Looking for Conference Funding?

In Michigan, historically Title II, Title VI, 31a, and private fundraising efforts have been used to pay for professional growth and development. Below is information about the MRA’s speaker recruitment process and strands for our next annual conference. It is our goal to help leadership around the state gain access to quality professional development, which includes the MRA Annual Conference.

Speaker Procurement

Key-note speakers and featured speakers: It is the job of the Conference Chair and Conference Planning Commission at MRA to identify and procure key-note speakers who support evidence-based practices.

Breakout sessions: In reviewing and selecting proposals, the Conference Planning Commission attempts to balance sessions by topic, age group, strand, relevance, evidence-based practice, and thematic connection. The selection procedure includes several readings of each proposal through a two-tiered process. Each year we average 160 - 200 proposals. Each proposal is reviewed by at least five readers before being accepted. Each proposal must be evidence- based and the MRA asks for these details upon submission.

Strands for the 2018 Conference

The strands within the 2018 conference were designed to help attendees focus on their specific school’s goals, strategies, and activities. Below you will find routes of focus, so schools can pre-develop a learning pathway based on their School Improvement Plans and District Improvement Plans. Michigan’s Top 10 in 10 – Goals and Strategies document was used as a reference to help shape the conference strands.


STEM Integration Strand

Reading and writing are intertwined throughout all disciplines. Consequently, all educators, no matter what subject they teach, are teachers of reading. To be literate encompasses much more than being able to read a novel from cover to cover. This strand will focus on learners and professionals making meaning by reading like scientists, mathematicians, engineers, artists, and technicians.

Assessment and Data Management Strand

W. Edward Deming wrote, “Without data you’re just another person with an opinion.” Assessments are only as good as the data they produce. What do you hope to glean from your next testing cycle? The process of designing robust assessments, analyzing data, and leveraging results to make quick instructional decisions can be draining. Field experts in this strand will ease your burden by demonstrating new literacy assessment architectures, instructional agilities, and evidence-based practices.

Special Populations Strand

For most literacy educators and interventionists chances are the classrooms of children they serve each day are more diverse than the ones in which they were students, and across several dimensions both visible and invisible. The goal of the presentations in this strand is to illuminate the unique funds of knowledge that children from different cultures, language communities, socioeconomic strata, gender identities and special education categories bring to the literacy classroom, and how teachers can utilize those assets to design effective multi-tiered systems of supports.
**Literature, Social Justice, and Cultural Relevance Strand**

Diversity is at the forefront as educators search for books that both mirror children’s experiences as well as offer windows into the world around them. Titles that explore social justice issues are ideal to facilitate the reader’s ideation of sociocultural equity and opportunity for all citizens. Moreover, nonfiction titles that share cultural relevance with the reader continue to engage and sustain students’ interests. Such exposition invites readers to question and analyze topics to effectively “read their world”! Author’s intent, illustrator’s choice, power relations, varied genre and quality literature can all be explored in this strand. Presented information will enhance participants’ book knowledge and bolster their classroom literacy practices. It’s a rich time in the field of children’s and adult literature, explore this strand to diversify your educational practices!

**Wrap-Around Services Strand**

In this strand, learn how to coordinate policy, process, and practice to service the whole child. Session topics will span across community involvement, health/wellness, counseling, school psychology, and social services. Discover how principals, literacy coaches, reading specialists, reading coaches, reading interventionists athletic coaches, school librarians, special education teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and general education teachers can team up to create whole school, multi-tiered systems of support for ensuring that every student succeeds.

**Early Literacy Strand**

As educators, we know our students have a tremendous capacity for learning and this learning must be consistent with their development. This strand will address developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood through 3rd grade. Literacy development has to be acknowledged before kindergarten, and there are intentional literacy practices that promote life-long success for our youngest readers. Topics will include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, guided oral reading, vocabulary strategies, writing, and reading comprehension.

**Writing Strand**

Why learn to write in both traditional and digital formats? It’s because we are in the midst of a writing revolution! We write to communicate, learn, expand, express, accomplish, and make connections. As a result, it is essential for all P20 students to have code switching abilities when writing blogs, wikis, or more traditional pieces of works. This strand will emphasize argument, exposition, narration, the writing process, technical writing, conducting research, and the use of technology. Presentations will highlight digital and traditional modes of writing.

**Adolescent Literacy Stand**

Personalized learning options for high school students will help to encourage transferable academic competencies and professional awareness. Students in high school can have advantageous experiences through Dual Enrollment, Early/Middle College, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate programs, student government, job shadow, and access to literacy rich environments. Bridging the gap between high school and postsecondary, contextualized curriculum, new technologies, and evidence-based literacy practices will be the cornerstones of this strand.