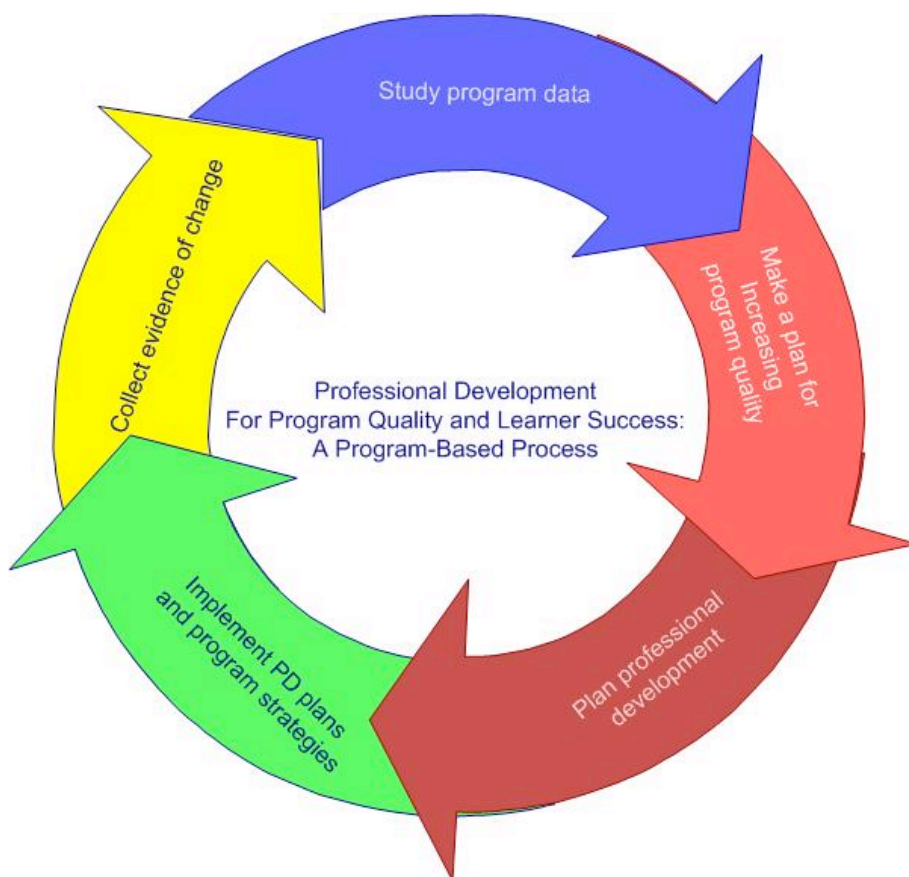


# A System Model of Professional Development

for the adult education system in Rhode Island



## Building on Prior Work

The professional development system model proposed herein builds on the following prior work:

- 1) The publication, *Building the Critical Links*, and the fundamental premise expressed within it that “learner assessment, program quality, and professional development in particular, are areas that are inextricably entwined in a quality education system” (p. 5).
- 2) Specific recommendations advanced by the Rhode Island Governor’s Adult Literacy Task Force, especially by Task Teams 3, 4, and 5.
- 3) Guiding Principles for Statewide Professional Development drafted by the Professional Development Work Group (Task Team 3).

A staff development system is more than a series of training events. It is a set of coordinated resources and activities directed explicitly toward achieving program quality and learner success. The system proposed herein is powerful enough to support practitioners learning but also produce “evaluable” learning outcomes for adult program participants. The model shares features with some staff development systems in other states, such as Kentucky and Pennsylvania, that were forerunners in designing evidence-based, outcomes-focused, professional development. For example, it involves practitio-

ners in a highly participatory process of examining data and choosing program quality goals to pursue collaboratively, and in addition, pursuing professional development goals of individual interest.

The diagram above illustrates this **program quality improvement process** within a single agency. The proposed professional development *system* would support this iterative, inquiry-based process occurring in all Rhode Island programs. At the heart of the system is a statewide **Professional Development Center (PDC)**.

