we have an overhaul of our whole contracts and our structures but that's that's dreaming big...”*

*“having a vision, sticking to that vision, [and] being very intentional with the learning” Arkansas Educator, 2020.*

*Aligned with a vision, responsive to and incorporates ongoing cycles of inquiry, collaboration, planning, reflecting and utilizes*

A common concern expressed among participants was that when districts, or the state, take on too much or change initiatives frequently, it is difficult to align PL with a purpose or vision, and it may be impossible to show improvement before the district moves on to the next thing. As one educator recommended, districts could make a “PGP for the district and the schools could build off that,” committing several years for a prioritized PD focus. Powerful learning is “learning that is consistent around the district or state... [and has] unity.” As one educator shared, powerful learning “for me has been interactive, [includes] discussion, [and is] applicable. I learn best by observing, discussing, and reflecting. Many of those one day things that we go to we never come back to the classroom and actually use. And so it has to have duration... it has to engage.” Across several groups, educators discussed connecting the why, the vision, and the importance of having a long term plan. As one administrator shared, “every school should have a learning progression plan to support their Vision that is 3 to 5 years ahead. Learning rounds and job embedded PD should be mandatory with funds set

aside...and should be delivered in a blended format with an onsite facilitator and follow-up coaching.” As a district leader stressed, it is important that districts “create long term, multi-year plans based on their vision, considering where they are on a continuum that they can start from, which allows districts to also target cross-district collaboration.”

### *Peer and expert coaching and modeling, feedback, and team learning*

Coaching, modeling, feedback, and team learning, often led by peers, were referenced across the groups. Educators expressed a desire to see PD hours better reflect the ongoing learning they are a part of in their buildings, districts, organizations, and networks. Much of the powerful learning described by stakeholders involved ongoing formal and informal peer and expert coaching. “Peer observation...is a powerful learning tool that isn't used often.” Educators dream of a system that “views professional learning as an integrated component in the day / year rather than something on top of what we do and includes an implementation process that allows time for follow up with coaching and feedback.”

## **What supports are needed for Powerful Professional Learning?**

### *Keep or increase flexibility and improve quality for all organizations providing PL (including districts, DESE, support organizations, Coops, etc.)*

Across the majority of the stakeholder groups, participants expressed a need to keep or increase flexibility and improve quality of PD so that it was true professional learning. Flexibility in this context meant that teachers could access the training in a variety of ways. This included scheduled professional development, required by the state and PD offered by schools, districts, cooperatives, IDEAS, and online courses and platforms. Stakeholders across the groups discussed the need to improve quality, yet did not discuss existing [guidance on PL quality from DESE](#). Several educators discussed the need to have quality indicators or criteria and did not seem aware of existing guidance for Standards for Professional Learning. The need to improve quality was discussed as a system-wide need that impacted learning as a whole in a variety of contexts, from district and school level PD, to online videos offered for scheduled rotations, to presentations and training offered at coops.

### *Resources ensure access to PL are equitable and accessible*

Several educators across different focus groups expressed difficulty in funding state initiatives and accessing expert providers, such as Solution Tree. Others said they thought that district size contributed to PL offerings. Educators expressed appreciation for opportunities for state supported initiatives that met real student and teacher needs, yet they noted they that the depth of understanding and knowledge required for opportunities such as PLCs and RISE, required more face-to-face and job-embedded support on-site. They stated the PD was not as successful through videos, limited workshops, or materials. Many educators expressed a need for more on-site support was needed.

### *Structure and leverage more on-going and job-embedded learning (and less one day workshops)*

Educators were eager to share examples of powerful learning, and often, their examples described learning experiences where they had greater agency. Being a part of a learning community, connecting to real work in real time, and being treated as experts and co-designers were characteristics of PL that they highlighted. Teachers expressed a desire for opportunities to watch colleagues teach, and alternately to demonstrate what they've learned to others, and they want to talk about their practice and ask questions. The participants who were experiencing this type of learning in their

