

ANALYSIS OF THE  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

*for the*

Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education

Pennsylvania Department of Education

---



World Education, Inc. &  
Cassandra Drennon & Associates, Inc.

*February 2006*

ANALYSIS OF THE  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

*for the*

Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education

Pennsylvania Department of Education

The evaluation team is

*World Education:*

Sally Waldron

Cristine Smith

Silja Kallenbach

Mina Reddy

*Cassandra Drennon & Associates:*

Cassie Bryant

Diane Monaghan

Adrienne Andrews

graphic design by Julie Sanders Graphic Design

© 2006 by World Education, Inc.

This report is a result of a project developed by the Pennsylvania Professional Development Analysis Project, under support from the U.S. Department of Education through the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education; however, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education, or the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education, and no official endorsement should be inferred. The contents of this publication are considered as accurate as possible at the time of publication, based on information provided; however, the Pennsylvania Professional Development Analysis Project is not responsible for any inadvertent errors.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	1
Acknowledgements .....	7
List of Working Group Members .....	9
Introduction .....	11
The Findings .....	17
1. <i>Components of the Professional Development System</i>	
2. <i>Coherence and Alignment</i>	
3. <i>Participation in Professional Development</i>	
4. <i>Communication, Decision Making, and Coordination</i>	
5. <i>Quality of the System</i>	
Conclusion .....	75
The Recommendations .....	77
Appendices .....	87
<i>Evaluation Document List</i>	
<i>Practitioner Focus Group Demographics</i>	
<i>Practitioner Focus Group Attendance</i>	

## Executive Summary

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania maintains a statewide professional development (PD) system to serve the needs of adult literacy programs and staff across the state. The system is highly evolved: it comprises six regional Professional Development Centers (PDCs) and State Leadership projects that augment the services of the PDCs. All of these entities are funded under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act and administered through the Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE), Division of Special Programs and Projects. Additionally, there are five statewide professional development initiatives that address family literacy, distance learning, workforce education, and tutor training which are funded by other state and federal programs such as Pennsylvania's Act 143 and the federal Even Start program. These initiatives are administered through the Bureau of ABLE, Division of Regional Programs.

As part of its commitment to providing the best possible professional development to ABLE-funded practitioners and programs, the Bureau of ABLE funded a system analysis during 2004-2005 (FY2005) focused on the professional development entities administered through the Division of Special Programs and Projects. The analysis was conducted by World Education, Inc. and Cassandra Drennon & Associates, Inc. This report presents the results of that analysis. It is intended for use by the ABLE Bureau and the PD system to strengthen the system overall and better serve the needs of adult learners in Pennsylvania.

The specific objectives of the analysis were to:

1. identify, document and rigorously assess the various service delivery components of the system;
2. produce realistic and specific recommendations for strengthening the system, recommendations that build foremost on excellence where it is currently found;
3. construct a model that depicts how the components can best function together to achieve the defining characteristics of *quality*, *reach*, and *coherence*; and
4. offer state leaders, professional developers, and practitioners a doable process for improving the system over time.

Sets of questions were developed to guide evaluation of five specific areas: system components; coherence and alignment of the PD system; participation and access; communication, decision making, and coordination; and quality. To answer these questions effectively, the evaluation team

reviewed documents, interviewed system stakeholders, conducted site visits to each of the PDCs, conducted practitioner focus groups, conducted administrator focus groups, attended professional development system quarterly meetings, conducted a statewide survey of practitioners, conducted an on-line survey of administrators, and observed local professional development activities.

In July 2005 (FY2006), the Bureau broadened the scope of the System Analysis Project to include the five training initiatives administered through the Division of Regional Programs. The purpose of this analysis is to produce recommendations for maximizing coordination and collaboration between the components and the larger professional development system, and to produce recommendations for better integrating the products and services of these entities into the larger system. When this second phase of the analysis is completed in February 2006, World Education and Cassandra Drennon & Associates will deliver a model that depicts how *all* the system components can best function together (objective 3 above).

### **Findings and Recommendations**

The Pennsylvania professional development system is recognized nationally for the strength of its leadership and the quality of its services in adult basic and literacy education. This reputation is entirely deserved. In our interviews and other communications with practitioners, program directors, professional developers, and Bureau members, we were impressed time and again with the passion, competence, and caring we encountered. Not surprisingly, however, we discovered that even the best efforts can be undercut by lack of communication and clarity in vision and expectations, and by practices that have outlived their usefulness.

We conclude with the major findings and recommendations of the analysis in summarized form. The findings reflect the excellence of the system as well as areas that need to be strengthened or changed. They are grouped according to the five evaluation questions that organized our analysis. The recommendations follow the logic of the model we developed for the purpose of attaining continuous program improvement: to support and improve the environments for learning, to make processes more effective, and to improve the quality of training content.

#### **THE KEY FINDINGS**

##### ***Components of the System***

- Elements of a high quality professional development system are in place.
- The PDCs are the “crown jewels” of the system.

- Some existing elements of the PD system need strengthening, reconceptualizing, or refining.

#### ***Coherence and Alignment***

- The Bureau's vision is not well understood and does not serve as an inspiration to the field.
- Stakeholders within the ABLE system differ in their opinions about the degree to which professional development should be guided by formal policy.
- Understanding of policy and policy implementation is inconsistent across programs and the PD system.
- Although programs are held accountable for achieving performance standards, the professional development system is not.
- Overall, the system suffers from a lack of clarity and consistency.
- The plethora of separate project names, acronyms, and logos undermines the ability of Bureau staff and professional developers to communicate a cohesive PD system.

#### ***Patterns of Participation***

- Most practitioners feel that the PD they receive is adequate.
- A key group of practitioners is underserved by the PD system.
- Fewer PD opportunities exist for Bureau staff, professional developers, program administrators, and very experienced practitioners.
- PD participation is strongly correlated to work status.
- What participants like most about the system is the variety that PD offers.

#### ***Communication, Decision Making, and Coordination***

- PDCs and State Leadership projects have strong internal communication and decision-making systems.
- Communication between PDCs and their constituents, and between State Leadership projects and their constituents, is inclusive and effective.
- The ABLE website is an excellent communications resource for the system.
- Communication, coordination and decision making across the PD system as a whole and between different system components are not always clear and consistent.
- Quarterly PDS meetings are not used effectively for communication, decision making, and coordination.
- Communication and coordination across the two divisions within the ABLE Bureau needs improvement.
- Communication of Bureau policy changes to the PD system and to the field as a whole is not always clear.

- Roles and responsibilities within the Bureau are not well defined, nor are the roles of PDC and State Leadership project staff in Bureau decision making.

### ***Quality of the System***

- The design of the six regions administered by PDCs has enabled delivery of high quality PD throughout the system.
- The quality of some components and activities within the PD system is low or inconsistent.

## **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***Make Environments More Supportive***

1. Communicate a clear vision for PD that is tied to the mission of adult education.
2. Promote the image of a PD system that is cohesive and unified.
3. Adopt quality standards for PD as the framework for continuous system improvement.

### ***Make Processes More Effective***

4. Enable the Continuous Program Improvement process and teacher & administrator competencies to function as the primary drivers of PD.
5. Use the expertise of the PD system staff more effectively.
6. Build a stronger system of coordination and communication across the entire PD system between the PDCs and State Leadership projects, and across the two Bureau divisions.
7. Broaden PD reach to target those who are very part-time without paid benefits or paid PD release time.

### ***Improve Quality of Content***

8. Limit the number of statewide “core” trainings to as few as ten by identifying the critical areas where consistency is appropriate.
9. Fill the gaps in training content and delivery methods.





## Acknowledgements

We offer our deep-felt appreciation to the following contributors who made the analysis of the Pennsylvania professional development system possible. Each of you gave generously of your time, opened doors that we could not otherwise have passed through, and helped us to understand this outstanding professional development system. Our thanks go out to:

***ABLE Bureau Staff***, who participated in many interviews and spoke openly about the strengths and needs of the PD system:

Rose Brandt, ABLE Bureau Director; Raiana Mearns, Chief of the Division of Special Programs and Projects; Don Paquette, Chief of the Division of Regional Programs; Regional Advisors: Michael Westover, Chuck Holbrook, and John Zhong; and other Bureau staff: Helen Hall, Jan Wessel, Mike Sobkowski, and Mike Tucci.

***PDC Staff and trainers***, the true “crown jewels” of the PD system, who made countless (and thoughtful) arrangements for our visits and participated in meetings, interviews, and focus groups:

Central-Northeast: Mary Mingle, Lydia Hale, and Jim Yeager; Northwest: Rich Gacka, Bootsie Barbour, Joy Zamerowski, Debbie Hrach, and Libby Wilson; Philadelphia: Diane Inverso, Guina Hammond, Sandy Harrill, and Mike Vail; South-Central: Carol Shefrin and Chuck Klinger; Southeast: Sandy Strunk, Ilsa Powell Diller, Susan Finn Miller, Patricia Link, Cheryl Hiester, and Melissa Monti; Southwest: Karen Mundie, Sue Snider, Sue Evans, Ellen McDevitt, and Rose Gioia-Fine.

***State Leadership staff***, who gave generously of their time and expertise to help us understand their work and the contributions their programs make to the professional development system:

Linda Hinman and Jim Yeager from ABLE Net; Carol Shefrin, Destiny Myers, Lori Forlizzi, Chuck Klinger, and Dyan Brandt with the ABLE Training Project; Evelyn Werner and Leanne Stasiulatis at AdvancE; Tana Reiff at AXIS; Mary Mingle and Holly Dittmeyer from Continuous Program Improvement; Sherry Royce with Focus on Excellence; KayLynn Hamilton and Barb Van Horn at WERC; and Sheila Sherow and Joanne Weinberger with Planning for Change.

**Teachers and other ABLÉ practitioners** who participated in focus groups and the teacher survey, sharing with us the practitioner’s experience in professional development. Their commitment to strengthening skills and knowledge and to improving Pennsylvania’s adult literacy services is commendable.

**Administrators** who participated enthusiastically in focus groups and the administrator survey, describing the program culture for professional development.

**Working Group members**, who guided us throughout the analysis and first helped us to understand how the PD system works in Pennsylvania. These helpful people, who are listed individually on the following page, gave us invaluable insight into the “real world” practice of professional development in Pennsylvania.

## WORKING GROUP MEMBER LIST 2004-2005

**Marcia Anderson**

*Director, Literacy Choices*

**Diane Baldrige**

*Program Director, Forbes Road  
Career & Technology Center*

**Bootsie Barbour**

*Coordinator, Northwest Professional  
Development Center*

**Chris Coro**

*Program Director, Northampton  
Community College*

**Rich Gacka**

*Director, Northwest Professional  
Development Center*

**Eddie Gordon**

*Teacher, Central Intermediate  
Unit 10 Development Center for Adults*

**Lydia Hale**

*Coordinator, Central-Northeast  
Professional Development Center*

**KayLynn Hamilton**

*Project Director, Workforce Education  
Research Center*

**Guina Hammond**

*Coordinator, Philadelphia  
Professional Development Center*

**Sandy Harrill**

*Trainer, Reader Development Project*

**Diane Inverso**

*Director, Philadelphia Professional  
Development Center*

**Chuck Klinger**

*Coordinator, South-Central Professional  
Development Center*

**Mary Mingle**

*Acting Director, Central-Northeast Professional  
Development Center*

**Karen Mundie**

*Director, Southwest Professional  
Development Center*

**Destiny Myers**

*Coordinator, Distance Learning Project*

**Ilsa Powell Diller**

*Coordinator, Southeast Professional  
Development Center*

**Kim Roush**

*Administrator and Training Coordinator,  
Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth*

**Carol Shefrin**

*Director, South-Central Professional  
Development Center*

**Sandy Strunk**

*Director, Southeast Professional  
Development Center*

**Amy Wilson**

*PA WIN Project Coordinator*

**Joy Zamierowski**

*Assistant Coordinator, Northwest  
Professional Development Center*



## Introduction

This report presents an analysis of Pennsylvania's adult basic and literacy education professional development system conducted during 2004-05. The Pennsylvania Professional Development System Analysis Project was coordinated by World Education, Inc. and Cassandra Drennon & Associates, Inc. World Education is a Boston-based non-profit that seeks to support and strengthen the U.S. adult literacy system through professional development, technical assistance, and connecting research and practice. Cassandra Drennon & Associates is a Georgia-based organization that provides technical assistance on adult basic education-related research, evaluation, professional development, and system-building projects.

We intend that this analysis will be used by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) staff together with professional developers to improve the system overall and better serve the needs of adult learners.

### **Brief History**

Professional development for adult basic and literacy educators in Pennsylvania has evolved from its beginnings in small grants to local programs to a comprehensive statewide system comprised of six regional Professional Development Centers (PDCs), a number of State Leadership projects that support or augment services of the PDCs, and other state-funded initiatives that address areas ranging from family literacy and distance learning, to workplace education and tutor training.

John Christopher, Pennsylvania ABLE Director from 1980 to 1994, initially funded decentralized professional development through grants to local programs to pursue special projects in staff and curriculum development, nurturing and developing some of the leaders who remain in the ABLE system today. In 1991, the National Literacy Act mandated that states use at least 15% of their federal dollars to support staff development and research, and in 1992 Pennsylvania initiated a regional professional development system, funding nine autonomous Professional Development Centers.

In 1998, the Workforce Investment Act eliminated the 15% mandate but continued to allow for professional development and at the same time established the National Reporting System, placing great demands on state systems and local programs for increased accountability and performance.

Cheryl Keenan, Pennsylvania ABLE Director from 1994 to 2002, anticipated and understood the implications of these federal-level changes; she therefore continued to invest in professional development by consolidating the regional centers from nine to six and implementing a broad array of policies and statewide initiatives. Keenan envisioned that professional development would support an overall program improvement agenda and recognized that improving accountability had to be linked to improving the quality of services. Under her leadership, some PDCs, and other entities such as universities, received additional funds to develop and provide statewide professional development activities related to special initiatives. Centrally-developed statewide training modules were produced and statewide entities were created that focused on areas such as family literacy and workplace education.

Beginning in 1994, Pennsylvania developed and piloted a comprehensive program improvement model, which was launched statewide in 1997 as the Educational Quality in Adult Literacy initiative, or EQUAL. Pennsylvania supported EQUAL from 1997 to 2002, implementing program improvement teams, a self-assessment process, a structure for using data to inform program improvement and decision-making processes within each ABLE-funded program. In 2003, with a change in leadership at ABLE, EQUAL was modified to become E-Quality. Some aspects of the model were changed, most notably the requirement within EQUAL for structured data logs. In 2004, Rose Brandt became Director of the ABLE Bureau, and the model for program improvement was again modified. The current model, Continuous Program Improvement, still relies on Program Improvement Teams and on each program to develop its own Program Improvement Plan. So while strengthening the quality of program services is still at the heart of the ABLE system, the process for program improvement is now viewed as a natural, day-to-day responsibility of adult basic and literacy education programs.

With new leadership at the Bureau for Adult Basic and Literacy Education, a broad array of professional development initiatives and structures in place, and the potential of decreasing adult literacy funding, the Professional Development System Analysis Project was funded by the Bureau to take stock of all that the current system had to offer and where the system should be headed.

### **Goals of the Analysis**

The ultimate goal of this system analysis was to ensure that the professional development needs of ABLE-funded practitioners in Pennsylvania are being served through an excellent professional development system. The specific objectives of the analysis were to:

- identify, document, and rigorously assess the various service delivery components of the system.
- produce specific and realistic recommendations for strengthening the system, recommendations that build foremost on excellence where it is currently found.
- construct a model that depicts how the components can best function together to achieve the defining characteristics of quality, reach, and coherence.
- offer state leaders, professional developers, and practitioners a doable process for improving the system over time.

### **Project Design**

The members of the evaluation team were guided by two approaches or “traditions” in the field of evaluation research. The first, *utilization-focused evaluation*<sup>1</sup>, is based on the premise that evaluations should be judged by “intended-use by intended users” (p. 20). Therefore, while we served Pennsylvania as evaluators conducting systematic, data-based inquiry and analysis, we also served as evaluation facilitators ensuring at every step that those who ultimately have responsibility for applying evaluation findings and recommendations were centrally involved in both decision making and “sense-making.”

A first step in this approach was to form a Working Group of stakeholders who would provide guidance to the evaluation and help interpret findings and implement recommendations. We sought individuals who were extensively involved in professional development and therefore best positioned to act on the resulting recommendations. It was our opinion that a representative from each PDC should automatically hold a seat at the Working Group table. We filled remaining seats with practitioners (teachers, program administrators, or state trainers) recommended to us by the PDCs. A total of 21 stakeholders comprised the Working Group, which we convened four times.

The Working Group contributed substantively to this evaluation by:

- educating the evaluation team initially about the various system components and their relationship to one another, how they were accessed by the field, and the strengths and weaknesses of the current system.
- recommending evaluation questions to be pursued through this analysis that had the greatest potential to improve system performance.
- validating initial findings and contributing to the interpretation of those findings.
- clarifying recommendations produced by the evaluation team.
- further conceptualizing a continuous improvement process for the professional development system.

<sup>1</sup> Patton, M. (1997) *Utilization-focused Evaluation*. (Third Edition). London, England: Sage Publications.

The second approach we followed is known as *appreciative inquiry*<sup>2</sup>, which is realized through a process “that inquires into, identifies, and further develops the best of what is in organizations in order to create a better future” (p. 5). Methods of appreciative inquiry, such as systematically collecting data about what is going well and why it is going well, were especially appropriate for this project since the Pennsylvania professional development system for adult education was (and continues to be) well-established and highly regarded. For Pennsylvania officials to undertake an examination at this time into the extent to which PD is functioning as a *system* further distinguishes the Commonwealth. A recent review of the PD literature by Belzer<sup>3</sup> failed to turn up documentation of such an endeavor by any other state.

