PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Questar III’s professional development plan is to improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that staff members participate in “relevant” professional development to remain current with their profession, as well as to meet the learning needs of all of our students. The plan describes the alignment of professional development with New York State learning standards and assessments, student needs, teacher capacities, and includes a needs analysis, goals, objectives, strategies, activities and evaluation standards. Our intent, as part of the plan, is to offer staff a menu of professional development opportunities throughout the year. These opportunities, both formal and informal, will be offered in a variety of formats and through a variety of providers.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The initial professional development plan was developed in collaboration with a professional development team. The team was composed of a majority of instructional staff who were selected by the Teachers’ Association Collective Bargaining Unit. In addition to the teachers, the team also included a designee of the district superintendent, a school administrator, parents of both special education and Career and Technical Education students, and a representative from higher education. These initial members were appointed by the Questar III Board of Education at a regular meeting on October 7, 1999. (See initial 2000–2003 plan for team members and Appendix B for Historical Data.)

For the 2004–2007 Professional Development Plan, the 2000–2003 plan was reviewed in detail by members of the Teachers’ Association Collective Bargaining Unit and Questar III Administration. Once this review was completed, the plan was amended to reflect current standards and regulations, as well as changes in Questar III policy and procedure. It also reflects the implementation of a new five-year Strategic Plan for the organization.

The current plan was revised by the following PDP team members:

- Joseph Mix, President, Teachers’ Collective Bargaining Unit
- Liz Zwink, Vice President, Teachers’ Collective Bargaining Unit
- Beth St. Clair Bedell, Teacher, Special Education
- John Mahoney, Teacher, CTE – Aviation
- Marc Daigle, Teacher, CTE, Auto
- Mike Gerrish, Teacher, Art
- Andrew DeFeo, Assistant Superintendent
- Robin Sobol, Director, Special Education
- Tracy Racicot, Principal
Gladys I. Cruz, Director, Assistant Superintendent for School Improvement & Chair of the PDP Committee

This plan will cover a three year span that ranges from 2009-2010 school year to 2012-2013. The program/strand specific and best practices plans will be evaluated and revised on an annual basis.

WHO THE PLAN IS INTENDED FOR

The professional development plan is intended for all full and part-time staff covered by the Teachers’ Association Collective Bargaining Agreement. These individuals have a direct impact on the students we serve. The staff includes, but is not limited to:

- Teachers (General, Special Education, Adult Education and Career & Technical Education)
- Bilingual Education Technical Assistance Center (BETAC) 10 month Trainer
- School Guidance Counselors
- School Nurse Teacher/Practitioners
- School Psychologists
- School Social Workers
- Speech Therapists
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists

Note: For the remainder of this plan, the above individuals will be referred to as “teacher(s)”.

LINKAGE TO THE ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The annual professional performance review ensures that teacher evaluation criteria shall include, but not be limited to, the following areas:

- content knowledge of subject matter and curriculum;
- preparation employing necessary pedagogical practices to support instruction;
- instructional delivery that results in active student involvement and meaningful lesson plans that result in student learning;
- classroom management supportive of diverse learning needs which creates a supportive environment conducive to student learning;
- knowledge of student development and regular application of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies;
- student assessment techniques based on appropriate learning standards;
- collaborative relationships that are effective with students, parents or caregivers, and support personnel;
- reflective and responsive practice that demonstrates adjustments are made on a continuing basis to improve the effectiveness of instruction and assessment; and,
- knowledge of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Professional development is necessary to ensure that staff improve and expand their knowledge and skills, master new skills and responsibilities, and change their teaching practices in hopes that all students achieve higher learning standards. Professional development has a direct impact on teacher performance, and teacher performance has a direct impact on student achievement. Therefore, the annual professional performance
review and the professional development plan have a strong linkage, and together will prepare and support educators to help all students achieve higher standards of learning and development.

**LINKAGE TO QUESTAR III’S STRATEGIC PLAN**

The mission, vision and beliefs of the professional development plan are closely tied to the mission, vision and beliefs of Questar III’s Strategic Plan.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Our new Mission Statement reads:

*Questar III is an educational cooperative providing leadership and creating student success through shared instructional and support services to schools and their communities.*

Becoming a Learning Organization:

A Learning Organization is able to perpetually expand its internal capacity to generate desired results. It is also an organization that learns from previous experience and values greatly the input from teams and customers. Simply stated - an organization of teams and individuals building upon prior experiences, expanding "collective intelligence", wisdom and ways of working.

**LINKAGE TO QUESTAR III’S STRATEGIC PLAN**

Questar III’s Strategic Initiatives:

The Strategic Initiatives identified in the Strategic Plan include:

1. Cost Value
2. Stakeholders
3. Best Staff
4. Best Environment
5. Best Practices

Each department in the organization will develop an action plan with specific recommended actions that are to be followed in order to support the strategic initiative. For each of the Strategic Initiatives, additional recommended actions will be added as the plan progresses.

**LINKAGE TO NEW YORK STATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

The Questar III Professional Development Plan recognizes the newly approved New York State Standards as critical in developing teacher expertise for student success. See Appendix E.
MISSION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT QUESTAR III

The mission of professional development at Questar III is to implement and expand participation in educational enrichment by way of practice, research and theory to achieve excellence for the student body, individual educator, the district, and the community at large.

