DISTRICT AND SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE GRANT APPLICATION
Instructions for Grant Development and Submission

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**INTRODUCTION**

The District and School Assistance Grant provides districts with funds to build educator capacity in DSAC-served Level 3 and 4 schools. There is a wide array of ways in which educator capacity may be built: strategies that encourage and support meaningful teacher collaboration, develop teacher leadership, build knowledge and skills, support reflective practice. Building these kinds of capacities contributes to an increased sense of shared responsibility and accountability for all students and fosters the development and implementation of intentional instructional practices and assessment practices for improving instruction and supporting all students.

Here are some examples of the strategies DSAC districts have used their grant funds to do this work:

- Provide teachers with time to engage in the curriculum mapping process by providing them with stipends;
- Provide professional development for cohorts of teachers – allowing them to have common learning experiences;
- Train staff in effective data use;
- Purchase materials for book groups focused on school improvement and turnaround;
- Purchase Model Curriculum Unit materials and provide teachers with time to plan for the implementation of ESE MCUs;
- Develop District Determined Measures (DDMs).

The goals and objectives of all of these strategies are to accelerate improvement in teaching, learning, and student achievement.

**THE GRANT PLANNING PROCESS**

District and School Assistance Grants are one of the resources provided to districts through the DSAC system of support. Districts are expected to work collaboratively with their DSAC Regional Assistance Directors and other DSAC team members to develop their plans for using District and School Assistance grant funds.

**How your DSAC team can help.** DSAC Team members are available to act as strategic thought partners as you develop your plans, and assist you with:

- Using data to identify key areas of need;
- Developing plans consistent with identified needs that address district and school improvement goals, District Standards and Indicators, and the Conditions for School Effectiveness, and other ESE initiatives;
- Determining whether professional development providers on ESE approved provider lists offer training relevant to your identified needs;
- Creating effective plans for monitoring implementation;
- Identifying indicators and benchmarks for measuring early indicators of change and short term outcomes;
- Developing plans to collect information on indicators and benchmarks .

DSAC assistance with your grant application will be customized to your specific needs. When your grant proposal is fully developed, the DSAC Regional Assistance Director will notify ESE of support for your completed grant application process.
Participating in Regional Priority Projects. Each DSAC region has identified one or more priority projects for that region. Regional projects are described in the following appendices to this RFP, with instructions for accessing funds for participation following the descriptions:

**Greater Boston:** 323_220_Appendix B -Greater Boston DSAC 2014-2015 Regional Projects  
**Southeast:** 323_220_Appendix C -Southeast DSAC 2014-2015 Regional Projects  
**Berkshires+:** 323_220_Appendix D -Berkshires+ DSAC 2014-2015 Regional Projects  
**Pioneer Valley:** 323_220_Appendix E –Pioneer Valley DSAC 2014-2015 Regional Projects  
**Central:** 323_220_Appendix F -Central DSAC 2014-2015 Regional Projects  
**Northeast:** 323_220_Appendix G -Northeast DSAC 2014-2015 Regional Projects

**GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING YOUR GRANT NARRATIVE: THE PART III: PLANS FOR GRANT FUND USE**

Once your plans for using grant funds are in place, you need to complete the 323_220_Part III_DSAC Grant Narrative Form (the grant narrative) and accompanying budget workbooks. You only need to submit ONE Part III Narrative form even though you may be submitting up to 3 budget workbooks.

What we are for looking for in this part of your district’s grant application is evidence that you:

- used a reflective, evidence-based process to identify and prioritize needs;
- developed thoughtful and reasonable plans for addressing those needs; and
- have specific strategies for monitoring the implementation and outcomes of those plans,

all with an eye towards helping your district and Level 3 and/or Level 4 schools determine whether the activity or strategy: 1) is resulting in the kinds of changes that will lead to the longer-term district and school improvement you expect it to foster, and 2) is a worthwhile investment of your limited resources.

