



STOUGHTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

The mission of professional development is to prepare and support educators to help all students to achieve higher standards of learning and development (WestEd, 2000). It is a process for improving the skills and competencies needed by staff to produce positive educational results for students. Meaningful, effective, high quality professional development focuses on individual, collegial and organizational improvement. It reflects the best available research and practice in teaching, learning and leadership. *No Child Left Behind*, the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, the new Student Assessment Program, and College Board assessments, including the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and Advanced Placement (AP) tests have raised the academic bar for all students. The standards and the ways in which educators and schools are held accountable for student performance place greater demands on educators to combine understanding of subject matter and teaching practices with knowledge of learners. Indeed, the movement towards standards-based reform, data-based assessments and accountability for learning has served to emphasize the important role professional development plays and its link to improved student achievement. "As students are expected to learn more complex and analytical skills in preparation for further education and work in the 21st century, teachers must learn to teach in ways that develop higher order thinking and performance. These new standards require a new kind of teaching, conducted by teachers who understand learning as well as teaching, who can address students' needs as well as the demands of their disciplines, and who can create bridges between students' experiences and curriculum goals" (Darling-Hammond, 2005).

BACKGROUND

During the last decade, researchers have begun to examine what works in professional development. Supovitz, Mayer, and Kahle (2000) studied the impact of intensive, standards-based professional development on teachers of science in Ohio. They found that teachers "became more positive about instructional reforms and more likely to use inquiry- centered pedagogy" as a result of standards-based professional development. Cohen and Hill (2001) studied mathematics teachers who participated in the intensive curriculum-based professional development offered by the California Subject-matter Network in the 1990s. They compared the changes made in the participants' instructional practice with those made by teachers who received more conventional professional development in mathematics. "They found that teachers who participated in the former were much more likely to make changes in their practice, and that these changes were associated with gains in student performance. They concluded that providing teachers with extended content-specific opportunities combined with follow-up support produced results" (Corcoran, McVay, and Riordan, 2003).

These findings are consistent with the research studies of the California Subject-matter Network (Pennell & Firestone, 1996; Wilson, 2003), the research on reforms in literacy and mathematics teaching carried out in District #2, NYC (Elmore & Burney, 1997), the evaluations of the National Writing Project (St. John & Stokes, 2003), and the secondary analysis of data from National Science Foundation's LSC projects (Supovitz & Turner, 2000). Studies of comprehensive school reform programs like Success for All and America's Choice (Haslam & Seremet, 2001; Supovitz & Taylor, 2003) and the national Eisenhower program

(Desimone et. al., 2002; Birman, Desimone, Garet, & Porter, 2000) have yielded similar results. “The general conclusion is that extended opportunities to engage in professional development that is aligned with the curriculum to be taught, and accompanied with on-site follow-up support, can produce significant changes in classroom practice and benefits for students” (Corcoran, McVay, and Riordan, 2003).

Moreover, these findings are consistent with the experiences and recommendations of those who design and deliver professional development, (Cohen & Hill, 2001; Corcoran, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1999, 2005; Desimone et al., 2002; Elmore, 2002; Lieberman & Wood, 2002; Loucks- Horsley et al., 2003; National Research Council, 1996; National Staff Development Council, 2001 and 2009.) Sustained, high quality professional development has a direct and positive impact on student achievement.

PHILOSOPHY

The success of professional staff development is determined by whether it alters instructional behavior in a way that benefits students. According to the report *Teachers Who Learn, Kids Who Achieve: A Look at Schools with Model Professional Development* (WestEd, 2000), there are a number of characteristics that are shared among schools that have distinguished themselves in the U.S. Department of Education’s National Awards Program for Model Professional Development. These schools have clear student achievement goals, provide an array of professional development opportunities, embed ongoing learning in the school culture, build a highly collaborative school environment, and use a broad range of student performance data. Similarly, the results of several national studies on the importance of professional development have concluded that high quality professional development provides access to the best research and experiences of successful practitioners; focuses on deepening teachers’ content knowledge and pedagogical skills; includes opportunities for practice, research, and reflection; is embedded in educators’ work; is sustained over time; and is founded on a sense of collegiality and collaboration among teachers and between teachers and principals in solving important problems related to teaching and learning (Sparks, 2002).

Given that research indicates that teacher quality is the single most powerful influence on student achievement, it is essential to ensure that teachers are provided with ongoing, high quality professional development to sustain and enhance their practice (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Indeed, teacher professional development is an essential element of comprehensive school improvement. However, the professional development needs of all members of school community, including administrators and support personnel, must be addressed to ensure a focus on continuous learning and to create the conditions necessary for closing the achievement gap and providing Equity and Excellence for all students.

The purpose, therefore, of the Stoughton Public School’s professional development plan is to improve the quality of learning - learning for students, teachers, and other professionals who support children. This purpose is directly aligned to the District’s continued commitment to close the achievement gap and provide equity and excellence for all students. Indeed, this professional development plan is intentionally designed to build skills and capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing learning. It is the committee’s belief that a sound and practical professional development program is an important link to establishing effective instructional practices that will enhance the knowledge of curriculum content, design and delivery and actively engage all learners.

VISION

Stoughton Public Schools is committed to providing a high quality, continuous and sustained, professional development program to all its teachers and other educational professionals. The professional development plan for Stoughton Public Schools describes a vision for adult learning that is collaborative, continuous, embedded in daily practice and focused on student achievement. This model builds on the wealth of knowledge and experience that teachers and practitioners have and expands upon that knowledge and skills. It builds on and strengthens the successes already evident in the district by providing a framework that affords every educator an opportunity to enrich his/her practice. The vision of Stoughton Professional Development ensures that standards-based professional development results in continuous professional growth and enhances on-going student learning.

There are ten key Principles embedded within the Stoughton Public Schools' Professional Development Plan. The Principles are based on the accumulated research about effective professional development and the impact on student learning. The Principles provide guidance for achieving high quality professional development planning, design, delivery and assessment, and serve as a foundation for ongoing professional development in Stoughton Public Schools.

Derived from the Principles, the Standards provide direction for designing an effective, high quality professional development program that ensures educators acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. It is clear that professional development in the 21st century must be results-driven, standards-based, and job-embedded. Stoughton Public Schools' Professional Development Standards provide a blueprint for high quality professional development for all educators to improve instruction and student achievement. These Standards promote and sustain continuous development, growth, and examination of practice. They provide clearly defined expectations and commitment to change.

Organized into Context, Process and Content standards (NSDC), the Stoughton Public Schools' Professional Development Standards and the related Strands and Indicators are intended to guide and support the design and implementation of meaningful professional learning opportunities for all school personnel.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The mission of professional development is to prepare and support educators to help all students achieve to high standards of learning and development. When professional development is effective, a number of principles can be identified (WestEd, 2000).

Professional development is most effective when it 1.) fosters a culture of continuous improvement; 2.) is research-based; 3.) is job-embedded; 4.) promotes shared leadership and responsibility; 5.) involves and reflects the diverse nature of the community; 6.) improves the learning of all students; 7.) is data-driven; 8.) supports refinement of practice; 9.) encourages the use of new strategies; 10.) occurs in professional learning communities; 11.) is adequately supported.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Standards	Explanation	Strands
Context	<p>High quality professional development occurs within an all-important context. Learning is an ongoing process of reflection, experimentation, and discussion that requires more than a single event. The environment in which educators work must support their learning – through adequate resources, strong supportive leadership, and a community that encourages collaboration and application of new learning.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning Communities 2. Leadership 3. Resources 4. Technology
Process	<p>In this view of professional development, the workshops and other one-time events become part of a coherent series of events that sustains, reinforces, and deepens learning. Today’s professional learning allows far more active engagement for the purpose of deepening understanding and making application in real-life contexts. Ongoing teamwork, discussions, product and project development, research, data analysis, reflection, demonstrations, and modeling are just some of the ways professional development facilitates the active engagement of the learner.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Data-Driven Professional Practice 6. Evaluation 7. Research-based 8. Design 9. Learning 10. Collaboration
Content	<p>Effective professional development balances attention to content knowledge, instructional strategies and assessment practices. The content of staff development that advances student achievement reflects national, state, and local content standards. The content of staff development that advances student achievement is further aligned with district goals, school improvement goals and educators’ individual professional goals, level of experience and competence.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Equity 12. Quality Teaching 13. Family Involvement

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

A tiered set of professional development plans will be developed annually. The planning scheme will be implemented in such a manner as to allow elementary grade level teams, secondary departments, and district-wide departments to meet their identified needs in addition to the District meeting its overarching professional development requirements.

Professional development planning will begin with establishing a calendar of events that identifies the number and dates of half and full day professional development activities.

