PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS
OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

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Background

In its 2001 Session, the General Assembly revised the responsibilities of the State Board of Education relative to professional development programs. Specifically, Section 31.4.(a) of G.S. 115C-12(26) was rewritten as follows:

> The State Board of Education shall identify State and local needs for professional development for professional public school employees based upon the State's educational priorities for improving student achievement. The State Board also shall recommend strategies for addressing these needs. The strategies must be research-based, proven in practice, and designed for data-driven evaluation. The State Board shall report its findings and recommendations to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina prior to January 15, 2002, and shall review, revise, and resubmit those findings and recommendations annually thereafter. The State Board shall evaluate the reports submitted by the Board of Governors under G.S. 116-11(12a) to determine whether the programs for professional development provided by the Center for School Leadership Development address the State and local needs identified by the State Board and whether the programs are using the strategies recommended by the State Board. Prior to January 15th of each year, the State Board shall report the results of its analysis to the Board of Governors and to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee.

In 2001, representatives of the Department of Public Instruction, the Center for School Leadership Development, the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission, and the North Carolina Association of Educators were involved in the development of the initial report. Input was also solicited from legislative staff members. While many professional development needs were identified in the process of developing the initial report, it was, by design, focused on the need to address a major issue facing North Carolina's public schools--closing the academic achievement gap among students while increasing the academic achievement of all students. The initial report was approved by the State Board of Education in January 2002. The response to the report submitted by the Center for School Leadership to the initial report was approved by the State Board of Education in January 2003. This response is to the report submitted by the Center for School Leadership Development in November 2003.

Initial Request to the Center for School Leadership Development

The Center for School Leadership Development was asked to marshal its resources to assist the State Board of Education and the Department of Public Instruction in their efforts to decrease the gaps in achievement among groups of students based on race, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status while raising the achievement levels of all students in two distinct, but complementary ways. Specifically, the Center for School Leadership Development was asked:

1. to develop and implement a comprehensive school-level program designed to close the achievement gap while raising the achievement of all students, and

2. to work with DPI and other appropriate partners to design and develop a series of instructional modules for teachers, administrators, and instructional support staff focused on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential to closing the achievement gap while raising the achievement of all students.

School-Level Program

The Center was asked to develop and implement a comprehensive school-level program designed to close the achievement gap while raising the achievement of all students. The Department of Public Instruction was to identify 15-20 schools to participate in the program. The identification was to be based on a number of factors including the analysis of the achievement gap data which has been completed by the DPI Closing the Gap Section, the demographics of the school, and a commitment on the part of the school to eliminate the achievement gap. Cognizant that what happens at one level of the K-12 system (e.g., the elementary school) influences what happens at other levels of the system (e.g., the middle school and high school levels), to the extent possible, a Afeeder-school" model was to be utilized (i.e., 3-5 high schools and the middle schools and elementary schools which Afeed" into the high schools were to be identified).   Eighteen schools in four LEAs were identified to participate in the program.

As reflected in the initial report, it was the expectation of the Board that the **school-level program**:

a. be a coordinated and collaborative effort across the Center for School Leadership Development Programs, and not simply current CSLD Programs delivered at the school level;

b. be based on a comprehensive needs assessment that involves administrators, teachers, instructional support staff, and others involved in support of instruction in the identification of needs;

c. include not only teachers, but administrators, instructional support staff, and others involved in support of instruction;

d. be sufficiently flexible to allow for the identification and addressing of local issues contributing to the continuation of the achievement gap;

e. be replicable on a statewide basis;

f. occur over an extended period of time and include provisions for participants to try out new skills and techniques and analyze the impact of new strategies and approaches on student learning;

g. provide participants with on-the-job coaching and feedback;

h. be predicated on the characteristics of effective professional development; and

i. utilize research-based techniques.