In short, we want to see that you are engaged in an evidence-based cycle of inquiry (aka, a continuous learning cycle) that incorporates the use of **SMART** criteria (i.e., **S**pecific and **S**trategic; **M**easurable; **A**ction Oriented; **R**igorous, **R**ealistic and **R**esults-focused; and **T**imed and **T**racked) to support the process.

**Completing the Part III Plan for Grant Fund Use Form**

The Part III: Plan for Grant Fund Use form consists of four sections, each of which is briefly described below:

**Section A. The Collaboration Process and Proposed Activities, Strategies, Initiatives**

**Section B. Grant Narrative Detail**

**Section C. Professional Development Assurances Statement**

**Section D. District Contact Information**

**Section A. The Collaboration Process and Proposed Activities, Strategies, Initiatives**

Section A asks for the following two pieces of information:

1. A brief description of the collaboration process you engaged in with your DSAC team to develop your grant proposal. (No more than 2-3 sentences);
2. A numbered list of the activities, strategies and initiatives that you propose to support with your District and School Assistance Grant.
Section B. Grant Narrative Detail

Section B is the heart of your grant proposal. This is where you will provide details for the activity (or activities) you propose to support with your district grant allocation. Please provide a separate narrative for each activity, initiative or strategy listed in Section A. 2.

The narrative should include information on the following key topics, each of which is briefly described below.

**Topic 1. A brief description of the activity, strategy, or initiative.**
Describe how the activity targets and will lead to transformation in the core instructional practices that are used in every classroom and instructional setting in order to accelerate improvements in teaching, learning, and student achievement. Include a description of the nuts and bolts of the activity you are proposing, focusing primarily on answering the following questions:

- What will educators be doing and learning while engaged in this activity
- Who will be involved (Teachers? Administrators?) How many people will be involved? Which Level 3 and 4 schools will be involved?
- Who will lead/facilitate the activity? What are their qualifications?
- When does the activity begin? When will it be completed?
- What resources are needed? How much will it cost?

**Topic 2. Your rationale for selecting this activity, strategy, or initiative.**
Explain to us why you chose this particular piece of work to support, including information about the evidence and process you used to select it and how it connects to and supports existing school and district improvement plans designed to support your Level 3 and 4 schools.

**Topic 3. Anticipated changes.**
Provide clear, specific examples of the changes you expect to see in educators and/or the products/tools you expect to see developed as a direct result of this activity, strategy, or initiative. Stated another way: How will you know that this activity is been successful? (Note: We are looking for early indicators of change here. Improved MCAS scores are a longer-term change, and are NOT what we are looking for here).

Explain how these early indicators of change (e.g., changes in actions, discourse, expectations, instructional practices or products developed) will directly support and lead to changes in practice at the classroom level (i.e., the intermediate/short term outcomes that will ultimately have a positive effect on student learning and student achievement).

Be sure to articulate clear measures of implementation, early evidence of change benchmarks, short-term outcomes and final outcomes.

**Topic 4. Monitoring implementation and assessing change.** Describe your plans to assess whether any products or learning from the activity, strategy, or initiative are:
a) of high quality and/or are being implemented with fidelity, and
b) leading to the anticipated changes you articulated in Topic 3

Be sure to include information about:

- The types of evidence you will be collecting;
- How that information will be collected and analyzed and by whom;
- Who is ultimately responsible for this process.

NOTE: While your DSAC team members may follow up with you to offer support in the monitoring and assessment process to help you reflect upon the information you collect, ESE does not plan to collect these data for accountability purposes.

**Guidelines for Selecting Professional Development**

**PD Selection and Enrollment Process for FY2014-2015:** Districts may select professional development opportunities based on various data sources such as MCAS performance and Educator Evaluation findings. Focused professional development for cohorts of teachers (e.g., whole school, grade level, content specific) aligned with school improvement goals is more beneficial than more individual isolated implementation. Districts may choose to purchase in-district professional development with DSAC grant funds, or with sufficient regional consensus across districts, may participate in collaborative professional development opportunities across their regions.

