



Council for Education Policy,
Research and Improvement

IN-SERVICE EDUCATION FOR FLORIDA EDUCATORS

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COUNCIL FOR EDUCATION POLICY, RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT

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The Council for Education Policy, Research and Improvement (CEPRI) was created as an independent office under the Office of Legislative Services by the 2001 Legislature (Section 1008.51, Florida Statutes). The Council serves as a citizen board for independent policy research and analysis and is composed of five members appointed by the Governor and two members appointed by the Speaker of the House and two members appointed by the President of the Senate. The Council's statutory responsibilities include the following:

- ❖ Prepare and submit to the Florida Board of Education a long-range master plan for education. The plan must include consideration of the promotion of quality, fundamental educational goals, programmatic access, needs for remedial education, regional and state economic development, international education programs, demographic patterns, student demand for programs, and needs of particular subgroups of the population, implementation of innovative techniques and technology, and requirements of the labor market.
- ❖ Prepare and submit for approval by the Florida Board of Education a long-range performance plan for K-20 education in Florida and annually review and recommend improvement in the implementation of the plan.
- ❖ Annually report on the progress of public schools and postsecondary education institutions toward meeting educational goals and standards as defined by s. 1008.31.
- ❖ Provide public education institutions and the public with information on the K-20 education accountability system, recommend refinements and improvements, and evaluate issues pertaining to student learning gains.
- ❖ On its own initiative or in response to the Governor, the Legislature, the Florida Board of Education, or the Commissioner of Education, issue reports and recommendations on matters relating to any education sector.
- ❖ By January 1, 2003, and on a 3-year cycle thereafter, review and make recommendations to the Legislature regarding the activities of research centers and institutes supported with state funds to assess return on the State's investment in research conducted by public postsecondary education institutions, in coordination with the Leadership Board of Applied Research and Public Services.

Further information about the Council, its publications, meetings and other activities may be obtained from the Council's office, 111 West Madison Street, Suite 574, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1400, telephone (850) 488-7894; FAX (850) 922-5388; Website – www.cepri.state.fl.us.

INSERVICE EDUCATION FOR FLORIDA EDUCATORS

Introduction

The Council for Education Policy, Research and Improvement was directed by the 2004 House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, to “evaluate the degree to which the in-service education programs of schools districts have resulted in improved student performance. By January 15, 2005, the Council shall report the results of this investigation to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the Florida Board of Education.”

The *School Community Professional Development Act of 2000*, Section 1012.98, Florida Statutes, called for a major revamping of the content and delivery of in-service, professional education for teachers throughout Florida public schools, and additional provisos in 2003 placed an emphasis on the importance of literacy training and the need to focus on the use of research-based approaches to professional development. The act has as its primary focus creating strong linkages between teacher participation in in-service activities and improvement in student performance.

The Council utilized resources of the Florida Department of Education (DOE), legislative staff, district staff development directors/coordinators, university administrators, and regional educational consortia staff to determine the scope of financial resources allocated to in-service education and how these resources are utilized by school districts. In addition, district and university staff development personnel were impaneled to address the Council to discuss the types of in-service activities conducted in their service areas and the impact of that training on student outcomes. Materials associated with Phase I of this study are found in the appendices.

Phase I

In Phase I of the study, the Council reviewed state and school district funding reports on professional development and compiled a summary of efforts at both the state and school district level designed to meet the goal of improving student achievement through participation in in-service education programs. Through this process, key issues were identified that warrant further study.

Funding for In-Service Education

The Florida Legislature annually allocates funds to every school district to support in-service education activities and, in 2003, the Legislature mandated that 50 percent of the funds be utilized exclusively for the support of literacy training. State funds however, are not the only source of revenue for staff development. The federal government, through targeted programs established in its *Improving America's Schools Act*, *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* and other initiatives, partially or fully funds numerous instructional programs, and a portion of the funding for each of these programs is used by school districts and schools for teacher training.