A CENTRAL PDC CAN SUPPORT AND PROMOTE QUALITY IN ALL RI PROGRAMS

A statewide Professional Development Center (PDC) supports the Program Quality Improvement Process taking place within each local program by providing excellent professional learning opportunities for all practitioners -- opportunities that will help each program achieve its goals for learner success. Local programs will be served by the PDC, but will also support one another by sharing knowledge, resources, training opportunities, and technical support.

Per Task Team 3, the PDC should be competitively funded and housed outside the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE). In this way, professional development services can

complement, rather than be confused with, the monitoring function of the state. However, it is essential that the PDC Director work closely with the state ABE Director, other RIDE staff, and a **Collaborative PD Council** to assure coherence and alignment between the professional development offerings and needs of the state, agencies, and individual practitioners. The PDC should be funded initially for five years so that critical development work can be accomplished with consistency.

Task Team 3 recommended a central state-wide *resource center* for professional development. In the proposed model, the broader term Professional Development Center or "PDC" is used when referring to this component.

Task Team 3 also recommended that *collaborative decision-making* should guide the professional development system. A Collaborative PD Council is included in this model. The council would be representative of the PDC, programs, and the state office of adult education; it would be linked to the adult education board. Practitioner members of the Council should represent the diversity of program types, staff positions, and geography of the state, and the Council should include student input.

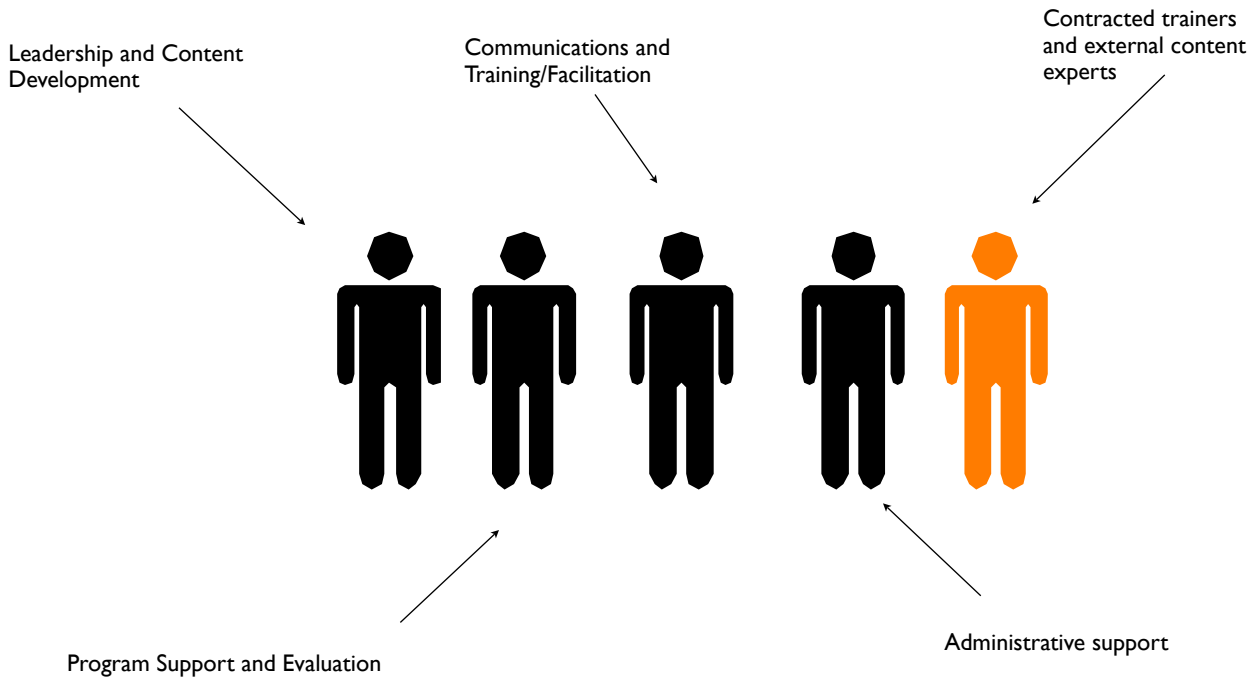
PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF THE PDC

*Italicized items in the chart already exist in the Rhode Island adult education system.*

