



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2010-2011

Mission

It is the mission of Westford Public Schools to provide professional development opportunities that are researched based and enable its administrators and staff to expand their expertise and to improve their ability to raise student achievement.

Focus

In accordance with Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines, programs will be provided that focus on expanding educators' knowledge of standards based curriculum, differentiated instruction, and comprehensive means of assessment to increase student achievement. Professional development in Westford is directly linked to goals of our district's strategic plan and technology plan and individual school improvement plans.

Objectives

1. Improve teaching practices to increase student achievement
2. Provide intellectually challenging opportunities to encourage professional growth
3. Enhance staff's repertoire of skills and current content knowledge base
4. Increase staff's knowledge of standards based curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices
5. Encourage collaborative efforts among staff that foster a professional learning community
6. Support administrators and teachers in meeting the goals of their individual professional development plans

Beliefs

Targeted consistent teacher training and administrative commitment is key to implementing the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and raising the achievement levels of all students. We believe that technology enriches the learning process of teachers and students, has tremendous potential as a tool to differentiate instruction and learning opportunities, and supports students of all abilities in meeting the standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

Procedures

Goals for improvement are adopted at the district and school levels each year. Priorities are established for professional development aimed at achieving these goals.

A Professional Development Task Committee is made up of teachers representing each school and administrators. The Task Committee determines and prioritizes staff development needs. It then recommends differentiated professional development, which will assist in attaining the objectives of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, standards based teaching and assessment and interpreting and using data to plan instruction.

Individual Recertification

Under the provision of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, each individual educator must develop a professional development plan for recertification. The plan should be aligned with both building and district goals. The principal of the building or his/her designee must approve individual professional development plans.

Recertification regulations outline minimum requirements for professional development, however Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education encourages educators to participate in professional experiences that support and expand their content and professional skills beyond the minimum requirements. Guidelines are available at *www.doe.mass.edu*

Calendar

The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the district wide Professional Development Task Committee will update the professional development plan on an annual basis to ensure compliance with system goals.

Professional Development Opportunities

Educators who participate in programs that focus on strengthening professional knowledge and skills in content 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 an individual documentable product. Participants will typically earn one PDP for each hour.

Professional Development opportunities may include but will not be limited to:

Workshops – The Westford Public Schools offers workshops that focus on expanding educators’ knowledge of differentiated instruction, standard based curriculum and increasing student achievement on comprehensive means of assessment. These areas as well as others dovetail with the district’s strategic plan, technology plan, and individual school improvement plans.

Curriculum Development – Teachers and administrators are encouraged to take part in the development of the district’s curriculum. Westford Public Schools is dedicated to developing curriculum that focuses instruction and assessment on standards and is directly linked to the district’s strategic plan and technology plan.

Study Groups – Staff propose topics that examine curricula as well as promote educational changes that benefit students of our communities. School initiated study groups will be encouraged and supported.

Conferences – PDPs are not awarded for attendance at a conference. However, PDP’s may be earned if the attendee coordinates with the conference provider a method for demonstrating proficiency in the relevant subject area or skill through an appropriate end-of-course assessment that satisfies Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidelines.

Course Work from an Accredited Institution of Higher Learning – According to Massachusetts Recertification Guidelines, individuals pursuing college work at colleges and universities earn 15 professional development points (PDPs) for each credit hour.

University of Westford – The University of Westford was established during the teachers’ contract negotiations in 2003 as an in-house alternative to graduate level courses at local colleges and universities. Through this program, courses will be offered in the Westford Public Schools at no cost to the participants.

Simmons College Partnership – The Westford Public Schools entered a partnership with Simmons College in 2004 to offer a district-based masters degree and certificate of advanced graduate studies (CAGS) program to Westford faculty. Participants in this program will receive a degree from Simmons College with the convenience of attending classes in the town of Westford. All courses are taught by Simmons College faculty.

