

*Section 5 -*  
*Education Issues -*  
**Staff Development for Teachers**

**KPMG Peat Marwick**  
Government Services Management Consulting  
in association with the McKenzie Group  
for  
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## Issue Statement

Critical to the success of education reform and the implementation of new programs such as site based management at both the state and local levels is an intensive staff development program for teachers. This program must be comprehensive in scope and, at the same time, sufficiently flexible to meet the individual needs of school districts serving differing student populations.

We are asking teachers to teach to higher expectations and to play a significantly greater role in decision making regarding instruction. We expect that they will be able to interpret assessment data and then tailor their teaching methods to address identified needs. To be successful in meeting these expectations, teachers must have the necessary tools and ongoing training.

This issue paper assesses the content and quality of staff development currently offered for teachers. It makes recommendations designed to improve both the types of staff development offered to teachers and to increase the value received for the resources spent.

## Background

The State's teachers need continuing training to meet the difficult challenges facing schools. Those challenges include: the need for high school graduates trained in technology; the need for more sophisticated numeric as well as written and spoken language literacy; increases in the range of skill and conceptualizing levels of students entering school; increasing numbers of mobile families; and a global economy that requires students to develop a global consciousness. Finally, movement toward local school empowerment through site-based management and shared decision making will require development of new skills at all staff levels.

Retraining of the teacher work force on a statewide basis cannot occur overnight or in a limited time frame. Such training must be ongoing, must be tailored to meet the individual needs of each staff group, must involve feedback from those trained, and must be continually reinforced. It also must include a variety of training methods including coaching and mentoring instead of simple attendance at workshops. It should include significant time spent on gaining additional mastery in each teacher's content area (science, math, or reading, etc.).

The State of North Carolina has recognized these realities and has provided a range of training programs of differing length and updated content using varied methods of delivery including public television. The State has given staff training a high priority in both program planning and in budgeting. To assure all districts a comparable level of funding for staff development, the Basic Education Program allocated to all schools a staff development foundation fund as well as additional funds based on average daily membership. As part of its ongoing effort to promote excellence in teaching, the legislature instituted a Career Development pilot in 16 administrative districts, and later, in Senate Bill 2, gave all districts the opportunity to provide differentiated pay for teachers. The same bill provides funds directly to districts to support staff development.

Efforts to provide effective programs for training staff occur at every level of public education in the State. Within the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), staff development programs are primarily the responsibility of the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel Services supported by other units in DPI and the Technical Assistance Centers. Additional staff development programs are provided in local districts and by institutions of higher education and The Institute of Government.

In Personnel Services, primary responsibility for staff development rests with the Division of LEA Personnel Services. Within that unit, two offices--Staff Development and Effective Schools--handle staff development programs. The responsibilities of these two units include disseminating information to local districts related to training opportunities, providing administrative training, conducting assessment centers, providing training in connection with performance appraisal, and providing effective schools training.

In several units outside the Division of LEA Personnel Services, staff members handle staff development activities to support their mission. Such divisions include Curriculum and Instruction Services, Student Services, Exceptional Children's Services, Vocational Education and Research and Development Services.

During fiscal year 1988-89, local school districts reported expenditures of \$15,226,014 to train 96,275 persons.

This included expenditures from all sources (federal, state, and local). The categories included:

Participant travel	\$ 4,278,851	28 %
Substitutes	3,308,686	22
Local workshops	1,835,362	12
Training materials & supplies	1,587,968	10
Stipends for participants	1,442,233	10
Refreshments/Meals/Rooms	1,001,718	7
Tuition & fees for college	990,197	7
Fees for non college courses	780,999	5
Total	\$15,226,014	100%

Source: Performance Audit Report Department of Public Instruction  
May 1990

Information for later years is not available as these reports were discontinued with the implementation of provisions in Senate Bill 2.

## Findings

### *Finding 1: Course offerings do not reflect the priorities that the State has set in educational reform.*

A review of staff development programs offered by Curriculum and Instruction in the past year shows representation from all content areas. The number of course offerings ranged from one to eight.

The emphasis on a new accountability process and the introduction of the end-of-year and end-of-course assessments should include in its implementation an intensive staff development effort to support school districts in improving instruction in the key academic areas such as science or reading. This is particularly important in the areas where test results are lowest. It is clear substantial effort has gone into certain academic areas such as math and science. On the other hand, only two courses at 11 sites are offered in communications which is equally important. Given the emphasis in the assessment program on writing and reading, the small number of staff development offerings in communications indicates staff development training is not structured around educational priorities.