In addition, we were guided in this evaluation by:

- a systems view of professional development, using a framework for analysis composed of three features: quality, reach, and coherence. This was modified from earlier work done by Belzer, Drennon, & Smith, 2001<sup>4</sup> that highlighted four key features of ABE professional development systems: scope, cooperative leadership, coherence, and accessibility;
- existing research on professional development in adult basic education, specifically the recent study by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy<sup>5</sup>. That study investigated how practitioners changed as a result of participating in one of three different models of professional development and what system factors affected such change; and
- the 1997 evaluation of the Pennsylvania Professional Development System conducted by Alisa Belzer. In that evaluation, Belzer identified the key components of the system and investigated how it operated to achieve the Guiding Principles as stated.

Finally, we strove to meet the Program Evaluation Standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation<sup>6</sup>, which provide professional standards on which to judge our evaluation work: *utility* (Does it serve the information needs of the intended users?); *feasibility* (Is it realistic, prudent, diplomatic and frugal?); *propriety* (Is it conducted legally and ethically, with regard to those involved and affected by its results?); and *accuracy* (Will it reveal and convey technically adequate information about the features that determine worth or merit of the program being evaluated?).

<sup>2</sup> Coghlan, A., Preskill, H., & Catsambas, T.T. (2003) An Overview of Appreciative Inquiry in Evaluation in *New Directions for Evaluation* (Preskill, H. and Coghlan, A., Eds), Volume 3, Issue 100 (pp. 5-22). New Jersey: Wiley Periodicals.

<sup>3</sup> Belzer, A. (2005). Improving Professional Development Systems: Recommendations from the Pennsylvania Adult Basic and Literacy Education Professional Development System Evaluation. *Adult Basic Education*, 12 (1), pp. 33-55.

<sup>4</sup> Belzer, A., Drennon, C., and Smith, C. (2001)

<sup>5</sup> NCSALL Reports #25. Boston, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

<sup>6</sup> The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994). *The Program Evaluation Standards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

## Determining the Evaluation Questions

Representatives from all stakeholder groups had input into the creation of the evaluation questions. After the Working Group had spent the better part of our first meeting with them in September 2004 educating us about the professional development system, we asked them, “What questions are worth pursuing to make the system the best it can be?” Individually and in small groups, they brainstormed questions that the evaluation needed to ask. We took away 30 possible questions from that first Working Group meeting. Next, we asked the Bureau staff to follow this same procedure, first individually brainstorming questions worthy of pursuing in a statewide system analysis and then negotiating with us to determine the most promising questions to pursue. Finally, the evaluation team contributed our own questions to the mix. We proceeded to categorize all of the possible questions, eliminate conceptual overlaps and redundancies, and set aside those questions that were beyond the scope of our contract. The ABLE Bureau approved five broad thematic areas of inquiry that resulted from this process along with 16 evaluation questions which appear in the following table.

### EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Theme	Specific Questions
Components of the PD System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What are the components that constitute the system?</li><li>2. How does the overall PD system “work”?</li><li>3. What is the intended and actual role of each component?</li><li>4. Does the system include the appropriate components? What are its strengths, overlaps, and gaps?</li></ol>
Coherence and Alignment of the PD System	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What are the principle drivers (e.g., policies, research and best practices, program improvement plans, practitioner needs and interests, mission, vision and guiding principles, etc.) with which the PD system should be aligned?</li><li>2. Are components of the PD system adequately aligned with those drivers?</li><li>3. What are the strengths and gaps in the system with respect to coherence and alignment?</li></ol>

## EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Theme	Specific Questions
Participation and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the target population for PD services? What are the various subgroups that make up this population and their important characteristics?</li><li>• What are the patterns of participation in PD among the targeted subgroups?</li><li>• What are the factors affecting participation?</li><li>• What are the strengths and gaps with respect to practitioner participation in the PD system?</li></ul>
Communication, Decision Making and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does communication occur within the PD system? Is this communication sufficiently inclusive and effective?</li><li>• How are decisions made within the PD system? Are the decision-making structures and processes sufficiently inclusive and effective?</li><li>• How do components coordinate their activities across the state and regions? Is this coordination sufficiently inclusive and effective?</li><li>• What are the strengths and gaps with respect to decision making, coordination, and communication?</li></ul>
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are there issues related to quality that arise during this evaluation? If so, what are these issues and how might they be addressed?</li></ul>

### Data Collection

In order to answer the evaluation questions, we:

- reviewed 254 documents;
- interviewed 49 system stakeholders (ABLE staff; PDC directors, coordinators, and other staff members; coordinators of State Leadership projects; and selected statewide trainers);
- conducted site visits to each of the six PDCs;
- conducted six focus groups (one in each region), which included a total of 48 practitioners;
- conducted two focus groups at the annual PAACE conference, which included a total of 14 local program administrators;
- attended and observed four quarterly professional development system meetings;
- conducted a statewide survey of 113 randomly-selected practitioners;
- conducted an on-line statewide survey of 112 local program administrators; and
- observed four local or regional professional development activities and the PAACE conference.

The remainder of this report addresses the findings, recommendations, and a suggested process for continuously improving the system from within.

## THE FINDINGS



## THE FINDINGS

# 1 Components of the Professional Development System

This section responds to our first set of evaluation questions, which required that we describe the components of the professional development system and how they function together in service to Pennsylvania practitioners: *What are the components of the professional development system? How does the overall system work? What is the intended and actual role of each component? Does the system include the appropriate components? What are its strengths, overlaps, and gaps?*

To answer these questions, we drew upon existing information that included, but was not limited to, expertise offered by the Working Group; PDC work plans and progress reports; work plans and progress reports for other State Leadership projects; policy statements; articles, websites, and other publications of the professional development system; and previous evaluations of the system or its components. We collected additional data that consisted of participants' and other stakeholders' opinions and experiences within the system. These data were gathered through focus groups, interviews, our observations of meetings, and surveys of practitioners and administrators.

---

### PD System Components

**FINDING** • *Elements of a high quality professional development system are in place.*

In Pennsylvania, funding and monitoring responsibilities for the overall professional development system fall within the purview of the Division Chief of Special Programs and Projects. Included under the professional development system umbrella are six regional Professional Development Centers (PDCs), the State Leadership projects that support or augment their services, and other statewide PD initiatives. In 2004-05 when we conducted our system analysis, the funded State Leadership projects for professional development included:

- *ABLE Net* (management of e-Campus and e-Data systems for the state, and provider of related training)
- *ABLE Training Project* (maintenance of statewide training content and support to trainers)
- *AdvancE* (the state literacy resource center)

## THE FINDINGS 1

- *AXIS* (provision of professional development publications, the ABLÉ website, and other communications)
- *Continuous Program Improvement (CPI)* (support of collaboration among local agencies, the PDCs, and the ABLÉ Bureau, with a focus on program improvement)
- *Focus On Excellence* (recognition of successful students and exemplary teachers)
- *Planning for Change* (training and technical assistance to ABLÉ coalitions in the 22 Workforce Investment Board regions)

Several other professional development entities are funded through Pennsylvania's Act 143 and administered through the Division of Regional Programs. These entities were not subject to our analysis but are viewed by system stakeholders as part of the “system” of professional development that serves their needs:

- *Distance Learning Training Project* (professional development and technical assistance to distance learning providers)
- *Family Literacy Training and Technical Assistance Project* (training services and technical assistance for practitioners and administrators providing family literacy services)
- *Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth* (training of volunteer literacy tutors)
- *Pennsylvania Literacy Corps* (instruction and training for college students in adult learning theory, research-based instructional practices, and tutoring strategies)
- *PA WIN/WERC* (research and professional development related to workforce education)

According to our Working Group members, local program administrators, and practitioner focus group members, there is a third set of professional development activities that contribute to the professional growth of Pennsylvania's practitioners but which lie outside the boundaries of the “official” (i.e., ABLÉ-funded) professional development system, including self-directed learning:

- *The Pennsylvania Association for Adult and Continuing Education (PAACE)* (the professional organization for adult educators, which sponsors an annual conference and produces a set of publications)
- *The Internet*
- *National conferences*
- *Training provided by non ABLÉ-funded entities* (e.g. human service organizations, non-profits, K-12 systems)
- *Professional reading*
- *College/University coursework*
- *Agency-led in-house training*

In addition to the service delivery and support components listed above, this study determined that other important elements of a high quality professional development system are in place. These elements include qualified staff, training consultants, and other content experts; effective training methodologies; policy models; planning structures and processes; guiding principles for staff development; and teacher and administrator competencies.

### **How the Professional Development System Works**

The Working Group was instrumental in helping us conceptualize how components of the professional development system work together systematically and how the network of professional development services that make up the system are perceived and experienced by members of the field. One assumption we had was that different stakeholders would have somewhat different understandings of the PD system, and we wanted to explore these differences.

At its initial meeting, we divided the Working Group into three “job alike” stakeholder clusters - PDC staff, trainers, and practitioners. We gave each group a set of manipulatives - small cardboard cutouts representing all aspects of the professional development system in Pennsylvania (i.e. state- or federally-funded PD projects and the people, products, activities, services, and drivers associated with them). We asked each group to arrange the cutouts to reflect its understanding of how the professional development system was organized and how it functioned. Each group was also given blanks for adding components if they felt this was necessary in providing a comprehensive view of PD in Pennsylvania. Each group then explained the system they had depicted.

The activity affirmed our assumption that the system was understood and experienced differently by different stakeholder groups. For example, the two groups that deliver professional development services (i.e., the group made up of PD staff and the group made up of trainers) view the Bureau in the center of the professional development system with spokes extending from the Bureau to the PDCs and the other state-funded professional development projects. The practitioner group, in contrast, depicted the system hierarchically, with the Bureau at the top and local programs positioned at the bottom. In the center they positioned the PDCs and other State Leadership projects to depict that they are responsive to both the field and the Bureau. The practitioner and trainer groups added a number of professional development activities that they considered important to professional growth in Pennsylvania although these did not receive funding from the ABLE Bureau (e.g., the annual conference sponsored by PAACE; college and university coursework; training offered by K-12 school systems, Intermediate Units, CBOs, and community colleges; self-directed learning).

THE FINDINGS 1

After leaving the Working Group meeting, we created a single “map” of the existing Pennsylvania professional development system that took into account what we had learned from our stakeholder clusters. This map is represented by Table 1, which shows how the system works on the state, regional, program, and individual levels, including what drives the system at each level.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM MAP

System Level	How does the system work?	What drives the system?
State	The Bureau provides direction and support to the overall professional development system through both its program monitoring functions and its funding of special projects.	Federal and state legislation, such as WIA and Pennsylvania’s Act 143 respectively, influence decision making on the state level with respect to professional development.
	Additionally, the Bureau facilitates coordination and communication among all professional development projects through quarterly meetings with PDC, State Leadership project, and other statewide PD initiative staff.	Regional needs assessment data and analyses of regional professional development plans, compiled by the PDCs, are data the Bureau can also use for decision making about statewide initiatives and funding priorities.
Regional	PDCs plan, promote, and/or deliver both site-based and regional professional development opportunities including workshops and practitioner networks and other sharing groups. They coordinate mentoring relationships; develop on-line courses; facilitate inquiry groups as part of Learning from Practice; lend support to new administrators; provide technical assistance to programs; and act as a liaison between Regional Advisors and local programs.	PDCs create regional professional development plans based on Program Improvement Plans from all programs. Regional plans are also subject to state initiatives, which can be announced at any time. PDCs conduct their own needs assessments for use in planning regional professional development events. Based on needs expressed by one or more agencies, PDCs will arrange region-wide or site-specific trainings. PDCs may also help an agency director bring in an outside trainer without actually sponsoring the training themselves.
	Through their offerings, PDCs are responsive to, and supportive of, state-level initiatives, regionally- shared interests, and program-specific needs.	Advisory boards made up of program administrators and the Regional Advisor guide the PDCs.  It is written into the RFP that professional development organized by the PDC must be consistent with the Guiding Principles.

Table 1

System Level	How does the system work?	What drives the system?
<b>Program</b>	<p>Program staff engage in site-based professional development that includes workshops; staff meetings focused on practitioner sharing or other PD content; study groups; curriculum projects; etc.</p> <p>Also on the program level, practitioners may participate in professional development that is offered by other organizations/agencies in the community that serve the same clientele.</p> <p>Programs also participate in trainings sponsored by statewide projects including ABLE Net technology training; Family Literacy training and technical assistance; Distance Learning Training; PA-WIN/WERC training; and trainings sponsored by Tutors of Literacy in the Commonwealth.</p>	<p>Site-based professional development may be driven by program improvement plans (PIPs) and professional development plans (PDPs). Programs are bound by Bureau policy to have PIPs tied to program quality indicators and performance standards. Program-level PDPs, however, are optional.</p> <p>Regional Advisors and PDC staff are to team with local program administrators to develop and support appropriate PIPs based on program goals.</p> <p>Some programs use teacher competencies when planning program-based professional development. There is no policy associated with the teacher competencies; rather, they serve as a tool and resource.</p>
<b>Individual</b>	<p>Self-directed activities of a practitioner's own choosing (e.g. professional reading, interaction with colleagues, college courses, PAACE conference, and so on).</p>	<p>These activities are driven by a practitioner's interest, recertification requirements, personal and professional aspirations, general curiosity, or by other intrinsic or extrinsic rewards.</p> <p>Some programs require practitioners to have an individualized professional development plan. Some also encourage teachers to self-assess using the teacher competencies before developing an individualized plan.</p> <p>For those teachers needing to maintain K-12 certification, Act 48 may drive their participation in PD to a large extent.</p>

*Table 1, continued*

**Intended and Actual Role of Each Component**

- FINDINGS
- *The PDCs are the “crown jewels” of the system.*
  - *Some existing components of the system need strengthening, reconceptualizing, or refining.*

Each PD system component is designed to contribute in specific ways to the professional development of practitioners. However, due to any number of factors, the reality of implementation can vary greatly from original intent. We gained specific insights into how the various PD opportunities were being experienced by practitioners when we asked them on our survey, “What components of the Pennsylvania professional development system do you use and how often, and to what extent do they contribute to your professional development?” Practitioners who indicated that they had used a particular component were then asked to rate its contribution to their professional development on a scale of 0 (“not at all”) to 6 (“a great deal”). (Please note that all components are not parallel in all aspects: purpose, frequency, etc.)

Because the mean rating for each component exceeds the neutral point 3.0 (Figure 1), we can conclude that according to practitioners all components are making at least some contribution to professional development. Those practitioners who use Learning from Practice consider it the greatest contributor

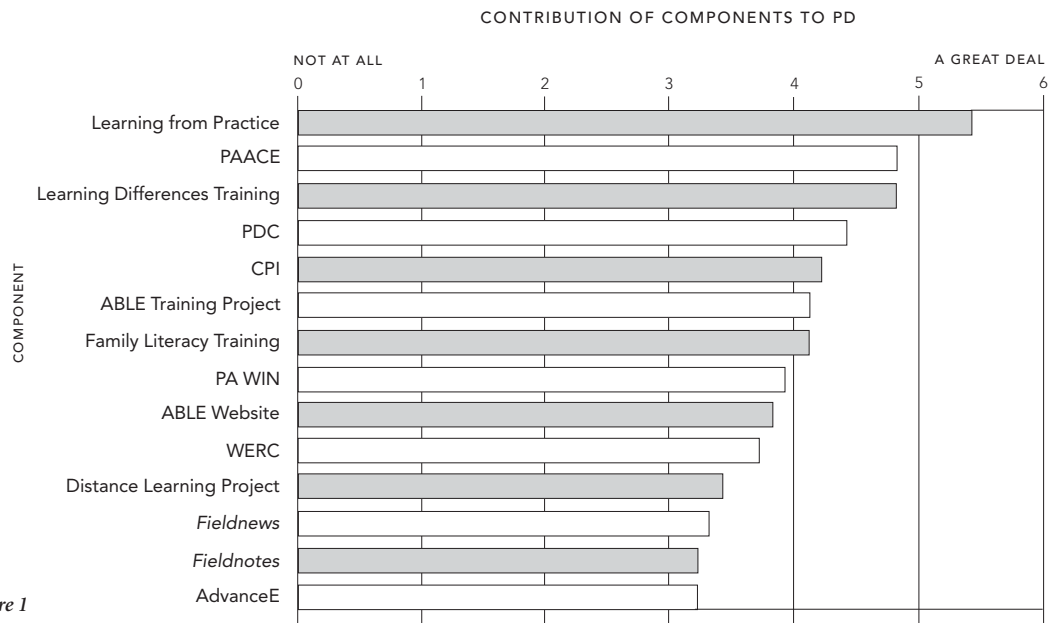


Figure 1

to their professional growth, although the number who use it is relatively small. PAACE ranks as the second greatest contributor to professional development. Although this is not an ABLE-funded activity, we included it in the survey knowing it figured prominently in many practitioners' annual PD.

To further explore differences between the intended and actual roles of system components, we studied funding applications and periodic progress reports from each project, talked to system users about their professional development experiences, and surveyed program administrators. Table 2 presents a summary of what we learned through these studies along with illustrative comments from system stakeholders. We discuss two of the major aspects of the PD system, the PDCs and the ABLE Training Project, more fully following the table.