STRATEGIES OF FOCUS

The Best Practices strand and/or program specific professional development plans will incorporate the following areas as applicable:

- **Use of Data to Drive Instruction** – Questar III acknowledges that informed decisions must be data-driven. Data to be reviewed and analyzed prior to the development of the Strand/Program specific plans are listed below. Also, please refer to data listed under the section evaluation of the annual plan on page 10.
- **Literacy** – Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed, written, oral and other material associated with varying contexts. "Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society." United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- **Numeracy** – Numeracy will include the process and content standards that support conceptual understanding, procedural fluency and problem solving.
- **Student Behavior** – Student behavior refers to the specific actions and attitudes necessary to ensure a safe and productive learning environment. Questar III will continue to support the Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) systems.
- **Project Based Learning** – Project based learning is a systematic, standards approach to learning that engages students in an inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully planned tasks and products.
- **Use of HEGIS to CIP Crosswalk** – “The New York State Inventory of Registered Programs uses the HEGIS (Higher Education General Information Survey) taxonomy to classify instructional programs and the federal government uses the CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs). In each classification, code numbers represent subject areas.” (Taken from NYSED website – see http://www.highered.nysed.gov/oris/codes/cipxwalk.htm)

The Best Practices strand and/or program specific professional development plans developed will also help address the areas of need being addressed by the Response to JMT Call to Action (see above). The organization’s full and part-time staff covered by the Teachers’ Association Collective Bargaining Agreement that is not actively involved in a Best Practices Professional Development Plan should connect their professional development to the areas of focus of this plan in order to further their expertise and better serve the students. It is of paramount importance that all staff stay abreast of their area of expertise including the trades in order to be aligned with Questar III’s Strategic Initiatives. All professional development activities should also be linked to the Annual Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) as appropriate.
DATA REVIEWED AND CONSIDERED

In our current educational system, it is critical to constantly use data to make decisions. The current PDP team identified the data listed below as critical for use in developing yearly professional development plans.

ORGANIZATION-WIDE DATA
- Strategic Plan (2003 - 2008) – new plan will be used as available

STUDENT-RELATED DATA
- BEDS Report
- Student Attendance Rates
- Graduation/Drop Out Rates - Columbia-Greene & Rensselaer Educational Centers
- Summary Status Report on Career Technical Program Integrated Academics
- New York State Learning Standards
- 3-8 NYS Testing System Data (i.e., ELA, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and NYSESLAT)
- Regents Data
- RCT Data
- New York State Alternate Assessment Data (NYSAA)
- National Assessment Educational Progress (NAEP) Reports – SREB reports based on NAEP
- National Reporting System (Adult Education)

PROGRAM-RELATED DATA
- Career and Technical Education Technical Reviews
- High Schools that Work
- Implementation of Adopted Series (i.e., Harcourt Trophies, Saxon Math, Scott Foresman Math)

STAFF-RELATED DATA
- Professional Certified Teachers
- “Teaching” Staff Who Participated in “Alternative Performance Review” and outcomes (This will be monitored during the 2008-2009 school year and revised during the next academic year.)
- Professional Development Workshops Attended by Questar III Staff
- In-service Credit Received (This will be monitored during the 2008-2009 school year and revised during the next academic year.)
- Approved Conferences Attended by Staff
- Mentor Program Surveys (This will be monitored during the 2008-2009 school year and revised during the next academic year.)
- Professional Development Needs Survey … and Survey Results

STAFF DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AND “BEST PRACTICES” RESEARCH DATA
- Schools as Learning Communities, Educational Leadership, May 2004, V61:8, p6-11.
DATA/NEEDS ANALYSIS

Based on a review of the previously listed data, a comprehensive needs analysis will be conducted each year and professional development plans will be developed.

PURPOSE AND DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT QUESTAR

The purpose of professional development at Questar III is to:

- improve instructional and support services in a way that ensures higher student learning and development;
- improve staff effectiveness by continually developing new skills and approaches which link the best of research to instructional practices;
- integrate the latest technologies to teaching practices that support student learning consistent with the Questar III Technology Plan goals; and
- promote collaborative and supportive relationships among staff, students, parents, districts and the community at large.

At Questar III we believe that staff should engage in diverse and extensive learning experiences, and should have multiple opportunities to learn. Staff learning should be continuous, multifaceted, focused on Questar III’s strategic plan, and embedded within the classroom.

Staff learning experiences can be categorized into two main groups. Some are formal, more traditional learning structures; others are informal, more spontaneous learning structures. It is suggested that teachers maintain a record of their annual professional development (See Appendix A for sample Professional Development Log.).

Formal Professional Development

Formal professional development is scheduled at a particular time, occurs for a predetermined period, usually involves a defined learning group such as a team, has predetermined outcomes and prescribed learning processes, and is planned, designed and facilitated by an expert. Formal learning typically provides staff with content and instructional knowledge and skills, and builds their understanding of the theories or principles underlying content and instructional knowledge (as related to their profession).

Formal learning structures can be required or optional and include, but are not limited to:
Required for all Staff (equivalent to approximately 20 hours):
- Professional Development Day
- Formal Performance Review

Required for Special Education Staff:
- Formal performance review process
- Four Strand Meetings*
- One IEP writing workshop
*These meetings will focus on specific issues by program strand to support student achievement planned by the program supervisors.

Required for CTE/Alt. Ed.:
- Two Professional Development Days
- Trade Specific Training (as appropriate)

Required for Adult Education Staff:
- Five Adult Education Professional Updates
- One Professional Development Day

The above mentioned formal learning structures can be applied towards professional development requirements as applicable. Please refer to Amount of Professional Development section later in this document.