Similarly, staff training in compensatory education (Chapter 1 federal program) was offered at only four sites. The size of the compensatory education program in North Carolina would suggest a larger training program for compensatory education staff and more emphasis on the early childhood education field in general.

We found little evidence of strategic planning that would translate the desired outcomes in the reform initiatives, such as increased accountability, into an action plan to provide the necessary training or retraining of teachers. We also found no linkages between funding levels provided for staff development and the actions necessary to achieve the desired results.

Coordination of services and a systematic approach that assures availability of training experiences to

districts having an identified need in that area is lacking. The provision of local training funds, while an important element, does not guarantee that each district has the personnel available to plan, deliver, and monitor implementation of training programs. For the Legislature to be assured that all school staff are receiving appropriate training, there must be an improved delivery mechanism put in place beyond funding.

***Finding 2: The current staff development activities provided by DPI and the individual local districts do not meet the needs of many small districts.***

Our interviews with superintendents indicate that smaller districts (i.e., those under 10,000 ADM or 77 percent of the districts in the State) need greater support of their local staff development efforts. Many districts have limited personnel to provide training, particularly in content areas such as math, science, communication, and early childhood. When there were eight regional centers, these districts could access specialists in the content areas. In the past two years, with generalists giving support primarily to districts identified through the accreditation process, small districts have lost that support. There are not enough resources in Raleigh to support these districts' training needs, so they must rely on very limited internal staff resources.

Given the current limits on available staff and resources, the Technical Assistance Centers are directing their resources to support districts who have not met accreditation or report card standards. It is reasonable that these identified districts receive first priority from the TAC's. However, it also seems reasonable that districts with limited or no staff development departments and are not among the districts targeted for intensive support, be considered as another priority.

***Finding 3: There is a lack of coordination in staff training offered by DPI.***

Another concern expressed by the local districts was the lack of coordination in training programs among different offices in DPI. One example given by several districts was the ongoing emphasis on Effective Schools training that they believed does not take into account the new state emphasis on outcomes based performance and the Report Card. Some district personnel saw a lack of coordination between the report card and the expectation of effective schools training that school staffs establish school instructional priorities. It is possible that if staff development personnel were to address this issue, they could successfully resolve the perceived conflict.

When interviewed, representatives of units in DPI described the training they were providing to schools through a variety of workshops. Some were serving teachers, some counselors, some administrators. When questioned, each replied that their unit was not familiar with training provided by other DPI units. It was assumed that this coordination occurred at the assistant superintendent level.

Staff development programs need to be coordinated with other personnel functions including teacher selection, induction, and evaluation. Each operation within the personnel office should identify teacher training needs and work with staff development to see that appropriate training vehicles are provided. For example, if the teacher evaluation process reveals a need for training in classroom management, that training could be incorporated into training in the specific content areas. If the teacher induction process indicates a widespread need for computer training for teachers, such training could be offered at TAC's throughout the State for first year teachers.

This finding was also noted by the State Auditor in his May 1990 performance audit of the Department of Public Instruction. In his study, he found that the staff development person in the local district deals directly with the staff development personnel in each of the programs in each individual program at DPI.

***Finding 4: Over one third of the resources spent on staff development from all sources are spent on participant travel, meals, and hotels.***

The State Auditor in his 1990 performance audit of DPI noted that over one-third of the staff

development expenditures reported by the local districts from all sources was categorized as participant travel and refreshment/meals/room rent. This represented approximately \$ 5 million out of \$15 million spent on items other than direct staff development. As noted earlier, information on later years is not available as this report was discontinued with the implementation of certain provisions of Senate Bill 2.

***Finding 5: The State's annual leave policy for teachers serves as a barrier to enhanced staff development.***

At the state and local district level there is a consensus among administrators that the annual leave policy is in conflict with the opportunity for staff training and development that work days provide. Work days afford districts an excellent opportunity for staff training; however, because teachers must use or lose their annual leave and are not permitted to take the leave on days when school is in session, teacher attendance is unpredictable on work days and outside the control of local administrators. Informal estimates suggest that as many as 30 percent of the teachers are absent during each scheduled work day. Thus, a district cannot be assured of having staff available for staff development activities held during work days.

The State of North Carolina has made a strong commitment to staff development by building into the 20 calendar work days when teachers are free from classroom responsibilities to perform other professional responsibilities or receive training. This commitment is in conflict with the annual leave policy.

