



### Director's Message

I had the opportunity to attend the Michigan Virtual University Online School Educator of the Year Awards dinner last week. It was a great opportunity to celebrate two wonderful educators who are reaching students across the state. Frederick Page and Rebecca Mulrooney come to the classroom from two very different perspectives. Frederick Page is a former Detroit teacher who spends part of his retired years teaching astronomy online. He is one of those rare individuals whose certificate says "Permanent." It is clear when you talk with him that he does not view his professional education completed. He continues to learn about new ways to engage students and keep them involved in learning the curriculum designed for that course. When he went to college to become a teacher, the vision of students learning in settings other than the typical classroom were not yet clearly articulated.

Rebecca Mulrooney had been an engineer with an automotive company and had done some interesting work with new car design. Deciding that there was more to be done in society, she went back to school to become a teacher. Today, she spends her days in the more traditional brick and

mortar school and works with her online students afternoons and evenings. Algebra is one of the courses that she teaches. In spite of all that we hear about the problems with teaching algebra to all students, she manages to do so in not only the face to face but also the electronic setting.

Finally, last week was the time to recognize the Milken award winner. Mark Julien was honored in an assembly in his local high school. A teacher of English Language Arts, he stands out for his work with ACT preparation workshops. You could see the excitement on his student's faces later in the day when he returned to the classroom. They had written a note on the board sharing how much they believed that he truly deserved the recognition. Read more on page 6.

These three join Gary G. Abud, Jr., the Michigan Teacher of the Year, as some of our outstanding educators. Like so many of their colleagues across the state whose hard work is never recognized in a special ceremony, these teachers have figured out how to engage their students regardless of personal issues and regardless of the topic. The teachers who can help students see the reason for the work, who can make it relevant, who can challenge the most gifted and support those who struggle, and that is the majority of our Michigan teachers, make a real difference in the lives of their students.

Congratulations to those who are honored and MANY thanks to those who do this noble work day after day without special recognition.





# Curriculum & Instruction

## Personalized Teaching and Learning Initiative

A cross-office team led by OEII (Office of Education Improvement and Innovation) is working to operationalize the Michigan State Board of Education priority: “Increase the use of personalized teaching methods, including the integration of technology for K-14 grade students to improve learning and outcomes.” To better prepare our students for 21<sup>st</sup> century success, we are moving from yesterday’s industrial, one-size-fits-all, assembly line education system to meeting today’s demands for a new model of personalized, information-knowledge-innovation age, 21st century approach to learning.

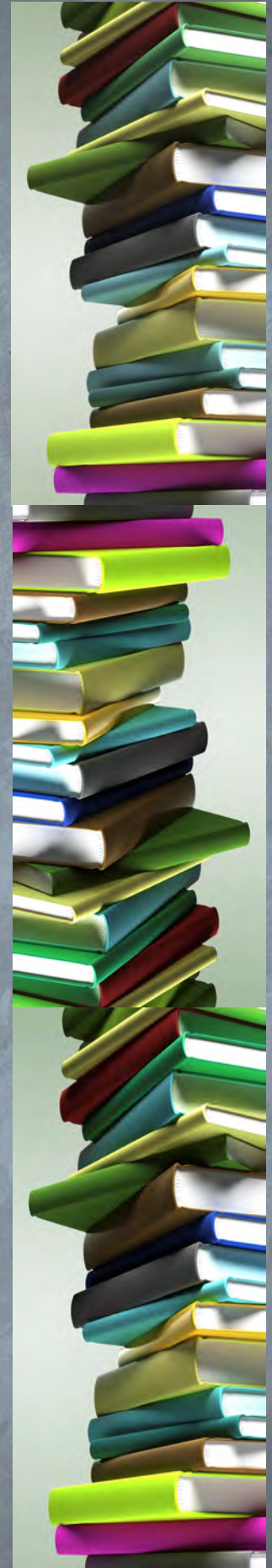
The term **personalized teaching and learning** subsumes other educational terms such as differentiation, individualization, and personalization. The ideas were resurrected in 2010 when the U.S. Department of Education laid the foundation for future technological work by defining them in the Education Technology Plan. Consequently, personalized teaching/learning has become a hot topic in schools as educators strive to become more flexible and adaptive in responding to the diverse needs and interests of students. In these efforts, we hope to implement technology to its full potential to help students realize their passions, connect globally with those who can help them learn, work on real-world problem solving and become self-directed life-long learners.

