

Tantasqua Regional and Union 61 School Districts

Professional Development Plan



2009-2010

*Working Together
Sharing Our Knowledge*

Tantasqua Regional and Union 61 School Districts

Working Together Sharing our Knowledge

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Student learning is the core of everything we do.

Tantasqua and Union 61 School Districts

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MISSION & GOALS

Mission

Tantasqua Regional and Union 61 School Districts are committed to providing programs that promote students' academic, civic, social, emotional, and physical development.

To accomplish this mission, our schools will:

- Build communities of learners in which respect is fostered for each other, the school, and the community.
- Prepare students for their roles in society by ensuring that they can communicate effectively in all the disciplines, think critically, and solve problems.
- Promote responsible participation in a democracy.

Goals

1. To increase students' reading, writing, and mathematical skills.
2. To foster skills that enable all students to locate, evaluate, synthesize, apply, and present information effectively.
3. To foster respect for good citizenship and to help prepare citizens to become contributing members of a democratic society.
4. To foster collegiality, collaboration, and communication among educators as a means of improving student achievement.
5. To promote educational excellence through ongoing review of curriculum and enhancement of instruction.
6. To use student performance data to address improvement of student achievement.
7. To promote accountability in all areas of school operations.

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Tantasqua and Union 61 School Districts Professional Development Plan 2009-2010

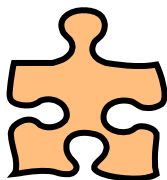


"The single greatest influence on the professional practices of teachers is the direct observation of other teachers."

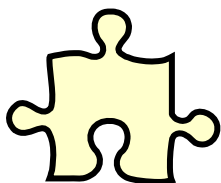
-Reeves, 2008, p. 70

Introduction

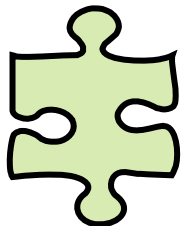
Professional development, like so much in education, is not the responsibility of any one person, but should be driven by the needs for whom it is designed, more specifically, the staff of the Tantasqua Regional and Union 61 School Districts.



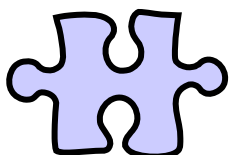
High quality professional development should meet the needs and requirements of federal and state mandates, such as the Sheltered English Immersion training;



High quality professional development should meet the needs of the district as detailed through the goals of the District's Improvement Plan and other district initiatives;