Develop Content and Processes	Communicate	Manage a PD Delivery System	Deliver PD	Collect and Analyze Data
Develop and continually update research-based training content Design varied delivery methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshops</li> <li>Online courses</li> <li>Mentoring and coaching programs</li> <li><i>Practitioner inquiry</i></li> <li><i>Sharing groups</i></li> <li><i>Conferences/Institutes</i></li> </ul> Design processes and forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual PD</li> <li>Program PD</li> <li>Self-assessments for use with the Teacher and Administrator Competencies/Abilities.</li> <li>Evaluation of PD</li> </ul>	Communicate PD offerings and resources to the field through a variety of electronic/technological pathways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flyers</li> <li>Newsletter</li> <li>Catalog</li> <li><i>Website</i></li> <li><i>Mailing Lists</i></li> <li><i>E-distribution list</i></li> <li>Telephone and face-to-face meetings with programs, RIDE, and collaborating state agencies</li> <li>Presentations</li> <li><i>Reports and bulletins</i></li> </ul>	Arrange logistics of PD events  Develop and maintain a statewide registration system  Schedule all training events at convenient times and locations  Recruit, prepare, and support trainers.	Facilitate PD opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshops</li> <li>Online courses</li> <li>Mentoring and coaching programs</li> <li><i>Practitioner inquiry</i></li> <li><i>Sharing groups</i></li> <li><i>Conferences and institutes</i></li> </ul> Provide follow-up support to practitioners after training  Provide technical assistance to programs	Conduct needs assessments  Summarize program Quality Plans and PD Plans from agencies  Evaluate individual PD events  Evaluate the overall PD system against its <i>Guiding Principles</i> and other quality standards

A fully functioning statewide PDC serving Rhode Island's 40 programs, 400 paid practitioners, and approximately 600 volunteers would require the equivalent of 3 full-time professional staff; one administrative support person; and contracted trainers, facilitators, or content experts when needed.

POTENTIAL STAFFING SCENARIO: 4 FTES PLUS CONTRACTED TRAINERS AS NEEDED



There are many possibilities for configuring staff positions based on the table of PDC functions shown above. Details of one staffing scenario follow for consideration:

**Leadership and content development** functions would be assumed primarily by the PDC Director. He or she would oversee day-to-day operation of the PDC including budgeting, reporting, and supervising staff; facilitate the annual statewide professional development planning process with the Collaborative PD Council; articulate and further inspire a vision for professional development in Rhode Island; implement a plan to foster a culture of professional development in programs across the state; and assure that all PDC sponsored training reflects current research and best practices in the field of adult learning and staff development. The PDC director should have demonstrated expertise in staff/professional development, adult education/adult literacy, and program management/supervision. Through his or her leadership and vision, the PDC should be successful in achieving its short and long range goals for Rhode Island according to the Guiding Principles.

Given that Rhode Island is essentially building its adult basic and literacy education system from the ground up, substantial development (or adaptation) of both content and processes must occur over the next several years within both the PD system and the larger ABE delivery system. The Director and one or more of the PDC staff members should work closely with the Collaborative PD Council and RIDE staff in

developing and piloting a Program Quality Planning Process for local programs such as that suggested in this report. Part and parcel of this effort is developing and then piloting the process necessary for planning professional development on the individual, program and state levels. Additional development work should include “core” or baseline training content and delivery methods as well as training to meet the range of needs identified through the Program Quality Planning Process, individualized professional development plans, and state initiatives. Once the system is fully functioning, PDC staff can also design site-specific training requested by local agencies; develop new training content and delivery mechanisms; and revise training and methods based on evaluation data, emerging priorities, and new research. Training content will need to cover a broad range of topics related to instruction, assessment, learning differences, culture, technology and so on. It will need to reflect the needs of practitioners working in ESL, ABE, ASE, Corrections, Workforce Education, and Family Literacy. PDC staff involved in developing content and training methods should have expertise in instructional design, curriculum development, training/staff development, and adult literacy education.