Some key implications of personalized teaching and learning help us think more broadly about these concepts:

- Teachers assume a philosophy that views teaching as helping students comprehend the implications of new ideas and information towards furthering their existing understanding.
- Teachers understand that student diversity must be viewed cognitively, socially, culturally, ethnically, and linguistically.
- Teachers learn what they need to know to support new learning for all students. Teachers become facilitators.
- Teachers need opportunities to try out new approaches and (then) to assess the effects of these approaches .
- Professional development must be stitched into the work routine of teachers, not tacked onto the work day or week.

Intersections exist between personalized teaching and learning and other initiatives in education such as competency-based assessment, blended learning, self-directed learning, dual enrollment, curriculum compacting, individualized learning, student choice and voice, project based learning, passion-based learning, UDL, technology enhanced adaptive learning and assessment, gaming, content curation, inquiry-based learning, connected learning, challenge-based learning, and others. These new concepts engage students in creating, designing and connecting. They accelerate the learning process because they are interest-based and incorporate problem-solving and risk-taking. Ideally, they empower students to take charge of their own learning.

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## *Curriculum and Instruction, continued*

The OEII Personalized Learning Committee aims to better define “personalized teaching” as it will be implemented in Michigan, seeking to connect with these other motivational initiatives. It will provide leadership for planning statewide guidance and technical assistance around transformation with the ultimate goal of designing personalized learning for **all** students.

For more information, please explore the resources below:

- Learning IS personal: <http://www.personalizelearning.com/2013/07/learning-is-personal.html>
- Ken Robinson, Changing Education From the Ground Up: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEsZOnyQzxQ&feature=em-subscriptions\\_digest-vreccs&goback=%2Egde\\_1943371\\_member\\_276852034#%21](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEsZOnyQzxQ&feature=em-subscriptions_digest-vreccs&goback=%2Egde_1943371_member_276852034#%21)
- Personalize Learning Toolkit: Transform Learning for ALL Learners: <http://www.personalizelearning.com/p/toolkit.html>

## **School Improvement Support**

### **African American Young Men of Promise Initiative (AAYMPI): Climate and Culture Strategies**

Addressing the climate and culture in a school so that it nurtures improved academic performance is one of the components of the AAYMPI being facilitated by Zena Lowe, Lauren Kazee, and Bersheril Bailey. The focus of this work is to assist schools as they develop and implement plans enabling them to provide all students with concrete real life experiences, high expectations, and a purposeful engagement for learning in an environment where anything is possible. This requires effective teachers to aim for excellence by setting an ambitious goal and then fostering a daily sense of urgency to meet the goal. Teachers who reap the benefits of high expectations for their students do not merely tell their students that they have high ambitions; they also show them those high ambitions by making every instructional decision consistent with high standards.

*ASCD suggests that the definitions for climate and culture are exactly the same. That is, the climate and culture of a school are deemed to be “the sum of the values, cultures, safety practices, and organizational structures within a school that cause it to function and react in particular ways.” (<http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/school-culture-and-climate-resources.aspx>). What makes these two concepts different is the impact they have on the environment. The climate addresses effects primarily on students, while the culture refers to the way teachers and other staff members work together.*

### **High Expectations and Purposeful Engagement Strategy**

*Research by Leeson, Ciarrochi, and Heaven (<http://www.acceptandchange.com>) indicates that intelligence, gender, and positive thinking individually play a unique role in the academic performance of young people. That is, when someone instills a belief and a sense of hope into a young person, not only does his or her self-esteem improve, but so does the motivation to excel and personal IQ!*

### **Some of the methods used to address climate and culture include:**

- Set high expectations - communicate belief and hope in the students.
- Communicate - clearly, effectively the expectations for classroom behavior and academic achievement.
- Allow students to set their own goals.
- Help students make connections between what they are learning and their life experiences – relevant, related, and inspiring.
- Model how to learn, think, and process information.
- Provide opportunities for students to practice their skills and show ownership.