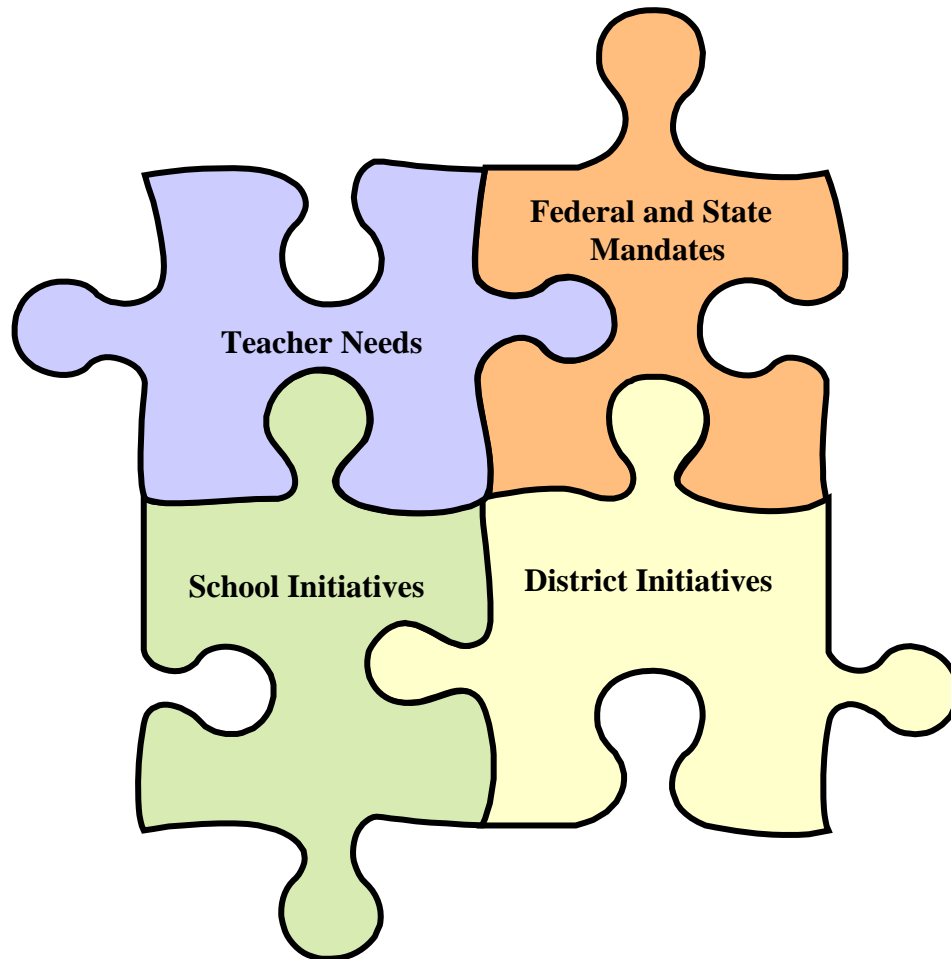
High quality professional development should meet the needs of the schools as detailed in their School Improvement Plans and as evidenced by the results of both formal and informal assessment measures; and



High quality professional development should meet the needs of teachers, as evidenced through survey and evaluation data, in full recognition that the very professionals for whom learning opportunities are provided, *deserve* a say in such offerings.

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The various components of a high-quality program of professional development, like the pieces of a puzzle, when combined together, create a comprehensive program of professional development designed to move our educational program forward toward educational excellence.



As suggested by the U.S. Department of Education Professional Development Team, in its National Awards Program for Model Professional Development, the plan for Tantasqua and Union 61 is ultimately focused on the continuous improvement of student learning and understanding.

“Professional development plays an essential role in successful education reform. Professional development serves as the bridge between where prospective and experienced educators are now and where they need to be to meet the new challenges of guiding all students in achieving to higher standards of learning and development. High-quality professional development...refers to rigorous and relevant content, strategies, and organizational supports that ensure the preparation and career-long development of teachers and others whose competence, expectations, and actions influence the teaching and learning environment (p.1).”

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Guided by research from many scholarly sources, the program of Professional Development offered by Tantasqua Regional/Union 61 is defined by a number of research-based characteristics:

- It must engage teachers in the concrete tasks of teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection that illuminate the processes of learning and development.
- It must be grounded in inquiry, reflection, and experimentation that are participant-driven.
- It must be collaborative, involving a sharing of knowledge among educators and a focus on teachers' communities of practice rather than on individual teachers.
- It must be connected to and derived from teachers' work with their students.
- It must be sustained, ongoing, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching, and the collective solving of specific problems of practice.
- It must be connected to other aspects of school change.

-Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995, p. 598

District Offerings

Tantasqua/School Union 61 continually offers a variety of professional development opportunities. The district is an official Professional Development Provider, certified by the Massachusetts Department of Education. Certificates of Completion and PDPs will be awarded after successful completion of professional development.

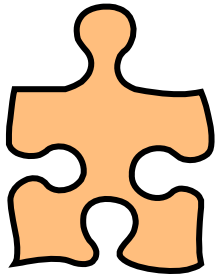
Eligibility: There is no cost for District staff, unless otherwise noted in individual announcements. Teachers interested in enrolling should register with the contact person prior to the deadline. Slots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Support Staff is eligible and encouraged to participate in professional development sponsored by Tantasqua/Union #61. Enrollment may be limited by space and the relevance of the training to the individual's position. To participate, support staff members should complete the Support Staff Application, found on the Tantasqua website under Professional Development, "Forms for District Professional Development" and submit it to his/her Building Principal. Study Groups generally are not open to support staff, and on-site college course enrollment may be restricted, or a fee assessed. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis with the approval of Central Office administration.