Additional:
- Attending conferences
- Attending workshops or in-services
- Doing presentations or serving as a trainer
- Taking classes
- Earning advanced degrees
- Chairing or participating in committees
- Conducting action research
- Designing curriculum
- Mentoring programs (Required for first-year teachers as of September 2004)
- Additional formal observations by your supervisor or another administrator
- Participation in the Mentor Program as a mentor
- Conducting or participating in book studies
- Training and scoring of NYS 3-8 assessments

Informal Professional Development

Informal professional development occurs spontaneously and is staff-initiated and directed. It occurs naturally as a part of the work of staff. Informal professional development gives responsibility to staff for his or her learning. Each staff member determines what he or she needs to learn and find the most convenient and flexible way to acquire what they need to know. Staff determines how much or how little they want to learn and how much they want to invest in learning and applying it. Informal structures for staff learning are varied and frequent. Informal learning occurs when teacher collaboration is recast as learning experiences.
Informal Professional Development

Informal learning structures can include, but are not limited to:

**Participating In …**
- program planning
- professional meetings and committees
- staff generated forums/collegial circle groups
- in-school and/or community projects
- professional organizations/associations
- peer coaching
- peer mentoring

**Writing/Reading/Sharing …**
- writing articles and/or books
- writing grants
- reading articles, books, and/or information from the Internet
- sharing information with colleagues from conferences and workshops

**Managing …**
- staff intern/student teacher experiences

**Leading …**
- professional meetings and/or committees
- staff generated forums/collegial circle groups
- in-school and/or community projects
- professional organizations/associations
- task forces

**CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**
- Integrated with district goals to improve education
- Guided by a coherent long-term plan
- Designed according to teacher-identified needs
- Primarily school-based job embedded
- Provides a strong foundation in subject content and methods of teaching
- Informed by research on teaching and learning
- Designed around collaborative problem-solving
- Enables teachers to work with colleagues, in and beyond their school building
- Continuous and ongoing, providing follow-up support for further learning
- Incorporates principles of adult learning
- Provides sufficient time and other resources

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD FOCUS ON**
- Content knowledge of subject matter and curriculum
- Preparation employing necessary pedagogical practice to support instruction
- Instructional delivery that results in active student involvement and meaningful lesson plans that result in student learning
Classroom management supportive of diverse student learning needs which creates a supportive learning environment conducive to student learning
- Knowledge of student development and appreciation of diversity and regular application of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies
- Student assessment techniques based on appropriate learning standards
- Collaborative relationships that are effective with students, parents or caregivers, and support personnel
- Reflective and responsive practice that demonstrates adjustments are made on a continuing basis to improve the effectiveness of instruction and assessment

AMOUNT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As per regulations effective on February 2, 2004, the Regents now require that all newly certified teachers receive one-hundred seventy five (175) hours of professional development every five years in order to maintain their professional certificate in good standing. This requirement averages 35 hours of professional development per year. Staff can satisfy this requirement by taking college courses related to their field of study. Questar III’s professional development plan will allow newly certified staff to meet this requirement, as well as allow all staff to participate in substantial professional development. It is recommended that all staff maintain a log of her/his professional development for the year (See Appendix A for sample log).

It is recommended that all professional staff use the above guideline to further develop their individual professional growth and learning. For purposes of this plan, a year is defined as starting on September 1 and ending on June 30. Although participation in professional development activities outside the regular school day or regularly scheduled working days of the school year are volitional for staff, it is recognized that staff may choose to participate in professional development at these times. Therefore, participation in professional development activities at any time during the year may count towards the minimum requirement. If a teacher participates in professional development activities over the summer, he/she must submit evidence of the professional development completed for review and approval by the supervisor.

Previously in the plan, it was stated that we believe staff should engage in diverse and extensive learning experiences, and should have multiple opportunities to learn. It was also stated that staff learning should be continuous, multifaceted, focused on Questar III’s strategic plan, and most often school based and embedded. As a result, professional development activities that our staff participate in will be a blend of formal and informal learning structures, and not solely limited to one or the other. Staff will participate in individual professional development activities, however, will be encouraged to develop and incorporate a “team approach” to professional development through the Best Practices Model that is aligned with the Strategic Plan.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS

Questar III’s professional development plan emphasizes the need for alignment with the New York State learning standards and assessments and is directly related to student learning needs.
IMPLEMENTATION

For each year of the plan, staff member committees will be required to complete a strand and/or program specific staff development plan (See Appendix D). The intent of the plan is to link the staff annual offerings to appropriate and substantial professional development, with the ultimate result being: improved instruction and support services, which ensure higher student learning and development; improved staff effectiveness through continuous development of new skills and approaches linking the best of research to instructional practices; and the promotion of collaborative relationships among staff, students, parents, districts and the community at large.

At the beginning of each school year staff will develop their Professional Development Plan. These plan goals must be: SMART – Strategic and Specific, Measurable; Attainable, Results-Oriented and Time bound. They must be directly related to the New York State learning standards and the specific learning needs of the students in Questar III programs. The staff member committees will evaluate the plan on a yearly basis.

EVALUATION OF THE ANNUAL PLAN

It is our belief that the professional development plan should be evaluated ultimately on the basis of its impact on staff effectiveness and student learning. As a result, the following “tools” will be used to evaluate Questar III’s professional development plan:

1.) Ongoing surveys of workshops and staff development offerings will be summarized and shared.
2.) We will attempt to obtain from staff via online means, as well as from supervisors of those staff, their reaction to how meaningful the “professional development experiences” were to them during the plan year. Their feelings regarding the relevancy of the experience can help guide the organization in the future refinement and development of the Professional Development Plan.
3.) Each staff member impacted by the plan will receive an annual professional performance review. This “review” is a tool that will be used to measure staff effectiveness, based on a set of established criteria. It will include the identification of “targeted areas for growth” and an “improvement plan” for addressing those targeted areas. The progress made in becoming more effective in the targeted areas will be assessed and measured as part of the subsequent annual professional performance review. The impact of professional development in this improvement process will also be assessed as part of the review, acknowledging that professional development and staff effectiveness are closely linked.
4.) Questar III will use student data to assess the impact of professional development on staff effectiveness, and thus the impact of staff effectiveness on student learning. Although we believe that student learning is closely tied to staff effectiveness, we also realize that student data may be influenced by other factors, including but not limited to: well established curriculum, program resources, student population, administrative support and parental support. It is our hope though that student data will be a general “thermometer” to help measure, in part, the effectiveness of our professional development plan on student learning.

