

Professional learning helps educators “power up” their teaching practices with technology



Michigan’s pre-K–12 teachers can tap free resources for insights on how technology can enhance their instructional practices.






Organization needs

The nonprofit Regional Educational Media Center (REMC) Association of Michigan supports preK-12 teachers with a wide range of free professional learning and classroom resources, including the Power Up Teaching and Learning materials developed in cooperation with Dell Technologies Professional Learning Services.

Innovations

-  REMC classroom resources empower educators to amplify how they teach, using technology to expand their horizons.
-  Online, in-person and blended formats offer teachers more flexibility in their professional learning experiences.

Outcomes

-  Enables educators to amplify their teaching practices with technology.
-  Augments professional learning delivery – 1,900 teachers in a recent year.
-  Helps REMC achieve a 67% online course completion, 4x the U.S. average.

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Sue Schwartz,
Executive Director, REMC Association

With the influx of technology in schools over the last several years, teachers and students now have the opportunity to create learning experiences that previously were not possible.

The nonprofit Regional Educational Media Center (REMC) Association of Michigan aims to give the state's pre-K–12 teachers the know-how and confidence to use technology to not just improve their teaching practices but also amplify them.

Delivering services across a span of 450 miles

Founded in 1969, the REMC Association supports high-quality teaching and learning across all of Michigan's pre-K–12 schools by providing a range of no-cost resources for teachers. These are:

- **Classroom resources** to improve learning, such as various curriculum toolkits, lesson plans and activities to build student knowledge, teach them technology skills, and help them be safe and secure online.

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- **Professional learning** to empower teachers with free online courses, face-to-face workshops and hands-on training, all offering State Continuing Education Clock Hours (SCECHs). In its most recent year, the REMC Association offered 112 online courses, reaching 1,900 educators, with a 67 percent course completion rate. It also offered 77 workshops reaching 450 educators.
- **REMC SAVE**, a service to help schools take advantage of large-volume contracts to buy almost everything they use, from classroom and office supplies to furniture to software and digital services and devices. During the 2021–22 school year, when the pandemic forced students to learn from home, REMC SAVE facilitated the purchase of 1.5 million devices to students and teachers across the state.

The REMC Association is a statewide network of 28 local Regional Educational Media Centers operating through Michigan's Intermediate School District (ISD) structure. The state's 56 ISDs each serve one county, except for sparsely populated counties, where an ISD might support schools in several counties. A local REMC facility will typically support two or more ISDs.

“As a nonprofit, we have to operate as a lean organization,” Executive Director Sue Schwartz explains. “That makes it all the more challenging for us to support Michigan's education community that stretches 450 miles from Detroit to the northern tip of the Upper Peninsula.”

Closing the distance with technology

According to Schwartz, the extent of this area can also create a geographic disparity between schools — particularly how far teachers and students must travel to their schools — a distance that technology helps to bridge. “To address this issue, the REMC Association provides virtual, instructor-led, online courses and workshops at no charge,” she says. “Plus, all the classroom resources we've developed are freely available on our website under a Creative Commons license. There's no login or paywall to download them. What's more, this license allows users to copy, adapt and customize the materials as desired, as long as it's for non-commercial purposes.”

Given the REMC Association's lean organization and modest operating budget, Schwartz has been imaginative about developing its many professional learning resources. She says, “When we first engaged Dell Technologies for the PCs and other devices that our REMC SAVE program offers ISDs, we were impressed by the added value its Professional Learning Services team could provide. Over the years, our relationship with Dell Technologies has evolved into a clear strategic partnership.” Schwartz further notes that Dell Technologies has contributed \$3.8 million since 2017 toward resource development and professional development provided by Advanced Learning Partnerships (ALP) consultants.



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Developing Power Up Teaching and Learning resources

One of the fruits of their relationship has been the support of the Dell Technologies Professional Learning Services team in helping the REMC Association develop its most recent offering for educators: [Power Up Teaching and Learning](#). “It’s a comprehensive suite of ready-to-use tools and materials to help teachers implement educational technology to enhance or even reimagine their teaching practices,” says Melinda Waffle, the professional learning coordinator for the REMC network.

The Power Up Teaching and Learning portfolio illustrates the quality and breadth of the many other free resources available to Michigan’s educators through the REMC Association. It covers the following topics:

- Curriculum and Content Development
- Digital Leader
- Effective Communication
- Learning Environment
- Meaningful Data

Each topic area includes overview videos, guidebooks, slide decks, templates, professional learning activity documents, and toolkits for designing additional professional learning curricula to further support the topic. ALP assisted in

developing this content. “We designed our Power Up tools and materials for teachers who are new to education or who want to brush up their technology skills or get new ideas on using technology to improve the educational experiences of their students,” Waffle says. “School leaders, administrators and professional learning facilitators can also use these resources to customize their own professional learning for teachers.”

The scope and many layers of the Power Up Teaching and Learning development project made the assistance of Dell Technologies Professional Learning Services and ALP invaluable. “Power Up was the largest such project we had ever tackled in such a short window of time,” says Waffle. “Without the support of Dell Technologies and Advanced Learning Partnerships, we’d be much more limited in the professional learning and resources we could provide.”



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Empowering educators to make better ideas happen

The REMC Association has made the Power Up Teaching and Learning materials available online for self-learning and as guided virtual learning with a course facilitator. “These different approaches to acquire the Power Up knowledge give teachers, administrators and ISD professional learning facilitators a lot of flexibility,” Waffle says. “This type of flexibility with our professional learning helps explain why completion rates across our online course catalog are nearly four times better than the U.S. average.”

Going forward, Schwartz sees the REMC Association’s support of Michigan’s pre-K–12 teachers being significantly enhanced. “Dell Technologies Professional Learning Services team has expanded our capacity to turn ideas into reality, such as our new Technology Support Essential Services course for Level-1 IT professionals in Michigan’s ISDs,” she says. “Now we can provide more timely, consistent and higher-quality resources than ever before to better deliver on our mission and beliefs.”

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