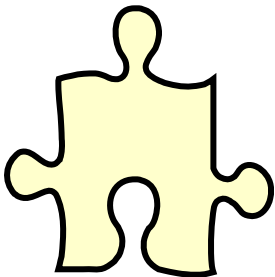
Costs for other professionals interested in enrolling in a Tantasqua/Union 61 Activity are as follows: Institutes - \$50; workshops - \$20; courses vary. To enroll, submit requests in writing to the Office of the Superintendent, at 320A Brookfield Rd., Fiskdale, MA 01518. Out-of-district enrollments will be taken on a first-come first-served basis after accommodating local staff.

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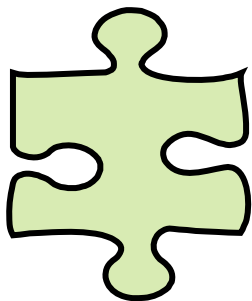
As a district, there are several venues through which professional development is offered as detailed below:



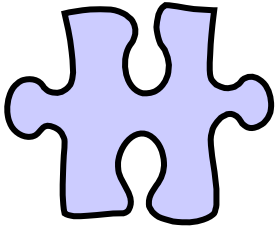
District Sponsored Institutes: The Institute is a district sponsored course consisting of 15 hours with a minimum of 12 hours of instruction, three hours of application and a product as required by the Massachusetts Department of Education Guidelines. A variety of teaching techniques may be employed for the Institute including, but not limited to, direct instruction, practice, discussion, problem-solving, Socratic dialogue and research projects. The provider may determine, based on participants and topic preferred modes of presentation. The course will have a syllabus which must be approved in advance by the Superintendent or designee, and the content must be consistent with Tantasqua/Union 61 goals. The Institute will be conducted by a qualified consultant or expert practitioner. Upon successful completion of an Institute, participants will receive one credit, or fifteen PDPs, and a Certificate of Completion.



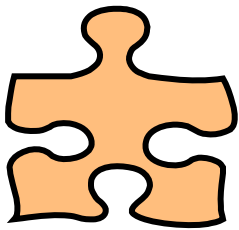
District Sponsored Study Groups: The Study Group is a district or building-based group of three to 12 members. The Group will meet for 10-15 hours around a specific topic to study teaching and learning, or to implement innovative curriculum and/or instructional methods. Collegial sharing and discussion are prime components of the Study Group and all participants will be involved in classroom experimentation and sharing of experiences. The forum will be led by a convener who is a member of the group, but who also organizes and structures each meeting with a written agenda. The content of the Study Group will be consistent with Tantasqua/Union 61 goals and must be approved in advance by the Superintendent or designee. Upon successful completion of a Study Group, with the submission of the completed product, participants will receive 15 PDPs and a Certificate of Completion, or a stipend (if such has been approved in advance by Central Office). Study Groups, which earn more points, may be designed with advance approval of the Superintendent or Faculty Senate.



District Sponsored Workshops: This form of professional development is generally topic specific and designed for the short term study of a limited range of topics. Usually workshops are focused on dialogue, discussion and problem solving; however, other strategies may be employed as appropriate to the topic, audience and purpose. Participants receive PDPs as requirements of the workshop are completed.



Conferences and Workshops: Teachers may choose to attend various professional conferences and workshops. The sponsoring organizations, not the Tantasqua/Union 61 District, will be responsible for issuing attendance confirmation and/or PDPs. Teachers should follow the proper procedures in their respective schools for pre-approved release time. The content of workshops and conferences attended during the school year should be consistent with Tantasqua/Union 61 goals and must be approved in advance by the principal. Teachers completing district-sponsored workshops may request a letter confirming the workshop topic, their attendance, number of hours and completion.