Instructional Modules

To begin creating a "library" of high quality professional development activities that can be used to address the needs of individual teachers, administrators, and instructional support staff, the Center was asked to work with DPI and other appropriate partners to design and develop a series of instructional modules focused on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions essential to closing the achievement gap while raising the achievement of all students. These modules were to be designed for use by teachers, administrators, and instructional support staff, on an individual or small group basis, based on identified need. The modules were to be made available to all school systems in the state, and not limited to those schools participating in the school-level program. The modules were to be accessible on-line or through other distance learning technologies.

As reflected in the initial report, it was the expectation of the Board that the **instructional modules**:

a. be designed for independent use by teachers, administrators, and instructional support staff (i.e., they should allow for self-directed, self-paced learning);

b. be focused on the knowledge and skills inherent in the Core Standards for Teachers articulated by the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards Commission and adopted by the State Board of Education; and

c. include an assessment component that requires the individual to demonstrate application of the skills in the classroom and/or school setting.

Based on the experiences of the assistance teams and the July 2000 report by the Evaluation Section of the Division of Accountability Services entitled, *Closing the Achievement Gap: Views from Nine Schools*, the first series of modules were to address the following: the impact of diversity on learning; differentiated instruction; grouping strategies; assessing student progress; data analysis as a basis for planning instruction; developing higher order thinking skills; teaching basic reading and writing skills; integrating reading and writing across the curriculum; and content/subject matter updates.

Assessing the Impact of the Professional Development Activities

As reflected in the initial report, the objective of the professional development activities was to be to decrease the gaps in achievement among diverse groups of students while raising the achievement levels of all students. The effectiveness of the activities in achieving this objective were to be primarily assessed by measuring student achievement on End of Grade and End of Course tests and on the size of the achievement gap across time in participating schools. The ABCs results for prior years and the historic analysis of the achievement gap data completed by the DPI Closing the Gap Section was to provide the baseline data for measuring progress across time. This school level data is to be provided to the Center for School Leadership Development on an annual basis by the Department of Public Instruction and included in the CSLD Annual Report.

A secondary means of assessing the impact of the professional development activities developed by the Center for School Leadership Development in response to this request was to examine indicators of school success among different racial and ethnic groups in the school. These include numbers of students who:

a. dropout
b. are suspended or expelled
c. participate in academic clubs and academic extracurricular activities
d. participate in accelerated or advanced courses
e. enroll in AP/Honors courses
f. achieve honor roll or other academic recognition
g. enroll in and successfully completing continuing education (college/technical school)

Baseline data on these measures is available from the Department and on the Department website. Changes in the above indicators across time will measure progress toward the ultimate aim of reaching the point where there is no longer an ethnic, racial, gender, or socioeconomic indicator of school success.

Formative assessment was also to occur as the programs were implemented. This was to include assessment of participants' valuing of the activities, their understanding of the activities, their use of the knowledge and skills acquired through the activities, and the administrative and community support for their implementation of suggested strategies. Student work products were to be analyzed for evidence of participants' understanding and use of suggested strategies. The data gathered in the initial needs assessment is to be periodically reviewed and updated.

Response from the Center for School Leadership Development

In response to the initial report, the Center for School Leadership Development began working with schools in Duplin County, Lexington City, Montgomery County, and Swain County on a two-year initiative entitled ASSET (All Students Succeed through Excellent Teaching). In October 2002, the State Board of Education received the first report from the Center for School Leadership Development on the status of requested professional development activities. The report indicated that:

1. The CSLD's first goals were to gain a general familiarity with the districts and the schools and to determine the schools' and districts' specific needs with regard to closing the achievement gap.

2. CSLD personnel established communications with administrators and teachers at the sites, gathered critical data (EOC and EOG test scores, etc.), noted conditions and circumstances unique to each site, and completed initial site-assessments.

3. CSLD personnel reviewed and consolidated the initial assessments and began delivering services in June 2002.

The report also indicated that the following services had been provided to the schools and LEAs participating in the program.