## **Recommendations**

Great strides have been made in providing the public meaningful information about student achievement. Excellence in teaching has been established as a goal, and funds have been budgeted to provide training. The next step involves connecting the results of data collection and analysis to the identification of teacher training needs and then systematically providing a coordinated program of training to meet those needs.

***Recommendation 1: The State Board of Education should develop a strategic plan for teacher staff development that identifies which types of training at what level are necessary to achieve the desired changes in teacher activities.***

A strategic plan for teacher professional development should address the following: identified needs, goals and objectives; strategies; performance measurements; implementation plans and cost benefit analysis. The strategic plan should address these issues as well as ascertain the cost to achieve the desired results. One method to determine this information would be to require that all educational reform initiatives include a fiscal note on the cost to implement, including training.

For example, if the desired outcome is increased participation in site based management at the school level, the following questions should be answered:

- What kinds of training and exposure are necessary for teachers to be able to implement this policy in a meaningful way?
- As a strategy, do we train certain teachers who in turn train others on their campus?
- Do we send teachers to observe and participate on campuses that already implemented successful programs?
- Do we train the principals and then use them as facilitators?
- Do we use all of the above strategies?

**Recommendation 2:** *A staff development advisory group should be established to provide recommendations regarding staff development needs to the State Superintendent.*

This group should consist of no more than eight to twelve representatives from local districts, especially small districts, and the TAC's. Central DPI staff should participate as ad hoc members of the advisory group. On the basis of the recommendations of this group, the State Superintendent can then set training priorities and communicate this information widely.

**Recommendation 3:** *The responsibility for the coordination of staff development should be consolidated in one division in DPI.*

Staff development functions in the Division of LEA Personnel Services should be restructured into two units; the Office for Statewide Staff Development and Office for LEA Staff Development Support. Division of LEA Personnel Services should assume responsibility for providing coordination of the staff development activities of all divisions of DPI and the Technical Assistance Centers.

**Recommendation 4:** *Long distance learning technologies should be implemented in teacher staff development to reduce overall costs by limiting the amount of participant travel and associated meal and lodging costs.*

We noted in our findings that approximately 33 percent of the costs associated with staff development are attributed to participant travel and associated costs. We recommend that DPI seriously evaluate the use of existing and planned telecommunications and long distance learning systems to limit the expenditures which are not direct staff development.

We recognize that an important aspect of staff development is the opportunity to meet and work with professionals from a variety of educational organizations. This recommendation is not intended to eliminate such interaction. Rather it is intended to point out the significant costs associated with participant travel and to recommend alternatives that can reduce costs. For example, long distance learning could be offered through local universities in the area. Teachers could assemble at various locations throughout the state and participate in the staff development sessions with their peers at that location and using teleconferencing across the state.

**Recommendation 5:** *The annual leave policy should be modified so that a given number of work days would be unavailable for annual leave.*

Instead of losing annual leave, teachers could:

- Take a limited number of work days during regular school days with substitutes provided
- Accumulate time toward retirement by contributing the number of annual leave days corresponding to the number of days identified as unavailable for annual leave.
- Participate on weekends or during the summer, receiving a stipend so that it will not be necessary to provide substitute teachers.
- Be required to be present for certain mandatory work days.

The cost to implement the first two concepts will be significant. We estimated that the cost to provide substitute teachers for one day across the state could be \$3 million. If the second option is selected there will be additional costs to the retirement system. We recommend that the State Board of Education consider implementation of the last two concepts as the cost would be very low to implement if teachers are willing to participate in staff development either without receiving additional pay or receiving only small stipends.

## Implications

A more coordinated staff development effort is necessary to institutionalize the improvements mandated by state programs. Development of a strategic plan for staff development will enable the State to prioritize training resources to support implementation of state programs and to allocate the resources necessary to achieve desired implementation. A more clearly defined process for identifying training priorities will result in a more realistic time frame for planning and delivering training statewide.

With one office in DPI serving as a coordinating arm for all staff development programs, the current duplication of some training experiences and lack of availability of training for small districts can be eliminated. A single office for coordination will facilitate the sharing of successful local district training models among school districts. A single office can also establish and continually evaluate standards for the delivery of staff development from all sources, within DPI, on local campuses or by outside sources such as the universities.

By assuring that all teachers are available during at least a few of the work days, the State can require annual training for all teachers. School districts will have the opportunity to implement programs systematically.

The cost to implement these recommendations can be accomplished under the current budget funding with the possible exception of work days for teachers. As noted above, if teachers are willing to participate in staff development outside of school hours but as part of their normal work, the cost will be minimal.