

Establish and support a new professional development paradigm

Statement of Need:

As the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the different content areas go through the review and revision process, they are being aligned and correlated to the College and Career Readiness. These standards will prepare Texas high school graduates for post-secondary success and aid in diminishing the number of students leaving high school in need of developmental education.

Beginning with the incoming freshman class of 2011-2012, high school graduates will be required to pass End of Course assessments in the four core content areas. The End of Course assessments coupled with the adoption of high standards require a shift in the approach to professional development in order to most successfully serve educators and students in classroom instruction.

Recommendations and long term planning:

Much of the professional development (PD) completed in prior years used a traditional approach with a teacher attending a session for a day or more outside of the classroom. While this type of professional development is useful, there haven't been ways to ensure teachers implement the ideas learned in the PD back in the classroom.

Classroom or Campus-Based

Other venues for professional development have been created in recent years to provide educators with professional development that is **classroom or campus-based**. Training would highlight instructional strategies that could be modeled in the classroom with students in order to short cycle the implementation process.

Classroom or campus-based training differs from traditional PD because it is designed to focus on the instructional needs of teachers in the context of teaching. During these year-long sessions, a coach might co-teach a lesson, lead the lesson with teacher(s) as observers, interject additional questions, and help the teacher modify the lesson based on the responses students are providing at different stages of the lesson. This type of training allows the coach to individualize the content of the training based on different needs the teacher might have.

For example, if a teacher is struggling with vocabulary development of English Language Learners, a lesson modeling language development might be used. The coach might model the first lesson, and then support the teacher as he/she implements the lesson with another group of students.

Ideally, teachers would become comfortable with external support during the course of this work. Leaders should begin to emerge during this process that can lead and coach other teachers in future years.

Lesson Study

Additional professional development models have been created to assist teachers in the planning process through the use of **lesson study**. Teachers work collaboratively to design lessons based on the needs of the students they serve. This learning environment enables teachers to share strategies they are using in their classrooms with others, discuss the TEKS, and share resources. Teachers are encouraged to team

teach lessons and debrief the outcomes of the lesson with the collaborative group. This process will also allow teachers to evaluate student work as anecdotal evidence of mastery of the student expectations learned in the lesson.

As districts begin to modify the type of professional development models used to develop the skills of educators, they must also determine how to ensure sustainability beyond the funded project. For this reason, planning must be completed to assess how campus leaders will communicate with the coach, conduct walk-through evaluations in classrooms, and facilitate the professional growth of staff members served. Flexible methods of delivery must be considered outside of the initial year to support new teachers (or teachers new to a campus).

Elearning or Online Professional Development

Elearning or online professional development has become more prevalent in the last five years. Teachers engaging in Elearning are given access to learning modules that typically include research, videos, and learning materials to support the content. Teachers are given some type of assignment to validate learning and sometimes have access to an online facilitator. Most recently, virtual learning communities have been developed in order to provide a way for teachers to communicate with one another about the content they have learned as well as share the results of activities and strategies they have used in the classroom.

To move education into the 21st century, we need to use a more comprehensive approach to teaching and learning with a strong commitment to rethinking traditional professional development.

Proposed Areas for Implementation:

Professional Development

- Implement strategies and activities learned from Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies that provides professional development to middle school teachers in order to increase adolescent literacy.
- Implement strategies and activities learned from Middle-school Students in Texas: Algebra Ready (MSTAR) professional development provided by the Educational Service Centers (ESCs), Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (T-STEM) Centers or Texas Regional Collaboratives (TRC), in order to increase mathematics achievement by focusing on critical areas for mathematics instruction and implementing intervention strategies for students in Grades 5-8 who are identified as needing math intervention (Tier 1 Response to Intervention (RtI))
 - Texas Response to Curriculum Focal Points (K-8) –clear consistent focused grade-level priorities to be taught in-depth , thus providing the foundation for connections across grade levels.
 - Addressing the Needs of Struggling Students-design and implementation of intervention strategies for students in Grades 5-8 who are identified as needing math intervention (Tier 1 RtI)

- Implement strategies and activities learned from T-STEM Center professional development provided to K-12 teachers in order to improve student achievement in math and science and incorporate engineering design principles into instruction.
- Implement instructional coaching similar to the Mathematics Instructional Coaching (MIC) grant. Mathematic Coaches may be selected from the approved service provider list or an Educational Service Center to provide classroom based mathematics coaching for teachers in grades 6-12 to improve teachers content knowledge and instruction practice
- Provide intensive professional development focused on the content standards including RtI, integration of technology and access points for students with disabilities (SWD), including teachers of SWD and English Language Learners (ELL)
- Develop distinct institutes to support K-12 TEKS and End of Course (EOC) assessments and College Readiness. All institutes may include the following components:
 - Use of appropriate data to drive instructional planning
 - Focus on diagnosis to drive instruction
 - Focus on the TEKS, lesson study
 - Increase teacher content knowledge
 - Focus on accelerating the curriculum
 - Appropriate use of technology
 - Use of ELL strategies to build academic language

Resources

Middle-school Students in Texas: Algebra Ready (MSTAR)

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=5348>

Texas Adolescent Literacy Academies <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/tala/>

T-STEM Centers <http://www.tstem.org>

Mathematics Instructional Coaching Approved Service Provider list

<http://burlson.tea.state.tx.us/GrantOpportunities/forms/GrantProgramSearch.aspx>

***To learn more, please contact the Division of Curriculum 463-9581 or State Initiatives 936-6060.**

***The information provided in this document is as an overview of recommendations and research. This list of acceptable activities is not exhaustive.**