

DSAC Course Parameters

It is expected that professional development experiences provided to Level 3 and 4 districts through DSAC District and School Improvement grants or Race to the Top funding will include the following components. This applies whether the opportunity is run regionally for multiple districts or within a single district.

Most PD experiences are expected to have three components for systemic implementation: (1) the core PD experience; (2) an administrative support component for supervisors of participants, and; (3) a site facilitator/coach component to provide additional training for one or more participants from a given site to provide embedded support for implementation of PD learning.

Additionally, in most instances it is expected that cohorts of teachers from a given site will participate in the PD experience together in order to develop common learning and have the ability to provide mutual support for implementation following the PD experience.

Adjustments may be appropriate for certain types of courses (e.g., coach training, in which cohorts of the PD course from the same school may not apply).

I. THE CORE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

A. SYLLABUS

The syllabus for offerings in literacy, mathematics and science must demonstrate how the PD experience is aligned to the MA Curriculum Frameworks. Description of alignment must be detailed, and must include more than a crosswalk between course content and learning standards from the Frameworks. Supporting implementation of the Frameworks is a significant state priority, and it will be valuable to school districts to understand how courses on the DSAC PD pre-qualified list are able to support implementation of the Frameworks and Standards.

B. PRE- AND POST-ASSESSMENT

In order to gauge learning from the PD experience, each participant must participate in a pre- and post-test on the key concepts to be learned during the course. Although the pre- and post-tests are not required to meet rigorous statistical standards, they are expected to model good test construction techniques and be aligned to articulated course outcomes. Unless the provider has pretest and posttest instruments that have demonstrated validity and reliability, the pretest should be re-administered as the posttest to ensure compatibility and measure change in teacher knowledge and skill.

C. EARLY IMPLEMENTATION INDICATORS

In order to assist teachers, coaches, administrators, DSAC staff and others seeking to provide implementation support, each PD experience will provide a

concise list, with descriptions, of what an observer might expect to see being implemented in the classrooms of PD participants shortly after completing the experience. Indicators should be described briefly in language that is accessible to school and district learning walkthrough teams and to other classroom observers. Descriptions should include brief explanations of context and frequency with which indicators might be evident. It is preferred that indicators be identified along a continuum (e.g., not evident; developing; providing; sustaining) to support discussions around the scope of implementation. This is not intended to reduce implementation to a checklist, but should be a useful tool for supporting teachers in the early stages of implementation of PD learning. Indicators should be appropriate for the type of PD experience and the expected participants (e.g., teachers, coaches, academic content course, facilitator training, pedagogical strategies).

D. SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

In most instances, course participants are expected to complete a course survey at the conclusion of the course (or, in some instances, at the conclusion of the summer portion of a course). The survey is developed by the Department, and a link is provided to PD instructors.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT MODULE

The DSAC PD theory of action is predicated on the assumption that the administrator who supervises participating teachers should have knowledge of course content and pedagogy in order to effectively monitor and support implementation of PD learning. When administrators participate in the full PD experience with teachers, they have greatest capacity to support implementation of PD learning. When full participation is not possible, an administrative support module is offered in order to provide administrators an overview of the PD and suggestions for how administrators can support implementation of learning. The support module is typically a half-day experience.

The administrative support module includes:

- A brief overview of course content. A complete review of the course syllabus is not necessary (the syllabus will also be available on the DSAC website), but participants should receive a summary of course content;
- A summary of pedagogical strategies and techniques. Administrators should understand what major strategies are presented, and why these are valuable;
- Early indicators of implementation. What should observers expect to see in the classrooms of PD participants?

The administrative support module may occur as an addendum to the course (e.g., a three-hour session), or within the course (e.g., supervisors attend for a half-day and work with teachers to develop an implementation plan).

In addition to the administrator who supervises participating teachers, support module participation is offered to coaches and specialists (curriculum, SPED, ELL) who are in positions to support classroom implementation.

III. SITE FACILITATOR/COACH MODULE

Learning from professional development is much more likely to be implemented in professional practice when embedded support is provided to PD participants. The embedded support module provides a resource to support classroom implementation of PD learning. This is distinct from the administrative module in that it is designed to support team leaders and coaches to facilitate common planning and peer observation. Because many districts do not have formal coaching models in place, it is important that the module be designed so that the site facilitator does not have to be a coach in order to receive this training.

The person trained as the PD implementation site facilitator will be provided with tools for short-term and long-range implementation of PD learning, and will be trained in the use of protocols for facilitating school-based team meetings. This person will have the responsibility of keeping PD implementation goals before the team throughout the school year. The site facilitator may not have greater content expertise than other team members, but will have tools to organize and coordinate implementation.

The timing and duration of this module will vary according to the scope of the course.

IV. COURSE COMPLETION AND CREDIT

Completion of all elements of the course and the survey (I, D above) is a prerequisite for receiving credits and/or professional development points (PDPs).

V. COST STRUCTURES

The cost for a DSAC course must be inclusive of the administrative support module, the site facilitator/coach modules, course materials, instructors' salaries, course coordinator costs, etc. They should not be additional costs for which districts need to budget.

School districts will use District and School Improvement Grants and/or other funding sources to purchase professional development opportunities directly from

vendors. For district budgeting purposes the PD costs need to be represented in two ways:

- The cost of participation **per teacher**. This will support budgeting for regional courses and statewide (e.g., online) courses.
- The cost of purchasing an **entire course**. This should be presented as a range from the minimum number of participants for which the course will engage to the maximum number of participants that may attend.