College Courses/Degree Programs: Tantasqua/Union 61 may partner with surrounding colleges and universities to offer courses and programs on-site. The individual teacher and the college/university are responsible for record keeping for the purpose of accumulating PDPs. On-site course content should be consistent with Tantasqua/Union 61 goals and must be approved in advance by the Superintendent.

“A collaborative culture is so strongly linked to improving schools that principals can not afford to simply hope this culture emerges: They must take steps to ensure that collaboration becomes the norm within their schools.”

-DuFour & Berkey, 1995, p. 31

Each school within Tantasqua Regional and Union 61 has developed a professional development plan for the four early release days and the November 2, 2009 Professional Development Day. While those plans have some distinct differences, there is much that is shared in common, allowing time for teacher collaboration across and within grade levels as the ultimate goal of increased student achievement is shared by all. Finally, once again this school year, the staffs from all eight schools will join together for the March Professional Development Day, this year scheduled for March 12, 2010.

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Committees

Academic Support Teams (Union 61)

This Union 61 team meets quarterly as a cohort to discuss topics of shared interest, i.e. best practices, motivating reluctant learners, scaffolding instruction, service delivery and student selection. Two teams meet separately, the Math Support and the Title I teachers.

Character Education Committee (Union 61)

This committee addresses issues/concerns/questions related to the implementation of the federal grant related to character education and community service learning. Participants come from both Union 61 schools and Spencer/East Brookfield. Topics include, but are not limited to, implementation of Lesson One, professional development and evaluation of the project per federal guidelines.

Community Service Learning Committee (CSL)

The role of this committee is to provide leadership for integrating service learning throughout the district. The committee, which consists of representatives from each school, will share service-learning theory and practice in order to enhance service-learning experiences across the district and to coordinate CSL activities.

Faculty Senate

The Tantasqua/Union 61 school system is committed to educational excellence. To accomplish this goal, the Faculty Senate is the forum for teachers and administrators to collaborate on initiatives to meet the goal of continuous improvement of instructional programs. The focus of this work will be determining priorities for district curriculum improvement and professional development at the school and system levels.

Literacy Leaders (Union 61)

This group works as a team to problem-solve issues related to providing a well articulated English Language Arts program consistently throughout all the schools of Union 61. Topics addressed include common assessments, parent information and engagement, literacy coaching, professional development and best practices. Meetings occur on a monthly basis, usually for two hours.

“Teachers learn best by studying, doing and reflecting; by collaborating with other teachers; by looking closely at students and their work; and by sharing what they see.”

-Darling-Hammond, 1998, p. 7

Committees, continued

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is dedicated to improving the well-being of all young children, with particular focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age 8.

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NAEYC is committed to becoming an increasingly high performing and inclusive organization.

Currently, the preschools in each of the elementary schools in Union 61 are either working toward their accreditation, or have already earned it, as noted below:

Brimfield Elementary School:	accredited through July 2009
Brookfield Elementary School:	accredited through July 2011
Holland Elementary School:	currently in self-study; visit in spring
Burgess Elementary School:	accredited through August 2012
Wales Elementary School:	accredited through August 2011

New England Association of Schools and College (NEASC):

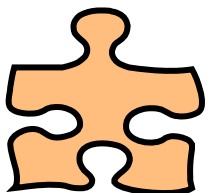
Accreditation relies on a voluntary, peer review process, engaging some 3,400 educators in the region on hundreds of reviews in any year. Each relies on a 12- to 18-month self-study process undertaken by schools and colleges in regular review cycles. The goals are school effectiveness, improvement and public assurance. Unlike popular magazines, this does not involve ranking institutions, but rather, establishes a level of acceptable quality for all accredited institutions.

Tantasqua Senior High's Two-Year Progress Report was delivered on October 1, 2007. In a follow-up report, the Commission complemented the high school on its work in addressing several recommendations in the two year period from 2005-2007. The Commission requested additional clarification on three recommendations to be documented in a Special Progress Report due in early 2009.