Mentoring – The Westford Public Schools has developed an in-house Mentor Teacher Training Program. The program follows the state guidelines for mentor training as well as meets college requirements for a 3-credit graduate course. Teachers may earn PDPs or 3 graduate credits. The purpose is to provide skilled veteran teachers with the tools and knowledge necessary for the many facets of mentoring. This professional development opportunity for experienced teachers is a yearlong process with a concentrated week of class followed by callbacks within the school year for sharing and reflection. A new teacher (mentee) is mentored for a one-year period. Mentor/mentee observations and meetings are integral parts of the program.

The mentor program includes a mentor/mentee summer systemic induction as well as school year building-based components involving personal relationship building and dissemination of systemic and school information.

Site Visits – The Westford Public Schools encourages teachers and administrators to observe programs in various schools. Sharing these valuable observations with colleagues fosters the importance of collaboration. PDPs may be earned through this process.

Cooperating Teachers – For many years, educators in the Westford Public School System have served as cooperating teachers in conjunction with programs at several area colleges and universities. This remains an important and useful professional development activity.

Guidelines for student teacher supervision are generally issued by the college or university involved. Cooperating teachers are asked to document the time spent in supervision. Forty-five PDPs are the maximum number of points awarded for this activity.

Training for School Council Members

Training for members of the district's school councils is provided. This district-wide orientation session includes an overview of the district's expectations, policies and procedures, the Massachusetts General Laws relevant to school councils, and a review of the Westford Strategic Plan. A calendar for budget presentations and school improvement plan approval will also be addressed. Capacity building, decision-making, and working toward consensus is covered.

Technology

In Westford, technology professional development is provided for teachers in two general ways: through the traditional workshop format and through the collaborative work of the Instructional Technology Specialist in each school. Training sessions are provided in a variety of formats including release-time professional days, before and after school workshops, and professional conferences. The magnitude of the ongoing technology professional development task requires that every possible effort be made to increase staff skills including the piloting of new models such as technology mentoring and online courses.

The complexities of developing the skills that enable a teacher to truly integrate technology into the curriculum requires more than training sessions of limited duration. Ongoing support is essential and is provided by each school's Instructional Technology Specialist. These certified specialists work with teachers in a consultative model, identifying places in the curriculum where the application of a technology will be beneficial for students and then co-planning, co-teaching and co-assessing technology-infused units. As teacher skills in a given area increase, the less direct intervention by the technology specialist is needed so that both can refocus on other areas of technology integration. This "train-the-trainer" model of professional development requires that the technology specialists themselves be provided with continual learning opportunities to keep abreast of changes in technology and related educational practices. Each school has a full time technology specialist except for the K-2 schools where a half-time specialist provides these services.

A goal of the school system's long-range technology plan provides for all staff to be "provided with opportunities to acquire appropriate skills in concert with the technical and instructional support they need to use technology effectively." Each year the objectives for this goal are revised to reflect changing needs. For more detail, refer to the current technology plan.

**Professional Development Release Days
2010-2011**

August 27, 2010	Welcome Back Day for Teachers
August 30, 2010	UbD Professional Development
October 8, 2010	Early Release <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site-based PD
October 12, 2010	2-hour Delay – Site-based PD
January 27 & 28, 2011	Early Release 27 th ; Full Day 28 th <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate to Improve Student Learning Breakout sessions. Teachers will have a choice among several topics that might include alternate assessments, differentiated instructional practices, disability awareness, teaching in a standards-based environment, Understanding by Design, or other current issues in education.
February 10, 2011	2-hour Delay – Site-based PD
May 24, 2011	Early Release <ul style="list-style-type: none">• District PD
May 31, 2011	2-hour Delay – Site-based PD