Listed below are some examples of student data that we may be considering:
- Student Attendance Rates
- Student Suspension Rates
- Student Dropout Rates
- Percentage of Students Passing the Regents Exams
- Percentage of Students Receiving High School Diplomas
- Results of the New Assessments
- Pre- and Post- Results of Academic Intervention Services (AIS)

We will analyze this data prior to plan implementation (as a benchmark), and at the end of each year of the professional development plan. This will help us see, through the use of quantifiable data, the level of progress being made in the area of student participation and learning.

**MENTOR PROGRAM**

At a public meeting on June 3, 2004, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services authorized and directed the establishment of a mentor program at Questar III, both to fulfill regulatory requirements and to enhance retention of well-qualified teachers and certified support staff.

It is recognized that the new teachers may experience difficulties during their first year of teaching which, if not addressed, could prevent them from reaching their full potential as professional educators. Mentors can provide experience and guidance to lead and support new staff in instructional, curricular, behavioral and educational issues, facilitating a new teacher’s transition from teacher preparation to practice. Mentors also can introduce new teachers to organizational protocols and give suggestions for teaching strategies that have proven particularly successful with Questar III students. Mentees will have an opportunity to grow professionally in order to strengthen and improve student achievement offer wisdom and best practices so that students will have the best possible education.

Furthermore, regulations require the establishment of a teacher mentoring program for new teachers as part of the organization’s professional development plan. The program established by this policy shall be included in the professional development plan for Questar III. Documentation of participation in the mentoring program will be maintained for purposes of allowing new teachers to meet certification requirements.

An effective teacher mentor program will require the active participation in and support of the Teachers’ Association. A Mentor Committee has been established consisting of members from the Questar III administration and the Teachers’ Association. The committee will have responsibility for oversight of the Mentor Program. A copy can be found in Appendix C.

**HOUSSE**

The NCLB Act requires all public school teachers of core academic subjects to be “highly qualified” for all the core academic subjects they teach by the end of school year 2005 – 2006 – see exception below. To be “highly qualified”, teachers must have a bachelor’s degree, be certified for the classes they are teaching, and demonstrate subject matter competency in all core subjects they teach. The “High Objective Uniform State Standard
of Evaluation” (HOUSSE) is one option that some teachers can use to demonstrate their subject matter competency.

“VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TEACHERS. The NCLB requirement that teachers be “highly qualified,” as defined by the NCLB, does not apply to vocational educational teachers who are exclusively teaching career and technical classes for which students receive no credit in a core subject. Guidance form the USDOE dated June 6, 2002 states that vocational education teachers must meet the NCLB’s definition of “highly qualified” if they are teaching a course for which a student receives credit in a core academic subject. For example, a career and technical teacher who “teachers a course in Applied Physics for which students receive a science credit must hold a four-year degree, be … certified by the State and demonstrate subject matter competency in order to be considered highly qualified. Although the course is taught by a career and technical teacher, “it is counted as a science credit; therefore it is considered a core academic requirement and the teacher must meet the definition of a highly qualified teacher.”
http://www.highered.nysed.gov/nclb01-d.html

New York State defines HOUSSE as an evaluation conducted locally as part of either (1) a pre-employment review or (2) an Annual Professional Performance Review as required by regulations, that enables a teacher who is beyond the first year of the effective date of the teacher’s first teaching certificate to demonstrate subject matter competency in all core academic subjects the teacher teaches based on objective, coherent information acceptable to the Commissioner.

As it applies to the Questar III Professional Development Plan, one part of the “Evaluation Tool for Using Information Acceptable to the Commissioner for the HOUSSE” is Professional Experience and Development. For those who may be fall under the criteria needing a HOUSSE, successful completion of professional development, pursuant to the employer’s professional development plan, that are aligned with the Regents learning standards, it is a way in which one can earn credit as part of the evaluation process.

ADOPTION BY THE BOARD

The initial professional development plan was adopted by the Questar III Board of Cooperative Educational Services at a public meeting on July 6, 2000. It was then implemented starting in the 2000-2001 school year. The current revised and amended plan will be presented to the Board with a planned implementation beginning with the 2007-2008 school year.
APPENDIX A
# ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LOG

**NAME:** ___________________________  **YEAR:** 200__ - 200 __

**ASSIGNMENT:** __________________________________________

**CERTIFICATE TITLE**: ______________________________________

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**GRAND TOTAL**

**TO BE COMPLETED BY PROFESSIONAL TEACHING CERTIFICATE HOLDERS ONLY**

- [ ] I currently hold a professional certificate.
- [ ] I certify that this information is accurate and correct.

_____________________________        ___________________________
Employee Signature                                             Date
APPENDIX B
PDP Plan Historical Data (1999-2007)

DATA REVIEWED AND CONSIDERED

The initial professional development team looked at a variety of data prior to the development of the professional development plan. This included: organization-wide data, student-related data, program-related data, staff-related data, and staff development resources and “best practices” data. A listing of this data can be found below. Copies of any and all data listed below are available upon request.

