

Teacher Leader Information

One of the core beliefs of the Task Force on the Maine Learning Technology Endowment centered on *teacher preparation and professional* development. State funding for staff development focused on systemic change in teaching and learning practices. However, the resource commitment from the Endowment is primarily targeted to begin in the summer of 2002. In order to carefully evolve a statewide, school-based capacity to adapt teaching and schools to a change as significant as proposed, the Gates Teacher Leadership Project will begin in the 2001-02 school year. The approach proposed by Maine for a Teacher Leadership Project will establish a professional development system that is:

Aligned with Maine's *Learning Results*:

- Intended to provide the best tools to help all students achieve to high standards, and to help teachers access primary resource materials, personalize learning and design assessments to this end;
- Based on a comprehensive, local needs assessment for professional development;
- Focused on supporting, empowering, and equipping all teachers to successfully adopt and adapt technology into their practice in rich ways that will motivate students to learn;
- Designed to create local and regional ownership of the MLTE project and its desired outcomes.

Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment

The linchpin and driving force behind grant activities undertaken will be a local needs assessment of school culture and teacher skills, needs, and attitudes in every middle school building in the state. Such an assessment does not currently exist and will be undertaken this winter. We want to roll out staff development on the local status and needs identified.

Teachers as Leaders

We see teachers and students at the center of this” technology project.”

It is obvious that teachers will play a central role in implementing the new ways of learning. Some approaches to “staff development” to fit them for this role might see the task as coaching teachers to design effective learning experiences using technology resources. Although this is critically needed, two other lines of development are crucial to realizing the true benefit: the development of all teachers for a leadership role in schools and the development of the school and larger community of stakeholders in education as “learning organizations”- organizations that in addition to facilitating learning in their students are themselves capable of learning.

Our strategy for development in each school is based on the following approach:

Lead Teachers:

Some teachers will move faster than others in appropriating the philosophy and/or the methods offered by this project. We expect these teachers to play a leadership role in the school, and we are giving high priority to setting up mechanisms to help them develop the requisite skills. As a start, we are asking each of the 243 middle schools in the state to nominate a “lead teacher” (a classroom teacher with influence power) to participate in a series of workshops and other situations designed to prepare them for leadership in their schools. Critically, these teachers must have the respect and confidence of their own colleagues in the classroom.

The” **Requisite skills**” will concentrate on the following:

Leadership skills: this includes skills, knowledge, and sensitivities relevant to moderating discussion and decision-making, as well as some familiarity with different types of governance structures in schools and other organizations.

Grasp of issues in Change: some knowledge of the history of school reform movements, managing change strategies and the prevailing resilience to change.

History of the Integration of Technology: Insight regarding issues surrounding the link of learning and technology, including some experience in discussion of controversial issues and the negative literature.

Content and Assessment: An appreciation for the richness and diversity of content accessible through technology, and the power of technology to both broaden the methods of instruction and the modes of assessment.

Other qualities: **advocate and communicate for and about the program
vision for the use of technology in education
change agent – risk taker**

Job Description:

- Work collaboratively with the building principal to build capacity
- Keep project focused on teaching and learning within the context of real classrooms.
- Act as contact person for notification of learning opportunities.
- Collect baseline data in building including strengths, needs, potential problems and local resources. Help staff analyze data to make decisions.
- Supporting their colleagues by providing information, mentoring, cognitive coaching, modeling and facilitate meetings and problem solving around project

- Focus on this project for a period of at least one year.
- Developing a culture of discussion in and around their schools of relevant issues –“ Schools that learn are schools that talk”.
- Working with school administrators, technology coordinators and other school system personnel in implementing the technology deployment with a sensibility to the status and needs of the teachers
- Understands the demands and constraints of being a classroom teacher.

Process For selection:

Teachers should notify building principal of their interest with a letter from that teacher that includes their interest in the position, their qualifications, and their vision for this work. Principals, using a collaborative model of selection, will then notify Bette Manchester at bette.manchester@state.me.us of the name and email address of the school’s choice for lead teacher. Please send by email the letter from the teacher that states, interest, qualifications and their vision for this work. Please make every attempt to make the selection in December.

Each school must submit their nominated Lead Teacher by January 7, 2002.