Duplin County Schools	
Wallace-Rose Hill High School	• assistance in using newspapers in classrooms to promote better reading comprehension (services provided by the Principals' Executive Program and the UNC-CH School of Journalism) • NC Teacher Academy's "Making the Connections" workshop, delivered on site.
Central Office	• NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching workshop for beginning teachers, delivered on site.
Lexington City Schools	
Pickett Primary, South Lexington Elementary, Southwest Lexington Elementary, and Charles England Intermediate Schools	• NC Teacher Academy "Learning Styles" workshop, delivered on site.
Central Office	• NC Mathematics and Science Network "Closing the Gap" seminar, delivered on site.
Lexington City Schools Central Office: Lexington Elementary, Intermediate, Middle, and High Schools	• Test Score Analysis and Review, delivered on site by the building principals
Montgomery County Schools	
Candor Elementary and Star-Bisco Elementary	• NC Teacher Academy "Balanced Literacy" workshop, delivered on site
East Montgomery Middle School, Candor Elementary, Star-Bisco Elementary, and East Montgomery High School	• NC Teacher Academy workshops on meeting the needs of English language learners, delivered on site
Central Office	• NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching workshop for beginning teachers, delivered on site

Swain County Schools	
East Swain Elementary	• NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching school planning improvement workshop, delivered at NCCAT
Swain County Middle School	• NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching "Curriculum Integration" workshop, delivered on site • Facilitation of a series of faculty meetings on "Revisiting the Middle School Philosophy," delivered on site by NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching
Swain County High School	• NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching "Learning Styles and Multi-Cultural Understandings" workshop, delivered on site
Swain County Elementary, Middle, and High Schools	• Test Score Analysis and Review, delivered on site by the building principals
Central Office	• NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching workshop for beginning teachers, delivered on site • training for principals and central office administrators in instructional leadership based on data analysis, delivered on site by the Principals' Executive Program
Other Services Provided by CSLD	
• NCCAT reserved places in its regularly scheduled seminars for participants from ASSET schools and waived certain qualifying requirements for participants from ASSET schools • The Principals' Executive Program conducted seminars on data analysis for *No Child Left Behind* requirements for all four school districts	

The report indicated that the CSLD is in the process of:

1. scheduling as many workshops, seminars, etc. as possible into ASSET schools' existing professional development plans;

2. strengthening the partnerships between CSLD and the ASSET schools and refining the roles and responsibilities of the partners;

3. establishing communication networks with the new principals of ASSET schools;

4. analyzing student achievement data, especially 2001-2002 ABC results;

5. securing appropriate technical assistance from other education providers (e.g., universities) when ASSET schools demonstrate the need for expertise not available within CSLD;

6. developing means to warehouse data gathered by CSLD, the ASSET schools, the Department of Public Instruction, etc., in order to establish "baseline" information from which to determine ASSET project progress;

7. creating partnerships - both within CSLD and between CSLD and other agencies – to design and deliver the varieties of content-specific professional development that will be required to close the achievement gap;

8. developing the customized instructional modules "that may be delivered in a variety of ways, including electronically, to other schools with similar needs across the state" that are mandated by the DPI's January 7, 2002, report titled "Professional Development Needs of Public School Employees." Sample modules are:

- Differentiated Instruction – Principals' Executive Program and NC Teacher Academy
- Improving Supervision of Instruction in Mathematics – Principals' Executive Program and NC Mathematics and Science Network
- Improving Instructional Decisions through Effective Use of Data – Principals' Executive Program and NC Teacher Academy