ORGANIZATION-WIDE DATA
- Strategic Plan (2003-2008)

STUDENT-RELATED DATA
- BEDS Report
- Student Enrollment (Student/Staff Ratios)

STUDENT-RELATED DATA
- Student Attendance Rates (By Class)
- Graduation/Drop Out Rates, Columbia-Greene & Rensselaer Educational Centers
- Summary Status Report On Career Technical Program Integrated Academics
- Summary of Student “Placements” for Career and Technical Programs
- New York State Learning Standards
- Questar III Exit Standards for Excellence

PROGRAM-RELATED DATA
- Services to Questar III Region Districts
- Review of the Questar III Alternative Learning Programs
- Review of the Questar III Challenge Program

STAFF-RELATED DATA
- Annual Turnover Rate for “Teachers”
- “Temporarily Certified Teachers”
- “Teaching” Staff Who Participated in “Alternative Performance Review”
- Special Summer Project (August 1998) Conducted by Celia Thomason - Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses Noted on Annual Performance Reviews for “Teaching” Staff
- Curriculum Writers – Career and Technical and Special Education
- SETRC Workshops Attended by Questar III Staff
- In-service Credit Received
- Approved Conferences Attended by Staff
- Development of Questar III Mentor Program by the Mentor Committee
- “Teachers” who Received Credit for Graduate Hours
- “Teachers” who Used the School Library System
- Professional Development Needs Survey ... and Survey Results
- Staff Development Catalog
- Staff Development Day / Staff Development at Orientation Days
STAFF DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES AND “BEST PRACTICES” RESEARCH DATA

- Professional Development: A Strategy for School Improvement
- Professional Development - The Balanced View: Research-Based Information on Timely Topics
- National Awards Program for Model Professional Development
- “Islands of Hope in a Sea of Dreams” - A Research Report on the Eight Schools that Received the National Award for Model Professional Development
- Investing in Our Work Force ... Professional Development, Teacher Evaluation, Student Achievement (Resources on the Internet)
- Principles for Professional Development ... AFT’s Guidelines for Creating Professional Development Programs that Make a Difference
- Websites Supporting Standards and Professional Development
- Sample Professional Development Plan from Hilton Central School District
- Teacher Standards
- National Staff Development Council’s Standards for Staff Development

STAFF DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES & “BEST PRACTICES” RESEARCH DATA

- Paying Attention to Professional Development
- Professional Development ... A Toolkit for Schools and Districts Based on Model Professional Development Award Winners
MENTOR PROGRAM

The Questar III Mentor Program is a labor-management endeavor between the RCG BOCES Teachers’ Association and Questar III. The following people collaborated to make this possible: James N. Baldwin - District Superintendent, Questar III BOCES; Mary Yonkers, President of the Teachers’ Association; Barbara Levine; Diana Conroy, Carol Seastrand; Michael Buono; Denise LaGrange; Susan DiDonato; Alice Sharp; Amy Nash; Pam Bannon; Mary Andrus; and, Renee Silber. Through this Mentor Program, Questar III will comply with the New York State Education Department’s regulations requiring BOCES to include a mentoring program for new teachers in their professional development plans. This requirement is effective from February 2, 2004 and thereafter.

PURPOSE

The Questar III Mentor Program is a labor-management endeavor between the Teachers’ Association and Questar III. It is designed to give assistance and support to new Questar III teachers and related service staff in their first year of employment. The primary goal of the program is to ease the transition from teacher preparation to practice, thereby increasing retention of teachers in Questar III. Efforts will be made to provide continued mentoring to second and third year teachers, when possible, as well as expand the mentoring program to assist experienced teachers in new assignments. It has been concluded by both Federal and State studies that beginning educational staff experience many difficulties during their first years of teaching which, if not addressed, could prevent them from reaching their full potential as professional educators. Mentors can provide experience and guidance in leading and supporting new staff in instructional, curricular, behavioral and educational issues. They can introduce them to organization protocol and give suggestions from teaching strategies that have proven successful with students in Questar III.

The Mentor Program will be non-evaluative. It will offer the wisdom and best practices from trained mentors so that students in Questar III will have the best possible education. By providing new staff with numerous opportunities to grow professionally, we expect to improve student achievement and retain quality professionals.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR COMMITTEE

As indicated by law, the Mentor Program is a joint venture between labor and management and accordingly, the Mentor Committee will have representation from both. The majority of members will be from the Teachers Association. The Mentor Committee is responsible for overseeing the Questar III Mentoring Program. The committee will match mentors and mentees. The committee will assist in Orientation Day activities for new staff, planning a special welcome activity, helping in the coordination of workshops and other programs for mentees, and monitoring the overall support and needs of new staff.

An evaluation of the program and end of year celebration will also occur. The Mentor Committee will meet regularly, as needed. They will revise the program, where needed, within contractual obligations, New York State Education Department requirements, and Questar III board policy.
SELECTION OF MENTORS

The Mentor Committee will choose mentors, subject to review and consent of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Teachers and related service staff who are interested in becoming mentors can apply (see application) to the committee through the Human Resources Department. They need to meet specific criteria that reflect mentoring best practices and must demonstrate leadership qualities. The Director of Human Resources will respond to applicants in writing. The Mentor Committee will match mentor and mentee, subject to review and consent of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, as closely as possible, with primary considerations being the similarity of teaching areas and location. Any person selected must have tenure and agree to participate in at least two days (12-15 hours) of NYSUT or a comparable type of mentor training.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MENTORS

At a minimum, the mentor must meet with the mentee once a week during the first three weeks of school. After that, an in-person meeting shall occur at least two times per month. Release time of up to five days per mentor and mentee (ten days per team), for the school year is part of this program and can be used for a variety of staff development. An activity log (see log) of these meetings shall be kept by the mentee and signed by both parties. The log will include dates of meetings, topics, teacher certificate identification number and a checklist of mentoring topics, specific to each job (see checklist of topics). The role of the mentor is non evaluative and administrators will continue to be the evaluators of new teachers, suggesting ways to improve and providing the tools to do so. Mentors and mentees will visit each other’s classrooms or programs and will do other site visits. Mentors will be asked to participate in a portion of the separate orientation for new teachers, held prior to the general Questar III orientation before the opening of school. There will be a welcoming reception and an end of the year celebration that mentors should also attend. Mentors will be paid $700 at the end of the year, as per contract, and upon completion of all mentoring responsibilities. This includes submission of the activity log to the mentor coordinator by June 1.

