STOUGHTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

FY16 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Latest Update: March 11, 2015

STOUGHTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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	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.	1. Learning Communities 2. Leadership 3. Resources 4. Technology
Process	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.	5. Data-Driven Professional Practice 6. Evaluation 7. Research-based 8. Design 9. Learning 10. Collaboration
Content	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.	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 individual schools and departments to meet their identified needs in addition to the District meeting it overarching professional development requirements.

Professional development planning will begin with establishing the calendar of events that identifies the number and dates of half and full day professional development activities. Planning that encompasses the use of designated half-days will precede sequentially beginning with the Superintendent of Schools, followed by the Principals / Special Education Director / Curriculum Specialists, and the Department Directors / Head Teachers.

The Superintendent will initiate the process and work with the Deputy Superintendent to develop a professional development plan(s) that address items/areas that were identified as in need of improvement during the 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, NCLB required professional development due to a District accountability status, etc...

The Principals / Director of Special Education / Curriculum Specialists will continue the process and work with the Deputy Superintendent to develop a professional development plan(s) that address items/areas that were identified as in need of improvement during the development of each school's School Improvement Plan, required professional development due to an NCLB accountability status, Title I requirements, MCAS results, etc... Elementary Principals / Curriculum Specialists will also work with Grade Level Teams to develop a team specific professional development plan to address the specific needs, and foster the development of Professional Learning Communities, within each discrete grade level.

The Department Directors / Head Teachers will complete the process and work with their Principals / Curriculum Specialists and the Deputy Superintendent to develop a professional development 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 will be based on the results of the annual Professional Development Survey and / or each school's Professional Development Committee summaries, completed in the early spring of each school year. The results of these activities will be used to identify a portfolio of workshops that will be made available on the full day. Teachers will self select a series of professional development workshops to address areas in which they would like to receive additional training.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS

Massachusetts Recertification Guidelines have identified the primary mission of professional development as that of assist 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 FOR FY16

NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

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

The Next Generation Science Standards are a new set of standards that provide consistent science education through all grades, with an emphasis on engineering and technology. The NGSS 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.

SCHOOLNET

Target Audience: All Educators

SchoolNet for PowerSchool 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 curriculum units and their supporting materials, and 3.) the ability to provide access to a dashboard style student information and assessment database. This program will support data-driven instruction and

provide real time dashboards and reports on student progress to administrators, teachers, students, and parents.

ONGOING DISTRICT SPONSORED
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES FOR FY16

COLLINS WRITING

Target Audience: All faculty members

The Collins Writing Program is designed to simultaneously improve students' thinking and writing skills. The program develops thinking skills through Five Types of Writing^{SM} assignments and can be easily used in any content area. Collins Writing is based on two essential principles: 1) thinking and writing skills develop with experience and practice, and 2) it is almost impossible to be both a creative thinker (generating new ideas) and a critical thinker (evaluating existing ideas) at the same time.

The goal is to give teachers, schools, and the district a unified program that can be used in all classrooms and in all subject areas from grades K-12. To achieve this goal, the program provides techniques that require the student to be the intellectual worker in the room. The Collins Writing Program is a challenging program for students and an effective, easy-to-manage program for teachers.

DATA TEAM TRAINING

Target Audience: All faculty and staff members

Data team training in the Stoughton Public Schools system follows the Research for Better Teaching (RBT) model of collaborative inquiry. This model acknowledges two core values: that we have a moral responsibility to see that all students are given the opportunity to succeed academically and that the process of collaborative inquiry unleashes opportunities for teachers to use their expertise and creativity to solve student-learning problems. Participants engage in the four-step data-driven dialogue process in order to learn a coordinated model to build their data literacy, create and analyze data, research and diagnose student learning problems, and create programs of action to solve those problems. Through readings, group projects, and active learning strategies, teachers gain knowledge of and practice with tools and strategies to increase academic collaboration within and across departments and maximize their pedagogical knowledge.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION TRAINING

Targeted Audience: All faculty members

Differentiation is a method of teaching that asks teachers to know their students well so they can provide each one with experiences and tasks that will improve learning. Differentiating instruction requires a teacher to observe and understand the differences and similarities amongst their students and use this information to plan instruction.

FORMATIVE / SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Target Audience: All Educators

Well thought out and purposefully designed formative and summative assessments are the core or all data team meetings and are essential in providing teachers and administrators with the information necessary to determine student learning needs, identify gaps in the curriculum, and promote best practices in teaching.

HANDWRITING WITHOUT TEARS (HWT)

Target Audience: Elementary Teachers

Handwriting without tears provides an easy-to-use curriculum that uses engaging multi-sensory techniques and research-based methods to make handwriting a natural and automatic skill for children of all ages and abilities. The program uses a fun hands-on approach to develop good skills and teach correct letter formation.