The Superintendent will initiate the process and work with the Deputy Superintendent to develop, if necessary, a professional development plan(s) that address items/areas that were identified as in need of improvement during the development or updating of the triennial District Improvement Plan, development of the annual District Action Plan, and development of any action plans related to MCAS testing, English language education, coordinated program review finding requirements, professional development due to a District accountability status, etc... Priority will be given to providing professional development to schools with the highest percentage of low income students or an accountability status.

Designated members of the administrative team will continue the process and work with the Deputy Superintendent to develop a set of professional development plans that account for all members of the faculty. The designated members include the following:

- Elementary Curriculum Specialists
- Secondary Curriculum Specialists
- Director of Fine Arts
- Supervisor of Health Services
- English Language Education Coordinator
- Director of School Counseling
- Administrator of Special Education
- Early Childhood Coordinator

The Elementary Curriculum Specialists will work with elementary principals to develop district-wide, team specific professional development plans to address the individual needs, and foster the development of Professional Learning Communities, within each discrete grade level, as appropriate.

The Secondary Curriculum Specialists will consult with the secondary principals, before working with the Department Directors / Head Teachers to develop plan(s) that addresses the specific need of each secondary department. Every effort should be made to coordinate professional development initiatives between the middle school and high school faculties, within corresponding departments, to promote intradepartmental discussion and the development of increased continuity between the schools.

The activities that take place on the full professional development day may be defined by the Superintendent, based on the results of a Professional Development Survey, each school's Professional Development Committee summaries, the District's primary or ongoing professional development activities, or other District priorities such as the implementation of a Triennial Plan. The results of these activities should be used to identify a portfolio of workshops that will be made available on the full day. Teachers may self-select a series of professional development workshops to address areas in which they

would like to receive additional training, although principals may require an individual teacher or department to participate in a specific workshop(s) at their discretion.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Massachusetts Recertification Guidelines have identified the primary mission of professional development as that of assisting educators in enhancing subject-matter knowledge and ways to develop student understanding of that subject through varied standards-oriented instructional and assessment practices. In accordance with the Guidelines, all professional development is expected to:

- address the content of the relevant state Curriculum Frameworks;
- conduct professional development with clear objectives, relevant learning activities, and conclusions;
- conduct professional development that recognizes the overlapping and different needs of beginning and veteran educators;
- incorporate technology tools and appropriate media, as warranted;
- build on educators' prior knowledge and experience;
- use principles of adult learning theory to engage educators in professional growth;
- employ a variety of teaching techniques such as direct instruction, practice, discussion, problem-solving, Socratic dialogue, and research projects;
- provide many and varied opportunities for educators to incorporate new knowledge and skills into classroom practice or school and district management.

All professional development resulting in the issuance of Professional Development Points (PDPs) requires the evaluation of a teacher's learning through an appropriate assessment. This may be a written assessment, a lesson plan, a curriculum unit, or by other means established prior to the approval of a plan or workshop.

In meeting the standards established by the Massachusetts Professional Development Standards, and expectations provided to the District as part of the PQA District Review process, all professional development workshops will be evaluated to determine their effectiveness and relative impact on faculty, staff, and student success. Workshop evaluations completed at the conclusion of each PD workshop by the faculty and staff members who attended the workshop, as well as the plan or workshop facilitator(s), will form the basis for the evaluation. Workshops that receive sub-standard evaluations will be formally reviewed. The findings of the review may result in revisions to existing PD plans, changes in presenters, or the re-negotiation of contracts with PD service providers.

PRIMARY DISTRICT-SPONSORED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

ELEMENTARY HUMANITIES/STEM LIAISON SUPPORT

Target Audience: K-5 Educators

Humanities and STEM liaisons conduct monthly building meetings for the purposes of sharing and pooling ideas, instructional materials, and resources. Liaisons adopt and implement district initiatives and best practices within their buildings/grade level and help to support colleagues with new district initiatives and are seen as leaders within their buildings. As participants in the K-12 Curriculum Review meetings, they also represent the five elementary schools to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment throughout the district. These positions also help to plan and attend a district curriculum support night to partner with families, caregivers, community members, and local organizations.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERACY, 2017

Target Audience: Kindergarten – Grade 5 Classroom Teachers, Grade 6 – 12 ELA Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Technology Teachers, and ESL Teachers

The 2017 Massachusetts English Language Arts and Literacy Standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language strands for conceptual clarity. There are cross-references among the standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language, as well as numerous examples that show how standards may be combined in effective instruction. The standards emphasize the importance for all students (and particularly English learners) of learning general academic vocabulary, sometimes called “Tier Two” words, such as affect, analyze, argue, average, compose, conclude, contradict, culture, effect, explain, foundation, image, integrate, method, percent, region, research, Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy 11 translate, transpose, or vision. These abstract concepts are broadly used across disciplines and sometimes have different meanings depending on the academic context.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS FOR MATHEMATICS, 2017

Target Audience: Kindergarten – Grade 5 Classroom Teachers, Grade 6 – 12 Math Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Technology Teachers, and ESL Teachers

The Massachusetts Math Standards describe a vision of what it means to be a mathematically proficient person in this century. The framework defines what all students are expected to know and be able to do at each grade level kindergarten through grade eight and high school pathways. The state standards also outline the Mathematical Practice which describe the varieties of expertise that all mathematics educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS FOR HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, 2018

Target Audience: Kindergarten – Grade 5 Classroom Teachers, Grade 6 – 12 HSS Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Technology Teachers, and ESL Teachers

The Massachusetts History and Social Sciences Framework is built upon the foundation of the 2003 and 1997 Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks. This revision of the Framework retains the strengths of the previous frameworks and includes these improved features: increased

emphasis on civics at all grade levels, including a new grade 8 course on civics; inclusion of standards that reflect the diversity of the United States and world cultures, with particular attention to the contributions of women and men of all ethnicities and backgrounds in the United States and the connections among world cultures; new Standards for History and Social Science Practice and questions to guide inquiry; stronger attention to the intersection of history, social science, and literacy instruction, through the inclusion of literacy standards for history and social science; expanded examples of primary sources representing significant texts, maps, photographs, and works of art and architecture in United States and world history; and includes new standards for financial literacy and news/media literacy.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENGINEERING, 2016

Target Audience: Kindergarten – Grade 5 Classroom Teachers, Grade 6 – 12 Science Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Technology Teachers, and ESL Teachers

The Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Standards are intended to drive engaging, relevant, rigorous, and coherent instruction that emphasizes student mastery of both disciplinary core ideas (concepts) and application of science and engineering practices (skills) to support student readiness for citizenship, college, and careers. The framework provides consistent science education through all grades, with an emphasis on engineering and technology. The Standards describe, at each grade from kindergarten through fifth grade, at middle school and at high school, what each student should know in the four domains of science: physical science; life science; earth and space science; and engineering, technology and science application.

MENTORING SUPPORT

Target Audience: New Licensed Educators

Description: The District provides a two-year mentoring program to new teachers and one year of mentoring for new administrators. The mentoring program is based on the UMass Dartmouth CUSP's (Center for University, School, and Community Partnerships) "Project SUCCESS" program. The mentoring program holds monthly District-wide meetings, as well as building-level meetings. Individual mentors may be provided on a case by case basis. The program is reviewed annually for effectiveness.

ONGOING DISTRICT-SPONSORED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

DATA TEAM TRAINING

Target Audience: All faculty and staff members

Data team training in the Stoughton Public Schools system follows the Data-Wise model of collaborative inquiry. This model presents a continuous, sustainable process that allows school leaders to harness classroom metrics to inform educational practice. Data-Wise also provides a groundwork for collaboration:

advancing assessment literacy among contributors, building productive professional learning communities, and identifying targets for change.

Educators were introduced to a data inquiry tracking method to help promote consistency and accountability. Data meetings are based on inquiry and are collaborative, ongoing, and focused on improving instruction and learning. These meetings are part of a cycle of improvement that involves the regular collection and systematic analysis of evidence, and are poised to routinely examine data, consider what it could mean, and plan for growth. Star 360 provides the primary source of data and information that fuel these cycles.

EDULASTIC

Target Audience: All Educators

Edulastic is a platform that will provide the District with 1.) a tool that will allow for the design and deployment of a curriculum-aligned assessment program, 2.) an area to archive common assessments and their supporting materials, 3.) the ability to provide access to a dashboard style student information and assessment database, and 4) the ability to practice MCAS style questions with released items from the state. This program will support data-driven instruction and provide real time dashboards and reports on student progress to administrators, teachers, students, and parents.

FUNDATIONS TRAINING

Targeted Audience: All PK-3 Educators and Support Personnel

As a recognized leader in multisensory, structured language programs, Wilson brings three decades of systematic and explicit instruction to the K-3 classroom. Based on the Wilson Reading System® principles, Wilson Foundations® provides research-based materials and strategies essential to a comprehensive reading, spelling, and handwriting program. Students in grades K-3 receive a systematic program in critical foundational skills, emphasizing: Phonemic awareness, Phonics/ word study, High-frequency word study, Reading Fluency, Vocabulary, Comprehension strategies, Handwriting, and Spelling. The instruction aligns with states' rigorous college- and career-ready standards. Combined with reading and writing workshops, Foundations provides an integrated and comprehensive approach to reading and spelling.