## INTENDED AND ACTUAL ROLES OF SYSTEM COMPONENTS

### PDCs

INTENTION	ACTUAL ROLE	VOICES FROM THE FIELD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To address the PD needs of adult basic and family literacy practitioners and administrators.</li> </ul>	<p>The PDCs offer ABLE Training Project and other workshops, practitioner research support, site-based customized training, technical assistance, observation, feedback, and network facilitation. Their efforts almost always meet and more often exceed the expectations of those they serve.</p>	<p>"[PDCs] are staffed by knowledgeable, experienced leaders who are a great resource to administrators." <i>Program Administrator</i></p> <p>"They are the ones that work closely with the agencies and they're constantly assessing the needs....They know what's going on out there better than we do here." <i>Bureau Staff Member</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To collaborate in the Continuous Program Improvement process with the program administrator and Regional Advisor for each local program.</li> </ul>	<p>In most regions, PDCs are not yet playing the integral role identified for them in the new Continuous Program Improvement process with Regional Advisors and program administrators.</p>	<p>"Across the state there really is a strong network now. The PDC model is a great way for the state to get out its message." <i>PDC Coordinator</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify regional PD needs and provide activities to meet those needs.</li> </ul>	<p>The traditional workshop model may be over-used at the expense of other effective PD approaches such as inquiry, mentoring and coaching, and study groups. Practitioners wish for greater variety.</p>	<p>"The quality of the services and activities provided by our PDC has always been excellent!" <i>Program Administrator</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide training, technical assistance, and other support to programs as needed.</li> </ul>	<p>There is not as much coordination and collaboration among PDCs and State Leadership projects as there could be.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support other State Leadership projects.</li> </ul> <p><i>State Leadership Application Abstracts 2005-2006</i></p>		

**Table 2**

## ABLE TRAINING PROJECT

INTENTION	ACTUAL ROLE	VOICES FROM THE FIELD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To centralize the coordination and maintenance of statewide expertise, training, and PD offerings.</li> </ul>	<p>By 2004-2005, the number of trainings managed by the project had increased from 27 core modules to more than 100. The number of trainers had grown from 57 to 80-100.</p> <p>A comprehensive print- and web-based catalog provides a single point of reference for anyone seeking information on training opportunities.</p> <p>Some PDC and Bureau staff do not see a need for a separate training project. The demand in the field for standardized trainings has diminished.</p> <p>Much of the module content is considered outdated and sometimes irrelevant.</p>	<p>"The sheer number of prescribed scripted trainings [concerns me]." <i>Bureau Staff Member</i></p> <p>"Money should be going into developing new trainings. The six PDCs have this baby [core modules] and it is safe. It won't disappear." <i>PDC Director</i></p> <p>"It's like moving a dinosaur around.... They've been asking ['Are these the correct trainers?'] for five years and that's not an important question." <i>PDC Coordinator</i></p> <p>"It behooves everyone to really look at the customer – the folks we serve – and if you're having a hard time getting folks to come to training, there's a reason.... Agencies must think the training is not that valuable." <i>PDC Coordinator</i></p> <p>"Some of the PDC trainings, in particular, module trainings have sometimes been a waste of time. It seems that it depends upon who the trainer is." <i>Program Administrator</i></p> <p>"I'm concerned [the core modules] are getting a little outdated and stale." <i>Bureau Staff Member</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To coordinate project decisions among Bureau, State Leadership projects, and PDCs.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain a high level of quality through continuous review and systematic evaluation of trainings and trainers.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain and monitor the training delivery system to ensure that ABLE-funded programs have access to trainings through the PDCs.</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To establish a review process for core training modules that need to be revised or updated.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>State Leadership Application Abstracts 2005-2006</i></p>		

*Table 2, continued*

**ADVANCE**

INTENTION	ACTUAL ROLE	VOICES FROM THE FIELD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop and maintain the AdvanceE website.</li> <li>• To provide search services.</li> <li>• To serve as a clearinghouse for all ABE-funded publications.</li> </ul>	<p>In 2004, AdvanceE conducted 1,075 information services, answered 619 reference questions, made 1,383 referrals, lent 958 items, and distributed 2,060 items for conferences, workshops, and presentations.</p> <p>Despite the circulation levels noted above, practitioners and administrators know little about AdvanceE, including how to use its online services. It has less visibility now that it is online, and it is under-used (less than 25% of practitioners use it, though most say they do web searches).</p> <p>AdvanceE no longer provides a unique service as it did in years past when it housed and disseminated 353 projects. Some in the field would like to see AdvanceE establish a new niche, but this remains unidentified.</p>	<p>“When I had a workshop we took materials out, but it wasn’t that easy to get there...and I didn’t find too many things for ESL.” <i>Practitioner</i></p> <p>“During a workshop at the state Bureau, I got a guided tour of AdvanceE...but I haven’t utilized it since. Tickets for parking there are expensive.” <i>Practitioner</i></p> <p>“AdvanceE isn’t supporting this field. They still have a library mentality. Their current niche is no longer unique.”</p> <p>“It was the clearinghouse for small special projects no longer in existence so it’s hard to find a need that AdvanceE now fills.” <i>Working Group Discussion</i></p>

*Table 2, continued*

**ABLE NET**

INTENTION	ACTUAL ROLE	VOICES FROM THE FIELD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain existing databases and electronic application systems by providing e-Data, e-Campus, and e-Grant related technical support to the Bureau, PDCs, and ABLE-funded agencies.</li> </ul>	<p>The ABLE Net team finds its services to be most helpful to programs that don't look at their own data.</p> <p>E-Data and e-Campus trainings are now offered online to make them more convenient.</p> <p>Administration of e-Grants has been moved to the Bureau. Data team meetings with the Bureau were held as needed, while project management was resolved.</p>	<p>"[E-Campus is extremely high quality] because you can reach a lot of different areas from one site." <i>Practitioner</i></p> <p>"We get a lot of complaints because ABLE Net doesn't give the support people expect." <i>PDC Coordinator</i></p> <p>"I have little input into e-Data. They don't provide a lot of what I need. It's a frustration. Training for e-Data is good; the access to information is not good." <i>State Leadership Project Director</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assist agencies with managing and reporting of their data.</li> <li>To provide training to system users including the Bureau.</li> </ul>	<p>ABLE Net's technical training role has been de-emphasized in response to budget cuts – they no longer offer the Master Tech series and other tech support training.</p> <p>In the past, data from e-Campus and e-Data were considered somewhat unreliable and seen as not as useful to the field as they could be (see Section 5 for more).</p>	<p>"We have so many people who struggle with e-Campus that we've actually started our own registration system." <i>PDC Director</i></p>

*Table 2, continued*

AXIS

INTENTION	ACTUAL ROLE	VOICES FROM THE FIELD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide communications support for adult education statewide.</li> </ul>	<p>AXIS as an entity is not well known in the field but its director is, and people consider her highly competent, primarily through her work with the ABLE website and her technical assistance (see Section 4 for more).</p>	<p>"They get things on the website immediately [and support is] excellent." Bureau Staff Member</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To administer the ABLE website and support websites of the statewide projects.</li> </ul>	<p>The Bureau uses the ABLE website to communicate with the field and to post policy.</p>	<p>"It opens up a world of everything. If you go onto the ABLE site, you can get all the information you need: minutes from meetings, things that happen at PAACE, administrator teleconferences re: grants. Everything is posted." PDC Coordinator</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To design and produce print communication, including <i>Fieldnotes</i> and <i>Fieldnews</i>.</li> </ul>	<p>Nearly half of practitioners visit the website at least monthly. Another 17% say they visit once a quarter. These individuals consider the website a moderate contributor to their PD overall, relative to other components (see Figure 1).</p>	<p>"I attended ESL civics, so I did visit [the website] for that, just to get some ideas. That's the only time." Practitioner</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To design and produce print communication, including <i>Fieldnotes</i> and <i>Fieldnews</i>.</li> </ul>	<p>More than 1/3 of practitioners say they do not make use of <i>Fieldnotes</i> and <i>Fieldnews</i> (see Section 3 for more), although the AXIS director solicits articles and works with contributing authors for <i>Fieldnotes</i> and uses practitioner focus groups and editorial groups for both publications.</p>	<p>"Fieldnotes is a great publication." Bureau Staff Member</p>

Table 2, continued

**PLANNING FOR CHANGE**

INTENTION	ACTUAL ROLE	VOICES FROM THE FIELD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide technical assistance, guidance, and support for ABLE workforce coalitions in the 22 Workforce Investment Board (WIB) regions of the state.</li> <li>To encourage active participation of all ABLE administrators and facilitate the resolution of collaboration, communication, and leadership issues.</li> <li>To provide all coalitions with ongoing assistance and support in solving problems related to partnerships with WIBs and Career Links, and the delivery of workforce development services.</li> </ul>	<p>Due to funding cuts, Planning for Change consultants are now paid to attend only meetings of those coalitions that are minimally functioning; however, they have volunteered their time to attend others as well.</p> <p>The project's interim report for 2005 states that "[PDC participation] remains a problem, but there are signs of possible progress." The report also indicated a problem with negative attitudes in one region.</p> <p>Many in the field lack clarity about this initiative or its contribution to PD.</p>	<p>"We cut their funding because of a federal change; [the consultants] are a bargain - they do a lot for free." <i>Bureau Staff Member</i></p> <p>"It's such a waste of time." "It is important."</p> <p>"It is PD because they do training for administrators, but it is poorly designed."</p> <p>"This is the first time I'm hearing that Planning for Change is connected to the WIBs." <i>Working Group Discussion</i></p>
		<p><i>State Leadership Application Abstracts 2005-2006</i></p>

*Table 2, continued*

### PDCs

Early in the study, a local program director remarked, “The PDCs are the crown jewels of the PD system.” This highly positive assessment was reinforced throughout our analysis of other stakeholders’ views. For example, the ABLÉ Bureau Director refers to the PDCs as “our greatest strength.” Program administrators we surveyed point to PDC-sponsored workshops and technical assistance as areas in which system quality is especially high. PDCs earn their respected status because the staff at each are widely considered responsive to statewide, local, and regional needs. In the opinion of most system stakeholders, they are communicative, knowledgeable, and dedicated, and they provide excellent resources.

The PDCs have a hand in most professional development received by program staff, and administrators find them very responsive to the needs of their individual programs.

Data from the teacher focus groups and practitioner survey show that practitioners are generally aware of the professional development opportunities available to them through the PDCs although they do not always know that the PDC is behind the activities in which they participate. Seventy-nine percent of practitioners do say that they use PDC services on a regular basis, according to the practitioner survey, and they rate its contribution to their PD above most other components of the system (Figure 1).

Although few complaints about the PDCs surfaced in the data we collected, there are areas in which they could improve, primarily with respect to Continuous Program Improvement (CPI), training delivery methods, and communication with the State Leadership projects. Specifically, we find that some PDCs have not yet engaged in the new CPI process with Regional Advisors and program directors to the extent that was intended. Some PDCs have participated in the CPI process as the model is designed and are able to use the resulting program improvement plans to coordinate regional and site-based training. Other PDCs are unclear about how the new CPI process is to function. Some simply do not have a tight enough grasp of the current program improvement process within programs they serve. For example, a PDC coordinator from one region said, “We have no idea how the program improvement teams are functioning in the agencies or even if they are.” The disparity between intention and reality can be partly explained by the fact that the PDCs were initially informed about the new CPI process at a quarterly PDS meeting, but subsequently Regional Advisors, PDC staff, and program staff never received joint training on its implementation.

A concern of PD users is the over-reliance on the traditional workshop model in the delivery of PDC

offerings. The preponderance of single-session workshops is confirmed by the regional professional development plans and PDC quarterly reports. Practitioner comments indicate that they value variety in training delivery and would like to attend fewer workshops.

Communication among PDCs, State Leadership projects, and other statewide PD initiatives has failed to provide the cohesiveness one would expect within a “system.” The PDCs do not always know what the State Leadership projects or other PD initiatives are doing in the regions, and this discourages coordination of services. One PDC director said,

*I'd like more information about how activities are working. They fund PA WIN for example. I have no idea what its impact is in [my region] or across the state... I almost wish the initiatives would visit each of the PDCs and talk about how it would fit into the region. We don't have an opportunity to talk about how those initiatives will actually play out.*

### **The ABLE Training Project**

The ABLE Bureau developed the Training Project to satisfy a need for basic knowledge-based training that could be delivered with consistency across the state, coordinated by a single entity. Pennsylvania had no standardized training prior to this time. Consistent with their current mission, the project staff has been meticulous in identifying the vast spectrum of training opportunities developed across the state, cataloguing them, cross-referencing them with teacher competencies and indicators of program quality, and making the catalog available to all PDCs and programs. The same conscientiousness has been applied to identifying trainers across the state who are available to deliver training when called upon. There is no question that the Training Project staff has been committed and diligent in establishing a comprehensive statewide training project. The assumption, however, that virtually all training can and should be coordinated and managed by a single entity, should be re-examined.

It is our opinion that neither the trainings (which reflect a great degree of topical overlap) nor the trainers (many of whom have been prepared to deliver training but have never been called on to do so) are managed or coordinated optimally within this model. Moreover, a single statewide training hub functions somewhat at odds with the regional system of PDCs, whose staff (as well as administrators and practitioners) often find customized, site-based training more relevant and cost-effective. A more realistic model would entail centrally managing and coordinating far fewer “core”

training opportunities and associated expertise (i.e., 10-15 workshops rather than the 100 or more that are currently maintained) and developing new, consistent *statewide* training as needed. Other concerns related to the Training Project include these:

- Although trainers are, in theory, free to adapt some ABLÉ Training Project modules, in practice they are often discouraged from doing so. The requirement to have all workshop descriptions approved in advance by the Bureau and then posted on e-Campus acts as a deterrent to adaptation. On the other hand, it is not uncommon for a trainer to modify a workshop while the original description on e-Campus is left intact. Some practitioners, therefore, complain that the workshops they attend do not resemble what they signed up for. Said one practitioner, “A lot of the workshops are described differently [from] what I get when I get there. My expectations are a lot different from what I actually get. Sometimes good. Sometimes not.”
- We question whether the Training Project can effectively achieve its intention to coordinate standardized training opportunities and trainers when it does not collect or use standardized evaluation data.
- The project has not been able to provide a consistently high level of support to the trainer cadre evidenced by the lack of observation and feedback provided to trainers over the past year.
- The Bureau primarily has been the decision maker for the project’s focus and direction rather than having the project draw on the expertise of its stakeholder advisors. As a result, the project does not routinely receive and incorporate broad-based input from its customers; and it has not been able to develop new content based on statewide needs.
- As a final concern, the Training Project staff indicated that direction they receive from the Bureau has at times lacked clarity. They noted instances of mixed messages and unclear communication of changing Bureau priorities. For example, notable confusion arose over the proposed collaboration between the Training Project and PDCs to develop regional PD plans. Training Project staff had completed much of the planning for this collaboration when the Bureau shifted the focus of the project.

## 2 Coherence and Alignment

In this second group of findings we address issues of coherence and alignment in the Pennsylvania PD system: *What are the principle drivers with which the PD system should be aligned? Are components of the PD system adequately aligned with those drivers? and What are the strengths and gaps in the system with respect to coherence and alignment?*

In answering these questions, we drew on all data sources available to us, particularly the interviews with Bureau and PDC staff and project documents.

When we speak of coherence within a PD system, we are referring to the logical relationships between various professional development offerings, as well as the relationship between those offerings and the larger purpose of student learning toward which they are directed. What “drives” a PD system are factors such as the overall vision for adult education, state and local policies, program data, practitioner needs, and research or professional wisdom about best practices. In the Pennsylvania system, we find strong alignment between PD offerings and some of these drivers, but weak alignment with others because of differences in how the drivers themselves are accessed, understood, or valued. Issues of coherence and alignment overlap with the issues of communication, decision making, and coordination. These are discussed fully in Section 4.

---

### Vision as a Driver of PD

**FINDING** • *The Bureau’s vision is not well understood and does not serve as an inspiration to the field.*

Although many high quality PD offerings, special projects, and initiatives make up a professional development system, they cannot effectively coalesce in the absence of a common vision. In our observations, there is not a sense in Pennsylvania among many members of the field that the totality of PD activities is directed toward a particular end. One reason may be that neither the ABLE Director’s vision for adult education, nor her vision for professional development, is formally expressed to the field; she most often communicates her vision, she explained, in broader goals and through the

invitation to join the process rather than in top-down decisions. Consequently, there are differing interpretations of the vision by Bureau staffers and members of the field, and some think there is no vision for PD at all. One Bureau staff member remarked, “[The State Director] has a vision but we don’t know what it is, so we’re kind of working in the dark.”

The sentiments expressed by Bureau staffers were echoed in the field. A PDC director lamented, “I feel like [the vision] is a secret. I certainly don’t know what it is... I think part of it is a desire for things to be quite different but I don’t know what that is or why.”

Some field members seem to think the lack of a clearly articulated vision has to do with the Director’s style as a leader:

- “[The State Director] wants to be open and inclusive, go out to the field and have them tell her what they want...Her instinct is to be more bottom up.” (PDC director)
- “[The State Director’s] strength is listening to the field.” (PDC coordinator)
- “[The State Director’s] style is different. She believes in consensus gathering. (PDC director)

The Director admits to placing a lot of credibility in her own thoughts, and her own vision, but she says she also wishes to allow a shared vision to develop within the Bureau and then be advanced throughout the professional development system. A problem now, she says, is that the various PDCs value different things. “Different philosophies in different PDCs are a constraint. They don’t have a shared philosophy. I think we need to grow in that direction.”