The 40 adult education programs in Rhode Island will require substantial ongoing support to implement an adult education system that integrates learner assessment, program quality, and professional development. Through its **program support and evaluation** functions, the PDC can provide technical assistance to all adult education programs in the state. Staff can assist administrators as needed in developing their program-wide professional development plans linked to program quality goals; help program staff as needed in developing individualized professional development plans guided by the Teacher and Administrator Competencies/Abilities; provide support to programs as they implement professional development plans and other program quality strategies; and assist programs in evaluating the impact of program quality efforts -- including professional development -- on learner success.

Through **communications and training/facilitation**, the PDC staff can bring the statewide professional development plan to life. They should organize and deliver a slate of high quality, accessible training opportunities. With the help of training consultants, they should deliver the training through workshops and institutes, and facilitate a variety of other professional development opportunities such as practitioner inquiry, coaching and mentoring, and teacher sharing groups. Communication will be key in the new statewide system. A variety of mechanisms should be employed such as a website, a listserv, and flyers to regularly promote the training opportunities to every practitioner in Rhode Island. Another important communication function involves helping the entire ABE system “get smarter.” The PDC should take the lead in communicating the most valuable lessons learned each year from program quality improvement processes going on within programs across the state.

All PDC functions require competent **administrative support**. A person in this role can handle training logistics and maintain a registration and evaluation data base in addition to performing other clerical duties. A **cadre of contracted trainers** (experienced practitioners and other content experts) can support PDC staff in facilitating professional development opportunities.

## Training Priorities

2005 - 2007

Orientation for new practitioners (teachers, administrators, other staff)

Content-specific training based on common needs (reading, math, work skills, etc.)

Training to support achievement of the Teacher and Administrator Abilities/Competencies.

Understanding and implementing standards-driven reform.

Orientation to content standards and program quality indicators.

Orientation to the Management Information System once in place.

Using data for program improvement and professional development; performance standards and measures.

Implementing the program quality improvement process in local programs.

## Short Term Staffing Options for PDC

Assign a RIDE staff person to carry out essential development and training functions in collaboration with contracted staff person (Isserlis/LRRI).

Contract with an outside consultant to work with RIDE and Isserlis/LRRI in carrying out essential development and training functions.

Hire an interim PDC Director to carry out essential development and training functions until PDC is launched.

Formalize the Collaborative PD Council immediately and proceed with the development of priority PD content and processes.

## HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

1. An agency director forms a team of teachers, other staff, and learners to examine program performance data (e.g. learner outcomes, retention data, etc.) and agrees on areas of growth/improvement.
2. The team develops a Program Quality Plan that includes specific strategies (e.g. a new reading curriculum; a change in the intake process) and when warranted, a related professional development plan for the agency.
3. All practitioners use the appropriate Abilities List (teacher, administrators, counselor, etc.) to self-assess in relation to both program and personal goals and then develop Individual Professional Development Plans.
4. Individual Professional Development Plans are shared with agency directors. Program Quality Plans are submitted to RIDE which in turn shares them with the PDC.

## Time Line

### June 2005

Gather broad-based feedback on the PD system model and revise.

### July - August 2005

Establish minimal short-term staffing for PDC (See box on this page). Convene an interim Collaborative PD Council that includes members of Task Team 3, and establish its role.

### August 2005 - June 2006

Develop content and processes for the training priorities (See box on page 4.)

### September 2005 - June 2006

Begin piloting statewide training on the priorities as development is completed.

### January 2006

Issue RFP for the Professional Development Center.

### April 2006

Launch the PDC.

5. The PDC conducts an annual needs assessment of practitioners through a variety of methods including surveys, focus groups, training evaluations, etc.
6. The PDC develops a statewide plan for professional development (a slate of training opportunities and a delivery schedule) based on trends apparent in the Program Quality Plans, state-level initiatives, and the needs assessment, as well as new research, trends, and best practices. The statewide PD plan must also provide orientation for all new practitioners; training that is aligned with the Teacher and Administrator Abilities/Competencies; and training in general content areas such as reading, math, ESL, workforce, and so on. The state plan for professional development is reviewed by the Collaborative PD Council to determine that it is reasonably aligned with policies, state mandates, program goals, guiding principles, and individual needs. Most training is delivered by the PDC at a central location -- and eventually online in some cases -- at various times to all practitioners in Rhode Island. Additional training may be either site-specific or offered by the PDC's to clusters of programs expressing common needs. Programs retain the freedom and flexibility to sponsor site-specific training without PDC help, and are encouraged to share effective trainings and resources.
7. Practitioners implement the activities in their professional development plans, and programs as a whole implement activities in the Program Quality Plan. Programs and practitioners collect data.
8. The program team examines evidence to determine impact.
9. The PDC in conjunction with RIDE provides technical assistance to programs in any and all phases of the Program Quality Process.
10. The PDC in partnership with the Collaborative PD Council also participates in a Program Quality Improvement process to assure continuous improvement of the overall PD system.