Foundations serves as a prevention program to help reduce reading and spelling failure. It is integral to a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) or Response to Intervention (RTI) framework, providing research-based instruction in Tier 1 as well as early intervention (Tier 2) for students at risk for reading difficulties. To support the implementation of an MTSS or RTI framework, progress monitoring is built into Foundations. This allows students requiring a more intensive program to be identified early before undergoing years of struggle.

HEGGERTY PHONEMIC AWARENESS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Target Audience: PK-2 Educators

Phonemic Awareness is an understanding that spoken words are made up of individual sounds called

phonemes. A child who is phonemically aware can isolate sounds, blend sounds, segment a word into sounds, and manipulate sounds in words. Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curriculum is now part of the tier I curriculum and is also used as a supplemental resource to the core curriculum for the whole class in Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1st grade, and 2nd-grade classrooms.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS FOR WORLD LANGUAGES, 2021

Target Audience: 6-12 World Languages Educators

In 2021, Massachusetts introduced new standards for World Languages, which shifted the instructional focus to language immersion and building conversational skills. This requires 6-12 World Language educators to take some time to unpack and understand the new standards and begin working towards implementation. Work will also involve updating and adapting their current scope and sequence documents for their courses. Teachers will work in collaborative groups with their curriculum coordinator to complete this work.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS FOR THE ARTS, 2019

Target Audience: All PK – 12 Fine Arts Teachers

All Massachusetts students will develop artistic literacy through active participation in the arts, expressing creative ideas with skill, confidence, and artistic intent. A high-quality arts education empowers students to take artistic risks and supports the social emotional and learning needs of all students. Through practices related to creating, presenting or performing, responding, and connecting, students will understand the role of the arts in their individual lives and interests. While recognizing the intrinsic value of the arts, students will also discover the meaningful connections between the arts and other disciplines, and how the arts contribute to their communities and cultures around the world. As art students respond to great artists and works of art, they develop the ability to analyze artworks in terms of their formal qualities, historic style, social context, and artistic intent. The practice of responding to works of art builds perceptive acuity and aesthetic sensitivity. A rigorous progression of learning and engagement with the arts throughout Pre-K–12 education is the foundation for a rich, lifelong relationship with the arts.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS FOR DIGITAL LITERACY AND COMPUTER SCIENCE, 2016

Target Audience: Grades K – 12 Technology Educators

Digital literacy and computer science knowledge, reasoning, and skills are essential both to prepare students for personal and civic efficacy in the twenty-first century and to prepare and inspire a much larger and more diverse number of students to pursue the innovative and creative careers of the future. The abilities to effectively use and create technology to solve complex problems are the new and essential literacy skills of the twenty-first century.

Digital literacy and computer science standards in the Framework articulate critical learning outcomes for Kindergarten through Grade 12 to help prepare students for success in world. The standards represent the core elements of digital literacy and computer science and are intended to drive coherent, rigorous instruction, which results in the mastery and application of digital literacy and computer science knowledge, reasoning, and skills.

LEXIA CORE 5 TRAINING

Target Audience: Special Education faculty and staff members; Literacy Specialists; K-2 Educators

Lexia Core 5 is a computer-based supplemental reading program designed to help all learners master basic decoding skills. Through independent practice, students build speed and accuracy in the application of phonics skills. The program develops critical phonological reading skills to foster automatic word recognition while monitoring for meaning. The activities promote comprehension skills by applying phonological strategies to single words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and stories and emphasizing listening skills, and following directions.

NOVEL APPROACH AND COACHING FROM THE TEACHING AND LEARNING ALLIANCE (TLA)

Target Audience: 6-12 English and History/SS Educators

A Novel Approach is an instructional method that promotes the idea that teachers ultimately do not have to decide between a purely workshop model of teaching reading or a purely whole-class text model. While focusing on a whole-class text, teachers center the lessons on discrete skills and model them throughout all lessons. After the whole-class text is taught, students then apply the skills they have learned during independent reading in book clubs with peers. In this way, students learn from a whole-class text, but also have voice and choice in their book club selections and are encouraged to build their independent reading skills with guidance and support from their teacher.

RENAISSANCE/STAR 360 BENCHMARKING AND PROGRESS MONITORING TRAINING

Target Audience: All K-8 Educators

Star 360 comprises Renaissance Star Reading, Renaissance Star Math, Renaissance Star Early Literacy, and Renaissance Star Custom. This system of assessments informs data-based decisions and supports instructional frameworks such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). Moreover, Renaissance Star Assessments are accurate, reliable, and valid. They are highly rated for screening by the National Center on Response to Intervention and for progress monitoring by the National Center on Intensive Intervention. Professional development goals were to ensure educators were able to: identify how and where CBMs fit into the evaluation of or informing instruction/intervention in RTI/MTSS models; group students of similar scores in the same Star CBM measures, with Star CBM; set goals and monitor progress using the Star CBM Record Book and the note-taker feature; and plan differentiated instruction/intervention using the Star CBM Record Book.

RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM

Target Audience: Elementary faculty and staff members

The Responsive Classroom approach is a research-backed approach to elementary education that increases academic achievement, decreases problem behaviors, improves social skills, and leads to more high-quality instruction.

Responsive Classroom I (Provided Annually)

In this four-and-a-half-day course, faculty members will explore key *Responsive Classroom* teaching practices with a focus on building classroom community and establishing positive discipline. Topics covered include:

1. Morning Meeting
2. Rule Creation
3. Interactive Modeling
4. Positive Teacher Language
5. Logical Consequences

Responsive Classroom II (Provided Semi-Annually)

Builds on the fundamental concepts and practices developed in *Responsive Classroom I*, this four-and-a-half-day course covers topics that include:

1. Guided Discovery
2. Academic Choice
3. Classroom Organization
4. Collaborative Problem-Solving

Responsive Classroom – Middle School (Provided Annually)

The Responsive Classroom Course for Middle School Educators is designed to empower educators to create a middle school experience that's responsive to the developmental strengths and needs of every young adolescent, while helping students to develop the academic and social skills they need to be successful.

SAFETY-CARE TRAINING

Target Audience: Special Education faculty and staff members, as well as Principals

Safety-Care is a competency-based crisis prevention training program for professional staff who work with individuals who have the potential for dangerous behavior.

The Safety-Care core curriculum is presented in a least to most restrictive format designed to provide staff with skills for prevention, minimization, and management of dangerous or challenging behaviors. Each chapter provides practical, functional skills for use in just about any educational, human services, or medical setting.

SECOND STEP

Target Audience: Elementary and middle school guidance counselors

The Second Step is a universal, classroom-based program designed to increase students' school success and decrease problem behaviors by promoting social-emotional competence and self-regulation. It teaches skills that strengthen students' ability to learn, have empathy, manage emotions, and solve problems. The Second Step program targets key risk and protective factors linked to a range of problem behaviors. Students equipped with Second Step skills helps a school create a safer, more respectful learning environment that promotes school success for all.

Grades K – 1 Program

The program provides lessons and activities for Kindergarten and Grade 1 students that begin with Skills for Learning and Listening Rules, which set the stage for future academic success and later lessons on identifying feelings, managing strong emotions, solving problems, and getting along with others.

Grades 2 – 3 Program

The program provides lessons and activities for Grades 2 and 3 students that build on their K–1 skills, including Skills for Learning. Students hone their ability to pay attention, listen, and ignore distractions. They also learn how to respond to others with empathy, calm down, manage strong feelings, and solve problems.

Grades 4 – 5 Program

The program provides lessons and activities that build on students' K–3 skills, including Skills for Learning, and provide a bridge to middle school. Students will strengthen their empathy, emotion-management, and problem-solving skills while learning to use them in social and academic settings. Whether they have a disagreement with a friend or test anxiety, students will be better poised to make positive choices.

Middle School

The program is designed to create an environment where adolescents can develop positive coping skills and learn the protective skills necessary to make good choices and stay engaged in school despite the pitfalls of substance abuse, bullying, cyber bullying, and peer pressure.

SHELTERED ENGLISH IMMERSION TRAINING (15 HOUR LICENSURE COURSE)

Target Audience: All licensed employees

A 15-hour Sheltered English Immersion course, which will fulfill recertification requirements, will be offered annually to all faculty members. This course will be updated in an ongoing basis, to ensure it helps the faculty meet the needs of students in the District that are in the process of developing proficiency in English.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Target Audience: All Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital for school, work, and life success.