At the end of a HWT Kindergarten-5th Grade Handwriting Workshop, faculty members should be able to:
1. Understand the handwriting process and how to make it accessible and engaging for children
2. Plan exciting, active lessons to teach fine motor skills and posture for writing
3. Understand the developmental sequence of handwriting and how to create multisensory lessons that inspire students and promote a love of writing
4. Identify appropriate strategies and transition time from printing to cursive
5. Identify common handwriting problems and implement simple, effective remediation techniques

KURZWEIL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS TRAINING

Target Audience: Special Education faculty and staff members

Kurzweil Educational Systems specializes in providing reading and writing software to assist people who are blind or partially sighted, or who have learning disabilities, such as dyslexia and Attention Deficit Disorder. The Stoughton Public Schools utilizes the Kurzweil 3000 as a tiered assistive reading, writing and learning medium aimed at students with learning disabilities or other disabilities that make reading or writing difficult.

LEXIA TRAINING

Target Audience: Special Education faculty and staff members; Reading Teachers

Lexia Primary Reading 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 through the application of phonological strategies to single words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and stories and emphasize listening skills and following directions.

PHYSICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT (PMT) TRAINING

Target Audience: Special Education faculty and staff members

PMT training is a restraint training program that helps staff safely address extreme issues related to student behavior and function effectively under stress. The goals of PMT training include:

- increasing faculty members understanding of the various aspects of the crisis intervention process;
- increasing the range of response options available to individual staff and teams;
- developing skills for analyzing one's own style of managing conflict;
- helping staff manage their fear response in a crisis situations;
- developing problem solving and critical thinking skills related to crisis management; and
- avoiding the use of physical restraint techniques, whenever possible.

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

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)

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.

SKILLFUL TEACHER COURSE

Target Audience: All faculty members and administrators

The Skillful Teacher Course is designed to contribute to the professionalization of teaching. It's goal is to increase the capacity of teachers and administrators to promote and sustain increased student learning and achievement.

As a result of taking the course, participants will be able to:

1. Articulate how their beliefs about teaching and learning impact their practices and more importantly, their students
2. Increase their repertoire of research-based strategies to improve student learning
3. Plan, implement, and assess standards based lessons
4. Give appropriate targeted feedback to help students learn
5. Collect and analyze data related to student achievement

SPECIAL EDUCATION TRAINING (15 HOUR LICENSURE COURSE)

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.

SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION TRAINING

Target Audience: All licensed school personnel
Cycle: Triennial (FY17, FY20, FY23 …)

The District will provide all faculty members with 2 – hours of training in Suicide Awareness and Prevention, every 3 – years. The training will be developed once the DESE issues final regulations governing the training and provide the required funding.

TEACHER-TO-TEACHER WORKSHOPS

Target Audience: Workshop Dependant

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 by 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.

TEACHER STUDY GROUPS

Target Audience: Workshop Dependant

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.

WILSON READING SYSTEM

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 Born Pathogens
2. Child Abuse and Neglect / Mandatory Reporting / 51A
3. Civil Rights
4. CORI Checks
5. Physical Restraint
6. Curriculum Review (CR 24)
7. Student Records
8. Bullying

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, educator 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, [4] include follow-up and support, and [5] 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

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 150 professional development points (PDPs) within a five year cycle, as follows:

1. Individual professional development plans must include at least 150 PDPs. At least 120 of the PDPs must be in the content area of the certificate or in pedagogy directly related to the educator's primary certificate, with at least 90 of these PDPs in the content area of the educator's primary certificate.
2. Educators working in Massachusetts public schools must get initial approval of their professional development plans pursuant to 603 CMR 44.04 (1) (b) within three months of issuance of the certificate to be renewed, or by June 30, 2000, whichever is later. A supervisor shall approve a professional development plan in which the 120 PDPs required to be in content area or pedagogy are consistent with school and district educational improvement goals.
3. Educators shall obtain final endorsement of their plans from their supervisors, pursuant to the provisions of 603 CMR 44.04 (3).
4. A minimum of 10 PDPs must be earned in a topic to count the PDPs toward recertification.
5. Professional development plans must include an additional 30 PDPs in the content area of any additional certificate to be renewed.

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 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.

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 judgment.
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

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 their 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?
2. Do the proposed activities address areas of need in terms of student learning?
3. Can a clear link be established between proposed activities and student learning?
4. Will the plan improve student learning at the grade level and subject area of the educator's primary teaching assignment?
5. Has the educator identified professional development goals prior to identifying proposed activities?
6. Has the individual considered his own professional development needs within the context of the school and district goals?
7. Is there flexibility within the plan to accommodate modifications over time?
8. Will the proposed activities add to the educator's repertoire of skills and content knowledge?
9. Is the educator planning to participate in a range of meaningful and professionally relevant professional development during the recertification cycle?
10. Do the proposed activities address the Professional Standards for Teachers?

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.

Endorsing 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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