These and other modules will incorporate and refine elements of existing CSLD instructional units, including:

a. teacher preparation units created by NC TEACH:
   ❖ The Professional Role of the Teacher
   ❖ Learning Theory and Cognitive Development in Students
   ❖ Diversity
   ❖ Special Education;
b. school leadership training units created by the Principals' Executive Program:
   ❖ Principals as Technology Leaders
   ❖ The Assistant Principals Leadership Program
   ❖ The Leadership Program for New Principals
   ❖ The Higher School Performance Program
   ❖ Improving NC High Schools;
c. teacher training units created by the NC Teacher Academy:
   ❖ Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom
   ❖ Site-based Management and Continual School Improvement
   ❖ Literacy
   ❖ Motivating Nontraditional Students;
d. mathematics- and science-specific units created by the NC Mathematics and Science Education Network:
   ❖ Inquiry-based Science
   ❖ Incorporating Technology into Mathematics and Science Instruction
   ❖ Science and Mathematics in a Multicultural Environment
   ❖ Numbers and Algebra, Statistics and Data Analysis, and Geometry and Measurement - three courses for middle school teachers originally developed by the National Science Foundation's Middle Math Project;
e. classroom-based units created by the NC Center for the Advancement of Teaching:
   ❖ Beginning Teacher-Mentor Training
   ❖ Program on Inclusive Classrooms
   ❖ Our New Neighbors (addressing issues related to the Latino population)
   ❖ Young, Black, and Male.

Throughout the 2002-03 school year the Center for School Leadership Development continued work on the ASSET (All Students Succeed through Excellent Teaching) initiative in the Duplin County, Lexington City, Montgomery County, and Swain County Schools. The report from the Center to the State Board of Education in November 2003 indicated that a tailored professional development plan was designed for each of the four systems based on a needs assessments that was shared with the superintendents and principals. The needs assessments involved not only student test scores, but demographic data, socio-economic data, and input from faculty and administrators. The Center report indicated that professional development and support was provided to all four districts based on their needs and the availability of staff to participate.

Highlights of the professional development activities reported by the Center are detailed in the following table.

LEA(s)	Activity
Duplin County	*Improving NC High Schools Program* (1 day per month training)
Lexington City	*Developing Teachers for K-3 Reading Success* (2-year project focusing on enhancing school reading programs)
Montgomery County	*New Neighbors: Latinos in NC* (Seminar for NC communities focused on culture, customs, and social expectations of Mexican immigrants)
Duplin County Montgomery County	*Strengthening Teacher Leaders: A Plan to Help Close the Gap* (2-year program of professional development and support for beginning teachers)
Duplin County Lexington City Montgomery County	*Children of Poverty* (Train the trainers session)
Duplin County Montgomery County	Cooperative Learning (Training for trainers)
Montgomery County Swain County	*Motivation: Giving Students the Wish to Learn* (Training provided by NCCAT)
Montgomery County	*Balanced Literacy* (Training)
Swain County	Instructional leadership training for principals, assistant principals, and central office staff
Duplin County Lexington City Montgomery County	*Young, Black and Male in America* (Seminar dealing with helping young black men succeed)
Lexington City	*Literature Circles* (training)
Lexington City	*Teaching and Learning in an Environment of Change* (training)
Lexington City	*Teaching Through Learning Styles*
Duplin County	*STAR* (2 year planning effort to determine what schools need to provide to meet needs of students, teachers, and community
Lexington City	*Data Driven Decision Making* (workshop)
Lexington City	Leadership Program for High School Principals
Lexington City	*Poverty Academy*
Swain County	*Lesson Planning for Higher Order Thinking Skills*

The report from the Center also indicated that concurrent with the on-going work in the districts, selected members of the ASSET team began the design of a professional development module focused on working with students in poverty because the issue of poverty was identified in all four districts as impacting student achievement and a need was seen for working with teachers on this topic. "Maximizing Student Potential" offers training to teachers and assistants in the areas of poverty awareness, classroom management/climate, instructional strategies, and working with parents from backgrounds of poverty. The

Teacher Academy, the Principals' Executive Program, the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, and the NC Math-Science Education Network designed and continue to deliver the various components of the module. The module is in the process of being piloted in Lexington City Schools and will be evaluated and fine-tuned for future presentations.

Additionally, the Department of Public Instruction provided the Center with funding to develop professional development modules in the areas of data-driven decision-making, instructional leadership, reading, math, classroom management, and teacher induction. Various programs in the Center developed the content for the modules and LEARN NC provided technical expertise to produce the modules in both CD and web-based formats. The modules have been completed and recently delivered to the Department.