In 2008, the Wales Elementary School will complete a 2 year Special Progress Report for submission to NEASC.

"If schools want to enhance their organizational capacity to boost student learning, they should work on building a professional community that is characterized by a shared purpose, collaborative activity, and collective responsibility among staff."

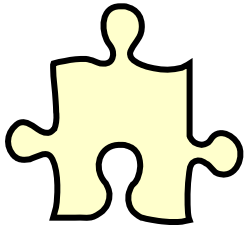
-Newmann & Wehlage, 1995, p. 37



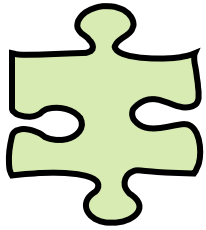
Ongoing Professional Development

Throughout the 2009-2010 school year, there will be additional professional development opportunities made available to staff, in addition to those mentioned previously. They include the following:

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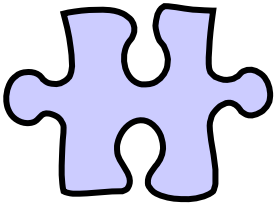


The Massachusetts Department of Education mandates annual training on a variety of topics, including: civil rights, confidentiality, physical restraint training, anti-harassment, and acceptable use of technology. The District continues to be in full compliance with these requirements.



According to MGL, c. 71A, regardless of whether a district enrolls one LEP (Limited English Proficient) student or hundreds, districts are required to provide Sheltered English Immersion programming. As a “low incidence district,” however, the state recognizes the unique challenges we face, thus allowing for the gradual phase-in of required trainings.

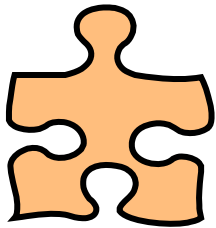
During the summer of 2009, 150 staff members from across Tantasqua/Union 61 were trained in either Category I or Category II Sheltered English Immersion training. During the fall Category III training will be provided to staff who has already attended one of the other Categories of training. Training will continue to be provided.



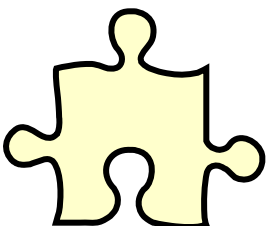
Structured professional development built into the school calendar through the four early release days and two professional development days. Other professional development has been coordinated at the building level, with considerable collaboration taking place between principals and schools.

A Mentor Training Institute took place in June of 08. These trainings utilized the Pathwise Induction Program, and address the following goals:

- Supporting new teachers
- Improving classroom instruction and student learning
- Retaining new qualified teachers
- Offering opportunities for reflection upon best teaching practices
- Enhancing teaching skills
- Nurturing collegiality
- Integrating teachers into the climate and culture of the school



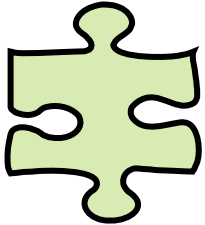
A Beginning Teacher Orientation session was held on August 20th at Tantasqua Senior High School. Along with viewing an original PowerPoint, the purpose of which was to introduce new staff to the Tantasqua Regional and Union 61 School Districts, beginning teachers also spent time reviewing the 4 Domains of the Pathways induction model, discussed the District Improvement Plan, and read and discussed an article related to beginning teachers.



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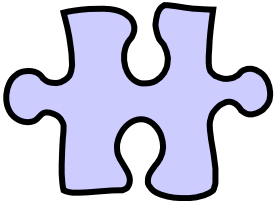
A Beginning Teacher Workshop series will be offered throughout the 2009-2010 school year, with sessions on the following topics being presented:

- Establishing a Culture for Learning
- Communicating with Parents/Setting Learning Expectations
- Effective Classroom Management
- Unpacking the Standards, Student Learning & Assessment