People with strong social-emotional skills are better able to cope with everyday challenges and benefit academically, professionally, and socially. From effective problem-solving to self-discipline, from impulse control to emotion management and more, SEL provides a foundation for positive, long-term effects on kids, adults, and communities.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRAINING (15 HOUR LICENSURE COURSE)

Target Audience: All licensed employees

A 15-hour Special Education course, which will fulfill recertification requirements, will be offered annually to all faculty members. This course will be updated in an ongoing basis, to ensure it helps the faculty meet the needs of students in the District with learning or emotional disabilities.

TEACHER STUDY GROUPS

Target Audience: Workshop Dependent

Teacher Study Groups (TSGs) are considered "best practice" professional development. They are teacher-organized and led conversations that are based on shared passions and meaningful dialogue, and sustained over a period of time. Participants share common interests and seek to reach personal goals through collaborative work.

TSG proposals may be developed by any faculty member and must be submitted on a Teacher Study Group Request form. TSGs must run a minimum of two - 1-hour sessions. Proposals must be submitted to the Deputy Superintendent for approval.

Groups that run between 2 and 9 hours will result in the participants being awarded professional development certificates. Teachers will later be required to bundle the certificates with other similar certificates in order to use them for recertification.

Groups that run 10 hours or more will result in participants being awarded Professional Development Points (PDPs). In order to issue PDPs, these study groups will be required to include an evaluation of the participant's learning through an appropriate assessment. This may be a written assessment, a lesson plan, a curriculum unit, etc...

Teachers that facilitate a TSG are eligible for compensation at a rate of \$25.00 per contact hour. This rate takes into consideration organizational tasks and any other related activities.

TEACHER-TO-TEACHER WORKSHOPS

Target Audience: Workshop Dependent

Teacher-to-Teacher Workshops are designed by teachers for teachers in order to provide technical support, professional development opportunities, and recognition for teachers of all content areas and grade levels.

Workshop proposals may be developed by any faculty member and must be submitted on a Teacher-to-Teacher Workshop Request form. Workshops must run a minimum of 2 hours. Proposals will be

submitted to the Deputy Superintendent for approval. Once approved, the workshops will be advertised as a District-wide professional development activity.

Workshops that run between 2 and 9 hours will result in the participants being awarded professional development certificates. Teachers will later be required to bundle the certificates with other similar certificates in order to use them for recertification.

Workshops that run 10 hours or more will result in participants being awarded Professional Development Points (PDPs). In order to issue PDPs, these workshops will be required to include an evaluation of the participant's learning through an appropriate assessment. This may be a written assessment, a lesson plan, a curriculum unit, etc...

Teachers that present Teacher-to-Teacher Workshops are eligible for compensation at a rate of \$50.00 per contact hour. This rate takes into consideration workshop preparation and any other related activities.

Teachers who develop and present a minimum of 3 separate sessions in a professional development series are eligible to receive twice the number of PDPs given to participants, with the presenter receiving a minimum of 10 PDPs and a maximum of 24 PDPs. These points may be awarded the first time the training is provided in a five-year cycle.

UNITS OF STUDY IN READING AND WRITING

Target Audience: K-5 Educators

The Reading and Writing Project's approach to instruction recognizes that "one size fits all" does not match the realities of the classrooms and schools of today's world. Educators in Stoughton utilize the workshop method of instruction which is designed to help teachers address each child's individual learning; explicitly teach strategies students will use not only the day they are taught, but whenever they need them; help students work with engagement so that teachers are able to coach individuals and lead small groups; support small-group work and conferring, with multiple opportunities for personalizing instruction; tap into the power of a learning community as a way to bring all learners along; and build choice and assessment-based learning into the very design of the curriculum. The routines and structures of the reading and writing workshop are kept simple and predictable so that the teacher can focus on the complex work of teaching in a responsive manner to accelerate achievement for all learners. The goal is to give all elementary teachers and schools, and the district a unified program that can be used in all classrooms from grades K-5 to support vertical alignment.

WILSON READING SYSTEM

Target Audience: Special Education Teachers, Literacy Specialists, ESL Teachers

The Wilson Reading System is a reading program designed for students in grades 2 through adulthood who have difficulty with decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling). It is a complete curriculum that has 12 steps, beginning with phoneme segmentation. Its main goal is to teach students language and word structure through a carefully planned program. The program provides an organized, sequential system with extensive controlled text to help teachers implement a multisensory structured language curriculum.

WRS is also useful for students who can't read or write English but are able to speak and understand. It is extensively used with older individuals and middle school students.

ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR ALL FACULTY MEMBERS

Annual Trainings

The Principal of each school is responsible for ensuring that all faculty and staff members attend each of the required annual training sessions and that all activities are accomplished no later than the 31st of September, each school year. The required annual training sessions are:

1. Heimlich Maneuver / Allergic Reactions / Seizure Disorder / Blood Borne Pathogens
2. Child Abuse and Neglect / Mandatory Reporting / 51A
3. Civil Rights
4. CORI Checks / Fingerprinting
5. Physical Restraint
6. Educator Evaluation Training
7. Electronic Communication and Social Media Use
8. Professional Boundaries Training
9. Medical Emergency Response Plan / Drills
10. Curriculum Review (CR 24)
11. Student Records / FERPA
12. Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Detailed instructions for each of the requirements are available through the Deputy Superintendent's office. Principals will submit all sign in sheets to the Deputy Superintendent by the 1st of October.

Individual Professional Development Plans (IPDP)

After receiving a professional license, educators must develop an IPDP and meet with their supervisors to review and seek approval of their plan. After approval, educators are required to review their individual plans with supervisors at least every two years to review goals and amend the plan if needed. A supervisor may require an educator to amend the plan or may withdraw approval for a plan that had been previously approved. A supervisor may withdraw approval or require an amendment of a plan from any educator new to the district or school within three months of the educator's beginning employment in the new position. Detailed information regarding IPDPs is available in Appendix 3.

Appendix 1

STOUGHTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS: GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Professional development is most effective when it fosters a culture of continuous improvement for all engaged in the learning endeavor.** Practices address the needs of professionals throughout their careers and embrace stakeholders as active participants in learning. Practices address the continuum of an educator's experience and level of expertise; and are based on an analysis of individual educator needs; current knowledge and skills; and district, building and educator learning goals.
- **Professional development is most effective when it improves the learning of all students, including those with different educational needs, learning styles, and incremental abilities, and those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.** Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge and skill to meet the diverse learning needs of all students. It ensures that educators are able to create safe, secure, supportive and equitable learning environments for all students.
- **Professional development is most effective when there are clear research-based expectations for what educators should know and be able to do to support student learning.** Professional development addresses the fundamental issues of curriculum, instruction and assessment as part of an integrated process that requires application, evaluation, reflection and review in order to be successful. As such, professional development is grounded in:
 - 1) research on child and adolescent growth, development and learning,
 - 2) content knowledge and content-specific, research-based instructional strategies, and
 - 3) knowledge of assessment practices and data analysis.

Professional development is targeted to the district purpose, offered over time, and evaluated both for effectiveness and impact on student learning.

- **Professional development is most effective when professional growth opportunities are derived from a baseline of collected data from observational and assessment sources.** Professional development uses disaggregated student data and other evidence of student learning to determine professional development learning needs and priorities, to monitor student progress, and to help sustain continuous professional growth.
- **Professional development is most effective when it is job embedded, directly relevant to classroom practice, and provided over time.** Professional learning is a product of both externally-provided and job-embedded activities that increase educators' knowledge and change their instructional practice in ways that support student learning. While formal professional development represents a subset of the range of experiences that result in professional learning, the activities:
 - 1) focus on reducing the gap between actual and desired levels of student achievement,
 - 2) involve participants in identifying the content and objectives,

- 3) help participants develop a theoretical as well as practical understanding of the new practices, include follow-up and support, and
 - 4) are linked to a comprehensive change process that focuses on student learning.
- **Professional development is most effective when it supports the ongoing refinement of practice and when it provides opportunity for practice of new strategies, time to reflect on changes, and time to integrate new learning into the teaching practice.** Professional development that truly enhances adult learning provides opportunities to be involved in leadership activities that focus on direct interaction with colleagues: follow-up demonstrations, feedback on mastery of new knowledge and skills, peer coaching and mentoring, opportunities for collaboration and problem-solving, study teams, and action research. This leadership opportunity grants ownership to the participants and allows them to construct a learning community that engages in continuous growth.
 - **Professional development is most effective when there is collaborative leadership and shared responsibility for improving teaching and learning.** Meaningful collaboration is more likely to occur when colleagues share responsibility for major tasks of teaching and for student learning, when there is a commitment to collective inquiry into student learning and collective action in improving it. Collaborative leadership for professional development embraces the individual and collective goals and talents of teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, school administrators, district administrators and school committee members. Effective professional development builds on the wealth of knowledge and experience that these stakeholders already have and expands upon that knowledge and skills. Professional development is not limited to a single content, grade or even school level. Growth opportunities should go beyond the school doors to ensure that the most efficient learning opportunities are present. By connecting professional development across levels, the opportunities become more effective and more likely to receive the support needed to be successful.
 - **Professional development is most effective when it takes place in professional learning communities.** Professional development that truly enhances adult learning provides opportunities to be involved in learning communities. These learning communities might take various forms, but they are all characterized by ongoing learning. They encourage individual and collaborative exploration, practice, and reflection. They foster collegiality and problem solving, and they emphasize continuous improvement in classrooms and schools.
 - **Professional development is most effective when it involves and reflects the diverse nature of the surrounding community.** It is vital for parents and leaders in the community to be engaged and understand why professional development is crucial in improving student outcomes. There needs to be two-way communication where the concerns of the community are reflected in the professional development growth opportunities and the goals and outcomes of the opportunities are shared with the community-at-large.
 - **Professional development is most effective when adequate resources are provided.** Resources include money, people, technology, and time. Resources necessarily come from a variety of sources, and must be sufficiently sustained over time to ensure the full impact of professional development. Resources are defined as adequate when they ensure that all educators can study, practice, reflect, receive feedback on practice, and implement knowledge and skills necessary to be effective with their students and others.

