

Massachusetts Educator and Provider Support Grantees

Principles of Professional Development

Developed June 16, 2010 edited June 21, 2010

We, as regional leaders from across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, have the distinct opportunity and challenge to design a state-wide professional development system for the field of early care and education. As we begin this work, we recognize that two perspectives shape our work:

- We celebrate the diversity of the early childhood and out of school time workforce and will build on this diversity as a foundational strength.
- We value and recognize the importance of these educators to child outcomes.

With these perspectives in mind, it is important to establish a firm foundation for professional development amid fiscal restraints. Therefore, we adopt the following four core principles as guidelines for our work.

Our focus is on the children!

Professional development is a means through which we strive to enhance the workforce to create strong outcomes for children. They are ALL our children regardless of setting, language, race, class or geography.

We are a learning community.

“All in one boat,” we aim to be open and welcoming with each other and with the professionals with whom we work. We are peers without borders, striving for high quality professional development across all regions and avoiding duplication. To achieve this we will respect the unique strengths and challenges of each region, work collaboratively rather than competitively; always acknowledge our common agenda; and proactively address conflict with clear communication. Resources must be directed toward supporting and strengthening our work as a learning community.

Our work with adult learners is evidence-based and supportive.

“No professional will be left behind” as we facilitate learning opportunities among diverse staff with qualities such as different educational backgrounds or primary languages. We learn about



and implement effective practices, and emphasize partnerships, especially with institutions or settings that may have received less attention in the past. Risk-taking and innovation are encouraged as we set and achieve clear outcomes. Our goal is to provide professional development that will help educators put their knowledge into practice and positively impact their work with children and families. We understand that our work must ultimately be tied to increased compensation for the early care and education and out-of-school-time workforce.

Results matter.

We aim to advance the field in many ways including more useful data collection; stronger state-wide systems for selecting and evaluating trainers; and clarifying the range of evidence that will demonstrate how the capacity of the field is advanced.

What We Learned in Year One 2010-2011

Developed June 2, 2011

The past year has been one of enormous change and value. We, as regional leaders from across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, have taken on the challenge of creating and implementing new partnerships that deliver high quality professional development. What we have embarked on together are the first steps in a journey toward systemic change---building new relationships and reconfiguring old ones. This has been a year of adjustments and learning, and we have learned much.

We share common values and commitments.

We believe that all children can succeed and that we have a responsibility to help them do just that. Fulfilling this responsibility requires a diverse workforce that has the knowledge and skills to help them succeed.

We started this work as individual entities with a common set of core beliefs-- better defined pathways to competency; coherent, intentional support our entire field; raising the quality of available Professional Development ; and a commitment to positive outcomes for children-- now we are partners in common work --- even if we don't always (often?) agree on how to do it.

Results matter.

- In one year, we acknowledge and recognize that we do not yet have a system of professional development in Massachusetts. However, we are working deliberately to create a system. In this process, we are *initiating*:
 - New, functioning partnerships in each region; still new and evolving;
 - Linkages that can turn our new partnerships into a system that has the capacity to increase coordination, consistency and coherence;
 - Reflection and practical assessments as we figure out what was working and what was not;
 - Effective collaborations as we expand existing relationships and fill gaps with new ones;
 - New tools, policies, and procedures that have been designed and tested; and
 - Structures that governance, communication, and most of all managing change.
- While doing all this we somehow found time to
 - Help **1,597** educators plan their professional growth with IPDPs
 - Help **over 800** programs plan to improve quality through accreditation or QRIS
 - Offer **1,758** educators the opportunity to take a college course and **2,117** educators the chance to earn CEUs
 - Offer **2,129** educators the opportunity to benefit from coaching/mentoringAnd, that is only through the end of *April 2011*.
- One can only guess at the number of children who benefited from the support we provided to the educators who care for them and to the programs they attend.
- We realize that we have begun an important journey with many steps to be taken in future years.

The uphill climb is worth the view.

Massachusetts IS moving forward in the development of a professional development system--- and we treasure the opportunity to be part of the leadership that envisions and achieves this goal. We recognize that many paths lead to quality; that funding levels are not yet sufficient; that compensation issues are unresolved; and that while trailblazing one encounters obstacles.



Yet we are rewarded when we facilitate personal and professional growth among our colleagues; when we inch toward higher quality services; when we nudge emergent integration among systems; and when out of school time really counts!

Our collective work is by no means finished but we have made a good start because of our commitment and dedication to the children and families and the educators who work with and for them.