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### *School Improvement Support, Continued*

- Encourage open dialogue and communication by making the environment safe to ask questions and explore learning, allowing students to share and build on others thoughts, experiences, and knowledge.
- Give positive feedback, building confidence and skill. Demonstrate good listening skills and allow for time to address important classroom concerns.
- Be flexible in classroom structure, allowing for students to work in various ways, i.e., flexible grouping. Utilize a variety of teaching structures such as reciprocal and/or cooperative learning.

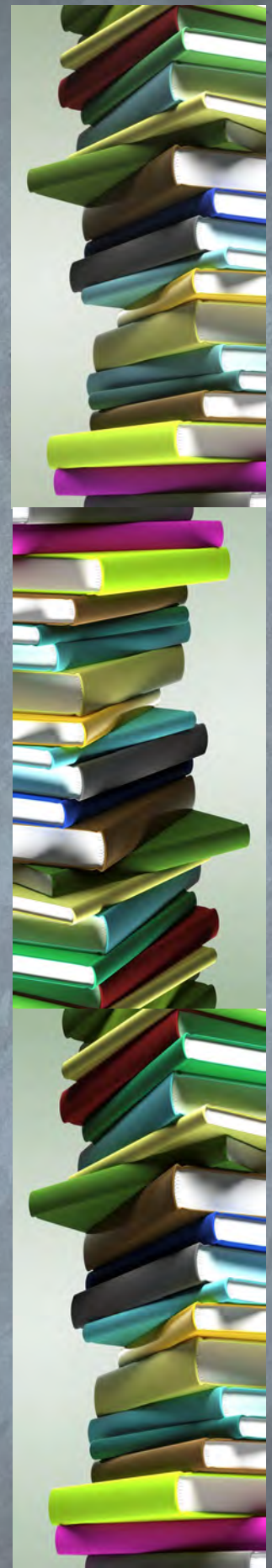
#### **Culturally Relevant Teaching and Learning Strategy**

Another critical area that changes the climate and culture of a school is the use of culturally relevant teaching and materials. This means recognizing the diverse cultural characteristics of students from different ethnic backgrounds and adjusting teaching methods to create an inclusive classroom where culturally and linguistically diverse learners can reach their full potential. A common criticism from African American high school students is that they don't get many reading assignments that pertain to their culture. Seeing ourselves reflected in the source of the teaching material is vital in learning. We connect with what we are learning when we are visible and our voices can be heard. Bringing in materials that are relevant to students' lives can provide a bridge that leads students to greater engagement in the classroom. By following these steps, teachers commit to sending an open invitation about learning to students, encouraging active involvement in their classroom and the school, and expecting and respecting participation in their lessons. They also eliminate the danger of a single story. (TED Talks Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: the danger of a single story.)

#### **Some of the methods used to address culturally relevant teaching and learning include:**

- Have staff participate in afterschool activities with students that are in-line with student interests
- Have staff participate in community asset assessments to identify and connect with the school community and develop positive perspectives about parents/families, and the community
- Utilize active and interactive teaching methods
- Rearrange classroom set-up and seating chart periodically so students get to know each other within the class
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity and respect
- Allow students to share their culture, values, and experiences
- Provide culturally mediated instruction and materials
- Encourage and maintain controlled cultural dialogue and discourse in the classroom among staff and students
- Give opportunities for cooperative learning to occur in the classroom

**For more information:** The ASCD website (<http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/school-culture-and-climate-resources.aspx>) is a good source for additional research on culture and climate strategies, ideas, methods, and materials. Also, the TED Talk on The Danger of a Single Story is a "must see" regarding the significant impact of non-culturally sensitive educational practices. If you are interested in learning more about the AAYMPI contact Theresa Saunders ([SaundersT@michigan.gov](mailto:SaundersT@michigan.gov)).