Appendix 2

STOUGHTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Context Standards

Sustained, high quality professional development provides a context in which it can have lasting impact. This perspective assumes that learning is an ongoing process of reflection, experimentation and discussion that requires more than a single event. It assumes that mastering complex ideas and skills requires continuous learning and long-term support. If educators are to introduce new practices into their work and to deepen their understanding of content, their students, and teaching, the environment in which they work must support their learning – through adequate resources, strong supportive leadership, and a community that encourages collaboration and application of new learning.

Standard 1: Learning Communities

Effective professional development that improves student learning supports teams of educators whose goals are aligned with those of the school and district and who work collaboratively in a trusting and respectful manner.

Indicators:

- a. Teams are composed of groups of educators that meet on a regular basis for the purpose of improving student learning: examining the standards; planning lessons; creating common assessments; critiquing student work; examining data; and problem-solving.
- b. Time is available on a regular basis for teams to meet collaboratively.
- c. Teams operate with a commitment to the norms of continuous improvement and experimentation and engage members in improving their daily work to advance student learning.
- d. Teams determine additional professional activities that will best serve the goal of solving identified needs. These can include workshop attendance, and /or course focused on content, pedagogy, or instructional skills, follow-up demonstrations, feedback on mastery of new knowledge and skills, peer coaching and mentoring, study teams and action research.
- e. Teams assume collective responsibility for all students represented by team members.
- f. Technology is used to support collaboration. Technology use can include but is not limited to electronic bulletin boards, email, shared servers, on-line courses, and video conferencing.

Standard 2: Leadership

Effective professional development that improves student learning requires the guidance of outstanding leaders from the district and school level and supports the development of skillful leadership among educators.

Indicators:

- a. Leaders establish structures that support ongoing, embedded professional development and continuous improvement. They encourage educators to participate in activities such as peer coaching, observation, assessment design, and action research.
- b. Leaders clearly articulate the district's professional development vision statement to foster a partnership between the administration, parents, educators, school committee and surrounding community.
- c. Leaders ensure an equitable distribution of resources and allocation of time to accomplish district and school goals in order to support all educators.
- d. Leadership opportunities are open to all educators and are designed to prepare educators for leadership roles such as trainers, peer coaches, mentors, department chairs, and committee members.
- e. Leaders stay current on technological tools in order to communicate effectively and efficiently.

Standard 3: Resources

Effective professional development that improves student learning requires adequate resources that support educator's professional growth, as well as opportunities for collaboration.

Indicators:

- a. Resources allocated include time for educators to work collaboratively towards district and school goals.
- b. Resources allocated include funding for expenditures, such as attendance at workshops, conferences, consultants, substitutes, and stipends.
- c. Resources allocated include funding for technology and educators in leadership roles such as coaches, facilitators, trainers, department heads, mentors, and administrators.

Standard 4: Technology

Effective professional development that improves student learning promotes educator and student technological literacy, and facilitates the effective use of all appropriate technology.

Indicators:

- a. Professional development ensures educator technological literacy by providing ongoing opportunities for educators to learn about new and current technologies that are useful in instructional practice, communication, and collaboration.
- b. Professional development enables educators to use technology as a tool in curriculum design and communication.

- c. Professional development enables educators to use technology as a tool for designing student learning opportunities, monitoring student learning, and evaluating the effectiveness of instruction.
- d. Professional development promotes the application of technology to meet diverse students' needs in optimal and equitable learning environments.
- e. Professional development ensures student technological literacy as educators engage students with available technologies, related to curricular activities, and assist students in using new and current technologies in innovative ways.
- f. Professional development informs educators about the legal and ethical issues surrounding technology and internet safety.

Process Standards

Consistent with what is known about adult learning, this perspective assumes that professional learning is an ongoing process of reflection, experimentation, and discussion. In this view of professional development, the workshops and other one-time events become part of a coherent series of events that sustains, reinforces, and deepens learning. Today's professional learning allows far more active engagement for the purpose of deepening understanding and making application in real-life contexts. Ongoing teamwork, discussions, product and project development, research, data analysis, reflection, demonstrations, and modeling are just some of the ways professional development facilitates the active engagement of the learner.

Standard 5: Data-Driven Professional Practices

Effective professional development that improves student learning actively engages participants in collecting, analyzing and interpreting data to inform decisions about [1] changes in instruction, curriculum and assessments; [2] changes in school and district organization; and [3] additional professional development needs.

Indicators:

- a. Data on student learning is gathered from standardized tests, district-made tests, student work samples, portfolios, etc. and provides important input to the selection of district and school improvement goals.
- b. Data is drawn from other sources, including local, state and national assessments, reports on grade retention, high school completion, student disciplinary actions, enrollment in specific courses. These data are typically disaggregated to reveal differences in learning among subgroups of students.
- c. Data is also drawn from teacher-made tests, common assessments, assignments, portfolios. Data analysis from this examination of student work creates a direct link between the work and content standards, the expectations for student learning, and the use of scoring rubrics.

- d. Professional development ensures that educators are able to acquire knowledge and skills related to formative classroom assessment, data collection, data analysis, and data-driven planning and evaluation.
- e. Professional development ensures that educators are able to gather and analyze data from multiple sources throughout the school year, to design assessment instruments, to implement various forms of assessment, and to determine the appropriate assessment to guide student instruction and monitor student progress.
- f. Professional development provides educators with current, high quality data analysis presented in a clear, understandable format to ensure optimal student learning opportunities.
- g. Professional development promotes technology as a tool in collecting, analyzing, and evaluating data to monitor student learning.

Standard 6: Evaluation

Effective professional development that improves student learning uses multiple sources of information to assess the effectiveness in improving professional practice and student learning. Evaluation is viewed as an ongoing process that is initiated in the earliest stages of program planning and continued beyond program completion.

Indicators:

- a. Goals of the professional development plan and needs of the specific group participating in the professional development program are used when creating evaluations.
- b. Resources, including the use of technology and student data, are provided to plan and conduct ongoing evaluation of professional development programs.
- c. Evaluations include multiple measures used throughout the school year to assess student learning after educators have had the opportunity to implement new instructional practices.
- d. Results from the evaluation process are shared with key groups involved in the planning of professional development to inform future decisions about professional development plans.

Standard 7: Research-Based

Effective professional development that improves student learning applies research to instructional decision-making and provides educators with opportunities to analyze, apply, and engage in research.

Indicators:

- a. Professional development is based on current research in improving student learning.

- b. Professional development encompasses sound, researched-based theories in student expectations, child development, curriculum content and design, instructional and assessment strategies, and shared leadership.
- c. Professional development includes ongoing opportunities for educators to evaluate and reflect on current research topics that are both relevant to educators' professional responsibilities and consistent with district and school goals.
- d. Professional development involves discussion of research with a variety of perspectives and conclusions to assist educators in applying research within the specific context.
- e. Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge, skill, and opportunity to apply research in instructional decision making and engage in action research.
- f. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to collaboratively test their hypotheses and report results about the impact of professional development programs and the effectiveness of instructional strategies and programs.

Standard 8: Design

Effective professional development design that improves student learning is based on data, is derived from the experience, expertise and needs of educators and reflects best research and practices in sustained job-embedded learning.