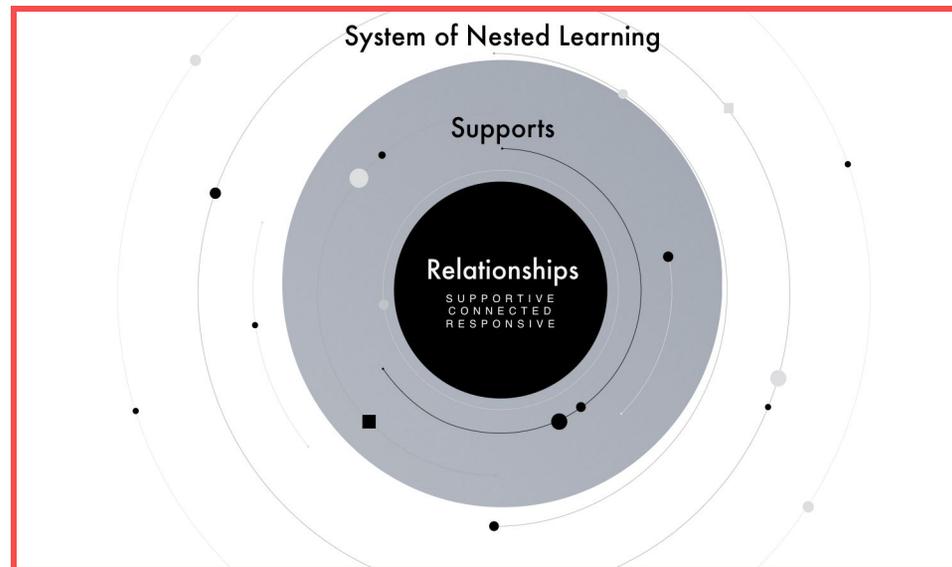
learning environments were more likely to describe learning as a process and a journey, and less as a professional requirement. They said that for them, the primary barrier was structural (the schedule of the school day/week and calendar year) and that the process was also hamstrung by too many district and state initiatives that were in competition with teachers spending time learning together.

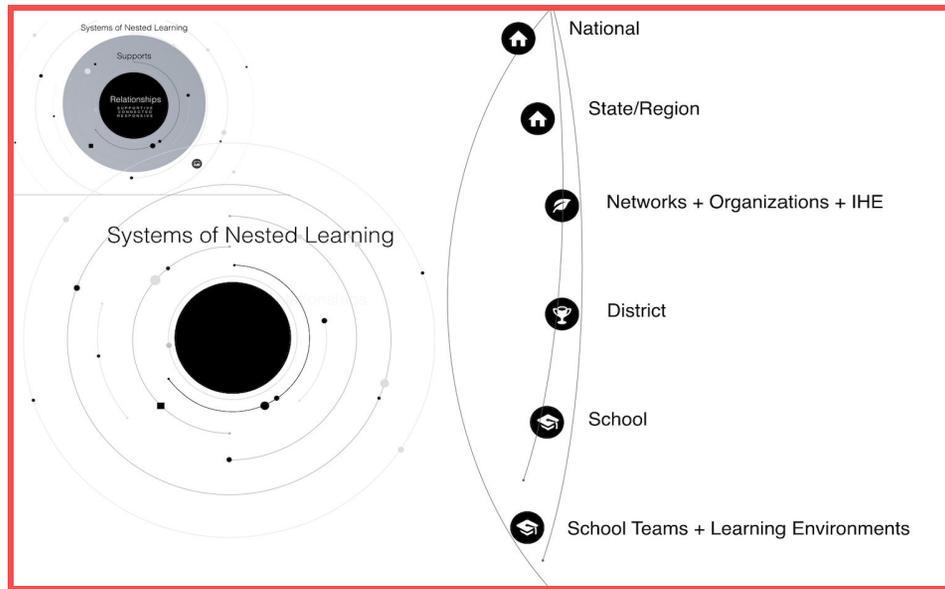
*More support for coaching, tap local teacher experts and greater access to regional, state, and organizational experts*