**Policy as a Driver of PD**

- FINDINGS
- *Stakeholders within the ABLE system differ in their opinions about the degree to which PD should be guided by formal policy.*
  - *Understanding of policy and policy implementation is inconsistent across programs and the PD system.*

In Pennsylvania, as in other states, the Workforce Investment Act has functioned from the federal level as the most significant driver of professional development in recent years. The Division Chief for Special Projects explained,

*When that came into being, we were just starting a lot of things like data collection. The mandate that there be a high quality data collection system generated a sudden huge need for training around that. The PD system responded by providing training. Then there was a need to analyze the data. From that came EQUAL. Then we had training on data collection and analysis. Along with the requirements of [the National Reporting System] came the need for assessment training. So really, WIA was the impetus for a lot.*

The Bureau posts all state policy and subsequent changes to those policies on the ABLE website and also distributes key documents in paper and electronic form. According to one PDC director, policies are now easy for everyone to access. They are organized and numbered, and it is clear what policies have been rescinded or revised. Despite this clarity, many in the field are not aware of policy changes or how to implement them. For example, the Bureau modified policy surrounding the Continuous Program Improvement (CPI) process in the fall of 2004, but months later many programs as well as the PDCs remain unsure how to implement the professional development dimension of CPI effectively. Even a Regional Advisor was unsure how CPI is now supposed to work. “There is a new policy but it’s unclear how to implement it.... What do we really need to do with the PDC? It’s still unsettled,” shared this advisor. The State Director concurs that communication surrounding the changes to CPI was not sufficient. “It’s not been handled well in the field or in house... I think I would have been more directive if I had to do it over again.”

The Bureau has no policy specifying what kinds of professional development Pennsylvania practitioners should be required to have nor how much time each year they should devote to it. PDC and State Leadership project staff, practitioners, administrators, and Bureau staff differ in their opinions about such policy and the role it should play in the PD system. A PDC coordinator felt that formal policy was needed, saying, “It would be much easier if the Bureau was clear and in fact mandated some things. I think, when they don’t require it, people think it’s not a high priority.” The State Director agreed that accountability is missing. “We have offerings but we don’t have requirements. This is the state of things now. It’s not necessarily part of the vision or philosophy. I think we do need to have guidelines and expectations.”

One of the Regional Advisors implied that some of the State Leadership projects suffer because the

Bureau places no expectations on the field to participate in training and State Leadership projects have no authority on their own to require such participation. “People complain if a statewide project puts expectations on them,” said this advisor. “Only if a policy comes from the Bureau level will people comply.” A PDC coordinator from at least one region disagreed, however, saying that she did not think PD could be mandated. “It has to be a necessity of the program and needs buy-in from participants.”

A Regional Advisor favors a PD policy requiring teacher certification, but at the same time he expressed these two concerns:

*I’m all for some sort of certification. The downside is, I can imagine the regional program side coming up with a policy that says you can only hire certified teachers. I don’t want that.*

*In a meeting last week, people said some really scary things like suggesting that pay be tied to levels of achievement in the certification scheme. I’m afraid this would result in a cut to services or a cut in the number of teachers hired.*

Most practitioner feedback about policy also centered around the two issues of certification and mandatory PD attendance. Teachers’ opinions were mixed on both. “There needs to be a standard,” one teacher from the NW said. “We are professionals and need to maintain standards. There is an ESL certificate and there needs to be something that is required [for the rest of us].” The Philadelphia focus group had a spirited discussion about mandatory PD. One experienced Philadelphia teacher said that at present the good teachers are the ones who attend PD. “There should be a requirement for everyone. We need more accountability.” Another disagreed. She was from a former Communist country and did not like the idea of outside control. Another said, “There are advantages in having flexibility in the backgrounds of adult educators. Lots of experience is brought into the classroom. Certification requirements would lessen this.”

---

**Data as a Driver of PD**

**FINDING**     • *Although programs are held accountable for achieving performance standards, the professional development system is not.*

Data of two types can drive the professional development system. Program performance data (i.e., scores, retention rates, and so forth) indicate how well programs are ultimately serving learners' needs and point to areas in which practitioners may need to develop new knowledge or skills. PD system performance data (i.e., workshop enrollments, achievement of teacher and administrator competencies, needs assessment results, and so forth) indicate how well the professional development system is serving the needs of practitioners and point to areas in which the system itself may need to be modified. Programs are held accountable for achieving performance standards; however, the professional development system has not been held similarly responsible.

**Program Data.** EQUAL built a culture that values using data for program improvement and involving practitioners in the process of identifying program goals. Under EQUAL, decisions about professional development were based largely on these data-driven program goals. Although EQUAL is no longer in place, some perceive that the culture and associated values have been retained. It is “a way of life and not just another procedure,” according to one PDC director. Others are less optimistic. One PDC director said:

*When EQUAL was dropped I was concerned about the quality of professional development. Nothing has really replaced it..... Now there's no accountability, no presence of the initiative. It makes a difference. People can still use the EQUAL process but there's so much going on that they don't do it without the accountability and the presence of EQUAL as a state supported mandate.*

Another PDC director, concurs, “Without a requirement, [professional development] is not going to happen. [Eliminating the new requirement for PD plans] sends a message that PD is not a priority anymore.”<sup>1</sup>

Eliminating the requirement for PD plans calls into question the ability, at present, to establish a direct link between professional development activities and outcomes for programs or learners. In terms of system coherence, however, our opinion is that the move represented a trade-off. Programs, on the one hand, gained flexibility and the freedom with respect to their participation in PD. On the other hand, the alignment between professional development activities and data-driven program improvement goals was not assured systematically. It makes sense to stop asking simply, “Is this PD activity or that PD activity effective?” But, there is merit in requiring professional development while diligently asking, “Under what conditions is this professional development likely to have the greatest impact?”

<sup>1</sup> When Rose Brandt became the State Director, a requirement for professional development plans had been in place for four months. Finding this requirement to be highly controversial, she eliminated it, not intending that this necessarily become a permanent decision.

**Professional Development System Data.** Each of the PDCs collects information in the form of practitioner needs assessments, workshop evaluations, and even follow-up data on practitioners as they incorporate into practice what they have learned in professional development. This information is highly useful for individual PDCs; however, capacity to use it for overall system improvement is limited since data collection is not standardized across the regions. Moreover, there are no quality standards for professional development and no process is in place to examine and improve the PD system as a whole.

Although all the PDCs share the same mandate to deliver professional development services on a regional basis, each decides how it will approach the challenge within the context of its own region. One PDC director thinks it is a problem, however, that the Bureau has never established common core competencies that the PDCs should achieve. “Their expectations are so low that we can do it with hands tied behind our back,” this individual remarked. Other PDC staff stopped short of suggesting competencies for the PDCs but, nevertheless, recognized a need to be accountable to each other and to the field. One coordinator shared that the issue has even been raised by program directors. At an advisory meeting for the PDC, for example, a director confronted the coordinator with the question, “Shouldn’t you be evaluating yourselves based on our data?”

One PDC director recommended treating the professional development system as “one organization.” Just like local programs, the professional development system could select one or two areas in which to improve each year such as diversifying delivery methods, infusing the system with more research-based practices, or increasing the skill level of trainers. “We need to find a way to rate ourselves as a system,” this individual said.

### Other Drivers

**Research and best practices** are of interest to stakeholders, but PDCs and State Leadership projects do not always have the opportunity to identify and incorporate research-based content into their offerings. The ABLE Training Project appears to use the most systematic approach. They assign a content expert to each of the core modules whose responsibility is to stay abreast of new research and best practices and make corresponding revisions to the modules as needed. Articles in *Fieldnotes* sometimes include references to underlying research. One function of the AdvancE literacy resource center is to be a clearinghouse for the “latest research.” Despite these mechanisms, practitioners do not feel they have ready access to research-based practices. A PDC director stressed, “The field needs good evidence-based research. This doesn’t happen....”

***Teacher and administrator competencies*** have been developed and approved, but there is no supporting policy on the state level. There is a sense among some that the project to develop teacher and administrator competencies has had no follow-through, and some wish for expectations or rewards for achieving the competencies. Despite the absence of a state-level policy, 41% of programs (based on the administrator survey) say they have a policy in place that teachers will use the competencies as a guide when planning PD. There is some degree of alignment between the competencies and training since the ABLÉ Training Project catalog does cross-reference each core module with the relevant teacher and administrator competencies. The ABLÉ Training Project curriculum, however, is not in and of itself a curriculum for achieving teacher and administrator competencies. A PDC coordinator questioned this:

*I never understood why they didn't use the teacher competencies as the core training. They are mentioned in the core training but they are not integral. To me, if you say these are the competencies of a good teacher, they become the curriculum of what a good teacher is.*

A Regional Advisor talked about how the teacher competencies should be made to “mean something” through a system of rewards. He believes people would like it if they could say they had a particular credential. They could be rewarded for what they know and it would be clearer what they needed to learn. And finally, this from a PDC coordinator:

*[Developing and piloting the teacher competencies] was a huge project and I loved it because it was one of the times that I saw the great talent we have in our teachers and under-used and under-rated talent. I really think that if the teacher competencies had been used in the manner that they were intended to be used, it would have solved a lot of problems.*

- 
- FINDINGS**
- ***Overall, the system suffers from a lack of clarity and consistency.***
  - ***The plethora of separate project names, acronyms, and logos undermines the ability of Bureau staff and professional developers to communicate a cohesive PD system.***

## THE FINDINGS 2

The Pennsylvania PD system, overall, suffers from a lack of clarity and consistency. In fact, one could argue that it consists of two parallel training systems rather than one coherent system. The PDCs make up one training system, supported by the State Leadership projects. Other components – Distance Learning, Literacy Corps, TLC, WIN/WERC, and Family Literacy training – operate as one or more parallel systems because they are funded from a different source (ACT 143) and generally engage programs or practitioners directly rather than working through the PDCs. In some cases, this results in duplication of efforts and competition for practitioners' time.

A Regional Advisor voiced a strong concern about the system's lack of coherence:

*My attitude is there is a lot of good PD in Pennsylvania but you can't find it.... And it's not organized.... I can already see programs pulling away from the PD system because they don't see things that will help them. It's just not organized.*

A PDC coordinator expressed additional concerns:

*If anything, there's too much professional development. And there have been parallel systems but there's only so many people and so much time, so they're really competing against one another. You know, there's Family Literacy training, and there's TLC training and there used to be all the EQUAL training. It's sort of burnt practitioners out.... The integration of those systems would be a good thing.*

In a different region a PDC director mentioned another area where integration is needed. Most tutor training and support doesn't come from TLC, although the project is charged with that responsibility. This director believes that:

*[Training] needs to be pulled together to get a real look at what's happening. The real number of tutors being trained across the state isn't being reported or captured. Each program that does tutor training thinks it does a great job but doesn't know what others are doing.*

The lack of clarity and consistency that exists in the current system is evidenced by the assortment of names and acronyms used for projects and components and the confusion this generates among users. This problem surfaced in both administrator and practitioner focus groups, where participants were stumped by names like AXIS, AdvancE, *Fieldnotes*, and *Fieldnews*, among others. At least a quarter of practitioners had never heard of PA WIN, the Family Literacy Project, Learning from Practice, or

Continuous Program Improvement. One administrator admitted at a focus group, “If you hadn’t listed the names of the publications after AXIS, I wouldn’t have checked it. We’ve never heard that term.”

### **Achieving Greater System Coherence**

The foregoing discussion has led us to a number of recommendations for achieving greater system coherence. These are presented later in the report (see Recommendations). Additionally, we suggest that staff working within the professional development system adopt a new way of envisioning the system that takes into account the purpose toward which all professional development activity is directed and the logical relationship between the inputs, activities, and outcomes that determine whether the purpose is actually achieved. Evaluators use the term “logic model” to refer to a depiction of these relationships. Logic models are highly useful tools for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and systems. We are suggesting that a program logic model (Figure 2) become the basis for a continuous program improvement process for professional development in Pennsylvania and that standards be developed against which the overall system can be assessed annually.



Pennsylvania Adult Education Professional Development System  
**Logic Model**

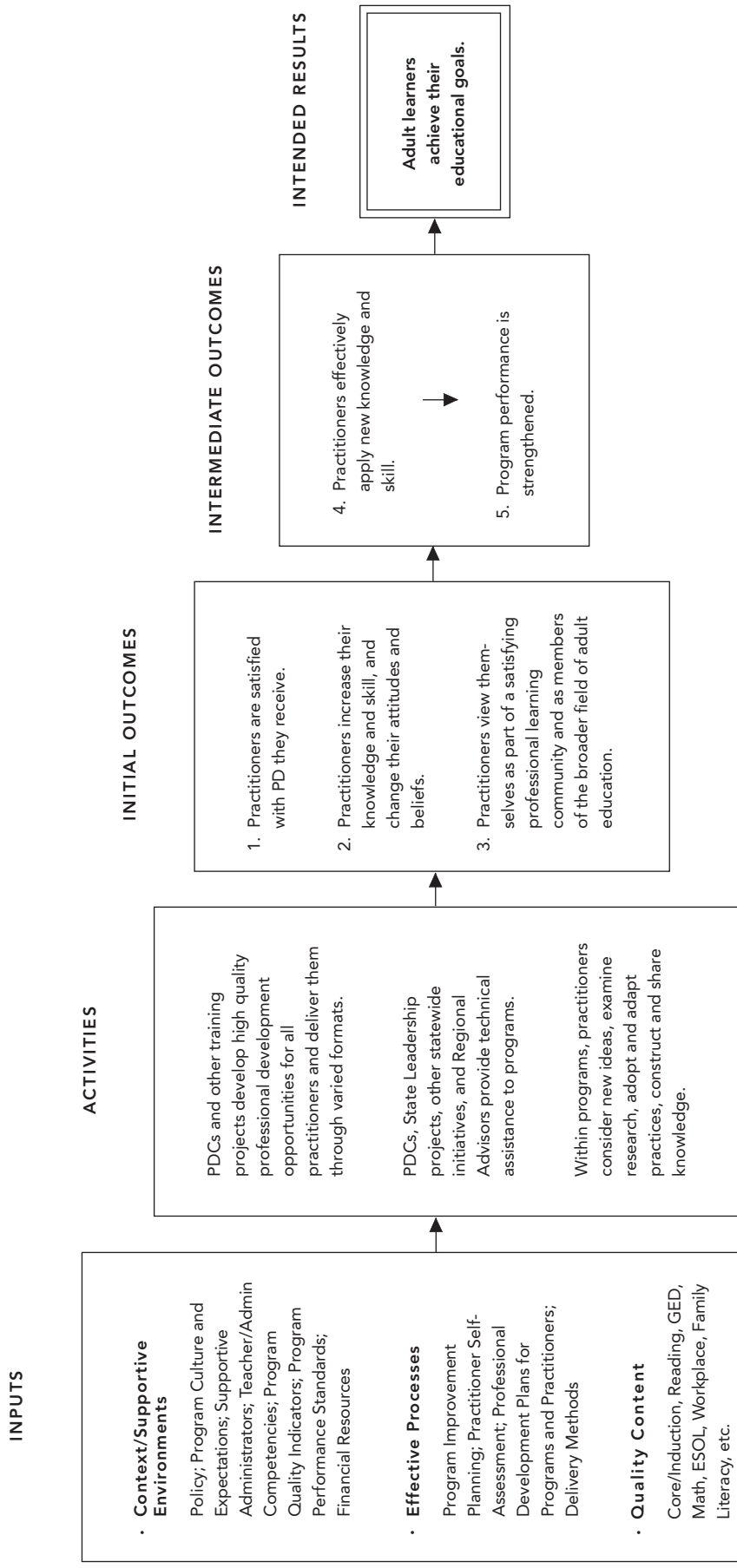


Figure 2



# 3 Participation in Professional Development

In this section of the evaluation we examined questions about patterns of participation in Pennsylvania's PD system: *What is the target population for PD services? What are the various subgroups that make up this population and their important characteristics? What are the patterns of participation in PD among the targeted subgroups? What are the factors affecting participation? and What are the strengths and gaps with respect to practitioner participation in the PD system?*

To answer these questions, we collected information through a practitioner survey, which was designed specifically to learn about patterns of participation in PD. We gathered additional data from the teacher focus groups in each region, an administrator survey and focus groups, and interviews with PDC staff and trainers. We also considered the number and types of activities offered throughout the state. Please also see the companion report, *Summary of Participation and Access Results* for a full description of the findings of the practitioner survey.

---

## A Profile of Participation

- FINDINGS
- *Most practitioners feel that the PD they receive is adequate.*
  - *A key group of practitioners is underserved by the PD system.*
  - *Fewer PD opportunities exist for Bureau staff, professional developers, program administrators, and very experienced practitioners.*

The mission of the professional development system is to target and serve all adult education practitioners across the state. The subgroups that make up this population include program administrators, teachers, counselors, and other staff in ABLE-sponsored programs. According to ABLE 2004 Trend Data,<sup>1</sup> the breakdown of 2,505 system practitioners in PY 02-03 was the following:

- 265 administrators
- 1,738 adult education teachers
- 111 family literacy teachers

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.able.state.pa.us/able/>

## THE FINDINGS 3

- 305 aides/paraprofessionals
- 86 counselors

Teachers include part-timers and full-timers and, teachers from each program category (school district, intermediate unit, library-based or literacy council, other CBOs, corrections, community college or higher education) and teaching area (ABE, GED/ADP, ESL, family literacy, computer literacy, and workplace literacy). From survey data we were able to create the following composite of a typical teacher in this target group.

