

## **AISC Professional Learning: Statement of Philosophy**

We believe all educators are valuable contributors to the development and growth of the AISC community. Effective teaching lies at the heart of an effective school and professional learning is central to the cultivation of the knowledge and skills needed to respond to the changing educational landscape.

Adult learners differ from children and, so, relevant theories help guide professional learning at AISC. We believe that quality learning experiences lead to transformative change in individual teaching practice and must allow for self-direction as well as experiential learning.

We encourage the faculty at AISC to engage in professional learning to:

- Reflect on their own strengths and areas of growth as professionals.
- Update individual understanding, skills and approaches informed by advances in educational theory and practice.
- Apply such changes to all aspects of their practice.
- Share and collaborate with other professionals to exchange information and expertise.

In the past, professional learning has largely taken the form of courses and seminars, usually completed outside of the school. However, studies have shown that such opportunities rarely lead to long lasting, meaningful shifts in teaching practices.

Author and researcher Doug Reeves identifies five key shifts in professional learning in a post-COVID world (2021). These include a shift toward sustained learning over time, increased personalization based on short and longer term needs, a focus on application, an emphasis on coaching and a commitment to fewer focus areas.

Darling-Hammond et al (2017) reviewed empirical literature studying the effectiveness of teacher professional learning and found the most successful experiences were:

- Content focussed
- Included active learning based on adult learning theory
- Were collaborative and job embedded
- Modeled effective practices
- Provided coaching or expert support
- Offered feedback and opportunities for reflection
- Were sustained in duration.

Further, in keeping with AISC's commitment to being environmentally responsible, virtual professional learning opportunities will be prioritized in order to minimize the impact of the carbon footprint associated with air travel.

In light of this research and to aim for high impact/high quality experiences, AISC will preference funding for professional development in the following manner:

Priority 1	Content or skill focussed virtual and on-site sustained professional learning in cohorts, ideally with the support of a learning coach or facilitator, which are aligned to programmatic or personal professional goals.
Priority 2	Content or skill focussed virtual webinars and short-term courses aligned to programmatic or personal professional goals.
Priority 3	Content or skill focussed multi-day offsite learning opportunities, in cohorts or as individuals, aligned to programmatic or personal goals, which lead to sustained application upon return.
Priority 4	Exploratory virtual webinars or short-term courses for personal professional development.

#### Sources:

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M., & Gardener, M. (2017). Effective Teacher Professional Development. *Learning Policy Institute*, 4–15.

Reeves, D. (2021). *Educational Leadership*, 78(5), 44–48.