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MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Utah State Board of Education

FROM: Diana Suddreth
Director, Teaching & Learning

DATE: August 11-12, 2016

INFORMATION: Professional Learning Series

Background:

In 2011 an appropriation from the legislature supported by the governor established the Core Academy which provided the basis for the Professional Learning Series (PLS). Since 2011 the PLS has served teachers throughout the state in online, blended, and face-to-face learning opportunities that support the teaching of core academic standards.

Board Strategic Plan:

This item supports the following imperative(s) and strategies in the Board's Strategic Plan:

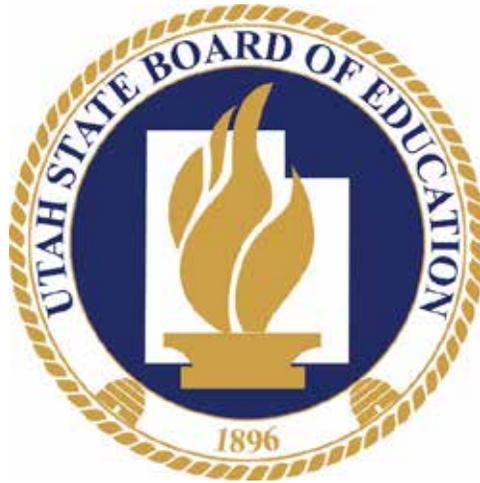
- Imperatives Educational Equity and Quality Learning
- Strategies Leadership Development and Oversight

Anticipated Action:

Information on the current state of the Professional Learning Series will be presented to the Board.

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Professional Learning Series



Prepared by the
Utah State Board of Education

August 11-12, 2016

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Professional Learning Series

In 2011, an appropriation from the legislature, supported by the governor, established the Core Academy. From 2011-2014, USBE staff and educator facilitators offered 4-day summer learning institutes, called Core Academy, for teachers in grades K-12 in the content areas of mathematics and English language arts. During the last summer of Core Academy, 4,316 educators participated.

In 2015, the USBE staff collaborated to change the format of the professional learning opportunities. The new structure allowed more content options for educators, flexibility in how they accessed professional learning, and connections among communities across the state. Beginning in the summer of 2015, professional learning opportunities were offered in different formats: online only, face-to-face, and hybrid courses. Fifty-seven courses in six content areas (English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, and World languages/dual immersion) were offered. Variety in the professional learning content and format allowed adult learners to select learning opportunities that matched their needs and availability. In the first semester 1,398 educators participated in the course offerings.

From the summer of 2015 until the present, the Professional Learning Series (PLS) has served over 3300 teachers in 7 content areas with 134 courses, including participants from all 41 school districts and over 350 participants from charter schools.

The new format has provided diverse opportunities for various types of educators to engage in targeted professional learning in areas that they are interested in. The courses are aligned with the legislated Professional Learning Standards and provide sustained, ongoing professional learning that research has shown to be most effective.

Evaluation comments from participants provide evidence that the Professional Learning Series is making a difference in teacher content knowledge, teacher pedagogical knowledge, as well as student outcomes.

- "This was the most helpful class ever. I have practical advice and material to go with it that I can use in my instruction right now. I will be a better instructor because of this class."
- "I appreciate the opportunity to participate in professional learning courses from the remote area where I live. The pacing of three weeks per module was appropriate as well. I liked that I could choose the best time for me to work on each module."
- "I am sharing this info with other teachers at my school. My principal wants to take the class and have others take it too."
- "I got many new ideas that I have tried to implement a little at a time and change the way I have taught reading and writing."
- "Everything in this course was applicable to the classroom, and I loved the ideas. I gained so much information and knowledge that I can put in place in the classroom. I feel that this course has made a huge impact on my small group instruction. I also really liked that the webinars were recorded, as opposed to other classes that I had to drop because I wasn't able to attend every live webinar. Great course."

Plans for 2016-17

Based on participant feedback, enrollment, and state data indicators, we will continue to offer a variety of courses in different formats and content areas. Based on the Professional Learning Standards, course designers and facilitators will make a concerted effort to incorporate more collaborative learning opportunities into the coursework.

For example, this August the English Language Arts team will be running a 2-day face-to-face institute on instructional practices to strengthen teachers' implementation of the core standards. Participants will have an opportunity to sign up for one of two follow-up online courses to allow them to extend their knowledge gained during the face-to-face session. These courses will allow participant choice in what they want to learn more about, allow them to use the strategies in the classroom with their students, ask questions, and learn from their peers that are also employing the strategies they learned. The Professional Learning Series allows experiences like this to be offered.

The USBE Teaching and Learning staff continues to adapt, develop, and facilitate the courses to better meet the needs of educators based on evaluation feedback and state data trends as a way to be responsive to the demonstrated needs of Utah's educators.

Accrued Costs

FY14 Core Academy

Total Cost: \$1,061,416.40
Number of Participants: 4,316
Cost Per Participant: \$246

FY15 Professional Learning Series

Total Cost: \$398,527
Number of Participants: 1,865
Cost Per Participant: \$214