This blend of opportunities is designed to provide adequate access to professional development for districts of varying size with varying professional development needs and the flexibility to customize it to their own needs.

Regional course offerings will be selected through consultation between districts and DSAC teams. DSAC professional development coordinators will coordinate interest in specific professional development opportunities in their respective regions.

Note that districts will pay vendors directly for all professional development, including both in-district courses and seats in regional courses.

The process for selecting, enrolling in and paying for PD is described below.

**Instructions for Selecting, Enrolling in and Paying for PD**

I. **Course Selection**

1. In consultation with your DSAC team, identify one or more courses in which the district wishes to enroll educators and determine whether to support the course in-district, enroll participants in pre-scheduled regional or statewide offerings, or combine the two approaches. Course information available on the [DSAC website](#) may assist you in your selections. (Note that PD providers, including district staff providing PD, must be qualified through one of the means described below.)

2. Identify a district contact person who will work with the DSAC PD Coordinator to arrange registration for courses, and provide the name and contact information for that staff member in Part III, Plan for District and School Assistance Grant Fund Use.

   **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Districts planning to participate in school-year activities or courses must submit proposals at least **four weeks before planned expenditures**.

3. Vendor Costs should be detailed on the Contractual Services line (i.e., Line Item 5) under Consultants on the Budget Summary page of the budget workbook. Your district will pay the vendor directly for any regional courses.
Because regional courses involve a number of districts and complicated logistics, it is necessary for funding commitments to be definite so that all participating districts and the vendor can plan with certainty. It is expected that work orders established for regional PD are binding, even in situations where all purchased seats are not able to be filled.

4. Costs for stipends, substitutes, materials and other related expenses for in-district courses that the grant will cover should be detailed in the Budget Summary.

5. The DSAC Professional Development Coordinator for your DSAC region will work with the district contact person identified in Part III, Plan for District and School Assistance Grant Fund Use, to collect the names and contact information for educators who will be participating in each course.

II. PD Provider Approval

All professional development funded through DSAC Grants must meet the ESE Professional Development Standards [http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.html). Any activity that issues professional development points (PDPs) is considered professional development. Ensuring that PD providers meet the PD Standards may be accomplished by:

1. Selecting pre-qualified professional development opportunities from the DSAC PD menu [http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/dsac/pd/default.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/dsac/pd/default.html).

2. Selecting PD providers who are enrolled in the ESE PDP Provider Registry. (Enrollment in the revised PDP Provider Registry is ongoing. To check the status of a PD Provider, send an email request to DSACPD@doe.mass.edu).


4. Instructing your selected PD Provider to complete the ESE Professional Development Self-Assessment for each proposed course. The self assessment can be completed online at this location. A Word version of the self assessment and the self-assessment guide is available on the DSAC web page of the ESE website at [http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/dsac/pd/default.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/dsac/pd/default.html). Further information can be obtained by contacting Abigail Slayton Aslayton@doe.mass.edu (781) 338-3517.

- Note that when any item is assigned the highest score of the self-assessment rubric then evidence must be provided to substantiate that score.
  - As noted in the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Professional Development Self-Assessment Guidebook, evidence may include course or session goals, learning objectives, agendas, evaluations or pre-assessments, slides, action plans, purchasing policies, syllabi, learning activities, resources, facilitator qualifications, assessments and reports.

Section C. Professional Development Assurances Statement

Submitting the DSAC application confirms your district’s commitment to meeting the Massachusetts Standards of Professional Development in the planning and implementation of all proposed professional development. It also reflects your district’s agreement to the Professional Development Assurances Statement printed on the Part III form that you submit. Districts should review the ESE Standards for Professional Development and read this assurance carefully before submitting your grant application.
**D. District Contacts**

Our DSAC Professional Development Coordinators work closely with DSAC PD providers and districts contacts to determine which courses will run regionally and to handle logistics and collect data for both regional and in-district courses. This section asks you to list the name and contact information for the primary contact for planning and organizing your district's participation in DSAC professional development.
Submit your Part III: Plan for District and School Assistance Grant Fund Use Form to the Regional Assistance Director for your DSAC region.