In the summer of 2003, the four ASSET districts began participation in a project funded by the Department of Public Instruction with SAS Institute Inc. to be trained to use SAS software to analyze student achievement data. The project will allow the districts to longitudinally look at test scores and project potential achievement student by student. The information gleaned from such analysis will inform curriculum and instruction decisions at all levels of the districts for continuous school improvement and student achievement.

Response from the State Board of Education to the Initial Report from the Center

The response of the State Board of Education to the initial report from the Center for School Leadership Development was as follows.

> The State Board of Education appreciates the collaborative manner in which the Center for School Leadership Development has responded to the professional development needs outlined in the initial report and looks forward to subsequent reports from the CSLD that include data on the impact of the school programs and instructional modules. The data should include student achievement on End of Grade and End of Course tests, as well as other indicators of student success including the number of students who:
> a. dropout
> b. are suspended or expelled
> c. participate in academic clubs and academic extracurricular activities
> d. participate in accelerated or advanced courses
> e. enroll in AP/Honors courses
> f. achieve honor roll or other academic recognition
> g. enroll in and successfully completing postsecondary education (college/technical school).
>
> The Center should continue implementation of the ASSET initiative and development of the instructional modules detailed in the initial report. In addition, in light of the legislative mandate that teachers of kindergarten through eighth grade complete three renewal hours of reading methods courses during each five-year renewal cycle, Center programs should provide professional development focused on reading methods. It is the expectation of the State Board of Education that the professional development activities focused on reading methods:
>
> a. occur over an extended period of time and include provisions for participants to try out new skills and techniques and analyze the impact of new strategies and approaches on student learning;
>
> b. provide participants with on-the-job coaching and feedback;
>
> c. be predicated on the characteristics of effective professional development; and

d. utilize research-based techniques for improving reading instruction.

Response of the State Board of Education to the Second Report from the Center

The State Board of Education appreciates the efforts of the Center for School Leadership Development to work collaboratively with the Department of Public Instruction and other stakeholders to design and implement professional development programs to decrease the achievement gap while increasing the achievement of all students. The Board requests that the Center continue work on the ASSET (All Students Succeeding through Excellent Teaching) initiative. This should include both the school-based programs and the instructional modules.

As indicated in the response to the first report, the Board requests that subsequent reports contain data on the impact of the school programs and instructional materials. The data should include student achievement on End of Grade and End of Course tests, as well as other indicators of student success including the number of students who:
    a. dropout
    b. are suspended or expelled
    c. participate in academic clubs and academic extracurricular activities
    d. participate in accelerated or advanced courses
    e. enroll in AP/Honors courses
    f. achieve honor roll or other academic recognition
    g. enroll in and successfully complete postsecondary education (college/technical school)

Rather than simply reporting data, the next report from the Center should include an analysis of the data, an evaluation of the impact of the ASSET program on student learning, and recommendations for next steps based on the evaluation of the impact of the program.

The Board requests that the instructional modules developed this year by the Center focus on learning styles, meeting the needs of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students, and strategies effective in helping students successfully transition from middle school to high school.

In addition, as reflected in the January 2003 response, the State Board requests that in light of the legislative mandate that teachers of kindergarten through eighth grade complete three renewal hours of reading methods courses during each five-year renewal cycle, Center programs should provide professional development focused on reading methods. It is the expectation of the State Board of Education that the professional development activities focused on reading methods:

a. occur over an extended period of time and include provisions for participants to try out new skills and techniques and analyze the impact of new strategies and approaches on student learning;

b. provide participants with on-the-job coaching and feedback;

c. be predicated on the characteristics of effective professional development; and

d. utilize research-based techniques for improving reading instruction.

The next report should include information on the reading methods addressed in these activities, as well as the number of teachers served, and a measure of the impact of the training on the achievement of students taught by participants in the activities.