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Implementation of the Master Plan for Statewide Professional Staff Development for 2011-2012

An Evaluation Study

Participants gave the strongest ratings to the relevance and specificity (content-focus) of the professional development. The weakest ratings were for two follow-up items—that is, follow-up discussion and collaboration, and related follow-up professional development.

Participants reported greatest impacts on their knowledge and behaviors, with less impact on their attitudes and beliefs.

The ability of some providers to participate meaningfully is hampered by the schedule that must be kept in formulating the PD Master Plan.

This evaluation study examined the formation and implementation of the West Virginia Board of Education's Master Plan for Professional Staff Development for 2011-2012 (PD Master Plan).

Method of study. We examined the performance of PD providers included in the PD Master Plan: Marshall University, all eight regional education service agencies (RESAs), the WV Center for Professional Development (CPD), and eight WV Department of Education (WVDE) offices. We used two main data sources: PD session reports from the providers, and an online survey of 6,312 participants who attended the sessions to which 4,281 responded (68% response rate).

Findings. Of the sessions planned, 77.5% were implemented—down slightly from the previous year. Attendance was also down, dropping nearly 42% from about 37,000 in 2010-2011 to under 22,000 in 2011-2012. The RESAs, CPD, and Marshall all saw lower attendance, while WVDE providers' attendance was slightly up. Overall, participants were in agreement that the sessions they attended adhered to research-based practices for high quality PD. The strongest ratings were given to the relevance and specificity (content-focus) of the PD. The weakest ratings were for two follow-up items—that is, follow-up discussion and collaboration, and related follow-up PD. Only 51.2% of respondents agreed that the sessions they attended were helpful in moving them toward the Board goals they were intended to support. Participants reported greatest impacts on their knowledge and behaviors, with less impact on their attitudes and beliefs. Collectively, we estimate participants traveled more than 20,000 hours to attend the PD, with participants from some counties traveling twice as long as others. As for formation of the plan, only one of the 11 public institutions of higher education (IHEs) with teacher preparation programs participated in the PD Master Plan and only eight of 15 WVDE offices. All eight RESAs participated. The ability of some providers to participate meaningfully is hampered by the schedule that must be kept in formulating the PD Master Plan. It is unknown how much of the PD offered by IHEs, RESAs, and the WVDE falls outside of that which is included in the PD Master Plan.

Limitations of study. While a 68% response rate is high for this type of survey, there remained a portion of the sample from whom we did not hear, whose perceptions of the PD are unknown.

Recommendations. The Board may wish to consider urging providers to (a) support more follow-up to their PD, (b) better align their PD with the Board's goals, and (c) reduce travel time by using more online PD formats; and to consider (d) other methods for including IHEs in the PD Master Plan, (e) reopening the PD Master Plan in early October to allow providers to revise their plans, and (f) conducting a study of the PD offered outside of the PD Master Plan by the four main groups of providers (i.e., CPD, RESAs, IHEs, and WVDE).

For more information, contact Patricia Cahape Hammer, Office of Research (phammer@access.k12.wv.us), or download the full report: *Implementation of the Master Plan for Statewide Professional Staff Development for 2011-2012: An Evaluation Study* from the Office of Research website at <http://wvde.state.wv.us/research/>.