Indicators:

- a. Professional development design begins with a needs assessment that involves the analysis of multiple sources of disaggregated teaching and learning data.
- b. Professional development design is grounded in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, the LPS Standards for content areas, and student learning goals.
- c. Professional development design bases priorities on the careful examination of "gaps" or discrepancies between data reality and the desired outcomes.
- d. Professional development design is based on the learning styles of adult learners as well as the diverse cultural, linguistic, and experiential resources that they bring to the professional development activity.
- e. The intended beneficiaries of professional development are substantively involved in all aspects of professional development design.
- f. Professional development design addresses the continuum of an educator's experience and level of expertise, and is based on an analysis of individual educator needs; current knowledge and skills; and district, building and educator learning goals.
- g. In addition to workshops, sustained, job embedded professional development includes, but is not limited to, expanded training, lesson study and demonstrations, peer observations, analysis of student

work and assessment data, collegial circles, coaching/feedback, action research, reflection, and opportunities for collaboration and problem solving.

- h. Professional development provides continued support to educators in the form of follow-up, demonstrations, feedback on mastery of new knowledge and skills, peer coaching and mentoring, and continued opportunities for additional study.
- i. The format of professional development incorporates technologies to provide more extensive and diverse content, expand access and participation, and create virtual professional learning communities.

Standard 9: Learning

Effective professional development that improves student learning incorporates knowledge about human learning and change. It ensures that educators have the knowledge and skills to meet the diverse learning needs of all students by meeting the diverse learning needs of educators.

Indicators:

- a. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to create a safe, inclusive, equitable learning community where everyone participates in maintaining a climate of caring, respect, and high achievement.
- b. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to develop a deep understanding of topics, practice new skills with feedback, and interact with ideas and procedures through active learning processes and reflection.
- c. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to participate in learning processes that incorporate different learning styles and strengths.
- d. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to engage in a learning process that factors in the anxiety caused by change, and addresses concerns through skillful listening and problem solving within a respecting and trustful culture.
- e. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to engage in a learning process that recognizes life stage differences and taps the unique strengths and talents of staff.
- f. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to engage in distance technology to enable learning throughout the day in various settings, using appropriate technology that appeals to different learning preferences.

Standard 10: Collaboration

Effective professional development that improves student learning provides educators with the knowledge, skill and opportunities to collaborate for the purpose of improving instruction and student achievement in a respectful and trusting environment.

Indicators:

- a. Professional development provides teachers and administrators the appropriate knowledge and skills regarding group processes to ensure various teams, committees and departments district wide and within schools achieve their goals and provide satisfying and rewarding experiences for participants.
- b. Professional development provides educators with the appropriate knowledge and skills to communicate effectively, to listen to the ideas of others, to exchange and discuss ideas, to work in diverse teams, and to share responsibility toward a common goal.
- c. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for educators to work with colleagues including teachers, principals, instructional assistants, librarians, counselors, social workers, psychologists, specialists, higher education faculty, and any others critical to student success.
- d. Professional development maximizes the use of technology to share ideas, strategies and tools with colleagues in ways that dramatically increase the collaborative links among educators.

Content Standards

Effective professional development balances attention to content knowledge, instructional strategies and assessment practices appropriate to helping students master the subject matter content. The content of staff development that advances student achievement reflects national, state, and local content standards and is aligned with district goals, school improvement goals and educators' individual professional goals, level of experience and competence.

Standard 11: Equity

Effective professional development that improves student learning prepares educators to understand and appreciate all students, holding high expectations for their academic achievement and creating safe, orderly and supportive learning environments.

Indicators:

- a. Professional development prepares educators to create and maintain an environment where high expectations for academic achievement are expected for all students.
- b. Professional development ensures that educators understand the cognitive and social- emotional characteristics of children and adolescents in order to provide developmentally appropriate curriculum and instruction.
- c. Professional development provides strategies for educators to tap the learning strengths and preferences of each student.
- d. Professional development ensures that educators are able to differentiate instruction, curriculum materials, and assessment tools in order to meet the cognitive and social/emotional needs of all students.
- e. Professional development assists teachers and administration in creating school-based and district wide programs to close the achievement gap and provide equity and excellence for all students, e.g.

the development and implementation of an after-school Extended Learning Program for at-risk students; the development and implementation of a mentoring program at each school site for students in need of additional support and connection; the development and implementation of a multi-tiered intervention system for literacy learning and mathematics instruction at all levels.

- f. Professional development equips educators with the knowledge and skills to establish safe and orderly learning environments characterized by mutual respect in which academic learning and appropriate social-emotional development can occur.
- g. Professional development assists educators in developing an appreciation of the benefits that diversity provides in their classroom for both students' academic performance and interpersonal and social development.

Standard 12: Quality Teaching

Effective professional development that improves student learning provides opportunities for educators to deepen their content knowledge, increase knowledge of instructional strategies and use formative and summative assessments to inform instruction.

Indicators

- a. Professional development ensures that content curriculum meet the highest national/state standards in core concepts in all disciplines.
- b. Professional development supports the development of curriculum documents which include state and local standards, instructional strategies, materials alignment, common assessments and essential content vocabulary and language.
- c. Professional development ensures educators are prepared to implement recommendations from each curriculum review process.
- d. Professional development ensures educators participate in a wide-range of activities in order to stay current and/or deepen understanding of content area knowledge. Activities require collaboration with colleagues and can include electronic subject-area networks, university or electronically delivered coursework, subject area institutes, professional learning communities, and/or engagement in action research.
- e. Professional development ensures educators have opportunities to participate first-hand in observing, learning, and practicing instructional strategies that can be used in the classroom.
- f. Professional development ensures educators continue to develop classroom management skills that promote respectful and caring environments where all children feel safe and are able to engage in academic learning.
- g. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for educators to examine a variety of classroom assessments, practice using them in their classrooms, and analyze the results to 1)

understand and report on student achievement, 2) identify gaps in student learning, and 3) adjust instruction.

- h. Professional development focuses on developing educators' knowledge of the learning styles, needs, and abilities of their students, as well as the diverse cultural, linguistic, and experiential resources that their students bring to the classroom.
- i. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to design and implement differentiated instruction and to implement assessment strategies that meet diverse student learning needs.
- j. Professional development ensures that educators have the necessary knowledge and skills to develop and foster the social-emotional, critical thinking, problem solving, literacy, and technological skills that students will need for success in the 21st century.

Standard 13: Family Involvement

Effective professional development that improves student learning recognizes the importance of collaboration between the school, home, and community.

Indicators

- a. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to develop the knowledge and skills to build active partnerships with parents, families, and community members.
- b. Professional development prepares educators to demonstrate sensitivity to families whose primary language is not English/and or whose cultural traditions differ.
- c. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to learn about the diverse cultural backgrounds represented by students, families, and community members and prepares educators to establish respectful and caring learning communities within the schools.
- d. Professional development provides technology training for educators to enhance communication with parents, families, and community members.

Appendix 3

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEWING, APPROVING, AND ENDORSING INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS (IPDPs)

Guidelines for Reviewing, Approving, and Endorsing Individual Professional Development Plans

INTRODUCTION

Professional development for educators is required by the Commonwealth in order to ensure that the highest quality educators are working with students in Massachusetts' schools. Effective December 1, 1999, the Commonwealth's new recertification regulations will strengthen the ongoing professional development of Massachusetts educators and align individual professional development plans more effectively with school and district improvement plans. The recertification regulations raise the standards for knowledge in the content area; provide an incentive for educators to engage in advanced academic study; enable greater decision-making at the school and district level; retain some flexibility in the kinds of activities that are eligible for professional development points for recertification; create options for new ways to assess teacher skills and knowledge; and establish a state registry of professional development providers.

Individuals with Massachusetts' professional licensure must engage in sustained professional development that strengthens professional knowledge and skills in order to meet the state's new recertification requirements. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has designed a recertification process that requires all educators to prepare an Individual Professional Development Plan for each five-year renewal cycle. The plan must be consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district and enhance the ability of the educator to improve student learning. As spelled out by the new regulations, educators are required to obtain initial approval and final endorsement of their professional development plans from their supervisor.

Professional licensure may be renewed by the successful completion of the appropriate number of professional development points (PDPs) as set forth in 603 CMR 44.05 (2), 44.06 (1), or 44.07 (1) within a five-year cycle as outlined in Appendix A of these guidelines. Educators may earn PDPs by engaging in a variety of professional development activities as part of an individual professional development plan which receives any approvals necessary under the provisions of 603 CMR 44.04. Many educators will need 10 hours in a topic for the PDPs to count toward recertification. A topic is a single or tightly integrated area of study within an academic discipline or related to a particular method of teaching or administration.

The new recertification regulations outline minimum requirements for professional development. Educators are encouraged to participate in professional experiences that support and expand their content and professional skills beyond the minimum requirements. Districts may choose to offer additional incentives through collective bargaining for educators to go beyond the minimum requirements for recertification and continue to participate in professionally relevant and academically meaningful professional development.

DISTRICT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

School districts are required annually to adopt and implement a professional development plan for all principals, teachers, other professional staff employed by the district, and school council members. Districts are also required to set forth a budget for professional development within the confines of the foundation budget. The plan must identify specific content to be addressed, including training in the teaching of the curriculum frameworks and other skills required for the implementation of the Education Reform Law, including participatory decision making and parent and community involvement (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38Q).