In-district Professional Development Opportunities 2010-2011

- # 2010 Summer Curriculum Work**
- 1** K-5 Science - Science Curriculum
- 3** Robinson, Math Pre-1 - Math Curriculum
- 4** Stony Brook, Technology - Google Apps & Web 2.0
- 5** Blanchard MS, Guidance - Peer Leader Training
- 6** K-5, Guidance - Anti-bullying lessons
- 8** Crisafulli, Guidance - School Climate
- 9** Blanchard & Stony Brook, Technology - GRT - Curricular Technology Course
- 10** K-5 Libraries
- 11** WA, Chemistry - Chemistry Connections Course
- 12** Miller - Bully Prevention/ Characteristics
- 13** WA, Health - Review of Health Curriculum, Assessments and Activities for Learning
- 14** WA, Art - Digital Darkroom
- 17** WA, Art - AP Studio Art and Advanced Art
- 18** 3-5, Strings - Expand Repertoire
- 19** WA, 10-12 Health, Child Development Curriculum Common Assessments
- 20** Blanchard & Stony Brook, Math, Grade 6 - Curriculum Design for EDM
- 21** Blanchard & Stony Brook, Math, Grade 8 - Curriculum Design for Newly Adopted Algebra for All-Standard Classes
- 22** WA (SPED), 9-12, ELA - Reading Non-fiction
- 23** 3-5, Writing - Scope & Sequence of Genres/Traits
- 25** Grade 1 - Word Study Differentiation
- 26** WA 11&12, Soc. Stud. - AP American History & CP Civics
- 27** Grades 6 & 7, Soc. Stud. - Curriculum Study
- 28** WA 11&12, Soc. Stud. - Psychology
- 29** Blanchard & Stony Brook, Soc. Stud., Grade 8 - Curriculum Mapping and Planning for New World History I Curriculum
- 31** WA 9-12, Computer/Business - Webpage Design using Dreamweaver
- 32** WA 9-12 Health - Sports Nutrition
- 33** WA 9-12 Spanish - Implementing Cinema Throughout Spanish Curriculum
- 35** WA 11 & 12, Science - Marine Biology
- 38** WA 9-11, Science - Foundations of Biology
- 39** WA 9, ELA - Write a UbD for Speak
- 41** Blanchard & Stony Brook 6, ELA - Reading/Language Arts Curriculum Integration
- 42** Blanchard & Stony Brook 7, ELA - Grammar UbD Unit: Stage 1 & 2
- 43** WA, Blanchard, & Stony Brook 6-12, ELA - Writer's Handbook
- 44** Blanchard 8, Science - Science Skill Drills
- 45** Blanchard 8, German - Revamp UbDs
- 47** Nabnasset - Social Skills

2010 Summer Curriculum Activities

University of Westford Summer Courses

Brain-Based Teaching and Learning

Recent findings in brain research have led to improved strategies in teaching students with varying learning styles. This course reviewed the research and developed strategies to improve and strengthen teaching skills in all disciplines.

Summer Institute on the Teaching of Writing

(Columbia University Home Grown Writing Institute for grades 3-5.)

The institute is an affiliate of Columbia's Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. The institute focused on curriculum development and planning the teaching of writing; units of study in the writing workshop; methods of holding students accountable for doing their best work; assessing and planning for work with individuals and small groups; and using literature to help students craft their writing.

Skillful Teacher

The Skillful Teacher course is a requirement for all Westford teachers within their first three years of employment. This course refines the participant's knowledge and skills of teaching by developing a common vocabulary. Information is presented through class presentations, role-playing, experiences in descriptive and reflective writing, and case studies.

Mentor Training Course

This course is designed to train veteran teachers to be effective mentors to our new staff. Topics include understanding the mentor's role, the qualities and skills of an effective mentor, principles of adult learning, case study analysis, exploration of teacher growth, and principles of effective teaching. This course is open to all pre-K-12 professional status teachers and is a prerequisite to becoming a mentor in the Westford Public Schools.

Simmons/Westford Partnership

COHORT III of the Simmons/Westford Partnership is in progress and will offer a Masters or CAGS in Education.