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Building Together: Implementing a New Statewide Professional Development System for Early Education and Care

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Summary/Abstract

Effective professional development systems are critical for improving the quality of early education and care. In 2010 the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) created a new statewide integrated professional development system for the early education and care workforce. This study, funded by EEC, examined the implementation of this new system.

Research Questions

This implementation study focused on the following research question:

➤ How does Massachusetts, along with its six newly-funded Regional Partnerships, implement the new professional development system with a consistent and stable infrastructure, and with common goals and expectations shared by EEC and the regional partnerships?

The study explored how policy change translated into new practices on the ground in the six regions of the state, and how the experiences of the regional partners informed state implementation efforts.

Results/Impacts

- Alignment of systems and sectors
- Shared vision
- Regional partnership development
- Processes for communicating about change at state, regional, and local levels
- Implementation challenges



“There is a process of learning about the new system, about alignment across systems, and [regional] leaders and partners have to educate themselves in order to go out to the field and educate the field about these changes in ways that won’t further confuse people.” - Regional Partner

Approaches and Methods

- Theoretical frameworks: systems change, co-production/co-creation of public service systems
- Study design & methods: qualitative case study, with 6 embedded cases (regions)
- 60 interviews with state & regional leaders/partners
- 27 meeting observations
- Document review and analysis
- Data coded with descriptive, analytic, and emergent codes

Next Steps

New Study in 2012: Funded by the MA Department of Early Education and Care (Anne Douglass, PI & Alice Carter, Co-PI) to analyze patterns of professional development participation. This study will provide important information about the professional development activities of the Massachusetts early education and care workforce at the individual educator level, and at the early childhood program level.

Resources

Study Report available at:
<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/eec/workforce-and-professional-development/resources-for-professional-development/20110827-umass-pds-rpt.pdf>

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