

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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DATE: July 2016
TO: Collaborative Executive Directors
FROM: Office of Regional Governance
SUBJECT: **FY16 Collaborative Annual Report Guidelines**

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40, Section 4E requires that each education collaborative submit an annual report to the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education (Commissioner), to each member school committee, and to each member charter school board (member district). The FY16 Annual Report must address the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2015 and ending on June 30, 2016, and the academic year that falls within the same timeframe. The annual report must be approved by the collaborative board of directors (collaborative board), and submitted on or before **January 1, 2017**. Collaborative regulations, 603 CMR 50.00, further state that the format and content of the annual report shall be presented in accordance with guidelines established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Department). The Department issues these *Guidelines* to provide direction on the format, content and submission of the FY16 Annual Reports.

The annual report should be a comprehensive summary of the programs and services offered by the collaborative during the fiscal year. The annual report will allow member districts, the collaborative board and the Department to review the collaborative's progress toward meeting the objectives and purpose(s) set forth in the collaborative agreement. Finally, the annual report will provide all interested parties with information about the collaborative and the programs and services that are offered by the collaborative.

At a minimum, the annual report must contain:

- Information on the programs and services provided by the collaborative;
- Discussion of the cost-effectiveness of such programs and services; and
- Discussion of the progress made toward achieving the objectives and purpose(s) set forth in the collaborative agreement.

These *Guidelines* describe the required content and a suggested format for the annual report. Please note that individual annual reports are not required to be formatted in this way, but must include all required content.

Letter from Executive Director and/or the Chairperson of the Collaborative Board

This letter may serve as an introduction to the key elements of the annual report and provide a brief overview of collaborative activities and significant changes from the previous annual report.

General Information

The annual report must include the name of the collaborative, contact information, and the address of the collaborative's principal office(s). The annual report must indicate the fiscal year that is addressed in the report and must include the collaborative's web address.

The annual report may include the vision, mission and/or goals of the collaborative, a summary of successes and challenges, or the departure or arrival of key staff. In addition, the annual report may contain information about the collaborative, such as the number of years the collaborative has been in existence, revenue and expenditure information, staffing information, or any other information relevant to collaborative operations during the fiscal year.

Governance and Leadership

The annual report must list the member districts, and the names of their appointed representatives and their roles in the member district.

The annual report may also include additional information relative to governance and leadership, such as: the collaborative's organizational chart, the function and composition of any advisory committees, a listing of the collaborative's key management and program staff, or changes in membership or collaborative leadership since the last annual report.

Programs and Services Provided

The annual report must list every program and service offered by the collaborative.

- For each program, include a detailed description of the program, and the location of the program.
- For each service, list the type of service, such as professional development, contracted adult services, transportation, therapy, cooperative purchasing, Medicaid billing, etc., and include a detailed description of the service. Indicate the scope of services offered by noting, as appropriate, depending on the service: the number of individuals served, the number of professional development sessions offered, and/or the entities benefiting from cooperative purchasing, joint transportation or Medicaid billing.

The annual report must include the total number of students served by the collaborative, identify new programs or services that have been offered since the last annual report, and note significant changes in program offerings or locations.

The annual report may include other information on the collaborative's programs and services, such as:

- a description of staff functions;
- student/teacher ratios in collaborative programs;
- performance data;
- arrangements with member districts to maximize integration opportunities for students or to coordinate services, including basic health care services;
- whether the collaborative owns or leases its program spaces or has agreements with member districts to operate within public school buildings; and
- the length of time each program has been in its current location.

Cost-Effectiveness of Programs and Services

The annual report must include a discussion of the cost-effectiveness of each of the collaborative's programs and each of the collaborative's services, including clear explanations of the methodologies used to assess cost-effectiveness and appropriate citations to data against which programs and services are compared. Please ensure that the report addresses every program and service offered by the collaborative, that reasonable methodologies are used to measure cost-effectiveness, and that methodologies are described sufficiently, so that readers understand how the collaborative measured cost-effectiveness. Please note that there are various ways to address cost-effectiveness, as described below.

The Department does not advocate or promote any particular means of measuring cost-effectiveness. That determination is to be made by the individual collaborative. However, there are a number of different ways collaboratives in Massachusetts and educational service agencies in other states have measured cost-effectiveness, some of which are listed later in these *Guidelines*. These examples are not all-inclusive and are not intended to require any particular means of measurement. Measuring cost-effectiveness may include cost comparisons, qualitative comparisons or comparisons based on other factors, as well.