# Policy Development

In order for Rhode Island's new Adult Basic Education system to be successful, policies must be adopted at the state and local level that will support participation by all practitioners in quality professional development. Policies preceded with \* have been drafted by the Association for Adult Literacy Professional Developers for consideration by states.

\*1. **Orientation for Practitioners New to Adult Education:** All practitioners new to adult education should have an orientation to teaching or administering in the field of adult basic education within the first 6 months of their employment.

\*2. **Expectations for Participation in Professional Development:** The state as well as every program should expect that all practitioners, no matter how experienced, will continue professional learning throughout their careers.

3. **Program Quality Plans and Program Professional Development Plans:** Each program should be mandated to establish a representative Program Quality Team; convene the team annually to produce a Program Quality Plan based on program data

\*4. **Individual Professional Development Plans:** Each program should be funded a minimum of 1% of its annual staff hours to support teachers in developing an annual professional development plan that dovetails with the program's quality improvement process.

\*5. **Paid Professional Development Release Time:** All practitioners should have a minimum of 2.5% of their annual working time as paid professional development. Paid professional development should include any professional learning activity, organized or self-study, that advances practitioners towards achieving the goals outlined in their professional development plans.

\*6. **Participation in Program Quality Improvement:** A minimum of 2% of each program's budget should be set aside for practitioners to participate in program quality improvement efforts [such as designing new curriculum, improving recruiting, designing a new student orientation, studying data for program improvement, etc.] This policy would cover practitioners for time they spend working on the Program Quality Team.

\*7. **Access to Professional Development:** The PDC should have the mandate and funding to ensure that every practitioner (full-time and part-time; new and experienced; teacher, administrator, or other staff) has access to quality professional development, throughout the year, both inside and outside of his/her program, and every practitioner has access to a variety of types of professional development on a variety of content, organized at a variety of times and locations, including on-line options.

8. **High quality Professional Development:** The professional development system should be guided by and evaluated against quality indicators developed and agreed upon by the Collaborative PD Council and the state agency. The PDC should be mandated to participate in a Program Quality Improvement Process that mirrors the process local programs use. The Guiding Principles for Rhode Island's Professional Development System, proposed by Task Team 3, can be translated into quality indicators for professional development.

9. **Mutual Accountability:** Mutual accountability between and among practitioners, programs, the PDC, and the state is implicit in the processes of personal, program, and state-wide professional development planning, in order to insure that all involved are aware of and attentive to ongoing professional growth and learning.

# Guiding Principles

The table below illustrates how each of the Guiding Principles for Rhode Island's professional development system, recommended by Task Team 3, is embodied in the proposed system model for professional development.