RETIREES AS CONSULTANTS

The beginning of the year is exceptionally busy for both mentors and mentees alike and so, our Mentor Program will use retirees as consultants, on a per diem basis, within budgetary constraints. Letters inquiring about availability and interest will be sent to former teachers and related service staff. People wanting to serve in this capacity will be chosen by the committee, subject to review and consent of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction. Retirees can help mentees set up classrooms and help enhance the environment in order to maximize classroom management for the beginning teacher. Retirees can shadow the new teacher and provide hands on assistance.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MENTOR COORDINATOR

There will be one Mentor Coordinator who will be a member of the Teachers Association and agreed upon by both labor and administration. The Mentor Program Coordinator will have half day to one full day of release time per week, depending on the number of new
staff, to coordinate program activities and provide support and resources to mentors and mentees. The Mentor Program Coordinator will monitor activity logs throughout the school year and receive and review logs at the end of the school year. The coordinator will act as a program liaison between the Teachers’ Association and Questar III administration and will serve as the chairperson for the Mentor Committee.

**ORIENTATION AND WORKSHOPS**

An orientation for new staff will be held prior to the general Questar III ten-month orientation. Human Resources, will organize this in conjunction with the Mentor Committee, with the focus on easing the transition for new staff. Mentors and mentees will meet at this orientation and participate in some activities together. Mentors will be paid 1/200th of their salary for each day they attend, as per the collective bargaining agreement. At the general Questar III orientation, a special welcome reception will occur to recognize new people in Questar III. A copy of the faculty handbook will be given to new staff so that each person has a hard copy for reference. The Mentor Committee will plan monthly workshops with Questar III Staff Development on topics pertinent to beginning teachers. In addition, Questar III will offer a monthly support group for teachers to talk about classroom management and behavior issues.
| Strand/Program: _________________________________ |
| School Year: _________________________________ |

Goal(s):

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PDP Writers:
New York State Professional Development Standards

Adopted by the NYS Board of Regents February 10, 2009

In a commitment to raising the knowledge, skills, and opportunity of its citizens, New York State seeks to enhance students’ cognitive, social, emotional and academic achievement throughout its schools. Given that research indicates that teacher quality is the single most powerful influence on student achievement, it is essential to ensure that teachers are provided with ongoing, high quality professional development to sustain and enhance their practice. Indeed, teacher professional development is an essential element of comprehensive school improvement. The professional development needs of other members of school community, including administrators and support personnel, must also be addressed to ensure a focus on continuous learning and to create the conditions necessary for closing the achievement gap and improving the achievement of all students. These standards provide guidance for achieving high quality professional development planning, design, delivery and assessment, and should serve as a foundation for all professional development in our schools.

New York State’s Commitment to Professional Development

The efforts of the New York State Board of Regents, the State Education Department, and the State Professional Standards and Practices Board for Teaching have resulted in formal processes that promote and support professional development for all educators and other school personnel. Listed below are existing State requirements and systems that build a strong foundation for professional development in New York:

• **Commissioner’s Regulation 80-3.6 (b)(1)** requires that Professional certificate holders and Teaching Assistant III certificate holders complete professional development every five years (175 hours for teachers and school leaders and 75 hours for TA IIIIs) in order to maintain their certification.

• **Commissioner’s Regulation 100.2(dd)** Professional Development requires each district and BOCES to collaboratively develop a plan for professional development that is annually revised and approved by its board of education.

• **Commissioner’s Regulation 100.2(o)** Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) focuses on the process of teacher evaluation and improving professional practice in the context of local needs and resources. This regulation requires that those with unsatisfactory performance receive a teacher improvement plan with appropriate professional development.

The State Education Department also administers a number of State and federal programs that support on-going sustained professional development to schools and BOCES, such as the State’s Teacher Center Program, the Mentor-Teacher Internship Program, and NCLB Title IIA Teacher Quality grants. In addition, various State-supported professional development networks share the goal of improving student achievement by supporting educator growth and change in practice, for example, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), Special Education Training Resource Centers (SETRC), and Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Centers (BETAC).

The New York State Professional Development Standards and the related indicators will guide high quality professional development offered by these and other providers. Use of the standards will increase coordination of effort and consistency in providing professional development to all school personnel throughout the State.
Standards Ensure Consistent High Quality Professional Development  
Leading to Increased Student Achievement

New York State’s Professional Development Standards provide a blueprint for high-quality professional development for all educators to improve instruction and student achievement. These standards promote and sustain continuous development, growth, and examination of practice. They also provide clearly defined expectations and commitment to change. They are aligned with New York State Learning Standards and are based on an analysis and adaptation of the National Staff Development Council’s Standards for Staff Development as well as other national, state, and professional standards. The New York State Professional Development Standards are based on fundamental knowledge about contextual factors from converging research about effective professional development and its ultimate impact on student learning. Attributes of effective professional development include the following:

- **Effective professional development fosters a culture of continuous improvement for all engaged in the learning endeavor.** Practices address the needs of professionals throughout their careers and embrace other stakeholders as participants in learning. Activities are evaluated both for effectiveness and impact on student learning.

