



LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
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TO: Rene Gonzalez, Debbie
Ernst, John Ralles, Mark
Shenkman

DATE: July 3, 2008

FROM: Donnalyn Jaque-Antón

For Your

- ☐ Action
- ☐ Approval
- ☐ Information
- ☐ Review/Suggestions
- ☐ Signature

Please

- ☐ Call me
- ☐ Follow-up/Process
- ☐ Prepare response
for my signature
- ☐ Respond
- ☐ See me

☐ Information you requested

Re: Professional Development Contracts

Please share the attached with your staff.

To: Specially Funded
Special Ed Exec.
SHHS, SBIX
From: DJA

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Inter-Office Correspondence

Share with all
staff -
changes

INFORMATIVE

DATE: June 9, 2008

TO: David L. Brewer, Superintendent
Members, Board of Education

FROM: *RC* Ramon Cortines
Senior Deputy Superintendent

SUBJECT: MAXIMIZING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTRACTS

As part of the budget process, I began a review of the professional development services contracts entered into by schools, local district offices and central offices. This preliminary review revealed that LAUSD enters into more than \$50 million dollars worth of professional development contracts on a yearly basis. These services range from one-time school presentations to multi-million dollar professional development services such as the Governor's Reading and Mathematics Institutes. Funds used to enter into these agreements are 33% general funds and 67% grant funds

It is crucial that our professional development efforts for our teachers, administrators, and classified staff be second to none, and it is essential that we provide them with the necessary tools to excel and grow in our classrooms, schools and offices. Research has shown that there is little to no evidence linking different forms of professional development to either teacher or student learning outcomes unless the professional development is closely linked to a district's goals and can be measured for effectiveness. Currently, the most common means of evaluating professional development is the self-reporting survey of satisfaction. Satisfaction data are not sufficient to ensure learning. Therefore, our current evaluation system is not effective in providing the real data that our District must use to evaluate our professional development investments. We simply do not have evidence of what teachers learn from professional development or how it changes their pedagogies.

This wide range of contracts and the large amount of money spent has led me to question the alignment of the services provided with our primary instructional initiatives. Where the alignment is clear, such as with the contract for Learning Teams, our primary professional development initiative at the secondary level, or in limited instances where we are required to choose a particular provider by Federal or State law, the contracts are appropriate. However, I have concerns about the appropriateness of many of the other contracts because, in my observation, we have allowed schools and offices to enter into professional development contracts without clearly defined outcomes or accountability to using the newly acquired learning to improve practice. Some of the professional development contracts are grant funded but simply accepting grants does not ensure improved practice. While I do not want to jeopardize grant funded programs, I do want to make sure that the grants we accept support our instructional goals. Therefore, I will require Local District Superintendents and Central Office division heads to approve all grant applications with subsequent acceptance of the grant by the office of Professional Learning, Development and Leadership to ensure that we accept grants which add value to our efforts to achieve our District goals as opposed to our traditional view of grants as a revenue source.

I also question our practice of hiring outside providers rather than using our existing resources to do the work ourselves. Thus, it is imperative that an internal analysis occur during the planning process in order to make an informed decision of whether to outsource professional development or not. After

review of outcomes/deliverables of third party contracting, I am unable to determine the effectiveness of the services provided in most cases. As you know, this has been an ongoing topic of discussion and area of concern by the Board in its review and approval of contracts. Furthermore, I question whether we contract out of need or habit. There are likely millions of dollars in duplication and other unnecessary costs that can be saved through a reengineering of this process. These dollars can and should be directly put back into quality professional development.

Consequently, I am initiating a change in review and approval of requests for contract actions, effective July 1, 2008 on new and continuing professional development contracts. ***This change will be in effect for a period of one year*** to allow a thorough prior to review of new and existing contracts by the Office of Professional Learning, Development and Leadership for alignment with District goals for professional development. Concurrently, clear guidelines and streamlined requirements for the processing and approval of future professional development contracts will be developed. This will allow the District to maximize the use of our professional development dollars. It is my intent to initiate a similar process for evaluating all professional services contracts within six months of the commencement of this initiative. I have already sent to the Board my direction that all contract actions be completed over \$72,400. This action was taken to decrease costs in the District and help reinforce the true value of competition.

* All supervisors are required to notify all staff of this process change. The Contract Administration Branch, under the Procurement Services Group, will notify service providers with continuing professional development contracts beyond July 1, 2008 that their contracts are subject to review prior to being renewed for the '08-'09 school year. Contracts requests which have been submitted to Contract Administration Branch for professional development services to begin July 1, 2008 are subject to this process change. Adding this review step will lengthen processing of all approved contract actions and schools and offices will need to plan for their contract needs well in advance (approximately 40 business days for those contract actions less than \$72,400 and 60 business days for contracts between \$72,400 and \$250,000) of any contractor beginning work on a contract. If the contract action is greater than \$250,000, there will need to be time for the competitive process with the associated Board approval step.

* All contract requests for professional development services regardless of dollar value must now be submitted to Office of Professional Learning, Development and Leadership for review. When contracts are submitted for review they must be accompanied by documentation of the evidence of effectiveness of the service provider with respect to the current contract period (current contracts) or evidence of effectiveness in urban educational settings with similar student populations (new contracts). The District's Research and Planning Office will provide Local Districts and Central Office guidance regarding proof of evidence of effectiveness. Contracts submitted directly to Contract Administration Branch, without going through this process will not be approved.

I have directed Ronni Ephraim to set up a task force to:

1. Review and approval of contracts submitted with completed justification regarding the need for the contract, alignment to District goals, and clearly articulated outcomes for improved practice
2. Ensure a timely approval process by establishing guidelines and requirements for the processing and approval of future professional development contracts
3. Develop a professional development policy based on scientifically-based research as well as a review of policies and procedures in other urban districts
4. Develop a formal Grant's Policy
5. Make a policy recommendation to the Superintendent by February, 2009 for the 2009-10 school year.

Requiring Central office review and approval as part of the current contracting process is not meant to add bureaucracy to our system. To the contrary, we are taking this action to streamline our process and provide real transparency. We must, however, use data for the purpose of ensuring systemic improvement and to identify the best means to build our skills, knowledge, ability, and ethical behaviors. We must use our resources wisely. We must ensure that the professional development offered at schools, local districts and central office actively engages learners in meaningful activities relevant to individual context, promotes collaboration/community building, and, most importantly, clearly articulates a vision for improved student achievement.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Ronni Ephraim at 213-241-5257.

c: Local District Superintendents
 Jim Morris
 Don Davis
 Judy Elliott
 Michael Eugene
 Duane Johnson
 Ronni Ephraim
 Donnalyn Anton
 Liza Scruggs
 Maria Wale
 Shelley Weston
 Julie Slayton