Guiding Principles for Rhode Island's Professional Development System	How the proposed system reflects the Guiding Principles
1. Professional Development is a long-term investment in the strength and stability of adult education.	The proposed system represents a strong, permanent infrastructure for supporting professional development in Rhode Island for years to come.
2. Professional development results in improved practice in teaching adult learners.	The proposed inquiry-based system provides a way for practitioners to examine the relationship between their learning and student achievement. High quality professional development opportunities will be plentiful and accessible, increasing the likelihood that practice can be improved.
3. Professional development addresses the educational needs of learners, practitioners, communities, and the state.	A slate of professional development opportunities are determined in the proposed system based on data collected from each of these sectors.
4. Professional development activities, attitudes, structures, and values support building a community of practitioners and developing leadership.	Practitioners will function as members of a professional community through attendance at statewide and regional training events and through participation in a statewide listserv where professional wisdom can be readily exchanged. Leadership development occurs as practitioners serve on their Program Quality Improvement Team, serve as members of the Collaborative PD Council; or serve as members of the training cadre.
5. Professional development focuses on both program improvement and individual development and is based on research and best practices in the process of teaching and adult learning, effective program management, and effective professional development strategies.	The system includes a process through which the PDC can learn of all program improvement goals and individual professional development goals. The PDC then responds systematically to those needs through an annual slate of high quality, research-based offerings.
6. There is significant input by practitioners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of professional development activities.	The proposed system is characterized by highly participatory planning processes on the local and state levels through which practitioners identify program improvement goals and goals for individual professional development. Additionally, practitioners contribute their input through needs assessments and regular evaluation activities conducted by the PD system as part of its continuous quality improvement process.
7. Practitioners are encouraged and supported to generate and apply new knowledge. Knowledge is not simply delivered.	The Program Quality Improvement Process is, in and of itself, a model of practitioner inquiry. Practitioners generate new knowledge in the proposed system by choosing to try something new in their classrooms or in the overall program. Then they collect and study evidence of the impact their innovation has had.
8. Professional development is viewed as an integral part of practitioners' work.	In the proposed model, professional development is inextricably linked to everyday practice because it is focused substantially on tangible program quality improvements. Policies support the expectation that all practitioners will be involved in professional development throughout their careers.

**RHODE ISLAND PDC**  
*Operating Budget: \*Phase 1*

Personnel:		Operating Expenses:	
PDC Director	\$ 60,000	Communications	\$ 5,000
Professional Developer (1)	50,000	Supplies	7,500
Administrative Support	25,000	Materials	2,500
Total Salaries:	\$135,000	Travel	10,000
		Total Operating Expenses:	\$ 25,000
Fringe Benefits @ 25%	33,750	Total Direct Costs:	\$218,750
Contractual	25,000	10% Indirect Costs:	21,875
Total Personnel:	<b>\$193,750</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$240,625</b>

*\*This budget assumes that the PDC will be phased in over a period of at least two years. Phase 2 adds a second full-time professional developer and increases the contractual budget. Each additional year would require 3-5% column increases.*

TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT



**Evidenced-Based Professional Development**

Professional development that reflects individual expertise as well as the best available evidence derived from systematic research.

**Inquiry-based**

Any process that seeks to answer a question or solve a problem through formulating a question; gathering background information; systematic planning for, collecting and analyzing data to help answer the question; reflecting with others on results and perhaps posing new questions (e.g. practitioner inquiry that originates in practitioners' questions and interests, or program inquiry

that uses this approach to improve program services.)

**Outcomes-Focused Professional Development**

An approach to professional development that makes outcomes – desired results -- a key factor in planning and creating professional development opportunities.

**Practitioners**

'Practitioners' as used in any of the Adult Literacy Task Force documents means all adult education staff – teachers, directors, administrators, counselors, tutors and other support staff.

**Practitioner Inquiry:** Research and learning processes whereby practitioners identify a question, problem or concern in their practice and focus their attention on addressing it. Practitioners engage in a systematic process of identifying issues, gathering information (including planned observation, outside reading, discussion with others), documenting and reflecting on what's been

learned, and applying that learning to the question at hand

**Program Quality Improvement**

An inquiry-based process that engages program staff in collecting and analyzing program data, using that analysis to plan for increasing program effectiveness, designing a professional development plan to aid in increasing and strengthening effectiveness, implementing the plan for professional development and other improvement strategies, collecting evidence of change, and analyzing the data in a cyclic on-going process that becomes part of the program culture.

**Program Quality Indicators**

A quality indicator is a variable or 'input' into a program that, according to research or field wisdom, reflects effective program performance (e.g. planned staff development, an effective system of data collection and analysis). Taken together, the Program Quality Indicators are assumed to result in high quality programs and services.



This report was created in collaboration with the Professional Development Working Group (Task Team 3) of the Governor's Adult Literacy Task Force by Cassandra Drennon & Associates, Inc. 675 Pulaski Street, Suite 2700, Athens, Georgia, 30601. 706-543-2971 [www.drennonassoc.net](http://www.drennonassoc.net)