- **Effective professional development is that which improves the learning of all students, including those with different educational needs, learning styles, and incremental abilities, and those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.**

- **Professional development is most effective when there are clear research-based expectations for what teachers should know and be able to do to support student learning.** These expectations are reflected in the New York State Code of Ethics for Educators, district Professional Development Plans, Annual Professional Performance Reviews, and Commissioner’s Regulations related to teacher preparation and certification. They are also enumerated and reflected in collective bargaining agreements, job descriptions and assignments, performance appraisal systems, systems of rewards and incentives for teachers, and in the design and content of teacher professional development.

- **Professional development is most effective when it takes place in professional learning communities.** These learning communities might take various forms, but they are all characterized by ongoing learning. They encourage individual and collaborative exploration, practice, and reflection. They foster collegiality and problem solving, and they emphasize continuous improvement in classrooms and schools.

- **Professional development is most effective when there is collaborative leadership and shared responsibility for improving teaching and learning.** Collaborative leadership for professional development recognizes that the pursuit of excellence is never-ending and embraces the individual and collective goals and talents of teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, school administrators, school boards, district and state staff, institutions of higher education, unions, and other stakeholders.

- **Professional development is most effective when it is job embedded, directly relevant to classroom practice, provided over time, and when it provides opportunity for practice of new strategies, time to reflect on changes, and time to integrate new learning into the teaching practice.**

- **Professional development is most effective when adequate resources are provided.** Resources include money, people, and time. Resources necessarily come from a variety of sources, and must be sufficiently sustained over time to insure the full impact of professional development. Resources are adequate when they ensure that all educators can study, practice, reflect, receive feedback on practice, and implement knowledge and skills necessary to be effective with their students and others.

The Ten Standards for High Quality Professional Development
1. **Designing Professional Development**: Professional development design is based on data; is derived from the experience, expertise and needs of the recipients; reflects best practices in sustained job-embedded learning; and incorporates knowledge of how adults learn.

2. **Content Knowledge and Quality Teaching**: Professional development expands educators’ content knowledge and the knowledge and skills necessary to provide developmentally appropriate instructional strategies and assess student progress.

3. **Research-based Professional Learning**: Professional development is research-based and provides educators with opportunities to analyze, apply and engage in research.

4. **Collaboration**: Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge, skill and opportunity to collaborate in a respectful and trusting environment.

5. **Diverse Learning**: Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge and skill to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.

6. **Student Learning Environments**: Professional development ensures that educators are able to create safe, secure, supportive, and equitable learning environments for all students.

7. **Parent, Family and Community Engagement**: Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge, skill, and opportunity to engage and collaborate with parents, families, and other community members as active partners in children’s education.

8. **Data-driven Professional Practice**: Professional development uses disaggregated student data and other evidence of student learning to determine professional development learning needs and priorities, to monitor student progress, and to help sustain continuous professional growth.

9. **Technology**: Professional development promotes technological literacy and facilitates the effective use of all appropriate technology.

10. **Evaluation**: Professional development is evaluated using multiple sources of information to assess its effectiveness in improving professional practice and student learning.
New York State Professional Development Standards and Indicators

Standard 1: Designing Professional Development

Standard:
Professional development design is based on data, is derived from the experience, expertise and needs of the recipients, reflects best practices in sustained job-embedded learning, and incorporates knowledge of how adults learn.

Indicators:
1a. Professional development design begins with a needs assessment that is grounded in the analysis of multiple sources of disaggregated teaching and learning data.
1b. Professional development design is based on the learning styles of adult learners as well as the diverse cultural, linguistic, and experiential resources that they bring to the professional development activity.
1c. Professional development design is grounded in the New York State Learning Standards and student learning goals.
1d. The intended beneficiaries of professional development are substantively involved in all aspects of professional development design.
1e. Professional development design addresses the continuum of an educator’s experience and level of expertise, and is based on an analysis of individual educator needs; current knowledge and skills; and district, building and educator learning goals.
1f. Professional development formats include, but are not limited to, lesson study, demonstrations, observations, analysis of student work and assessment data, collegial circles, feedback, action research, reflection, and opportunities for collaboration and problem solving.
1g. The format of professional development incorporates technologies to provide more extensive and diverse content, expand access and participation, and create virtual professional learning communities.
1h. Professional development is sustained over time and provides continued support such as follow-up, demonstrations, feedback on mastery of new knowledge and skills, peer coaching and mentoring, and continued opportunities for additional study.

Standard 2: Content Knowledge and Quality Teaching

Standard:
Professional development expands all educators’ content knowledge and the knowledge and skills necessary to provide developmentally appropriate instructional strategies and assess student progress.

Indicators:
2a. Professional development includes learning experiences and resources to ensure that educators understand how the subjects they teach address the New York State Learning Standards and the relationships between the subjects they teach and the other subjects in the curriculum.
2b. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to examine, observe, practice, and receive feedback on their use of research-based instructional strategies to improve their students’ learning by utilizing methods such as peer review, coaching, mentoring, and modeling.
2c. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for educators to examine a variety of classroom assessments, practice using them in their classrooms, and analyze the results to 1) understand and report on student achievement based on New York State Learning Standards, 2) identify gaps in student learning, and 3) adjust instruction.

2d. Professional development provides differentiated instructional strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners.

2e. Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge and skills needed to develop and foster the critical thinking, problem solving, literacy, and technological skills that students need to be successful in the 21st century.

2f. Professional development provides the knowledge, skill, and opportunity for educators to make relevant connections between the subjects they teach and the applications of those subjects.

Standard 3: Research-based Professional Learning

Standard:
Professional development is research-based and provides educators with opportunities to analyze, apply, and engage in research.