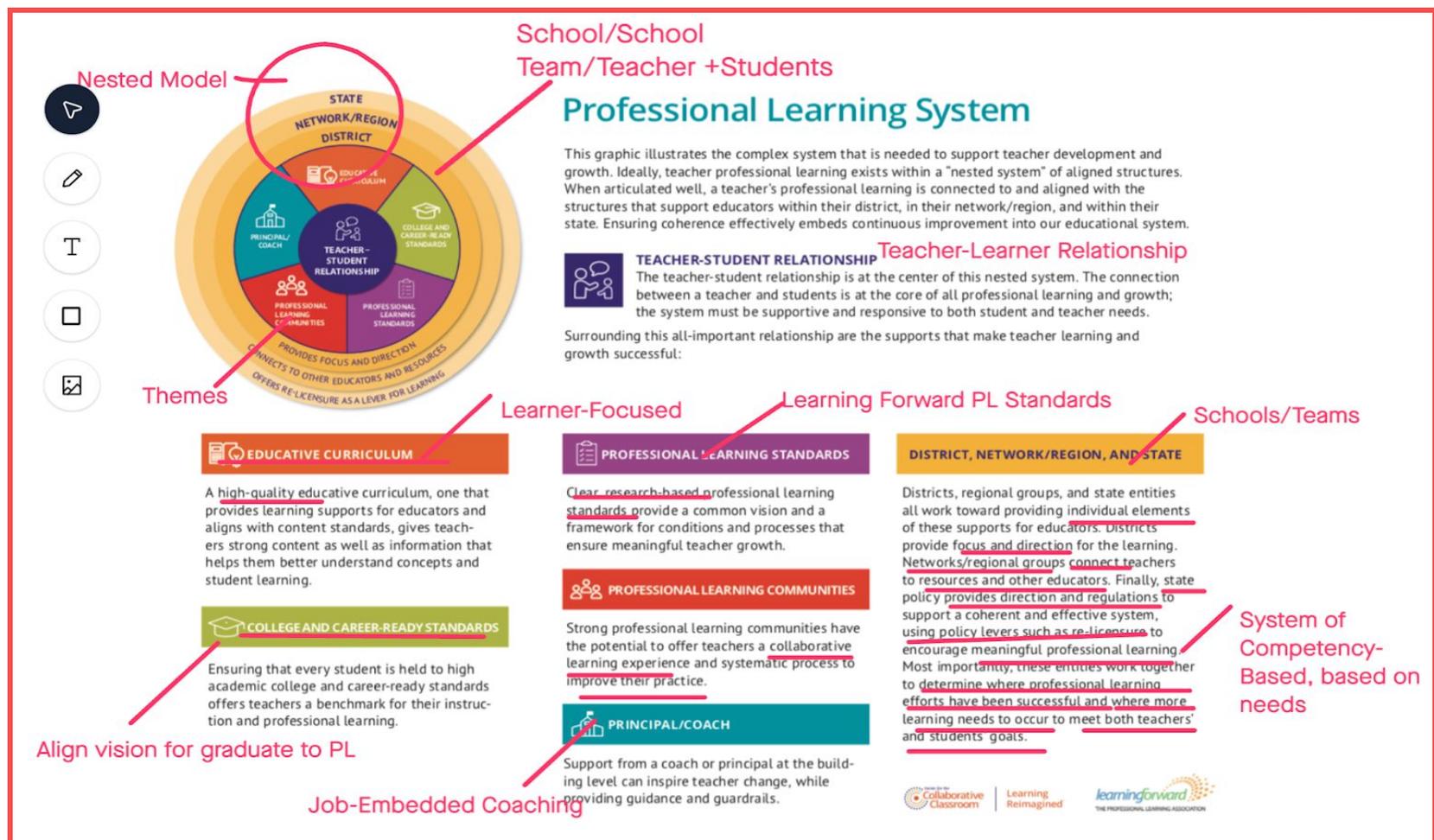
Educators' feedback included requests for more ongoing and job-embedded learning opportunities, greater access to peers as coaches and local experts and to serve as coaches and local experts. As mentioned in the sub-theme regarding resources, educators also want greater access to experts who can support and coach them on a day to day basis.

*Align local PL with a Vision for Learning, consider a "Nested Model"*

In a [nested model](#), educators are supported over their careers by a "nested" professional learning system in which there is a **pathway for professional growth** connecting individual pursuits to priorities at the district and state policy levels. Professional learning addresses individual and collective educator needs, builds on previous experiences, and is based on a shared understanding that educator learning must be **relevant and meaningful** in order to impact student learning (Learning Forward, 2020).







Continue expanding and integrating options for professional pathways and provide options in addition to Bloomboard (perhaps district, school, or teacher-led/created options); integrate these options with the new Educator Career Continuum

While the majority of the stakeholders did not discuss the new ECC, they expressed quite a bit of interest in micro-credentialing. At the same time, educators clarified that demonstrations of learning should be authentic, tied to PGPs, and based on choice with flexibility. There was some discussion about microcredentials--specifically distinguishing between micro-credentialing that seemed to be another compliance based activity rather than an option. Several educators saw the thinking behind micro credentialing as a way to think more about professional competencies, rather than required hours, courses, or topics.

