

# **Florida Department of Education**

## **Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol**

### **Second Cycle Technical Report School Years 2006-2009**

#### **Executive Summary**

by

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**Executive Summary**

Through a series of legislative acts in the late 1990s and early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Florida Legislature required the Florida Department of Education (Department) to develop a system for evaluating the quality of district professional learning systems. Pursuant to those requirements stipulated in **s. 1012.98 – School Community Professional Development Act** (F.S.) and legislative proviso language, the Department generated the Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol. The First Cycle of reviews for all 67 districts began in the 2002-03 school year with five districts reviewed in the spring of 2003, 11 districts in the 2003-04 school year and the remaining 51 districts by June 2006. The Department embarked on the Second Cycle of implementing the Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol in the 2006-07 school year with reviews of 20 local school districts’ professional development systems, and continued with reviews of an additional 22 districts in the 2007-08 school year and 25 districts in the 2008-09 school year plus reviews of the four developmental research schools located at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Florida Atlantic University, Florida State University, and University of Florida. By June 2009, the Department concluded two cycles of reviews of all 67 school districts and four university research schools. This document reports overall findings for the Second Cycle (2006-2009) with comparisons to the First Cycle (2002-2006).

The purposes of the Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol are to:

1. Ensure the highest quality district, school, and faculty Professional Development Systems in Florida to support instructional programs throughout the state and increase student achievement.
2. Provide the Commissioner of Education, State Board of Education, and Legislature with information each year on the quality of the district Professional Development Systems.
3. Provide Florida school districts with the methods and protocols needed to conduct ongoing assessments of the quality of professional development in their schools.

The Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol is based on a set of 66 standards that describe the characteristics and components of a quality professional development system that meets the requirements of Florida’s laws. These standards were generated from the statements in Florida’s laws as well as the professional development



standards generated by the *National Staff Development Council (NSDC)* entitled *Standards for Staff Development*. The standards reflect three levels of the Professional Development System and four strands incorporated into each level as follows:

Levels	Strands
1.0 Faculty Level	◆ Planning
2.0 School Level	◆ Delivery
3.0 District Level	◆ Follow-up
	◆ Evaluation

The scale used for judging each rating is a 4-point scale ranging from unacceptable to excellent. The midpoint on this scale is 2.5. The system is described in detail in the document entitled *Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol: Protocol System, Second Cycle, 2006-2009*, located at:  
<http://www.fldoe.org/profdev/pdstandards.asp>.

## Conclusions

The Department has generated and implemented the Florida Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol in accordance with Florida Statute s. 1012.98. The Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol is based on a set of 66 standards that describe the characteristics and components of a quality professional development system that meets the requirements of Florida's laws. These standards have been generated from the statements in Florida's laws as well as the professional development standards generated by the *National Staff Development Council (NSDC)* entitled *Standards for Staff Development*. The First Cycle of reviews for all 67 Florida districts was completed in the spring of 2006. The Second Cycle of reviews was completed in the 2008-09 school year.

Overall conclusions from the analyses of the First and Second Cycles were:

- 1. Districts that receive good or excellent ratings on the district professional development standards also demonstrate greater increases in student achievement.** A correlational analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between high ratings on the standards and the last district standard, 3.4.7 Student Gains. The analysis demonstrated a moderate positive relationship (.33) between the state's ratings of districts on student achievement increases and ratings on the quality of professional development in the district, significant at the .01 level. *These results support the effectiveness of high quality professional development programs in contributing to increased student achievement in school districts.*
- 2. The positive relationship between high district level performance on the professional development standards and high levels of student achievement is increasing over time and application of the standards by districts.** The



correlational analysis improved from .31 for the First Cycle to .33 for the Second Cycle.

3. **School districts demonstrated improvements in the Second Cycle in implementing the standards over the First Cycle.** The overall average across all standards for the First Cycle was **2.97**, and for the Second Cycle was **3.18**, on the 4-point rating scale (1=Unacceptable, 4=Excellent). These averages were above the midpoint of 2.5 on the rating scale.
4. **Most school districts are currently implementing most standards related to Planning and Delivery of professional development at the “good” or “excellent” level.** Averages for all strands and levels were above 3.0, a rating of “good.” The average for the district standards in Planning and Delivery was above 3.5, a rating of “excellent.” In the Second Cycle, all except 3 of the 67 districts received an average rating of over 2.5 across all standards reviewed.
5. **Districts improved their adherence to the standards in all four strands (Planning, Delivery, Follow-up, and Evaluation) and three levels (District, School, and Faculty) of standards.** Every comparison of the Second Cycle averages demonstrated improvements over the previous performance levels in the First Cycle for the strand and level.
6. **The most dramatic improvements were noted in the district level standards.** Two of the four strands at the district level (**Follow-up and Evaluation**) increased by almost one-half rating point in the 4-point scale, a remarkable change in the three-to-four years since the previous review.
7. **The highest ratings were noted in the Planning and Delivery Strands across all three levels.** All of the highest average ratings were from the Planning and Delivery Strands of standards. All Planning and Delivery standards received average ratings above 3.0. The areas receiving the highest ratings included **coordinated records** at all three levels, the standards at the district and school level on **content** reflecting a strong emphasis in professional development on the content areas specified in law, standards addressing the role of professional development in building **district leadership** and “**growing the organization,**” the **relevance of professional development** to school student achievement objectives and the professional needs of teachers, the processes used by districts in **determining professional development needs** of teachers, the **use of technology** in delivering professional development, and the delivery of professional development through **learning strategies** that employ methods appropriate for adults such as demonstrations and practice.
8. **More than 200 district, consortia, and university staff participated in these reviews.** The process results in greater understanding of and adherence to the standards by all participants.
9. **Many districts have incorporated the standards into their organization/structure.** Districts are using the 66 standards and the rationales for the standards in their planning and operations. Some districts have used the standards to generate checklists for professional developers and to provide quality control over all planned professional development.



- 10. The system provided a common language.** Conceptually, many discussions and planning sessions center now on the four strands of Planning, Delivery, Follow-up, and Evaluation. Common language is more apparent now for concepts and practices such as learning strategies, learning communities, and action research.
- 11. The set of standards raised expectations.** The Department's wide dissemination and public availability of the standards has encouraged all districts to meet the standards and improve their professional development systems.
- 12. Reviewers learn from other districts.** District professional development staff who participate in reviews of other districts increase their awareness of better methods for planning and implementing professional development, as well as becoming more focused on the need to improve professional development systems in their own districts.
- 13. Some districts conduct self-studies.** Some districts have used the Department's self-study methods to review their professional development systems and encourage principals and trainers to adhere to the standards.
- 14. Districts need continued improvement in evaluating the impact of professional development.** The average rating for the Evaluation Strand was the lowest for the four strands.
- 15. Districts need continued improvement in providing follow-up support to professional development.** The lowest rating was in Faculty Level Follow-up, and the Follow-up Strand was the second lowest of the four strands.
- 16. Districts continue to need to make improvements in the areas of Action Research, Web-based Resources and Assistance at the faculty and school levels, establishing and maintaining Learning Communities at the faculty level, providing meaningful Coaching and Mentoring, and documenting professional development expenditures at the school level.** These were the six lowest rated standards in the Second Cycle. Five of these standards were also in the six lowest rated standards in the First Cycle.

Overall, these results demonstrate that districts have benefited from the review system through increased adherence to Florida's Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol Standards. District staff have become more aware of and understand better how to design, implement, and maintain quality professional development systems that encourage all teachers to maximize their effectiveness in teaching students. Other benefits of the program are the sharing of practices throughout the state and self-reviews by district staff of the quality of their own professional development systems.