Once you have completed the Part III narrative, submit an electronic copy of the form, along with your 220-E and 323-B budget workbooks to Regional Assistance Director for your district’s DSAC region. The Regional Assistance Director will review the plan to ensure that it reflects the plan agreed upon during the collaboration process. If it differs substantially from the plan originally agreed upon during the collaboration process, the DSAC Regional Assistance Director may contact the district for further information and, if necessary, ask for a revised plan.

The DSAC Regional Assistance Director will send your district an e-mail indicating the Plan for District and School Assistance Grant Fund Use has been approved. The DSAC Regional Assistance Director will also send a copy of the Part III form, along with a copy of the approval e-mail, to ESE’s Regional System of Support. This completes the process for submitting Part III of your grant proposal.

NOTE: ESE’s Regional System of Support must receive copies of your Plan for District and School Assistance Grant Fund Use and the consultation email from your DSAC Regional Assistance Director in order for your grant application to be considered complete.

Amendments
If any future amendments to the grant are necessary, contact Karen Johnston kjohnston@doe.mass.edu for an amendment-ready copy of your budget workbook. Apply for the amendment by completing the Amendment worksheet in the budget workbook and updating the Budget Summary. Amendments must be completed within 30 days of the expiration of funds.

Amendment Deadlines:
- 220-E School Year amendments to use funds in Summer: May 31, 2015
- 220-E Summer: July 31, 2015
- 323-B: July 31, 2015

DSAC Grant Final Report

DSAC grantees are expected to submit a final report of no more than three pages using the DSAC Final Grant Final Report Template in Appendix H by September 30, 2015, one month after the end of the grant funding period. The DSAC Final Grant Report is designed to provide the Regional System of Support office with a snapshot of how your grant was used, any successes and challenges in implementing the grant as planned, reasons for any changes, and your plans for supporting ongoing work to monitor, deepen and sustain the learning associated with grant activities. We use the information to help improve the DSAC grant process. The report is also shared with your DSAC Regional Assistance Director, who may contact you to discuss possible follow up support, if that seems appropriate.
### DSAC Grant Narrative Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section A: The Collaboration Process and Proposed Activities, Strategies, Initiatives</th>
<th>0 - No Evidence</th>
<th>1 - Needs Improvement</th>
<th>2 - Satisfactory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The narrative describes minimal engagement between the district and the DSAC team during the grant planning process.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The narrative provides a clear indication of how the district/school worked with the DSAC staff to develop its plan for using grant funds</td>
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#### Section B, Topic 1: Description of the activity, strategy, initiative

**What will you do with the funds from your DSAC grant?**

**What?**

**Who?**

**How many?**

**When?**

**Description of the activity**

- There is insufficient explanation of how the activity will build educator capacity.
- It is not clear what educators will be doing and/or learning.
- The timeline for activities is missing or incomplete.
- The timeline falls outside of the funding period of the grant.
- The narrative includes insufficient detail on how DSAC funds will be used to support the activity.
- It is not evident whether, how, or which Level 3 and 4 schools will substantially benefit from the activity.

**Participant information**:

- Time commitments of educators is not detailed.
- It is not clear who will be engaged in the activity and/or how many educators will be involved.

**PD Provider/facilitator information**

- Information about facilitators or trainers is missing or incomplete.
- Details of expenses are missing or incomplete.
- PD Provider approval is missing or provider is not approved.

**Description of the activity**

- There is a clear and cogent description of how the activity will build educator capacity.
- The description includes an explanation of how the activity targets and will lead to improvements in core instructional practices benefitting students.
- It is clear what educators will be doing and/or learning while engaged in the activity.
- The timeframe for the activity falls within the grant timeline.
- The narrative details how DSAC funds support the activity (e.g., stipends, contractors).
- The activity will clearly benefit Level 3 and 4 schools and which schools, in particular, will benefit.