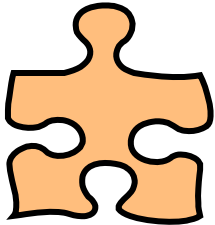


CPR/First Aid

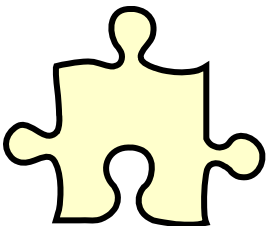
- Refresher Training
- Initial Training



Applied Non-Violent Restraint Training (ANV) In compliance with M.G.L. 71:37G and 603 CMR 46.00, each school maintains a restraint-trained team. Currently there are 70+ staff members from across Tantasqua/Union 61 who are certified. Each year all staff must be given an overview of the physical restraint training within the first month of school, with trained staff attending a 4-hour refresher each year. Utilizing both district and collaborative staff, ANV Restraint Trainings will continue to be offered to maintain effective teams.



Strategic Planning Committee As per the Superintendent's Goals for the 2008-2009 school year, a Strategic Plan for the Tantasqua/Union 61 Schools will begin to be developed. Working committees, consisting of administrators, staff, parents, community members and town officials will work collaboratively to develop the plan.



Math Training

- The Everyday Mathematics program has been adopted across the Union 61 schools, with implementation beginning in grades K-2 during the 2007-2008 school year. Grades 3 and 4 will implement this program in 2008-2009, with Grades 5 and 6 doing so in 2009-2010.
- Training will be provided to staff members throughout this implementation process.

Educator Licensure Recertification

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 requires school districts to, “Adopt and implement a professional development plan for all principals, teachers, and other professional staff, paraprofessionals and teacher assistants employed by the district” (M.G.L. Chapter 71 § 38Q).

The current DOE regulations require that educators earn 150 PDPs for their primary license within a 5-year cycle, with 80% of those PDPs classified as content-related and the remaining 20% in pedagogy-related activities; additional PDPs must be earned for additional areas of certification. The DOE continues to update the requirements for

recertification, therefore educators are advised to seek current information from the Massachusetts Department of Education website, the best source for such information: http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/e_license.html.

Educators who participate in school- and district-based in-service programs that focus on strengthening professional knowledge and skills in content areas are eligible to receive 1 PDP per clock hour. Educators may receive PDPs after the successful completion of a professional development program (minimum of 10 hours on a topic) with an observable demonstration of learning that could include a written product or other documentable product.

An observable demonstration of learning may include a written product or other documentation of the educator's learning as a result of having participated in the professional development activity. Examples of products that demonstrate the educator's learning, and therefore are acceptable PD activities, include: peer observation reports, reflection essays, professional journals or logs, and curriculum units. Within most of these products, there is evidence of educator knowledge, skills gained, and the impact or potential impact on student learning.

Educators can, to a large extent, design activities to meet the specific, identifiable needs of their students by creating their own opportunities for professional development. There will also continue to be PD opportunities for educators that are job-embedded, such as release days, committee work and professional development days.

Relicensure is an outcome of our professional development. The DOE requirements provide the opportunity to use professional development to address educator and student needs. This is a new and empowering development that dignifies the belief that teachers can direct their own learning.

NCLB/DOE Highly Qualified Requirements

According to the regulations outlined in the Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), all teachers who teach any or all "core academic subjects" must have met the definition of "highly qualified" by the end of the 2006-2007 school year. In order to be considered "highly qualified," teachers of core academic subjects must: possess a Bachelors degree or higher; possess a Massachusetts teaching license (Preliminary, Initial or Professional levels); and demonstrate "Subject Matter Competency" in each core academic subject being taught. For more information, go to:

<http://www.ed.gov/teachers/nclbguide/improve-quality.html>

There are multiple opportunities for acceptable professional development, including but not limited to:

- Faculty meetings focusing on school improvement, directed by principals to support the annual School Improvement Plan
- Workshops sponsored by outside agencies (because of the 10 hour minimum, participants will need to supplement workshop time with follow-up work in their classrooms or schools; these PDPs provided by workshop provider)
- Undergraduate, graduate, audited or on-line courses that are approved by the educator's evaluator which are then incorporated into the educator's repertoire of knowledge and skills