Indicators:
3a. Professional development is based on current research in teaching, learning, and leadership.

3b. Effective professional development ensures that all educators have the knowledge, skill, and opportunity to apply research to instructional decision making.

3b.1. Professional development includes ongoing opportunities for educators to read and reflect on current research on topics that are of interest to them and that are consistent with state and local school improvement priorities.

3b.2. Professional development involves discussion of research design, data collection, and analysis to assist teachers in understanding how to interpret research findings, particularly in areas where there may be competing perspectives and conclusions.

3b.3. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to collaborate with higher education and other partners in action research to test their own hypotheses and to report the results about the impact of professional development programs or the effectiveness of particular instructional strategies and programs for educators and students.

Standard 4: Collaboration

Standard:
Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge, skill, and opportunity to collaborate to improve instruction and student achievement in a respectful and trusting environment.

Indicators:
4a. Professional development provides skills that educators need to communicate effectively, to listen to the ideas of others, to exchange and discuss ideas, to work in diverse teams, and to share responsibility for work toward a common goal.

4b. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for educators to work with colleagues including teachers, principals, teaching assistants, librarians, counselors, social workers, psychologists, higher education faculty, and others critical to student success.
4c. Professional development maximizes the use of technology to broaden the scope of collaboration.

**Standard 5: Diverse Learning**

**Standard:**
Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge and skill to meet the diverse needs of all students.

**Indicators:**

5a. Professional development focuses on developing educators’ knowledge of the learning styles, needs, and abilities of their students, as well as the diverse cultural, linguistic, and experiential resources that their students bring to the classroom.

5b. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to design and implement differentiated instructional and assessment strategies that utilize diverse student, family and community resources, and that meet diverse student learning needs.

5c. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to examine their practice in setting and maintaining high expectations for all students to enable them to attain high levels of achievement.

**Standard 6: Student Learning Environments**

**Standard:**
Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge and skill to create safe, secure, supportive, and equitable learning environments for all students.

**Indicators:**

6a. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to create a safe, inclusive, equitable learning community where everyone participates in maintaining a climate of caring, respect, and high achievement.

6b. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to collaborate with school psychologists and social workers to develop effective strategies for student behavior and classroom management, and to seek creative solutions to conflicts.

6c. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to analyze and use data about student behavior (such as discipline referrals, suspension information, school climate surveys, and social-emotional data) to refine educational practices and promote optimal learning environments.

**Standard 7: Parent, Family and Community Engagement**

**Standard:**
Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge, skills, and opportunity to engage and collaborate with parents, families, and other community members as active partners in children’s education.

**Indicators:**
7a. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to develop communication and collaboration skills that enable them to build partnerships with parents, guardians, and the community.

7b. Professional development enhances educators’ knowledge of varying cultural backgrounds of students, families, and the community, and of how the diversity of these cultural backgrounds can serve as foundations and resources for student learning and success.

7c. Professional development includes opportunities for educators to develop skills and strategies that use technology to strengthen partnerships with parents, families, and the community.

**Standard 8: Data-driven Professional Practice**

**Standard:**

Professional development uses disaggregated student data and other evidence of student learning to determine professional development learning needs and priorities, to monitor student progress, and to help sustain continuous professional growth.

**Indicators:**

8a. Professional development ensures ongoing opportunities for all educators to learn how to analyze and collect multiple sources of student data throughout the year, to monitor student progress and adjust instructional practice.

8b. Professional development provides educators with the opportunity to examine all relevant student data, including Individual Education Plans (IEPs), at the beginning and throughout the academic school year, in order to design effective instruction.

8c. Professional development provides educators with current, high quality data analysis presented in a clear, understandable format, to promote optimal student learning.

8d. Professional development provides opportunities for educators to use results from local, state and national assessments; student work samples and portfolios; school climate, parent, and teacher surveys; and student behavior data to guide their instruction.

8e. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for educators to use disaggregated student data by race, gender, English language learning, special needs, eligibility for free or reduced price meals, and other factors in order to improve student learning.
Standard 9: Technology

Standard:
Professional development promotes technological literacy and facilitates the effective use of all appropriate technology.

Indicators:
9a. Professional development ensures ongoing educator and student technological literacy.
9b. Professional development provides ongoing opportunities for educators to learn about new and emerging technologies useful in professional teaching practice.
9c. Professional development facilitates the ability of educators to apply technologies to create optimal and equitable learning environments.
9d. Professional development promotes technology as a tool to design learning opportunities, to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, and to monitor student learning.
9e. Professional development encourages educators to engage with students in using available technology as it relates to curricular activities, and to assist students in using technology in innovative ways.
9f. Professional development provides educators with opportunities to learn and use technology for communication and collaboration.
9g. Professional development addresses the legal and ethical uses of technology.

Standard 10: Evaluation

Standard:
Professional development is evaluated using multiple sources of information to assess its effectiveness in improving professional practice and student learning.

Indicators:
10a. Resources are provided to plan and conduct ongoing evaluation of professional development.
10b. Professional development evaluation uses multiple measures to assess effectiveness of the knowledge and skill acquired in improving professional practice and student learning (such as the use of new learning in instructional planning, the use of student data for the development and adaptation of teaching strategies, or the enhanced student performance following the application of a different teaching strategy).
10c. Professional development evaluation includes the use of multiple methods and techniques that provide information to ensure ongoing improvements in the quality of the professional development experience (such as participant reactions, surveys, focus groups, interviews, reflective journals, portfolios, or information about student behavior or performance).
10d. Professional development evaluation results are reported to key stakeholder groups in a manner that promotes effective use of the evaluation data for improving both individual educator practice and building- and district-wide professional development plans.