**Participant information**:

- Time commitments of involved educators are provided.
- The narrative clearly indicates who will be engaged in the activity and how many educators will be involved.

**PD Provider/facilitator information**:

- Provides the name and qualifications of trainers/facilitators are clearly described.
- Indicates that trainers/facilitators are approved through one of the processes outlined in Instructions for Grant Development:
  - Pre-qualified DSAC PD list
  - Approved ESE PDP provider
  - Approved ESE Priority Partner
  - Completed HQ PD Self-Assessment
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topic 2: Rationale for selecting this activity, strategy or initiative</th>
<th>Rationale for choosing activity:</th>
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</table>
| **Why did you choose this activity, strategy, initiative?** | • It is not clear why this activity was selected  
• It is not clear what needs are being addressed by this activity  
• Connections between the activity and strategic goals are not clear  
• Connections to the Conditions for School Effectiveness are not evident  
• A through-line to the classroom is not described or is incomplete  
• Information and evidence that informed selection of the activity are not described  
• The process for reflecting upon information is not described  
• It is not clear why this activity was selected as the highest priority for use of DSAC Grant funds  
• It is not clear that the activity is part of a high-leverage turnaround strategy |
| | **Use of supporting evidence.** The narrative describes: |
| | • the information and evidence the district used to identify and select this particular activity  
• the process the district used to analyze and reflect upon this information and who was involved |

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<tr>
<th>Topic 3: Anticipated Changes</th>
<th>Indicators of change</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **How will you know the activity has been successful?** | • Expected changes in educator behaviors or products are not clearly described  
• Identified outcomes are long-range (e.g., MCAS), not short term or intermediate  
• It is not clear that (or how) expected changes from this activity will produce meaningful change in the classroom  
• Success criteria for the activity are not clearly described |
| **Note: ESE will not be collecting benchmark data. Benchmarks are for the purpose of tracking implementation and ensuring successful implementation of activities.** | **Indicators of change** |
| | • The narrative describes the changes you are expecting to see in educators and/or the products/tools you expect to see developed as a direct result of this activity, strategy, or initiative.  
• The narrative explains how these early indicators of change (e.g., changes in actions, discourse, expectations, instructional practices or products developed) will support and lead to changes in practice at the classroom level (i.e., the intermediate/short term outcomes that will ultimately have a positive effect on student learning).  
• The narrative provides specific information about the early indicator(s) of change that the district expects to see as a direct result of this activity. For instance:  
  o changes in educator knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, instructional practices, beliefs |
Topic 4: Monitoring implementation and assessing change

Note: ESE will not require data collected during the monitoring process to be reported. Monitoring is for the purpose of tracking implementation, not for district accountability.

<table>
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<th>Monitoring process</th>
<th>Monitoring process</th>
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<tr>
<td>A plan to monitor the quality and fidelity of the activity is missing or incomplete</td>
<td>The narrative describes plans to monitor implementation and assess whether any products or learning from the activity, strategy, or initiative are:</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is not clear how evidence will be collected, or by whom</td>
<td>o of high quality and/or are being implemented with fidelity and</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMART criteria are not evident in the plan to monitor the activity</td>
<td>o leading to the anticipated changes described in topic 3.</td>
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<td>A timeline for collecting information is missing or incomplete</td>
<td>The information provided in the narrative reflects that the district is using SMART criteria (i.e., Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic and Results-focused; and Timed?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A process for feedback and reflection is missing or incomplete</td>
<td>The narrative includes information about the specific indicators and/or evidence (qualitative and/or quantitative) that will be used in this work, and how that information will be collected and analyzed.</td>
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<td>The narrative describes how the district intends to measure and assess changes in educator practice described in Topic 3</td>
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<td>Plans for monitoring implementation and assessing change are appropriate to the scope and scale of the activity</td>
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