The typical ABE teacher:

- is a 47-year-old white woman;
- has either a bachelor's or a master's degree in education, English or TESOL, special education, science or math, or a social science;
- has been working in ABE for 5 years;
- teaches part-time, about 15 hours a week;
- is probably not also teaching in K-12;
- participates in PD an average of 31 hours a year; and,
- gets paid release time for 15 of those hours.

Over a third of Pennsylvania adult educators say that they receive all the PD they need, and most (67 percent) feel that the PD they receive is sufficient. With her 31 hours of PD and 15 hours of paid release time, the Pennsylvania practitioner is better off than her counterparts in other states, according to results of the NCSALL Staff Development Study,<sup>2</sup> which found that, nationwide, 23 percent of ABE practitioners receive no paid PD release time at all and 32 percent receive only 1 to 12 hours a year of paid PD time.

While the average time that practitioners participated in PD in 2004-05 was impressive, 25 percent of them participated eight hours or less, and 10 percent did not participate at all. A profile emerged of this group who participate minimally in professional development. They are likely to be practitioners who:

- receive no benefits;
- work fewer hours (averaging 9 a week);
- receive fewer hours of paid release time a year;
- have a director who makes PD decisions for them;
- feel that their level of PD participation is not sufficient.

<sup>2</sup> *The Working Conditions of Adult Literacy Teachers*, by Cristine Smith, Judy Hofer, & Marilyn Gillespie. [www.ncsall.net](http://www.ncsall.net)

Despite its extensive reach, the system addresses some group’s needs less than others. ESL practitioners participate in fewer actual hours of PD than other practitioners, and they indicated in both the survey and focus groups that there were not enough PD opportunities that addressed their needs. Practitioners were also concerned that too little is offered in reading, math, and corrections instruction. Administrators, in focus groups and survey data, indicated a need for more professional development geared specifically for program administrators. Experienced practitioners asked for advanced training that would keep them current on the research and best practices and address new challenges.

---

### Patterns of Participation

**FINDING** • *PD participation is strongly correlated to work status.*

Practitioners in Pennsylvania get most of their professional development from workshops, staff/teacher sharing meetings, and conferences. The average practitioner attended 3 or 4 workshops, 3 or 4 staff meetings, and 1 or 2 conferences last year (Figure 3). There are many additional ways that practitioners obtain PD in Pennsylvania, including practitioner inquiry projects, curriculum development projects, lectures, study circles, network groups, classroom courses, on-line courses, institutes, self-directed activities, and peer coaching.

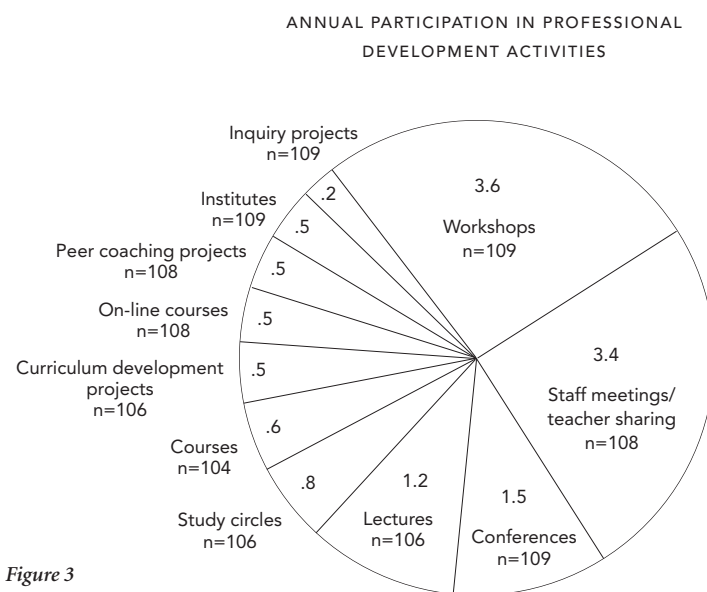


Figure 3

## THE FINDINGS 3

The number of hours practitioners participate in PD is positively correlated to the following factors:

- *The number of hours they work each week:* The more hours they work, the more hours of PD they attend. There was a medium strength, positive correlation between the two factors ( $r=.42$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $n=95$ ).
- *The number of hours of paid PD release time they receive annually:* The more paid PD time they receive, the more hours they participate. There was a strong, positive correlation between number of hours of paid release time and hours of PD ( $r=.68$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $n=90$ ). Overall, a fourth of respondents get no paid PD release time; a third get 5 hours or less per year; and half get 15 hours or less. It is also the case that the more hours practitioners work, the more paid release time they receive.
- *Whether they receive benefits as part of their job:* Those with benefits attend more than double the number of hours of those without benefits ( $p=.000$ ,  $n=96$ ).
- *Number of workshops, institutes, and on-line courses offered.* The more hours of PD they attend, the more likely they are to attend higher numbers of workshops, institutes, and on-line courses. Number of hours of participation is not related to any other types of professional development, possibly because workshops, institutes and on-line courses are the most common types of PD (workshop  $r=.52$ ,  $p=.000$ ,  $n=92$ ; institute  $r=.22$ ,  $p=.034$ ,  $n=92$ ; on-line courses  $r=.35$ ,  $p=.001$ ,  $n=93$ ).

Interestingly, no statistical correlation exists between the number of hours respondents participate in PD and any of the following:

- geographic region
- highest level of education completed
- academic major
- gender
- race
- program category
- years of experience in the field
- primary area of teaching (although those who teach ESOL reported a much lower number of hours attended)
- whether receiving paid prep time
- whether concurrently teaching in K-12
- whether certified

Although the region where a practitioner works is not correlated to amount of PD activity, the study does reveal regional patterns of participation. For instance, the SE and Philadelphia regions had a

lower mean number of hours of participation than the other four regions. CNE, the region with the lowest PD participation rate, also had the lowest average hours worked per week. SW had both the highest average PD participation rate and the highest average hours worked per week. Further investigation into regional patterns could lead to a better understanding of the underlying reasons why practitioners in some regions participate more than practitioners in other regions.

### Factors that Influence Participation

Practitioner survey respondents named the top 13 factors that influence their participation and rated their importance on a 6-point scale (Figure 4). The most influential factor to practitioners when deciding what PD activities to attend is training content, followed by the schedule and location of the event. “Knowledge of the trainer/facilitator” is considered relatively unimportant to attendance, and only three percent of the respondents included “presenters” among the best aspects of the system. Of all the factors considered that might affect participation, ACT 48 is the least influential quite likely because a third of respondents are not certified and are therefore outside its mandated reach.

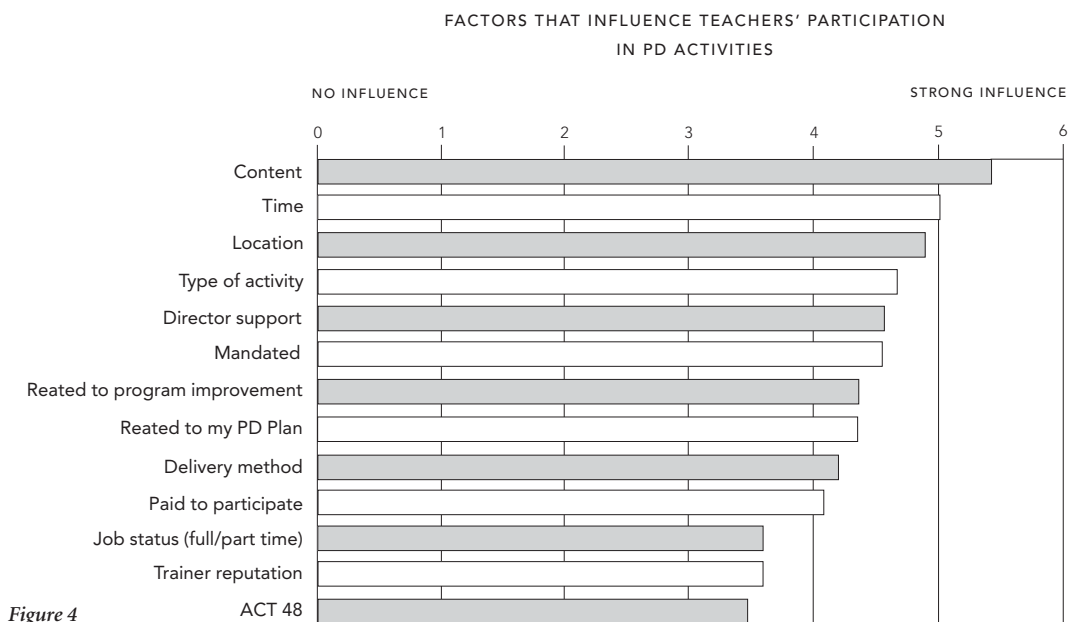


Figure 4

## THE FINDINGS 3

Training content got highest ratings in another area as well, when we asked practitioners how *satisfied* they were with the factors of PD participation (specifically: content, delivery methods, times of activities, location of activities, and receiving information about events). Teachers rated content a 4.4 out of a possible 6.

Besides the actual trainings themselves, additional factors emerged from surveys and discussions that influence participation in PD, primarily geographical distances across the state and within regions, practitioners' ability to attend activities, and support from administrators and supervisors.

### ***Location of Training***

Supporting the feedback received from the practitioner survey, focus group participants often mentioned geographical distances as a challenge to their participation. Easterners complained that Dr. Cooper was not available to their part of the state. Others complained that many trainings and meetings are held in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, or Lockhaven, which are hard to reach from some areas. Western Pennsylvania, which is mostly rural with greater travel distances, has its own challenges. Although the administrator survey did not ask about this issue, two administrators commented that distance to training sites was a concern for them. One named "the time it takes from the local office and program, and travel costs" as deterrents to participation. The other wrote, "Travel time to over 90% of our PDC is too great!"

### ***Factors Affecting Ability to Attend***

Various sources pointed to additional constraints on attendance, such as scheduling conflicts, the hours of PD allocated, finding a classroom substitute, and being paid for training time. Nevertheless, over a third of survey participants reported that they are able to attend as much PD as they want and only ten percent said they couldn't attend at all.

Beyond the factors included in Figure 2, the practitioner survey did not reveal a great concern about unpaid participation in PD. However, responses in the focus groups and administrator survey did reveal a strong concern. "I'm personally shocked that people don't get paid for PD," said a SW focus group participant. A respondent to the administrator survey commented, "They would have better attendance if teachers were paid to attend." Teachers agreed that their expenses needed to be reimbursed, and some said they did not attend trainings because they would not be paid. One NW teacher said,

*The cost has gone up and this discourages me. PDCs are free, but others cost from \$35 to \$150, and if you don't work for a school district, you pay the fee personally. Some programs charge a fee for non-ABLE funded teachers.*

Although 56 percent of practitioner survey respondents had been to PAACE and gave it a high rating as a contributor to their PD, few teachers from the focus groups had attended the annual conference. “No one goes to PAACE,” was a representative remark. The reasons they gave were cost and distance, pointing out that agencies reimburse only conference presenters. A practitioner wrote in the survey, “In general teachers are overworked and underpaid. Given more time and pay, PD would be more of a priority.”

There is no standard policy for reimbursing participants for training. Comments from the focus groups clearly illustrated that policy varies from program to program. Only one person in the SE focus group was paid for training. In the CNE focus group experiences ranged from a part-timer who got all her PD paid to another who had only in-service training covered. Many were concerned that budget cuts would affect whatever reimbursement policy was now in place.

### ***Director Support***

Most respondents to the administrator survey reported that their program supported a culture of professional development. More than half answered yes to every question asked to determine whether a supporting policy was in place. In over 90 percent of the programs surveyed, administrators reported:

- Administrators and supervisors discussed professional development needs with individual teachers and staff members, recommended opportunities to them, distributed notices about professional development, and announced opportunities at staff meetings.
- Administrators and supervisors asked teachers for recommendations about what professional development to offer.
- Teachers knew what their programs’ program improvement goals were and one or more participated on Program Improvement Teams.
- Teachers and staff were paid for at least some of time spent in professional development activities.

Administrator comments in the survey emphasized the importance of supervisory support for PD activities. Some activities are simply not available to practitioners without administrator approval, and administrator decisions necessarily take into account more than the individual practitioner’s PD plan. At many agencies, the supervisor decides what trainings are needed and requests certain staff to attend or promotes participation in other ways. A third of the practitioner survey respondents indicated that their administrator makes their PD decisions for them while half make their own decision. Although it was not statistically significant, those who said that their director made the decision also attended fewer activities than those who said they decided for themselves.

## THE FINDINGS 3

One program administrator elaborated on the decision-making process at her agency: “We now participate in trainings or development that is site specific and relevant to our experience and needs, and that is done in correlation with paid staff time.” Another wrote,

*Typically, I would never send four people away for three days unless we all believed that there would be a significant value added to our program. Money is just too short. “Required” trainings take the decision making out of our hands and create a morale issue for us since I then have to deny to these same individuals professional opportunities that they might find far more valuable. That doesn’t mean they [the trainings] are bad, but it does mean that they need to be high quality.*

Conversely, lack of administrative support can discourage participation. One NW teacher who said everyone at her agency was “on their own” for PD had not attended any training last year. Until she met with our focus group, she did not know about the ESL Network in her region and believed part-timers to be isolated. Others in the focus group, most of whom were also part-time, were able to give her a new perspective. Another part-timer, from the Philadelphia focus group, said she heard about PD only when she talked to other teachers. This emphasizes the role of networking, which is discussed as a system-wide gap in the following section.

---

### Strengths and Gaps of the Current System

**FINDING** • *What participants like most about the system is the variety that PD offers.*

When we asked survey practitioners “What would you say is the best aspect of Pennsylvania’s professional development system, as you understand it?” there was no consensus in the answers (Table 5). “Variety” was mentioned by 31 percent of respondents, but they used the term to mean different characteristics of the system, such as the wide range of offerings, the different types of delivery, and the variety of opportunities to develop professionally. Content and structure of activities were also named as important strengths, as well as convenience (19 percent mentioned each of these factors).

<b>BEST ASPECT OF PD SYSTEM</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
The variety of PD offered	37	31%
The content, structure, or topics of the PD	22	19%
Convenient, easy to attend or access	22	19%
Information about PD, helpful registration	7	6%
Specific component or agency mentioned*	5	4%
Opportunity to network	4	3%
It's free, no cost	4	3%
Capable presenters	4	3%
Not allowed to go	1	<1%
Answer too vague to categorize or understand	6	5%
I cannot judge	6	5%

*Table 5*

Similarly, responses to the converse question, “What would you say is the aspect of Pennsylvania’s professional development system that needs to be improved?” did not reveal any clear weaknesses in the system that affect participation (Table 6). Rather, respondents offered a range of areas for improvement. Fifteen percent described the need for a new model of PD that would address problems with delivery and format. Some wanted trainings to be more conveniently located or scheduled or of better quality, and some asked for more PD in a specific content area, particularly ESOL. They also asked for more information on the scheduling of PD activities. In the focus groups as well, experienced practitioners indicated a desire for improvement in these areas.

<b>ASPECT OF PD SYSTEM THAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Delivery, format, or model of PD	15	15%
Make it more convenient	13	13%
More on specific content (math, ESOL, etc.)	12	12%
Provide more information about the PD	11	11%
Quality of the PD	11	11%
Improve or increase incentives	11	11%
Offer experience- or role-specific training	4	4%
Do needs assessment	2	2%
Offer specialists	1	%
No idea what to suggest	12	12%
It's fine as it is	6	6%
Answer too vague to categorize	3	3%

*Table 6*

\*Specific components or agencies mentioned included: PDCs (3), AdvancE (1), PAACE (1).

***Local Training Activities***

An unheralded strength of the system is the significant amount of learning that goes on at the program level, as evidenced by the fact that 25 percent of practitioner learning activities occur at staff meetings, essentially equaling the time spent in workshops (Figure 1). Additionally, PDCs have created teacher networks around particular teaching areas such as ESOL and GED. These are very popular, and their activities are sometimes shared across regions.

***Communication of Training Opportunities***

The way the PD system communicates training information is a strength to some practitioners and a problem for others. Communication methods are in place to promote training opportunities efficiently, both statewide and through local and regional mechanisms such as flyers, websites, and administrator meetings. In general, practitioners are highly aware of PDC services and use them frequently. In the NW region practitioners say they are well informed by the monthly newsletter and their PDC website, and a SC practitioner said,

*On the (e-Campus) website, you log on; they'll list by month and the various types of workshops. Some of those are within the area, or some are far away. Plus, we frequently get notifications on something deemed important from our directors.*

At the same time, communication about training locations and times is inadequate in some regions and limits participation; in particular, practitioners say they need more advance notice about trainings and meetings. Suggestions to improve communication include setting a summer publication date for the training schedule in advance of yearly calendar planning, better use of websites to post trainings, and emailing. Although regional websites exist, some are more effective communicators than others, and as one practitioner pointed out, "If you don't have a computer, you can't find out about it."

***Convenience of Training***

Making training activities convenient for practitioners is highly valued, and although some practitioners found the level of convenience to be a strength of the system, work and family obligations keep many from participating in PD. Often teachers have trouble covering their classes so they can attend. For these reasons, they need more flexibility in the training schedules, prompting many to ask for night and weekend trainings. One trainer observed that teachers with several part-time jobs have a hard time attending PD. Trainers often see the same people in their classes, normally those who come from programs that are structured so that they can participate in PD. Administrators were also aware of the convenience issue. One program administrator pointed out in the administrator survey:

*We really ask a lot of our practitioners. I have a teacher who is running all over to teach, and at each site she's expected to teach something different and maintain the paperwork. My staff are feeling that a commitment for long-term PD sometimes can be a lot.*

Other administrator perspectives related to practitioner participation are found in the following comments from the administrator survey.