The FY01 state budget requires districts to spend at least \$125 per student from state aid funds on professional development. These funds may be used for tuition, conference fees, contracted services, stipends, salaries and materials. Districts are responsible for selecting providers of professional development that are of high quality and that address the identified learning needs in the district. Districts also identify the data to be collected on professional growth and on the quality and impact of professional development.

When setting district professional development goals, the most important criterion to be considered is the identified learning needs of the students. Student performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and other standardized tests administered by the district must be a part of identifying educational strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the percentage of students reading at a level appropriate to their age, student graduation rates, the percentage of students continuing on to post-secondary institutions, and other assessments that enable students to demonstrate mastery of the Frameworks and district curricula should be considered.

The Education Reform Act also requires school councils to develop annual School Improvement Plans. Schools are required to include professional development for school staff and allocation of professional development funds in the school budget in the School Improvement Plan. In school districts with language minority student populations, the Plan is to address the need for training and skills in second language acquisition and in working with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 59C).

DEVELOPING INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Educators are required to develop Individual Professional Development Plans that are consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district and enhance their ability to improve student learning. School districts must provide the following material to all employees who hold a professional license prior to the development or the biannual review of an Individual Professional Development Plan:

1. A copy of the district's annual Professional Development Plan.
2. A copy of the District Improvement Plan or relevant School Improvement Plan.
3. A copy of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Recertification Guidelines for Massachusetts Educators.

Districts may choose to suggest the following process to educators as Individual Professional Development Plans are developed and reviewed:

1. Review a copy of the district's annual Professional Development Plan.
2. Review a copy of the relevant School Improvement Plan.
3. Review the required PDPs for the professional license(s).
4. Create a set of individual professional development goals that are designed to enhance student learning and are consistent with district and school improvement goals. These goals may be based on the educator's own evaluation of her strengths and weaknesses, evaluations from supervisors and/or peers, planned career advancement activities, and her professional judgement.
5. Collaborate with colleagues to choose available professional development activities that will help meet the goals identified in the individual plan. The individual plan represents a 5-year cycle; educators may add appropriate professional development activities as they become available during the 5-year cycle.
6. Draft the individual professional development plan and share it with the supervisor for her review and approval.
7. Complete the professional development activities and keep records.
8. Revisit the Individual Professional Development Plan with a designated supervisor on biannual basis to review goals and amend the Plan as necessary.

APPROVING INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

As spelled out by the new regulations, educators are required to obtain initial approval and final endorsement of their professional development plans from their supervisor. It is the educator's responsibility to ensure that her proposed professional development activities meet all state requirements for recertification. Approval of the plan means that 80% of the proposed PDPs in the plan are consistent with the educational needs of the district and/or school and that the plan is designed to improve student learning.

Direct supervisors (or their designees) are required to review and approve individual professional development plans. This means that the principal will have the authority to approve the plans of teachers and other educators who report to the principal. A principal may delegate this role to a department head. The superintendent will approve a principal's plan, and the chairperson of the school committee will approve a superintendent's plan. Educators may seek peer review prior to supervisor approval.

The process for approving individual professional development plans should be fluid enough to allow educators to develop plans individually and collaboratively, receive initial feedback from supervisors, modify their plan (in mutually agreed upon ways), and submit their plan for formal approval. Individual Professional Development Plans are intended to represent a 5-year recertification cycle. Educators need the flexibility to add relevant professional development opportunities as they arise. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires educators to develop individual professional development plans that meet the minimum number of PDPs required for recertification prior to initial approval. However, The PDPs to be earned in the later years of the plan may be identified in a more general manner. Educators may be asked by their supervisor to provide justification of the relevance of the proposed activities.

When discussing a plan with an educator, or when reviewing the plan for approval, supervisors may consider asking the following questions. These may assist the supervisor in determining whether or not an Individual Professional Development Plan is aligned with school and district goals and designed to improve student learning.

1. Is the plan consistent with the subjects or topics included in the school and/or district plan?

For example, a district may, based on student MCAS scores, identify improving student literacy as one of its areas of need. The district goal may read: "All educators will improve their literacy instruction by increasing their knowledge of the mechanics of reading, expanding their repertoire of strategies for teaching literacy, and including literacy in every lesson in every subject."

Educators may review this goal, and could include the following as individual professional development activities: "Year One: I will attend workshop on the literacy model for our district. I will present what I've learned at a faculty meeting."

"I will supplement this with a summer Wilson training and all follow up days, and incorporate the Wilson method into all lessons. My documentation in support of this will include: my certificate of completion, and papers written or curricula developed, and a sampling of lessons that incorporate this instructional strategy."

These activities clearly build on the District goal of improving literacy instruction and can be clearly observed in the classroom.

Another example might relate to technology. Based on student performance on the Science & Technology portions of the MCAS, a district might decide integrating technology is an area of need. A district goal might be: "All teachers will become proficient in the use of hardware and software used by the district. All teachers will integrate technology into lessons and activities in at least one academic area."

An individual plan could build on this by including the following as proposed professional development activities. "I will participate in after-school workshops on computer literacy. I will develop proficiency with Microsoft Office, including Microsoft Excel. I will use Excel to maintain accurate student records. I will develop lessons and assignments that require student use of word processing programs."

2. Do the proposed activities address areas of need in terms of student learning?

Above all else, individuals and their supervisors must consider student learning needs. Standardized tests, such as MCAS, provide one measure of student learning. Other assessments will also provide valuable information on student strengths and weaknesses.

When approving an individual professional development plan, supervisors should consider whether a teacher has aligned her goals and activities to school goals for student learning. For instance, if an elementary school has identified student performance in math as its primary focus, a teacher's proposed activities should include those that will improve both her content knowledge in math as well as her math pedagogy.

3. Can a clear link be established between proposed activities and student learning?

Student learning is the most important consideration in developing individual, school, and district goals for professional development. Teachers can establish this link by reviewing student performance on assessments administered by the teacher, and on student performance on MCAS and other standardized tests. An experienced teacher can review student achievement on each unit's assessments and identify patterns of strength and weakness in student performance. This can inform the professional development activities in that individual's plan.

For instance, while preparing her plan, a teacher might examine student scores on a series of assessments in physics. If students have performed poorly on assessments relating to magnets, that individual may decide to enroll in a workshop or course that will improve both her content knowledge of magnets and her instructional strategies. Alternately, the same teacher might observe that, through classroom labs, homework assignments, and teacher administered tests, all of her students demonstrated mastery of the concepts relating to quantum mechanics. One of her professional development activities might be to teach a refresher course in that subject to her physics colleagues. Or, she might develop a study guide that can be shared with colleagues teaching the same concept.

All of these activities relate directly to student learning as measured by classroom assessments. A supervisor should look for such a link when approving professional development plans.

4. Will the plan improve student learning at the grade level and subject area of the educator's primary teaching assignment?

There are many ways for educators to earn improve student learning. For instance, educators can lead Case Study Seminars or develop and run district mentor training. These activities improve the quality of teaching, which common sense and a variety of studies suggest will result in higher student achievement.

In addition, teachers should be sure to include some activities that specifically address the learning needs of the students in their own grade level and subject. Different courses and groups of students will have discrete needs and teachers should accommodate these needs into their Individual Professional Development Plans.

5. Has the educator identified professional development goals prior to identifying proposed activities?

Goals are not a required part of an Individual Professional Development Plan; they may, however, help the educator identify their individual professional development needs and create a coherent plan of related activities. A supervisor may encourage the individual to create goals based on evaluations of her strengths and weaknesses, collaborations and career advancement plans, the special needs of specific classes of students and subjects being taught, and her own professional judgement.

For instance, an individual might review her evaluations, student performance on assessments, and feedback from colleagues and parents and identify specific professional development goals.

6. Has the individual considered his own professional development needs within the context of t the school and district goals?

When approving professional development plans, supervisors should consider whether the individual's goals are aligned with the school and district goals and whether they are designed to enhance the ability of the educator to improve student learning. Supervisors may ask for clarification on how an individual's personal professional development goals will link to school and district goals.

For instance, a teacher may wish, as part of personal professional development goals, to learn more about differentiated instruction. Understanding how to tailor instruction to all students within her classroom will help her to deliver effective instruction. Even if the school or district does not have a goal specifically relating to differentiated instruction, this goal could align with general school and district goals that address improve student learning.

Another example might be that the algebra teacher is interested in professional development in writing skills. A goal might read: "Year One: I will enroll in Creative Writing 101 through the continuing education unit of the local college. I will increase my writing skills, with special attention paid to the rules of syntax and grammar. I will incorporate this into lessons by requiring students to keep an Algebra Journal that explains, in correct English, the concepts of each lesson. I will document this through my own writing assignments from class and through samples of student work."