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- Educator-designed activities such as looking at student work, text-based discussions, and study groups
- Instructor for graduate level course – PDPs provided by agency offering course
- Instructor/Facilitator for district-sponsored professional development opportunity
- Participation on various district-sponsored committees
- Early release and professional day participation (must reach minimum 10 hours by subject area; participants may supplement with follow-up work)
- Curriculum meetings (documentable product, and minimum of 10 hours needed)
- Additional opportunities can be found on the DOE and Massachusetts' Teachers Association websites, as noted above

How do I develop an Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP)

1. Review a copy of your school's current School Improvement Plan.
2. Review a copy of the District's Improvement Plan
3. Review the required Professional Development Points (PDPs) for your license(s) http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/e_license.html
4. Formulate a set of individual professional growth goals consistent with district and school improvement goals.
5. Choose professional development activities that will help you meet your goals over the 5-year licensure renewal cycle.
6. Use the IPDP form to draft your professional development plan (Appendix A)
7. Share your plan with the Principal/Supervisor and secure his/her approval.
8. Complete the professional development activities and keep records; it is the educator's responsibility to maintain a file documenting PD activities in which he/she has participated.
9. Revisit your IPDP with your Principal/Supervisor a minimum of every two years to review goals and amend the plan as necessary. You may add appropriate professional development activities as they become available during the 5-year cycle.

"Privacy of practice produces isolation; isolation is the enemy of improvement."

-Elmore, 2000, p. 20

Additional Resources

The following represents a small sampling of the many available resources; teachers are encouraged to utilize these resources and share additional ideas and information with colleagues.

Massachusetts Department of Education
www.doe.mass.edu

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
<http://www.ascd.org/portal/site/ascd>

New England School Development Education Council (NESDEC)
<http://www.nesdec.org/>

United States Department of Education
<http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>

French River Education Center
www.frec.org

Merrimack Education Center
www.mec.edu

Phi Delta Kappa
<http://www.pdkintl.org/>

Massachusetts Elementary School Principals' Association
<http://www.pdkintl.org/>

National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
<http://www.naesp.org/>

Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association
<http://www.mssaa.org/>

National Association of Secondary School Principals
<http://www.mssaa.org/>

"The focus on collaboration is a shift from making teaching completely private to realizing how much you can learn by letting your teaching be public and talking about it with your colleagues."

-Stigler as cited in Willis, 2002, p. 7

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Appendix A – Individual Professional Development Plan



"We help children learn."

Massachusetts Department of

Education

Sample Individual Professional Development Plan for Massachusetts Educators

Name: Last First Middle Renewal Year

Home Address City State Zip Code

Primary Area Certificate Number

District School Grade Level(s) Subject(s)

Professional Development Points Required for Renewal of **Primary Area** 120 or 150

Total number of PDPs required in content

My professional growth goals (please number):

My professional growth goals are consistent with the following district and/or school goals:

Educator's Name

Certificate Number

Initial Review and Approval

Date _____

The signature below indicates that 80% of this educator's Individual Professional Development Plan is consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district and is designed to enhance the ability of the educator to improve student learning.

Supervisor's Name (print)

Title

Signature

First Two Year Review

Date _____

The signature below indicates that this educator's Individual Professional Development Plan was reviewed.

Please check one.

_____ The Plan remains consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district.

_____ The Plan was reviewed and amended.

Supervisor's Name (print)

Title

Signature

Second Two Year Review

Date _____

The signature below indicates that this educator's Individual Professional Development Plan was reviewed.

Please check one.

_____ The Plan remains consistent with the educational needs of the school and/or district.

_____ The Plan was reviewed and amended.

Supervisor's Name (print)

Title

Signature

Final Endorsement

Date _____

The signature below indicates the supervisor has reviewed this educator's Record of Professional Development Activities and the reported activities are consistent with the approved professional development plan.

Supervisor's Name (print)

Title

Signature

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