## What are some non-negotiables for PL rules to support powerful learning?

Flexibility of pace, path, and place remains or expands

Improve the quality of professional learning

Teacher learning impacts student outcomes

Different options other than hours for teachers who want to pursue competencies and career pathways

Districts, schools, and teachers can target PL for teachers that impacts student outcomes

Reconsider structure of time for PL, from the day to the calendar year

## What are some ways Arkansas educators might transform professional learning rules?

*What are some policy recommendations and considerations?*

### **Align Arkansas' Professional Learning System and Rules with the Vision for Teaching and Learning**

- 2.02 broaden definition beyond all students demonstrate proficiency on the state academic standards
- Update 4.01 Professional Development Generally to reflect stakeholder input

### **Monitor and evaluate the design and quality of PL across learning environments and entities using the current or updated Standards for Professional Learning**

- The current Professional Learning Standards by Learning Forward were not mentioned in the stakeholder groups

- Could be better utilized or updated, “While many states have created professional development standards, and some have increased investment in professional development, few have found ways to monitor and improve the quality of their services” ([Jaquith, Mindich, Chung Wei, & Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 9](#)).
- Keep flexibility, yet do not lose quality and impact on student outcomes for flexibility (a concern across the groups)

**Continue to leverage and connect the efforts of support organizations, professional groups, IHE’s, intermediaries, and networks through both exposure and deep work to transform learning for adults and students**

**Continue offering learning outside of traditional PD through networks, cohorts, collaboratives, pilots, and school visits**

- Tap the potential of teacher leaders across schools, districts, and the state
  - Consider existing models: Opportunity Culture, TAP, Teacher-Preneur in TASD
  - Expand the reach of teacher experts and leaders to serve outside of their district
- Utilize support organizations, IHE’s, intermediaries, networks
- Consider additional systems for capturing, evidencing, and crediting non-traditional PL
- Encourage statewide and regional networks to study real and meaningful problems of practice

**Encourage PL designed with smaller chunks of learning that are more in line with a Plan, Do, Study, Act or inquiry-based model and connect that collaborative learning teams**

- Emphasis on Hours and Days in the rules encourage seat time over learning yet,
- Admins want safeguards so hours and days may become an option?
- Teachers want time to remain built into their contracts

**Reconsider the structure of the school day, school week, and calendar year**

- Change or allow greater flexibility for districts to update calendar and/or school day, number of required days, and hours to allow more time for job-embedded learning. Think quality over quantity.
- Allow for more PLC and job-embedded learning
- Encourage PL sessions that are shorter in duration and more ongoing
- [International models](#) have built in more teacher time for more quality learning experiences

**Design key competencies for various PD requirements, as an option to a set course or hour requirement. Allow teachers to target their own personal needs based on prior knowledge and show evidence of learning.**

**Offer guidance for districts and schools to support alignment of individual PGP goals with ECC, microdententials, and school/district goals**

- Think of the nested model- the state supports districts and regions, districts supports schools, and teachers are able to connect individual pursuits to priorities at the district and state policy levels. All are connected to outside entities: organizations, IHEs, and networks for support and learning outside of their school/district.
- Larger districts may have a PD person to support this, smaller districts may not
- Continue to offer and improve the design, quality, and process of microcredentials
  - Consider these [recent design elements](#) offered by CCSSO and Learning Forward:

**Keep requirements that support student health and safety. Increase those associated with SEL and students’ mental and emotional well-being YET change the way requirements leverage hours. Tap lead teachers and other professionals from disciplines that might support student health, safety, and well-being.**

- Across stakeholder groups, participants spoke to awareness of teen suicide signs as extremely important, yet focusing on SEL, relationships, and school culture as the proactive way to support teens.
- Greater emphasis on SEL may be part of the rotation for teen suicide. Or teen suicide moves from awareness into deeper learning each year and/or educators spend time going deeper into SEL/school culture/Relationships.

**Some required topics, such as Arkansas History, can be reconsidered**

- Arkansas history does not need to be repeated once a teacher has demonstrated knowledge unless there is a relevance or meaning in going deeper in history- such as maybe in their local or regional context for a specific purpose, or there is new content/understanding/or specific purpose.