- **Cost comparisons:** The cost of programs and services offered through a collaborative effort can be compared to the cost of providing the same programs and services in individual districts or through private placements or contracts. Documentation or evidence may include:
 - Reductions in combined administration and coordination costs for staffing and administration of programs and services versus costs at the individual district level;

- Collaborative tuitions compared to costs of program creation or maintenance, at the individual district level;
- Costs incurred by individual districts' placement of students at collaborative programs compared to those at comparable private schools that offer substantially similar programs;
- Fees-for-services for related services as compared to the costs individual districts would pay full-time employees, private vendors and/or hospitals;
- Transportation savings due to joint bidding and/or shared routes;
- Collaborative transportation costs as compared to those districts would pay or have paid in the past;
- Savings realized from Medicaid billing;
- Professional development (PD) costs compared to those an individual teacher or district would have to pay colleges, universities and/or other PD providers;
- Savings in travel costs and staff time for staff to attend professional development sessions at locations closer to their local districts; and
- Savings realized from increased bargaining power associated with pooled purchases of, for example, school and professional development materials, cafeteria food, utilities, health insurance and transportation vehicles.

Please be sure to identify the agencies or entities to which cost comparisons are made, if applicable.

- ***Qualitative or other comparisons:*** In some cases, the cost-effectiveness determination may not be based on financial analysis, but instead may be based on qualitative factors or other tangible benefits. Examples may include:
 - Ability to offer higher quality services (e.g., a more costly and more experienced professional development provider) due to pooling resources;
 - Increased opportunity through shared resources, e.g., teachers from smaller districts or districts with a lower budget can avail themselves of the same professional development as teachers from larger or more affluent districts;
 - Ability to retain students in the least restrictive environment for academic programs and/or extracurricular and/or non-academic activities;
 - Standardization of content and ability for follow-up (fewer presenters can ensure consistency of message, and local presenters/PD providers can monitor delivery of content more readily); and/or
 - Likelihood that service would not have been provided at all if an individual district had to plan and fund the service alone.

Progress Made toward Achieving the Purpose(s) and Objectives Set Forth in the Collaborative Agreement

The annual report must describe the progress made toward achieving the purpose(s) and objectives set forth in the collaborative agreement and must indicate the measures that the collaborative uses to determine progress toward achieving the purpose(s) and objectives.

Report directly on the progress made toward achieving the purpose(s) and objectives listed in the collaborative agreement and include information about how the collaborative “strengthens and complements” member district programs by:

- Re-stating the purpose(s) and objectives;
- Reporting on whether the collaborative is achieving its purpose(s) or making progress toward achieving its purpose(s);
- Reporting on whether the collaborative is achieving its objectives or making progress toward achieving its objectives; and
- Describing the tools for measuring progress toward meeting both the purpose(s) and objectives of the collaborative.

In describing progress, the annual report may reference the new programs and/or professional development opportunities offered in response to district needs, or the results of satisfaction surveys sent to students and parents and the ways in which the collaborative responded to those results.

Collaborative Board Approval and Submission of the Annual Report

The collaborative board must discuss and vote to approve the annual report at an open meeting. Upon approval by the collaborative board and no later than January 1 of each year, the annual report must be submitted to the chair of each member district and the Commissioner. Documentation of the collaborative board's approval in the form of a signed certification from the collaborative board chair or the approved meeting minutes must be filed with the Department.

Please note that January 1st is a statutory deadline and cannot be waived by the Department.

Posting Requirements


Each collaborative must publish the approved annual report (and the annual independent audit) in an accessible format on the collaborative website. M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E, and CMR 603 CMR 50.08(1) anticipate that the required independent audit report and the annual report be presented in conjunction. Please ensure that both of these documents are posted on your website in the same location. If there is a request by the public for a copy of the annual report, the independent audit report must also be provided.

Electronic Submission through the MassEduGateway

All annual reports are to be submitted electronically to the Department via the MassEduGateway **no later than January 1, 2017**, by following these directions:

1. Navigate to the [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) home page.



2. Select the  [MassEdu Gateway](#) icon from the menu on the left of the screen.
3. Enter your user name and password.
4. Select **Application List** from either the menu on the left or the center of the page.
5. Select **Drop Box Central** from the center of the page.
6. Select **Regional Governance** from the Drop Box list.
7. Select the **Next** button below the box.
8. Select **Browse** to find and select the annual report on your computer.
9. Select the **Upload File** button to transmit your document.

If you are unable to access any of these fields, you may not have the necessary security clearance and should contact your collaborative's directory administrator in order to gain access to the portal. Please direct any additional questions to [Michelle Griffin](#), at 781-338-6503 or [Paulajo Gaines](#), at 781-338-6540.