Within the framework of Section 1012.98, F.S., each of the state's 67 school districts utilizes a combination of state and federal appropriations to implement its Master Plan for In-Service Education and to address the professional development needs of its classroom teachers. Due to the complexity of the funding mechanisms and sources used in each of the districts to finance in-service training, it has been difficult to identify and track the specific amounts and sources of funds. In light of the significant dollar amount that is appropriated at the federal, state and local levels to fund in-service education, additional work is needed in order to gain an accurate picture of these funding sources and amounts, in a way that will enable the allocations to be linked to program output, school performance and student achievement.

Program Evaluation

Emanating from the *School Community Professional Development Act*, the Department of Education's new evaluation process is called the Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol. All school districts are currently participating in a professional development system review by the Department of Education through a multi-year site visit schedule that began in 2003. The changes that have come about in the delivery and implementation of in-service education in the State since the enactment of F.S. 1012.98 have been very recent and the effectiveness of these new approaches is still in the process of being evaluated. Additional examination of the system protocol via district site visit evaluations is needed to provide feedback on the program strength of individual districts and the effectiveness of the new standards on student achievement.

Study Findings: Phase I

- Based on an assessment of training needs in each school district and in local schools, **distinctive in-service programs are developed and described in each district's Master Plan for In-service Education**, which contains all the approved in-service activities or components that teachers and other certificated personnel may use in order to renew their professional certificates.
- **All school principals must now establish and maintain an individual professional development plan (IPDP) for each teacher at the school**, with a portion of the plan including some type of in-service education activity.
- **The Florida Legislature has appropriated \$36 million each year in recent years to support professional development and teacher training in each of the 67 school districts based on a per-FTE basis. For the 2002-03 school year, DOE reported that nearly \$182 million, from state and federal sources, was spent on staff development, for an average of \$1,152 per person.**
- **The Department of Education's Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol is based on standards established by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC)** and is designed for use by the DOE during on-site visits in school districts, by district staff in preparation for site visits, and by school staff and School Advisory Councils for self-assessment.
- **Education consortia in Florida serve mainly small and rural districts throughout the state and provide both instructional and administrative training for their member districts.** Active agencies include the North Florida Educational Consortium (NEFEC), the Crown Consortium, the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium (PAEC) and the Heartland Consortia. In addition, the Florida Learning Alliance (FLA) collaboration is working to develop a telecommunications network, course offerings, teacher training and other benefits to enhance the educational programs in a number of small and rural school districts.
- **A number of public and private universities and colleges in the state have centers dedicated to instructional and administrative training.** These professional development centers provide additional avenues for teacher training and create partnerships between and among universities, colleges and school districts.
- **The Schultz Center for Teaching and Learning is an independent, non-profit corporation established to provide professional development services to five Northeast Florida counties.** Through a partnership with the Duval County School District and with CEPRI, the Schultz Center is working to design a program evaluation model that will test the effectiveness of specific teacher training programs and activities on student achievement.

Phase II

The effectiveness of in-service education programs is an important matter which merits additional study and evaluation. In phase II of the study, the Council will further examine specific school district funding allocations, policies and procedures that support in-service education training programs and will assess their impact on school improvement and student achievement. Additional evaluation of the professional development system protocol of selected school districts will also be done. Study plans for Phase II are as follows:

1. Conduct a quantitative and qualitative analysis of in-service education funding allocations, policies and procedures in a representative sample of Florida school districts. Review state-level accounting reports and school district expenditure analysis reports in order to gain an accurate accounting of district expenditures from all sources for professional development.
2. Review the findings of the first cycle of on-site reviews of selected school districts using the Professional Development System Evaluation Protocols and gather data on the evidence of improved student performance based on staff development participation/practices.
3. Identify “best practices” in school district professional development programs that are targeting increased student achievement, particularly in low-performing districts and schools.
4. Work with the Schultz Center and Duval County School District to develop a model for measuring the effectiveness of staff development in terms of improved student achievement.

Following these activities, the Council will have a comprehensive picture of funds from all sources allocated by school districts to in-service education and of efforts to link these funds to improved student achievement. In addition, the Council, in collaboration with the Schultz Center and Duval County School District, will develop a model that can be used by other school districts for determining the effectiveness of specific in-service education activities on raising student achievement.