

[FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY]

Funding for Increasing Embedded Teacher Learning & Collaboration Time

Increasing the amount of time that teachers have without student responsibilities during their contractual schedule can create more opportunities for teacher collaboration, common professional learning activities, and individual professional development. There are three broad categories of strategies currently in use in Maine districts to facilitate these professional activities:

- **Early release / late start days:** On a weekly or bi-weekly basis, all teachers are released from the classroom to engage in professional development. This design works across all types of school sizes and grade levels. Financial cost varies depending on whether all, some, or no students remain in the building during the PD time. If all students arrive late or leave early, direct costs are low but total instructional time is reduced. In some cases, students remain in the building and are supervised by non-profit partners and/or volunteers at an additional cost. Several districts use a version of this model.
- **Increase contractual days or hours:** Adding more paid time in teachers' contracts (without students) can also provide more opportunities for teachers to engage in PD. If collective PD activities are desired, days must be commonly scheduled for all teachers. This method also accommodates a variety of grade spans and school sizes, and costs can be estimated based on daily salary rates. This model interacts with teacher contract negotiations, and may be most feasible in the context of a statewide teacher contract. Currently a few Maine districts have longer contractual school years for teachers.
- **Increasing staff to cover common time during the day:** To allow teachers with opportunities to work with colleagues during the school day, schools may hire additional staff to provide educational opportunities to students during meeting times. Schools employ a variety of strategies; elementary and secondary configurations have different constraints, as do smaller versus larger schools. Costs vary depending on the number and type of added staff (i.e. literacy specialists, allied arts, or other certified teachers are more expensive than educational technicians). It is unclear if any Maine schools have intentionally hired additional staff for this purpose, though there are ample reports of schools that have been able to configure student schedules so that teachers have common planning time with their grade level, content area, and/or team teachers.

These strategies may involve structural changes to school staffing plans or schedules, making additional costs above and beyond current funding levels difficult to quantify in some cases. Regardless of the particular strategies employed to provide teachers with embedded professional time, consideration must be given to the various options for funding. The chart on the following page provides options for funding any of the various strategies for providing teachers with adequate contractual time to pursue professional development.

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Options for Increasing Funding to Provide Teachers with Time for Job-Embedded Professional Learning

	All schools	All schools that meet eligibility criteria	Competitive districts
School Eligibility for Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All school districts that operate schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any school districts that operate schools and that meet basic criteria would receive funds. <i>Basis could be meeting an established threshold of need and/or minimum characteristics of the proposed activity</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only school districts that operate schools and submit the best proposals for PD programs would receive funds. <i>Basis could be demonstrated level of need and/or quality of the proposed activity</i>
Amount of Funds Provided to Each School	<p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per capita amount (by teacher or student), as in current EPS formula. Per capita amount with a base amount to ensure that small schools have sufficient funds for a program. Other? 	<p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per capita amount. Per capita amount with a base minimum to ensure that small schools have sufficient funds for a program. A portion of the cost of proposed change. Other? 	<p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per capita amount. The total cost of the proposed project. A portion of the cost of proposed project (e.g. minus local contribution). Other?
Duration of Funding	<p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing, <i>embedded in existing categories or</i> added to funding formula as categorical state fund. A specific time period. Other? 	<p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A specific time period. Specific time period with renewal possibilities. As long as school maintains eligibility. Other? 	<p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A specific time period (e.g. 1-3 years) X years, renewable based on progress and/or evaluation. Other?
Evaluation	<p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evaluation. Annual reporting of use of funds. Other? 	<p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evaluation. Evaluation as part of district required program approval. Annual reporting of use of funds. Other? 	<p>Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evaluation. Evaluation as part of district required program approval. Annual reporting of use of funds. Other?

<p>Other Factors, Considerations, & Challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Costs may vary widely across schools as different grade levels, sizes, and local contexts demand distinct strategies.</i> • <i>The determination of additional/eligible costs may be subjective, as some districts have already implemented strategies within existing resources.</i> • <i>Teacher contracts may limit available options in some districts.</i> • <i>Could be varying amounts of funds depending on financial need.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Costs may vary widely across schools as different grade levels, sizes, and local contexts demand distinct strategies.</i> • <i>The determination of additional/eligible costs may be subjective.</i> • <i>Teacher contracts may limit available options in some districts.</i> • <i>What would be the eligibility criteria?</i> • <i>Evaluation criteria should reflect goals.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Costs may vary widely across schools as different grade levels, sizes, and local contexts demand distinct strategies.</i> • <i>The determination of additional/eligible costs may be subjective.</i> • <i>Teacher contracts may limit available options in some districts.</i> • <i>What would be the basis for ranking/scoring – financial need, academically struggling schools, program quality, cost-effective, etc?</i> • <i>Evaluation criteria should reflect goals</i>
<p>Pros and Cons</p>	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easiest to administer. • Gives greatest flexibility to local units. <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not targeted to highest-need schools. • No requirement for quality programming. 	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools with programs that meet criteria would benefit. • May be easier to implement than a competitive program? <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher total cost than competitive. 	<p>Pros:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be targeted to high-need schools. • Targets the funds to high-quality programs. • Total cost can be controlled by determining how many applications to approve. <p>Cons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only a portion of schools receive funding. • Not all schools have the capacity to write competitive grant applications. • May be the most time-intensive process for DOE to implement.

Additional questions relevant to the details of all of the above options.

- Funding – new money or redistribution of EPS funds?
- Will it be start-up funding then phase into the EPS formula?
- What will the application/reporting requirements be for these funds?
- Does the Department need additional staff to implement and administer?
- *A statewide teacher contract may reduce some barriers to implementing new strategies.*
- *How to ensure equitable professional time for teachers in different school contexts (elementary vs secondary, small rural vs. large, etc.)?*