Through her justification and documentation of her activities, it is clear that this individual plans to incorporate the new knowledge into her lessons. This demonstrates that this goal aligns to a school and/or district goal focused on increasing student proficiency in English/Language Arts. This plan would also include goals directly related to the individual's specific content needs.

It is important to note that educators are responsible for ensuring that their individual plan meets the state's recertification requirements for content. It is not the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that Individual Professional Development Plans include enough PDPs in content to satisfy the state requirements. In the review process, it would be helpful for supervisors to be familiar with state requirements in order to assist individuals with their planning.

7. Is there flexibility within the plan to accommodate modifications over time?

Over the course of a licensure renewal period, schools and districts may refine their professional development goals, based on improvements in student achievement. Or, an individual's teaching assignment may change to a different subject or grade, which would alter some of the individual's goals.

Because individuals are required to revisit their plans every two years with a supervisor, individual plans should be developed in such a way as to build in flexibility.

For instance, an individual might clearly specify concrete, measurable goals for the first two years, and might include less specific goals for the next three. An individual whose school and district goals stress improving student achievement in History and Social Science might center her goals around increasing her own content knowledge in History and Social Science and set the following goals for Year One:

"Year One: I will enroll in a summer content institute on United States history from 1776 through World War I. As the major project for this course, I will partner with the teachers on my grade level to develop an interdisciplinary yearlong unit on immigration that is aligned to the Curriculum Frameworks and

our district's curriculum. Together, we will organize a symposium at which students will present their research findings (tentatively scheduled on the school calendar for early Spring). I will document this work with my curriculum, and major assignments for the course, and a sampling of student research."

Year One activities are thus very specific; the school and other professional development providers may have already established a professional development calendar. Year Two activities may be broader and less specific. For instance:

"Year Two: I will participate in the scheduled district writing seminar to continue to improve my writing skills. As a result of this I will publish an article in an education journal. I will organize a seminar series for parents that builds on the same subject students will be studying. I will document this work through the article, through the plans for the seminars, and through letters and written feedback from seminar participants."

After Year Two, the individual will meet with her supervisor to modify (if necessary) the activities within the next two years of the plan. The goals for Years Three through Five might resemble the following.

"Year Three: I will enroll in another summer content institute, ideally on either World History or United States' history from 1939-the present. I will enroll in a course on differentiated instruction, through either a professional association or through a local institution of higher education. I will document this work through major projects completed for each course.

Year Four: I will develop lessons that support special needs students in my classroom. Documentation will include student work and progress toward IEP goals. I will attend a summer workshop on gifted and talented students.

Year Five: I will develop a curriculum unit with the teachers on my grade level that accommodates gifted and talented students in my classroom. Documentation will include lessons from the unit, and samplings of student work."

8. Will the proposed activities add to the educator's repertoire of skills and content knowledge?

In their daily work, educators must draw on a wide range of skills and content knowledge. For teachers, this might mean including several different instructional strategies and forms of assessments that accommodate the many types of learners in their classrooms (including students with Individual Educational Plans, as well as gifted and talented students). For administrators, this might mean observing teachers and offering feedback, as well as working with students. Individual Professional Development Plans should help educators increase the breadth and depth of their repertoire of skills required by their positions.

9. Is the educator planning to participate in a range of meaningful and professionally relevant professional development during the recertification cycle?

Recertification offers educators a chance to be lifelong learners. While the proposed activities should include a variety of different and meaningful activities, the activities should be relevant to their profession. For instance, a series of courses on ancient Chinese history may be interesting to the

English/Language Arts teacher, but without a clear link to the subject and grade level being taught, may not be professionally relevant and should not be the entire focus of that individual's plan.

Individuals may be asked to justify the relevance of the proposed activities, and may be asked to identify how the proposed activities will enhance their skills and abilities.

10. Do the proposed activities address the Professional Standards for Teachers?

Every teacher in Massachusetts must be able to demonstrate the Professional Standards for Teachers; those standards comprise the state's pedagogical requirements. Supervisors should be familiar with these standards and should consider whether the proposed activities will help teachers address the five categories within which all of the standards fall: Plans Curriculum and Instruction; Delivers Effective Instruction; Manages Classroom Climate and Operation; Promotes Equity; and Meets Professional Responsibilities.

In the documentation of the professional development activities, and in the biannual review, teachers should demonstrate each of the standards.

STANDARDS FOR APPROVAL

Approval of the plan means that 80% of the proposed PDPs in the plan are consistent with the educational goals of the school and/or district and that the plan is designed to enhance the ability of the educator to improve student learning. Supervisors do not have the authority to reject individual plans that are consistent with school and/or district educational goals and are designed to improve student learning.

The following standards must be applied when reviewing and approving Individual Professional Development Plans:

- Proposed activities in the plan are designed to improve student learning.
- Proposed activities in the plan are consistent with and aligned to school and/or district goals.

Approval of an individual professional development plan shall not be unreasonably withheld. A supervisor is obligated to approve an individual plan if the goals and proposed PDPs meet the standards for review and approval as outlined in the previous section. A supervisor cannot reject a plan because in the supervisor's opinion another activity would best meet the identified needs of the school or district. In other words, supervisors may not require an individual educator to participate in a specific professional development activity unless the activity is identified through collective bargaining. In addition, if the activities in an individual professional development plan are legitimately aligned with one school and/or district goal, the supervisor cannot reject the plan because the supervisor believes that the teacher should focus on another school and/or district goal.

A supervisor must grant or deny approval of a plan within 30 days of receipt of the plan. Denial must be accompanied by a written explanation for the failure to approve the plan. If a supervisor fails to act within 30 days, the educator may seek additional review provided by the regulations. Administrators providing additional local review must grant or deny approval of a plan within 14 days. If no decision has been made after 14 days, the educator may seek additional review from the department.

In the event that a plan is rejected by a supervisor, teachers and other educators who report to the principal may seek review of the denial from the superintendent of schools, principals may seek review from the school committee chairperson, and superintendents may seek review from the Department. An educator may then seek additional review from the Department, according to the provisions of 603 CMR 44.11.

ADDITIONAL REVIEW FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

An educator may appeal a supervisor's decision not to approve or endorse a professional development plan to the Commissioner after seeking any additional review available at the local level (pursuant to 603 CMR 44.04(1)(1)). To initiate such an appeal, the educator must submit a written request to the Commissioner within 30 days of the date on which the plan was rejected at the highest level of local review. The request should include:

1. A copy of the plan,
2. A copy of the educational needs of the district/school,
3. An explanation of how the plan satisfied the requirements of 603 CMR 44.04 (1)(b),
4. The name(s) of any supervisor or administrator who reviewed the plan; and
5. A copy of written explanations for the failure to approve the plan.

The Department may contact the supervisor(s) involved and will consider the reasons given at the local level for the rejection of the plan. The Commissioner or his designee will make a final, independent determination regarding plan approval. The Commissioner will approve a plan if 80% of the proposed PDPs in the plan are consistent with the educational goals of the school and/or district and the plan is designed to enhance the ability of the educator to improve student learning. The Commissioner will apply two standards for approval:

- The proposed activities in the plan are designed to improve student learning.
- The proposed activities in the plan are consistent with and aligned to school and/or district goals.

REVIEWING INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Educators are required to review their individual plans with supervisors at least every two years to review goals and amend the plan if needed. If permitted by the guidelines set forth above, a supervisor may require an educator to amend the plan or may withdraw approval for a plan that had been previously approved, provided, however, that any PDPs that were earned consistently with an approved plan shall be deemed approved in applying for recertification. A supervisor may withdraw approval or require an amendment of a plan from any educator new to the district or school within three months of the educator's beginning employment in the new position.

ENDORISING INDIVIDUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Educators who are employed in a Massachusetts public school must include their supervisor's endorsement of their completed professional development plan with their Recertification Application.

A supervisor's endorsement indicates that the supervisor has reviewed the record of professional development activities maintained by the educator to ensure that the reported activities are consistent with the approved professional development plan. The Department requires supervisors to review the total

number of PDPs earned to determine that 80% of the PDPs are consistent with the approved individual professional development plan.

A supervisor must grant or deny endorsement of a plan within 30 days of receipt of the plan. Denial must be accompanied by a written explanation for the failure to endorse the plan. If a supervisor fails to act within 30 days, the educator may seek additional review provided by the regulations. Administrators providing additional local review must grant or deny endorsement of a plan within 14 days. If no decision has been made after 14 days, the educator may seek additional review from the department as described above. In this case, the Commissioner or his designee will make an independent evaluation of whether the completed professional development activities were consistent with the approved professional development plan. The Commissioner will endorse the individual professional development plan if 80% of reported activities maintained by the educator are consistent with the approved professional development plan.

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