- “More emphasis on on-line programming, teleconferencing. Use the technology to eliminate driving long distances for workshops.”
- “Some methods work better than others, depending on topic and expertise of trainer’s delivery skills. Most trainings end up being either lectures with minimal discussion or 100% discussion.”
- “Just need to keep the ‘theory’ to a minimum and give adult educators tactics that actually work on a wide range of students.”
- “More up-to-date training options – include latest trends.”
- “Not all trainings are streamlined – could be better use of time.”
- “I feel that the participants are rushed or not given adequate time to assimilate the large amount of materials presented.”
- “More teacher involvement in planning professional development activities.”
- “There needs to be more communication between teachers from different programs in adult education.”
- “Is it really needed? Perhaps could best be handled by the Pennsylvania state university system or (better) Penn State.”

### ***Networking***

Many practitioners work in isolation and don’t know what is available; part-timers in particular need more networking opportunities. Although networking is strongly supported in some regions, there is no statewide system for teacher networking. Practitioners pointed out that part-timers do not attend staff meetings or talk with other teachers – e.g. a part-timer in one of the focus groups stated that she had attended one meeting in 3 years. Practitioners recommended mentoring programs as well, particularly for new teachers. As a CNE teacher remarked, “There are just some days when you need someone to share with.”

In sum, we learned that the variety of PD offerings, the content and structure of the activities, and convenience are all strengths of the system that encourage educators to participate. The PDCs respond

well to local needs and are doing a good job of communicating about trainings, but practitioners say there is room for improvement.

Most often practitioners receive their PD through workshops, staff meetings, and conferences. They find that the PD they receive is sufficient but would like to attend more activities than they do.

Although the PD system targets all adult education practitioners across the state, those who most often attend are those who work more hours, have paid release time, and receive support from their administrators. The system is not reaching the very part-time, nor is it meeting the needs of some practitioners such as ESOL teachers and those who are highly experienced. It is also not offering enough PD specific to the needs of Bureau staff, PD system staff, and program administrators. Geographical distances are a constant challenge to PD participation.

## 4 Communication, Decision Making, and Coordination

This section of the findings responds to the questions: *How does communication occur within the professional development system? How are decisions made within the system? How do components coordinate their activities? Are communication, decision making, and coordination sufficiently inclusive and effective? What are the strengths and gaps with respect to communication, decision making, and coordination?*

Data collected through interviews, focus groups, observations, and the surveys contributed to these findings. We have organized communication, decision making, and coordination findings by how they occur at the organizational level, system wide, and from the ABLE Bureau.

---

### Internal Communication and Decision Making

- FINDINGS**
- *PDCs, State Leadership projects, and other statewide initiatives have strong internal communication and decision-making systems.*
  - *Communication between PDCs and their constituents, and between State Leadership projects and their constituents, is inclusive and effective.*

Internal communication and decision-making systems within each Professional Development Center and within each State Leadership project are inclusive and effective, according to our interviews and observations in the field. A PDC staff member said her region has weekly meetings to discuss the assessed needs of the region’s ABLE-funded programs and to plan and schedule trainings that are responsive to the region. The staff member said, “We really work collaboratively... We have very candid relationships with each other; we’re approachable to each other... We function very well as a team.” The PDC director confirmed this statement by adding, “We meet every week or two, talk through issues, strategize about how to help programs grow.” A State Leadership project director stated, “Our project works as a team, makes decisions as a team. We talk through where we are in terms of the contract. On a daily basis, we’re also talking with each other. We all recognize each other’s expertise.”

Communication between PDCs and their constituents, and between statewide initiatives and their constituents, is for the most part inclusive and effective, with multiple strategies and mechanisms used to gather needs assessment data, promote professional development opportunities, and evaluate training and technical assistance. In some regions, practitioners asked for more advance notice of training schedules from the PDCs.

PDC staff understands the necessity of using input from constituents to meet their needs. In the NW PDC, a staff member emphasized communicating directly with teachers about their needs: “In the old days it was like taking your dog and pony show and saying, ‘This is what we can provide.’ But now it’s about listening to the teachers. It’s often different than what the administrators need...” In the SW, the coordinator said that PDC staff visits every program in her region yearly in August and September, sharing the PDC overview “because it’s important for everyone to have the big picture.” The value that the PDC gains from these trips is learning how all the programs in the region operate, which is then shared with the advisory council. The SE PDC does a comprehensive needs analysis at the end of the fiscal year and meets with its advisory board quarterly to get teachers’ input. “It’s a continuous process of communication,” said a member of that team.

There are many opportunities for teacher input to decision making at the PDC and State Leadership project level. These processes include gathering input from regional advisory groups, task forces convened by the Bureau and PDCs, the statewide administrators group, and others. These processes are not, however, always consistent and explicit across the system.

---

#### **System-wide Communication, Decision Making, and Coordination**

- FINDINGS**
- *The ABLÉ website is an excellent communications resource for the system.*
  - *Communication, coordination, and decision making across the PD system as a whole and between different system components are not always clear and consistent.*
  - *Quarterly PDS meetings are not used effectively for communication, decision making, and coordination.*
  - *Communication and coordination across the two divisions within the ABLÉ Bureau needs improvement.*

Across the professional development system (PDS), communication, decision making, and coordination structures and processes are in place among components and throughout the system, but are not always effective. The cornerstone of system-wide communication is the ABLE website, and it provides excellent information and resources for the broad range of adult basic education stakeholders. Seventy-five percent (75%) of practitioners use the site, according to the practitioner survey. System-wide communication structures also include quarterly PDS meetings, e-Campus, and the PDC listserv.

Despite these structures, however, the quality of communication, decision making, and coordination are uneven throughout the system. One PDC director, when asked, “How do you communicate as an integrated system?” answered in this way:

*Not that well. It's not because of anyone's lack of motivation. Everyone gets absorbed in what they're doing. There's a PDC listserv that's never been used effectively. We have quarterly meetings which haven't been that productive. That's the main way we get together. The communication is not at the level it should be at this stage in our development.*

As this director pointed out, the quarterly PDS meetings have not always been an effective tool for statewide communication, and amid complaints from PDS staff members that they serve little purpose, the Bureau is moving toward using the meetings more for decision making and coordination. These meetings could provide one structure for PDC input to key ABLE Bureau decisions and for joint planning by PDC and state initiative staff. Discussions about the purpose of the meetings also point out the lack of consensus about what constitutes the professional development system. This is evident in discussions about which projects should be included at the quarterly meetings. A State Leadership project director said, “The other thing about [the meetings] is that we're not a PDC. We're not even really a State Leadership project; we're kind of our on our own. Other State Leadership projects are out of place there, too.”

Problems exist in three areas: between the divisions of the ABLE Bureau; between PDCs and State Leadership projects; and among PDCs, State Leadership projects, and the Bureau. The first area of concern is that the two divisions within the ABLE Bureau do not communicate or coordinate their activities as effectively as they could. Vacant positions within the Bureau and the location of training and technical assistance projects within both divisions contribute to this challenge. For example, the training and technical assistance provided by TLC and Family Literacy are housed within Regional Programs. Concerned with the separateness of the two divisions, an ABLE Bureau member said, “We

used to talk about getting more communication across the two divisions. It's structured that way, but it shouldn't be. Some people are trying to make an effort to bring about that communication." Another Bureau member said, "There is not much formal interchange with the other division. I expected more of a team effort; the divisions' coming together is critical. Excellent working of the Bureau depends on much more exchange."

Another area of concern about system integration is the level of communication and coordination between the ABLE Bureau and the PDCs. The Division Chief of Regional Programs believes that a true collaborative relationship could be developed between the Bureau and the PDCs via the Regional Advisors, and that this would result in improved performance of all agencies. "Relationships with advisors and with PDCs have to be very close," he said. "This requires a lot of communication and working together."

Coordination among the system components is a third area of concern. Relationships are stronger among PDCs and less strong between PDCs and State Leadership projects and other initiatives. "I think we have a really good communication system [among] the six of us," a PDC coordinator said. Concerning coordination of services, however, there was agreement that some PDCs (NW and SW in particular) do a better job of working together than others, and their coordinated efforts include shared training and networks, and an interregional conference.

The Division Chief of Regional Programs speculated that the division between PDCs and State Leadership projects and other initiatives was effected because "probably in the past that there were so many State Leadership projects and they were so heavily financed and almost became autonomous and separate and distinct from the rest of the system." We did find a high level of coordination and collaboration between some PDCs and some State Leadership projects, and we noted the interest and will to further strengthen these relationships.

At the regional level PDC staff expressed confusion about their relationship to State Leadership projects and other initiatives, and they sometimes seemed to be working in isolation from one another. One means to decrease this isolation would be to get more clarity from the Bureau. "I guess I'd like more information about how activities are working," said one director. The director added, "Administrators don't know how to use the various initiatives. People can't figure how to piece the different initiatives together. The opportunities aren't systematically communicated." This lack of communication and coordination among the PD activities created noticeable tension. At one PDC, the coordinator said, "Everyday I get a call around state initiatives. We're to support all the leadership projects however we can. Who's supporting the PDCs?"

The level of coordination between PDCs and State Leadership projects and other initiatives (e.g., distance learning, family literacy training, TLC, etc.) varies from region to region and from project to project. A second phase of the Pennsylvania Professional Development System Analysis Project, being conducted in 2005-2006, will focus in more depth on the integration of projects funded through Act 143 funds with the overall professional development system and PDCs in particular.

In some instances PDCs and statewide projects have only recently begun to work together in the field. One Regional Advisor talked about the need to bring statewide projects and PDCs into alignment and used family literacy as an example:

*Family literacy was completely separate until recently. Adult ed, the Professional Development Centers, and the modules and family literacy have four or five TAs that go around the state and do pretty much what PDCs do. [We] have been talking about how to bring that into the PDC system. How do they coordinate and collaborate?*

In some areas PDCs, statewide projects, and other initiatives are already working well together to support the region, despite their separate identities. One family literacy training and technical assistance coordinator said, “We work closely with the PDCs, inform each other’s projects, offer joint trainings...[and] develop some training together. We have a long history of working together...”

A PDC director shared additional concerns about how the statewide projects and PDCs can coordinate more effectively. This director pointed out that some projects are so fragmented and “divided into so many pieces that it’s hard to get a handle on...how it all fits together....”

Decision making across the system is not standardized. For example, according to one trainer, developers seek Bureau input about module development, but there is no standard process to solicit input from the PDCs. A State Leadership project director said her project does not often ask for Bureau input into decision making, but “when we do, the Bureau Director is very responsive and will work with us as quickly as possible.”

---

**Bureau Communication and Decision Making**

- FINDINGS**
- *Communication of Bureau policy changes to the PD system and to the field as a whole is not always clear.*
  - *Roles and responsibilities within the Bureau are not well defined, nor are the roles of PDC and statewide initiative staff in Bureau decision making.*

The Bureau is committed to communicating policy evenly across the system, “officially, not through the grapevine,” according to the ABLE Bureau Director. Nevertheless, communication of Bureau policies, especially policy changes, is challenging. And even with an explicit commitment to clear communication, the Bureau’s vision for the field as a whole and for the professional development system in particular, is not widely understood. One Bureau staff member said, “There’s confusion here and in the field about priorities. Some have altered and changed, sometimes in midstream. This is hard internally, so how does it feel out in the field? Maybe the direction is new, but it’s not clearly spelled out.”

In the field, people also expressed frustration with unclear direction. A trainer voiced it this way: “Everything seems uncertain now. The vision is uncertain. What the Bureau will do is uncertain.” At a PDC interview, a staff person said, “We need to get more closure, to get clear directions on what to do. We always feel vulnerable, having to interpret what the director wants.” At another PDC someone explained, “We feel we’re being measured and evaluated but we don’t know what the criteria are.”

Within the Bureau, decision-making structures and the roles and responsibilities of individual staff related to decision making are in some cases not clear. One Bureau staff member stated, “I thought I’d have a larger responsibility for professional development [and] be very involved in the whole of professional development.... I thought I’d be more autonomous than I am.”

Although there are opportunities and a structure (the ABLE Administrator Group) for field input into Bureau decision making, the perception is that these are lacking. The PDCs have limited involvement in Bureau decision making, and there is no clearly articulated or consistent system in place for the Bureau to get input from the PD system.

Members of the PD system and those in the field indicated that they did not always understand the

rationale for Bureau decisions or their role in Bureau decision making. A PDC coordinator in one region said, “At times the Bureau will ask us for some input on things but I’m not sure how much that input really plays a part in decision making. We used to get the heads up before new policies were issued. In the past year, we’ve been getting the information at the same time as the programs. That’s been tough.” The PDC director in that region said, “I feel out of the loop, don’t know what decisions are based on. Partly this is people in new positions, but I can’t say how decisions are made and who’s making them.”

However, there is also a general understanding of the constraints under which the Bureau functions and of the Bureau’s desire to be inclusive in decision making and base decisions on supporting teaching and learning. “The atmosphere is healthier now and it’s safer to speak. Fear is gone,” said one PDC director. “We are creative and generate ideas that they [the Bureau] might like,” this director continued, “but I can understand that the Bureau has to move slowly. They are receptive but can’t act on our ideas fast enough.”

# 5

## Issues of System Quality

Because this evaluation was designed primarily to study the relationship among professional development components and how they function as a system, we did not measure the quality of individual PD activities, per se. Nevertheless, people did talk to us about quality issues at this level and in ways that led us, in some cases, to recommendations for improving the system. We analyzed these concerns about quality guided by the questions: *Are there issues related to quality that arise during this evaluation?* and *If so, what are these issues and how might they be addressed?*

In the interviews, focus groups, and the administrator survey we had solicited examples of high quality as well as areas where people had concerns about quality. We also asked practitioner survey participants to rate their most recent PD activities for quality. These responses provided the data needed to answer our final set of evaluation questions.

### **Defining Quality**

Reflecting a key concept of the ABLE Bureau's Indicators of Program Quality that “quality is ultimately judged by learner outcomes and customer satisfaction,” we examined the quality concerns of practitioners, program administrators, PDS staff, and Bureau staff. Time and again, people mentioned one or more of the following features when describing high quality professional development.

Quality in training content means the following:

- A wide range of offerings
- Content targeted to classroom needs
- The inclusion of expertise from outside local programs or even outside the state
- Information based on the latest research
- Fresh ideas
- Creativity
- Useful resource materials.

Quality in training delivery involves the following:

- Professional trainers and presenters from within the adult education field
- Adult education delivery methods: interactive and hands-on

- Tailoring training to audience level of expertise and content interest
- Site-based training
- Flexible scheduling
- The inclusion of follow-up.

---

### High Quality within the System

**FINDING** • *The design of the six regions administered by PDCs has enabled delivery of high quality PD throughout the system.*

System components considered exceptional by members of the field are the PDCs, the Learning Differences Center, the Penn Ohio Conference, and Learning from Practice. Of these, only the PDCs have survived recent budget cuts intact. PD delivery and communication approaches that people find to be of high quality are site-based training, websites (including but not limited to those that are ABLE-funded), and networks.

#### ***PDCs***

The regional structure for PDCs enables delivery of high quality professional development. Everyone we asked felt that the PDCs do an excellent job of responding to local and regional needs, as well as to statewide initiatives, through training services and technical support. PDC activities are, for the most part, well advertised to the field, geared to expressed needs, and of high quality, according to the practitioners and administrators.

The **Central-Northeast** region covers a large geographical area - roughly one-third of the state - and as the Division Chief for Special Programs attests, “When you set up training in the CNE region, it’s not going to be convenient for anyone.” According to a recent annual report, the region has compensated for this geographical challenge by using the “very effective communication network that currently exists between PDC staff and agency administrators.” Communication is also supported through separate electronic discussion boards for administrators, practitioners, PD staff, and volunteers. Strengths in the Central-Northeast region also include a strong sense of teamwork and expertise in technology.

The **Northwest** region is somewhat remote from the rest of the state, but the PDC works closely with

its neighboring counterpart in the Southwest. Networks are strong in this region, bringing practitioners and administrators together to share practices and learn together. The NW PDC website and newsletter do an effective job of communicating training opportunities and adult education research news to the field. Learning Differences activities (see below) are directed through this PDC, and its director, Dr. Richard Gacka, is a recognized expert in the field. Strengths in the NW region include a close-knit group of program directors and remarkable cohesion and flexibility among PDC staff.

**Philadelphia** is a densely populated, urban region, with the PDC compatibly housed within the Mayor's Commission for Literacy. This collaboration creates a wider reach to the literacy community than those of other PDCs, which are affiliated specifically with PDE-sponsored programs. This alliance also enriches PD activities because of the variety of agencies and the crossover of trainers from one program to another. Philadelphia seems more negatively affected by the centralizing of PD activities than other regions because of its need to customize activities to its unique urban needs.

**South-Central** administers several State Leadership projects in addition to bearing PDC responsibilities. Through this broader reach, it has more of a statewide than a regional perspective on PD. This is reinforced by the location of the ABLÉ Bureau within the region, giving the South Central region better access to the state-level leaders. The staff is known for its responsiveness. The region has many experienced practitioners.

**Southeast** is a diverse region of urban, suburban, and rural populations reflecting a broad array of professional development needs and strengths. Its programs are well established, with strong leadership, and serve as models for other regions. The director is considered highly qualified and has a strong statewide and national presence.