# Fall 2013 School Improvement Fall Conference

School Improvement: Taking it to the Next Level—Implement, Monitor Progress, Evaluate and Adjust



## Featuring:

- The new ASSIST online Program Evaluation Tool
- Newly developed Program Evaluation and School Improvement training tools through Learnport
- Practitioner presentations from Reward Schools and Program Evaluation Pilot schools on how they address implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting their school improvement process

## Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Monique M. Chism, Director of Student Achievement and School Accountability Program, U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Chism has held a series of positions in the field of education as a teacher, researcher and state administrator. Through these roles, she has a deep knowledge of what is required to close achievement gaps and cultivate culturally proficient schools. She has influenced and shaped education policy with the goal of ensuring that every student has access to a high quality education. She is committed to creating environments that foster excellence.



**Monday, November 18 Pre-Conference 4:00-7:00 p.m.**

**Tuesday, November 19, Registration and Breakfast 7:30-8:30 a.m. Main Conference 8:30 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.**

**Lansing Center, 333 East Michigan Ave., Lansing, Michigan**

**Register online at: [www.gomiem.org](http://www.gomiem.org)**

## Public School Academies

The Michigan Department of Education's Charter School Planning Grant has entered its fourth year of a five year federal grant. Due to the increasing number of charters being issued, all planning grant funds have either been obligated or have been set aside for development teams and schools. This essentially means that new planning grants cannot be issued unless funds are released from current grant recipients or those with grants set to expire.

Steps have been taken to ensure that entities with a planning grant will have funds available for implementation. As planning grant recipients time out, the implementation funds held for these subgrant awardees will be released back into the pot for reallocation. One more round will be scheduled in the spring of this fiscal year (application closing on March 5, 2014 - previously referred to as Round 3). Round 2 (initially scheduled to close December 14, 2013) will be canceled, as will the orientation associated with that round.

It is important to note that **effective immediately**, current subgrantees in previous rounds applying for implementation funds and new subgrantees applying for planning grant funds in the next two rounds shall have their grant awards scaled back. These changes will allow the funds to be managed right up until July 2015 when the grant closes. For questions or grant modification details, please contact [mdepsagrant@michigan.gov](mailto:mdepsagrant@michigan.gov).



## Educational Technology

### Milken Family Foundation Award

Congratulations to Mark Julien, English Language Arts teacher at Henry Ford II High School of Utica Community Schools in Utica, Michigan! Mr. Julien is the first Milken Educator of 2013-2014. There are many reasons why Mark is the recipient of this award— read his profile here: <http://milkeneducatorawards.org/educators/view/2593>.

The Milken is to educators what the Oscar is to film makers. This most prestigious award rewards and inspires excellence in the world of education. The award specifically targets early-to-mid career education professionals for their already impressive accomplishments and, more significantly, for the promise of what they will accomplish in the future.

Mr. Julien was surprised during a school assembly the morning of Tuesday, October 1. Milken Family Foundation Senior Vice President Dr. Jane Foley was on site and got the crowd of nearly 2,000 staff and students excited as she let them in on the surprise.

State Board Member Dr. Richard Zeile, representing the Michigan Department of Education, was also there to honor Mr. Julien. Students and colleagues cheered wildly as Mark made his way to the front of the assembly to claim his \$25,000 Milken Family Foundation Award.



*Photo: Courtesy Milken Family Foundation*

### Michigan Teacher of the Year Nominations

The nomination window is now open! To find out more and nominate a teacher, go to [www.michigan.gov/mtoy](http://www.michigan.gov/mtoy). Who can nominate a teacher as the next Teacher of the Year? Anyone can— friend, relative, parent, student, superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, assistant principal, current or past colleague, counselor, an education association, etc. Go now to nominate a phenomenal teacher that you know. *Hurry—the nomination window closes November 4, 2013.*

## Events/Important Dates

October 2—December 20: [Project Tomorrow Technology Survey Window](#)

October 15: FIRST Robotics Grant Application opens in MEGS+

November 7: FIRST Robotics Grant Applications due

November 18:-19 Fall School Improvement Conference ([www.gomiem.org](http://www.gomiem.org)) for details and to register

## Facebook Feature



The MDE Facebook Team would like to thank Principal David Hornak and his wonderful team at Horizon Elementary for letting us visit. Look for more information about this balanced calendar school on our Facebook page in October.

To recommend that OEII highlight your school for its innovative program/practices, fill out a form at <http://tinyurl.com/oeiifbform>.