The **Southwest** region has a strong system of professional networks and management and administrative PD activities and has focused on recruiting experienced trainers to teach the core modules. The region coordinates some activities with Northwest, and together they host an annual inter-region conference. Its staff is considered very professional and responsive and communicative with the field.

#### ***Learning Differences Center***

The Learning Differences Center (LDC), housed at the Northwest PDC, was technically de-funded in 2004 and the LD training curriculum absorbed into the ABLÉ Training Project. Despite this reorganization, practitioners still rate Learning Differences training among the strongest contributors

to their professional development, in relation to all other system components (4.5 out of 6 on the Practitioner Survey). In fact, it is rare to talk with practitioners anywhere in Pennsylvania about professional development without hearing their high regard for Learning Differences training.

The Northwest PDC currently has a subcontract with the ABLE Training Project to manage the LD training that is facilitated by Drs. Richard Gacka and Richard Cooper. Practitioners say they like Dr. Cooper's training because he incorporates excellent content and delivery methods into his practice. LD trainings are infused with idea sharing, interactive methods, and relevance to the classroom. "He's LD himself and knows that background," explained one practitioner. A recent SW PDC quarterly report noted that Dr. Cooper "remains popular because his information is essential to teaching our adult learners."

Follow-up built into the program is also of high in quality and well-liked by practitioners who have experienced it. Called the "Dr. Cooper in Residence" program, it takes the second or third session of Learning Differences training to individual teacher sites. The trainer talks to the teachers, sits in on a class, and models the training by teaching the class. "They're using what they learn," said the NW PDC coordinator. "I think it's an excellent model." Another feature of LD trainings is a home-study course on assessment using Dr. Cooper's CD-ROM C-SIP. The program includes a full system of computer scoring and an interpretation guide.

Initiatives of the Learning Differences Center that were dropped this year include development of a system of regional LD "hubs," the Psychological Testing done for GED accommodations, some of Dr. Gacka's trainings, and other support services. Dr. Gacka is committed to keeping as much of the project alive as possible, in spite of radical cutbacks in Bureau-level support. For Gacka, the case for LD services is simple. He states emphatically that the very people ABE educators deal with "are people who have a history of having learning problems."

### ***Learning from Practice***

Only 23% of practitioners report having participated in Learning from Practice (action research/practitioner inquiry activities). However, these individuals rated LFP higher than any other component of the Pennsylvania system based on the extent to which it contributed to their professional development (5.4 out of 6). A PDC coordinator concurred, "LFP is valuable for individual practitioners." Despite the high level of quality and popularity indicated for this project, there has been no state funding for it since 2003-04.

***Penn Ohio Conference***

Although we did not ask about it, the Penn Ohio Conference was brought to our attention repeatedly by practitioners and local program administrators. Obviously a very popular PD event, the conference was de-funded after 2003-04, the same time other popular initiatives such as Learning from Practice lost funding and the Learning Differences Center was rolled into the Training Project. According to the NW coordinator, who administered the conference, the demand was so great that she had to close registration early every year. Collaboration between the two states made it possible to bring in well-known speakers and to learn about another state's PD system. "It was an amazing thing, but again, it was because you satisfy the need," she explained. Program administrators in the focus groups put the conference on their short list of activities they would like to reinstate.

***Site-based Training***

By surveying local program administrators we learned that nearly 60% of them hosted from two to four site-based trainings in the previous year. Site-based trainings are well regarded by both participants and administrators. Training created or brokered by the PDCs or other training entities, and delivered at a program's location, is usually associated with high quality because of the relevance of the content and the convenience of delivery. Site-based training is "related to what we're doing and taught by people who understand," said one practitioner.

***Websites***

Websites offer high value to Pennsylvania's professional development system in two ways - as a resource for information and as a tool for regional and statewide communication. In every focus group, practitioners agreed that websites are an important aspect of their professional development. "They cover so many areas that you are involved in. Click it and everything is available to you. It's immediate," said one user. "With the website, the information is always fresh." The PDC websites are an effective way to inform participants about trainings, although some use their websites more effectively than others. One PDC website we visited, for example, had not been updated since 2002. A large number of practitioners (75%) have used the ABLE website in the past year, rating its PD contribution a moderate 3.8 on a 6 point scale. Focus group comments indicate that teachers use the site primarily to research a particular interest. "I attended ESL civics, so I did visit [the website] for that just to get some ideas. That's the only time," said a SC teacher. Administrators and PDC staff, on the other hand, are more likely to use the ABLE website for statewide communication, as indicated in the findings on communication, decision making, and coordination (Section 4).

***Networks***

Practitioners in the focus groups often mentioned networking as an important way to learn

collectively and share what they know with one another. As one remarked, the best PD is “hammering things out with colleagues.” Around the state at least seven different types of networks meet on a regular basis, including GED and ESL groups. The Central Northeast region has a network of practitioners and support staff affiliated with state correctional institutions. A group of practitioners in a Northwest GED networking group said it was “a nice way to spend a Friday afternoon with 10 or 15 people.” A couple of teachers at that network meeting found it valuable enough to drive two hours from the SW region in order to attend. “We bring in samples of what we actually do; I like it better than sitting and listening to someone else talking,” said one participant. Practitioners suggested electronic networking as well, as a way to combat budget shortfalls and share materials across agencies.

---

### **Concerns about Quality within the System**

**FINDING**     • *The quality of some components and activities within the PD system is low or inconsistent.*

#### ***PAACE Conference***

PAACE is Pennsylvania's only statewide adult education conference, and its reviews have been mixed. Administrators and PDC directors tend to rate the quality high; one described PAACE as being on the cutting edge. People like the availability of materials from the conference and the PAACE journal. Just over half of practitioners in the state have attended PAACE, and they reported that it was a strong contributor (4.8 out of 6) to their PD. (Only Learning from Practice ranked higher than PAACE as a contributor to professional development.) In focus groups, however, some practitioners said that the content is not always applicable to their practice, nor is it backed often enough by research and theory. One commented, “I have walked out when they're not teaching good practice to 50 or 60 people.” Another said, “They [the presenters] are like me - they are other teachers giving workshops about things I know already. I would like it to be more professional.” We were often told that practitioners are only funded to attend PAACE if they present, which could explain the common occurrence of teacher-presenters.

#### ***The ABLE Training Project***

People throughout the system consider that portions of the curriculum managed by the ABLE Training Project are irrelevant, outdated, or rigid. The most common complaint we heard, from the ABLE Bureau to the practitioner focus groups, is that the trainings are too scripted. “I went to [one of the module trainings] and I found it very bland,” said a Bureau staff member. “The trainer was always

referring to the notebook to read the next line. I know the purpose was to have consistency but I also think you have to do good teaching.”

PDC and program administrator support for the trainings is limited because of issues with quality and cost. There is a concern that the modules have outlived their usefulness and that this is why practitioners do not attend. As one coordinator explained, “People stay in this field and you can't expect [them] to go to the same thing again. So, after five years when we probably had offered all of the modules no one else wanted them.” Although the New Teacher Training would seem to be the most apt topic for scripting, we were told that in one region none of the agencies send their new teachers. Coordinators from that region as well as a second one said that the core trainings are expensive so they can't afford to offer them for the small number of people who will attend.

Core trainings are more likely to be delivered as a workshop than any other way, and we heard that quality is often not good at workshops. “Boring,” “talking head,” and “needs to be more interactive” were typical complaints. Some find certain core trainings to be good, for example, GED math and essay writing, but in general, practitioners need a broader spectrum of training and interaction than the ABLE Training Project's modules offer. Another criticism of the workshop format is its “one size fits all” format. A participant described one such workshop:

*There was a TABE workshop, good for people who already know how to do testing, but everyone had to go and they expected everyone to know everything, and people were really lost. You had coordinators, you had aides, you had teachers, and you had people who didn't know anything.*

Since they must limit the number of trainings their teachers attend, administrators want to be sure that quality is high. There is broad concern that the core trainings might not be high quality.

### **Trainers**

We learned that the quality of trainers is not always consistent either, particularly at those workshops considered to be “core” training. Only 3% of practitioners responding to our survey consider the quality of presenters to be one of the best aspects of the overall PD system. When asked what needs improvement, practitioners most frequently responded with suggestions related to delivery and format of the training they receive. Some practitioners contrasted the poor quality of PD offered by some trainers to that of Dr. Cooper, whose content and delivery they considered exceptional.

### ***ABLE Net***

ABLE Net quality is inconsistent. A State Leadership project team member indicated that ABLE Net's quarterly reports are not consistently reliable. E-Campus information is not always accurate as well and therefore has a low level of trust at some PDCs, according to administrators and PDC staff. "We find lots of problems with the e-Campus data," said a PDC director. "We don't trust it... We go back and forth with them to get it right."

At least one State Leadership project does its own data-based research because ABLE Net is not responsive and cannot provide the type of data it needs in a timely manner. Not all data that ABLE Net provides is useful to PDCs and to practitioners. A PDC director said that e-Campus and e-Data do not capture the information they need to plan professional development for the region. A practitioner said that she would like e-Campus to offer announcements to the field about upcoming trainings. Some trainers and teachers complained about the difficulty of using e-Campus, but other users said they had no problem with it.

### ***PDS Quarterly Meetings***

The quality of the quarterly meetings is considered low across the board. PDC staff consider much of the agenda irrelevant to their needs. One State Leadership project director said that the staff feels its attendance is inappropriate, and another statewide project member said that the distance from the region to Harrisburg, where meetings are usually held, is too great. Bureau staff are dissatisfied with the quality of the meetings as well and feel that they could be better focused for regional input. One PDC coordinator suggested that the meetings need to become more interactive and focus on planning with follow through. "We work on something as a group but then nothing happens," she said. A trainer described his experience with the meetings, "All projects are required to give a report... very little else. There is no checking in with trainers."

### ***Continuous Program Improvement Process***

The Regional Advisors and PDCs do not work together as effectively as they could. Some PDCs value their relationship with their advisor and see him as a liaison with the Bureau. This relationship is not always smooth, however. An advisor said of one region, "I feel like they think I'm the enemy." The work of the PDCs and the Regional Advisors is not always coordinated for program improvement, although this may improve under the new Continuous Program Improvement system.



## Conclusion

We began this report by putting forth an ultimate goal for the system analysis: to ensure that the professional development needs of ABLE-funded practitioners in Pennsylvania are being served through an excellent professional development system. Our initial objective to reach this goal was to identify, document, and assess the service delivery components of the system. In the five Findings sections we have addressed this objective.

Our second objective was to produce specific and realistic recommendations for improving the system, building on its existing strengths. We have organized the recommendations which follow by the Logic Model (see Figure 2 in Findings: 2) which satisfies our third objective: to depict how the components can best function together to achieve the defining characteristics of *quality*, *reach*, and *coherence*. Our final objective in this analysis has been to offer Pennsylvania state leaders, professional developers, and practitioners a doable process for improving the system over time. The recommendations in the next and final section are broken down into workable steps intended to support this objective.



## RECOMMENDATIONS



## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### Make Environments More Supportive

---

*While there is an explicit mission for adult education in Pennsylvania, the link between that mission and PD is weak. Although the Bureau has a vision for PD, it is unclear to those in the field and is not providing the guidance and inspiration that it could.*

**RECOMMENDATION 1: *Communicate a clear vision for PD that is tied to the mission of adult education.***

- ❑ The state director should facilitate a process including representatives of the Bureau, PDCs, State Leadership projects, and the field to craft a clear, common vision for the field and the PD system and fully clarify the role of the Bureau.
- ❑ The state director should communicate Bureau policy changes to the PD system and to the field as a whole, continuing to use multiple mechanisms such as the ABLE website, memos, the PD listserv, quarterly PDS meetings, meetings with PDC advisory groups, and meetings of the statewide administrators group. When possible, the director should make changes that affect programs, PDCs and State Leadership projects at the time of funding/refunding, and not mid-stream. Finally, all changes in policy or contractual obligations should be documented in writing.

---

*While many components of the PD system function effectively, the system as a whole lacks a single identity. Separately and together, the system needs to reflect a shared purpose and project a cohesive whole.*

**RECOMMENDATION 2: *Promote the image of a PD system that is cohesive and unified.***

- ❑ PD system staff should eliminate confusion by determining a single name to apply to the entire PD system.
- ❑ Across the system, staff should cease using individual project names, logos, and acronyms whenever possible (AXIS, Advance, TLC); instead, they should refer to components by their function, i.e., communications, resources, volunteer training.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❑ All service providers in the PD system should use the system logic model as a guide for planning and a tool for ongoing evaluation.
- ❑ A single staff person – the Division Chief for Special Programs and Projects – should provide the leadership necessary for strategically guiding the statewide professional development system toward its goals. This division chief should be the primary liaison between the Bureau and the PD system, functioning as the leader of a highly participatory decision-making process among the system stakeholders — most notably, the PDCs, State Leadership projects, and other statewide PD initiatives. Within the Bureau, this division chief should have primary authority for decisions related to the PD system.

---

*The state has distinguished itself through a continuous program improvement process, but this effort has not been extended to professional development. PD has no performance standards to indicate what constitutes excellence. Such standards are needed to guide goal-setting and improvement measures. The field offers substantial knowledge and experience on which to build a continuous improvement process for PD.*

### **RECOMMENDATION 3: *Adopt quality standards for PD as the framework for continuous system improvement.***

- ❑ PDC and State Leadership staff and practitioners should work together to articulate quality standards and indicators for PD.
- ❑ In this effort, participants should draw on standards from Pennsylvania’s current Guiding Principles for Professional Development and Indicators of Program Quality as well as quality standards for PD in K-12 drafted by the National Staff Development Council.
- ❑ All policies should be aligned with the new standards and PD providers made accountable for achieving them.

## Make Processes More Effective

---

*Program improvement and competencies processes have been developed, but they are failing to achieve their potential. The field needs a better understanding of these processes and stronger support from the state to implement them. People need access to reliable data for these processes to function properly.*

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** *Enable the Continuous Program Improvement process and teacher and administrator competencies to function as the primary drivers of PD.*

- ❑ The Bureau should support these processes through policy that is explicitly communicated.
- ❑ The PDCs should train the field on the processes.
- ❑ Regional Advisors and the PDCs should provide technical assistance as needed to implement the processes.
- ❑ Program administrators should ensure that their programs develop program improvement plans and that all ABE staff have individual development plans based on the competencies.
- ❑ E-Data and e-Campus data should be made easily accessible to each system component for decision making. The PD system should outline what it needs for planning, delivering, and evaluating PD; and the ABE Administrators Group should outline what it needs for policy development and accountability.
- ❑ Reports should align with each stakeholder group's needs.
- ❑ Consideration should be given to moving oversight and administration of e-Data and e-Campus to the Bureau, thus equalizing access to data among all six PDCs and statewide initiatives.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

---

*The PD staff is a strong group of qualified people with a tremendous knowledge base and breadth of experience. There are a number of ways that these assets could be used to implement the vision for PD.*

**RECOMMENDATION 5: *Use the expertise of the PD system staff more effectively.***

- ❑ The Division Chief for Special Programs and Projects should redefine the quarterly PDS meetings for system-wide coordination and decision making. These meetings provide one structure for PDC input to key Bureau decisions and for joint planning by PDC and State Leadership staff.
- ❑ PDS staff should co-plan and co-facilitate meetings with the division chief to focus more explicitly on planning statewide initiatives, identifying shared issues and challenges, sharing best practices, and continuously improving the PD system overall.
- ❑ Program administrators, Regional Advisors, and PDC representatives should use the Continuous Program Improvement meetings to strengthen communication, decision making, and coordination.

---

*Communication within the PDCs and within the State Leadership projects is strong, but it is not effective across the system as a whole. Moreover, the two Bureau divisions have few structured opportunities to collaborate around PD and to connect it to the larger adult education mission.*

**RECOMMENDATION 6: *Build a stronger system of coordination and communication across the entire PD system, among the PDCs and State Leadership projects, and between the two Bureau divisions.***

- ❑ PDC staff should improve cross-system and cross-region communication through more consistent and facilitated use of PDS meetings, the PD listserv, and the ABLE website.
- ❑ The state director should establish an advisory group, representative of the field, which meets at least twice each year to formally advise the Bureau on major decisions, such as State Leadership funding priorities.

- ❑ A formal process should be created through which the two Bureau divisions coordinate program improvement and professional development efforts with clearly articulated structures and processes (e.g., regular meetings, cross-division teams, etc.) for cross-division communication.
- ❑ An outside facilitator should be contracted to help the two Bureau divisions to more fully integrate their efforts toward achieving the mission of adult education and the related vision for professional development.

---

*Many practitioners are benefiting from a variety of PD experiences, but there is a group that is not being served, and many who are being served want more options.*

**RECOMMENDATION 7: *Broaden PD reach to target those who are very part-time without paid benefits or paid PD release time.***

- ❑ The PDCs and State Leadership projects should offer a greater variety of delivery methods, including interactive training and more on-line or DVD delivery.
- ❑ The PDCs and State Leadership projects should provide more advance notice about trainings and meetings, possibly including a summer publication date for the training schedule and website postings of training opportunities.
- ❑ The PDCs and State Leadership projects need to offer more flexibility in scheduling, e.g., expanding to include nights and weekends.
- ❑ The Bureau should mandate paid participation of all staff, including very part-time staff, in baseline PD.
- ❑ The Bureau should set a minimal number of hours for mandated PD.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### Improve Quality of Content

---

*Practitioners appreciate the wealth of training opportunities offered, but they have concerns as do other stakeholders that core modules are generally outdated or not relevant to them and that the delivery method is ineffectual.*

**RECOMMENDATION 8:** *Limit the number of statewide core trainings to as few as possible by identifying the critical areas where consistency is appropriate.*

- ❑ The Bureau should form an advisory group that includes PDC and State Leadership staff and practitioners to assess each module and determine if it qualifies as “core,” based on factors such as broad relevance.
- ❑ The advisory group should review the core modules, eliminate those modules that have outlived their usefulness or relevance, and update those that remain. Updating would include alignment with current research.
- ❑ The advisory group should guide the development and subsequent maintenance of new statewide training.
- ❑ The advisory group should restructure how statewide training is developed, delivered, and maintained. To the extent that modules are appropriate, integrate their delivery into the PDCs. Structural options for the maintenance of expertise in key areas and the development of new statewide training should include cross-PDC work groups, a statewide training development entity, or a number of content specific entities.

---

*Practitioners give high marks to the variety of PD topics offered but find gaps in the system. They agree with administrators and others that some methods of delivery, such as traditional workshops, are overused and that the needs of certain groups should be addressed more specifically.*

**RECOMMENDATION 9: *Fill the gaps in training content and delivery methods.***

- ❑ The PDCs need to offer additional training for ESL and math practitioners and for very experienced practitioners.
- ❑ The PDCs should offer additional training for program administrators, Bureau, and PD system staff.
- ❑ The PDCs and State Leadership projects need to use a greater variety of delivery methods of PD whose effectiveness is based on research and best practices in adult learning.
- ❑ Through State Leadership funding, the division chief should specifically revitalize practitioner inquiry and action research.
- ❑ Each PDC should be given the lead role and responsibility for one key area for the system. This lead role could include staying abreast of research, developing new training for statewide implementation, and coordinating the statewide delivery of training in the designated area.



## Appendices

1. Analysis of the Professional Development System Document List
2. Focus Group Participant Demographics
3. Number of Practitioner Focus Group Participants by Region

## APPENDICES

### 1. Analysis of the Professional Development System

#### DOCUMENT LIST

<i>Date</i>	<i>Document Description</i>
	ABLE Bureau Staff Titles and Responsibilities
Jan 2002	Pennsylvania Adult Teacher Competencies, User's Guide
	Pennsylvania ABLE Administrator Competencies, User's Guide
2003–2004	[brochure] Inventory of State Funding for Adult and Basic Literacy Education Programs
	[brochure] Indicators of Program Quality
2003-2004	Provider Directory
	PennPD Directory
Fall 2004	ABLE Fieldnews
Spring 2005	ABLE Fieldnews
	Role of PDCs from Bureau Perspective
	[Log] Bureau of ABLE Professional Development Course/Activity Completion
	ABLE Continuous Improvement Model
12 Jan 2005	ABLE Web Sites Focus
2002-2003	Annual Report
2001-2002	Annual Report
	Glossary of Abbreviations
2003-2004	Agencies Funded by ABLE
2001-2002	ABLE-funded Agencies
	Contracts Check
	Perf.Rankings2 (EdG)
	Program Cycle
	Project Contacts
	[DRAFT – Proposed Fee Structure for On-line Delivery thru PDE Bureau of ABLE Professional Development System]
2000-2001	[organizational chart] Professional Development System
13 Oct 2004	Professional Development Centers Coordinators Meeting Agenda
16 Nov 2004	[Memo from Rose Brandt to ABLE Administrators and Program Contacts regarding] ABLE Continuous Program Improvement
19 Jan 2005	Raiana Mearns' Proposed State Leadership Policy for 2005-2006
9 Feb 2005	Agency Alike Sharing Session Notes PAACE 2005
October 13	State Leadership Review Team Meeting Agenda

<i>Date</i>	<i>Document Description</i>
22 Mar 2005	[Memo from Raiana Mearns to All Professional Development System Members with Draft Agenda for 13 Apr 2005 Professional Development System Meeting and with copy of Article from Handbook of Research on Teacher Education titled "The Changing Nature of Teacher Education" Agenda for State Leadership Meeting on July 28, 29, 2004] [Map of PD System used at 2004 State Leadership Meeting]
21 Jan 2005	[Email from Rose M. Brandt to Administrators of ABLE-funded programs. Re: ABLE Net conducting interim data checks and advising of the procedures.] Field Impact Survey
2004-2005	[State Leadership project e-Grant application - Application Abstract, Leadership Narrative etc.]
2003-2004	Regional Professional Development Center Final Narrative Progress Reports, Program Year 2003-2004 Registration Summary by Activity Sponsor/Provider
Jul 2003	Advisory Meeting Power Point
Oct 2003	Advisory Meeting Minutes
Oct 2003	Advisory Meeting Power Point
Jan 2004	Advisory Meeting Minutes 2
Jan 2004	Advisory Meeting Power Point
Apr 2004	Advisory Meeting Minutes
Apr 2004	Advisory Meeting Power Point
Jul 2004	Advisory Meeting Minutes Final
Jul 2004	Advisory Meeting Power Point
Oct 2004	Advisory Meeting Minutes
Oct 2004	Advisory Meeting Power Point
Jan 2005	Advisory Meeting Minutes
Jan 2005	Advisory Meeting Power Point
2004-2005	Central-Northeast PDC Regional Professional Development Plan Central-Northeast Professional Development Center Quarterly Progress Report (REV 1) First Quarter July 1, 2004-September 30, 2004 Central-Northeast Professional Development Center Quarterly Progress Report (Final) Second Quarter: October 1, 2004-December 31, 2004
2004-2005	[State Leadership project e-Grant application - Application Abstract, Leadership Narrative etc.] Instructor Training Evaluation Form

## APPENDICES

<i>Date</i>	<i>Document Description</i>
9 July 2004	Northwest Professional Development Center Fourth Quarter and Final Report NW PDC Regional PD Plan Final [not dated]
11 Oct 2004	NWPDC Quarterly Progress Report
Fall 2003	PDC News [Newsletter]
Spring 2004	PDC News [Newsletter]
Winter 2005	PDC News [Newsletter]
2003-2004	Survey Responses [Needs Assessment Comments]
2004-2005	Needs Assessment Comments
2003-2004	[Needs Assessment Informational Charts]
July 2004	PDC Events [Calendar of Events]
Aug 2004	PDC Events [Calendar of Events]
Sep 2004	PDC Events [Calendar of Events]
Oct 2004	PDC Events [Calendar of Events]
Nov 2004	PDC Events [Calendar of Events]
Dec 2004	PDC Events [Calendar of Events]
Jan 2005	PDC Events [Calendar of Events]
Feb 2005	PDC Events [Calendar of Events]
	[Pre-Training Questions]
29 Oct 2004	Steering Committee Minutes
21 Jan 2005	Steering Committee Minutes
25 Feb 2004	[Steering Committee Minutes]
	Evaluation
	[Working Copy of Agency Program Improvement Plans and NWPDC Status]
	[Sample email from Joy Zamierowski to Administrators' Network members and samples of their responses]
	[Sample email exchange between Joy Zamierowski and the facilitator of the ESL Network]
	[Samples of emails and attachments Joy Zamierowski sends out to teachers and administrators several times a week]
2 Jan 2005	GED Network [Minutes of 10 Dec 2004 Meeting]
10 Dec 2004	Summary of Erie's NWPDC GED Network Roundtable Discussion on Recruitment and Retention
18 Feb 2005	Erie's NWPDC GED Network News
7 Oct 2004	[Email from John and Sondra Wiggins to Joy Zamierowski on GED Network Highlights including an update as well as upcoming dates and topics]

<i>Date</i>	<i>Document Description</i>
15 Oct 2004	[Email from Joy Zamierowski to GED Network members announcing 12 Nov meeting and TABE topics to be discussed]
24 Feb 2005	[Cover letter from Bootsie Barbour to Cassie Drennon with explanatory statements about documents sent]
13 Apr 2004	Description of Activities – Core Direct Services [Flyer about PDC offering on-site follow-up training.] [Flyer announcing Slippery Rock University “The Best and Worst in the World of GED”] [Letter from Sondra to Libby detailing upcoming events ARIN GED Network]
8 Jan 2005	Quarterly Progress Report
2 Jan 2005	NWPDC GED Network Notes December 10, 2004 Meeting [Sample emails sent from Joy Zamierowski to numerous recipients on a host of different topics] [Charts from 2003-2005? (2004) Survey]
8 Jan 2005	NWPDC Quarterly Progress Report
2004-2005	[State Leadership project e-grant application - Application Abstract, Leadership Narrative etc.]
Feb 2005	The Mayor’s Commission on Literacy’s Calendar of Events, February 2005
2003-2004	Philadelphia Professional Development Center Fourth & Final Quarter Report [Program Year 2003-2004] Activity Report for Fiscal Years: 04-05, 03-04, 02-03
4 Mar 2005	Agency Report for Fiscal Years 04-05, 03-04, 02-03 Post Activity Survey Results Fiscal Years 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 Agency Report for Fiscal Years 2004-2005, 2003-2004, 2002-2003 PDE Funded Agency Participation in PDC Activities
2004-2005	Philadelphia Regional PDC Professional Development Plan
2004-2005	[State Leadership project e-grant application - Application Abstract, Leadership Narrative etc.]
17 Dec 2003	SCPDC Advisory Committee Meeting [Minutes]
8 Mar 2004	SCPDC Advisory Committee Meeting [Minutes]
2003-2004	[Events, Trainings, Site Visits Log – MSExcel]
26 Sep 2003	SCPDC Advisory Committee Meeting [Minutes]
10 Jun 2004	SCPDC Advisory Committee Meeting [Minutes] SCPDC Training Data From e-campus 7/1/03-6/30/04 South-Central Professional Development Center Narrative Progress Report Program Year 2003 – 2004 Year End

## APPENDICES

<i>Date</i>	<i>Document Description</i>
2004-2005	SC Regional PDC Professional Development Plan [Printout of PowerPoint Presentation that is an overview of Tuscarora Intermediate 11]
2004-2005	Tuscarora Intermediate Unit, Adult Education and Training Department: Highlights, Professional Development Accomplishments, Selected Project Development and Implementation Tuscarora Intermediate Unit Training Department Staff Roster with Names, Titles, and Primary Projects
Spring 2005	SCPDC Newsletter
Sept 2004	SCPDC Quarterly Progress Report 1st Quarter, 2004-05
2004-2005	[State Leadership project e-grant application - Application Abstract, Leadership Narrative etc.]
9 Jul 2004	Final Report
Dec 2004	SE Regional PDC Professional Development Plan
13 Oct 2004	SEPDC Quarterly Report
19 Jan 2005	[Email from Ilsa Diller accompanying data used for regional planning]
21 Jan 2005	[Email from Sandy Strunk accompanying math data used for PD Planning]
14 Jan 2005	[Email from Sandy Strunk explaining how SEPDC is different] SEPDC Administrator Survey Data SEPDC Administrator_Survey SEPDC Dec 03 Regional PD Plan SEPDC Dec 03 Regional PD Plan Appendix SEPDC Dec 03 Regional Pd Plan Appendix B SEPDC Practitioner/Volunteer Tutor Data Practitioner Evaluation
12 Jan 2005	SEPDC Quarterly Report
2004-2005	[State Leadership project e-grant application - Application Abstract, Leadership Narrative etc.]
25 May 2004	Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes QUARTERLY NARRATIVE PROGRESS REPORT April to June 2004 SWPDC Training Evaluation Form

<i>Date</i>	<i>Document Description</i>
2004-2005	SW Regional PDC Professional Development Plan SWPDC 04-05 Summary 1st Quarter Report SWPDC 04-05 2nd Quarter Report ABLE NET Statewide Leadership Technology Initiative Application Procedures Manual for e-Campus guidelines for Act 48-eligible Professional Development
Jul 2004 – Oct 2004	ABLE Net 2nd Quarter Report
10 Jan 2005	ABLE Net Interim Report e-Campus Course List [with total] ABLE Training Project Application
12 Jan 2005 (March 2004)	Participation & Use of Core Training: Evaluation of Pennsylvania’s Core Training State Leadership Project
12 Jan 2005	Participation and Use of Core Training: Evaluation of Pennsylvania’s Core Training State Leadership Project. Executive Summary [Flyer – Describes project goal, delivery system, and desired outcomes.]
2004-2005	[DRAFT] ABLE Training Project Catalog
13 Oct 2004	ABLE Training Project Trainer List
12 Jan 2005	ABLE Training Project Courses
12 Jan 2005	Other Courses/Activities by PDC Region 2004-2005 PDC Professional Development Plans Requesting Trainer from Other Regions [Received along with other 12 Jan 2005 documents. Undated. Contains “Total Trainer Requests” which are broken down by PDC.] Need Regional Trainer Trained [Received along with other 12 Jan 2005 documents. Undated. Contains “Total Regional Trainers Needed” which are broken down by PDC.]
12 Jan 2005	[Content Standards – 3 year Implementation Plan for Pennsylvania]
12 Jan 2005	Pennsylvania Training and Professional Development Catalog [Undated Newsletter Article] New ABLE Training Project to Coordinate Statewide Training
2004-2005	ABLE Training Project Work Plan and Timeline PY 2004-2005 Priority 5: Training Proposal Narrative

## APPENDICES

<i>Date</i>	<i>Document Description</i>
2003-2004	Core Training Project PY 2003-2004 Final Report Core Survey Implications and Recommendations [Group Surveyed Dec 2003- Jan2004] Interview Questions for Active Trainers Summary of Trainer Interviews Module Training Observation Form
6 May 2004	Module Training Observation Summary of Year to Date Activities
27 Aug 2004	Core Training Tracking by PDC
28 Jun 2004	Core Competencies Overview
5 May 2004	Core Training Levels and Sequence Chart
26 Jan 2005	Interim Report TIU On-line Courses Upcoming ABLE Trainings (February) Upcoming ABLE Trainings (March) Upcoming ABLE Trainings (April)
Jul 2004-	Assessment Activities to Date
Dec 2004	AdvancE State Literacy Resource Center Application
19 Jan 2005	Raiana Mearns' Proposed State Leadership Policy for 2005-2006
2004-2005	State Literacy Resource Center State Leadership Activities [Goals and Objectives] [Brochure – The AdvancE State Literacy Resource Center: a single point of access for adult basic and literacy education resources and information.] Focus on Excellence Application
12 Jan 2005	SUCCESS STORIES Nomination Form
12 Jan 2005	APEX Nomination Form – Agency Statement
Jul 2004 – Jan 2005	AXIS 2004-2005 Midyear report
2004-2005	AXIS Application
12 Jan 2005	ABLE Web Sites Focus Group e-Quality Continuous Program Improvement Initiative Application
2004-2005	Program Improvement Plan Program Year 7/1/2004 – 6/30/2005
17 Jan 2005	Continuous Program Improvement Interim Report EQUAL Evaluation & Project Case Study Report 1998-2002 ABLE Continuous Program Improvement Underlying Beliefs Planning for Change Application

<i>Date</i>	<i>Document Description</i>
Jan 2005	Planning for Change Interim Report Summary of Population Participation Information
12 Jan 2005	[E-Campus] Registration Summary July 1, 2004 – December 31, 2004 Core Training Courses – Completed Registrations by PDC
PY 2002-2003	Adult Education Personnel by Function and Job Status
27 Sep 2004	JYeager Email Participation Data
13 Oct 2004	Completed Unduplicated PDC Sponsored Activity Registrations by Practitioner Region
27 Sep 2004	Completed PDC Registrations by Practitioner Region PDS Data 04-05 [Activities List, Users 04-05 List, Users by Agency]
13 Oct 2004	Completed PDC Sponsored Activity Registrations by Practitioner Region excluding On-line Registrants
24 Sep 2004	Completed Registrations by Course
27 Sep 2004	Completed Registrations by Course Sponsor
19 Jan 2005	Completed Unduplicated PDC Sponsored Activity Registrations by Practitioner Region Excluding On-line Jul 2003-Jun2004
19 Jan 2005	Completed Unduplicated PDC Sponsored Activity Registrations by Practitioner Region Excluding On-line Jul 2004-Jun 2005
19 Jan 2005	Completed Unduplicated PDC Sponsored Activity Registrations by Practitioner Region On-line Only Jul 2003-Jun 2004
19 Jan 2005	Completed Unduplicated PDC Sponsored Activity Registrations by Practitioner Region On-line Only 04-05 Teachers' List Administrators' List

## APPENDICES

### 2. Focus Group Participant Demographics (N=48)

Gender	Male	16
	Female	32
Race	Black or African American	6
	White	41
	Other	1
Highest Level of Education Completed	Associate's Degree	2
	Bachelor's Degree	22
	Master's Degree	21
	Doctoral Degree	2
	Currently in Graduate School	1
Program Category	School District	8
	Intermediate Unit	9
	Library-based or Literacy Council	5
	Other Community Based Org.	13
	Corrections	2
	Comm. College or Higher Education	7
	Other	2
	Marked More Than One	1

Subjects Taught	ABE	7
	GED/ADP	12
	Equal Combination of ABE/GED	8
	ESOL	9
	Family Literacy	3
	Other	3
	More Than One Response	4
PD Prep	Did Not Respond	2
	Yes	29
	No	18
Benefits	Did Not Respond	1
	Yes	24
	No	23
Currently Teaching K-12	Did Not Respond	1
	Yes	4
	No	42
	Did Not Respond	2

### 3. Number of Practitioner Focus Group Participants by Region

Philadelphia	8
Central-Northeast	8
Northwest	9
Southwest	9
South-Central	8
Southeast	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>