**Massachusetts Focus Academy Course Offerings**

Schools and/or districts have the opportunity to apply for a cohort of educators to participate in one or more of the following courses:

* [**Assessment of Students with Disabilities Who are English Language Learners**](http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/mtss/assessment-ell.pdf)  **I.** This practical course is designed to provide educators with essential competencies in assessment for eligibility of students with disabilities or exhibit indicators of disabilities who are also English language learners. Special attention is given to what is additional and or different from assessing English speakers with disabilities in four areas: linguistic, cultural, legal & research. A process for distinguishing between second language indicators and learning disabilities is studied and selected assessments tools are examined and used with this school age population. Non-discriminatory report writing is emphasized as well as strategies in addressing the over identification and disproportionality of students who are ELL in special education. Course taught by faculty from Lesley University.
* [**Assessment of Students with Disabilities Who are English Language Learners**](http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/mtss/assessment-ell.pdf)  **II**: **Case Study Approach.** This course is designed to provide educators with advanced knowledge and skills related to integrating linguistic, cultural, and research factors into required assessment practice in the school or district. A problem-solving ‘case study based approach’ with action planning and implementation will be used throughout the course. The cases addressed are a combination of what participant’s experience and bring from their school district with the ones selected for the overall course outcomes. Participants will learn strategies for ‘teaching’ this content to others with the primary goal of addressing the over identification and disproportionality of students who are ELL in special education beginning with appropriate assessment procedures which require different things when compared with English speaking peers with disabilities. Course taught by faculty from Lesley University.
* [**Collaborative Co-teaching: Meeting the Needs of All Students:**  This course will provide educators with competencies that enable them to work effectively to design and implement collaborative, co-teaching approaches, and to facilitate the delivery of research-based instruction to all students in the inclusive classroom. Participants will review appropriate assessments for both instructional and non-academic needs of students. Course taught by instructors from Collaborative for Educational Services.](http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/mtss/cct-inclusive-classrooms-syllabus.docx)
* [**Differentiated Instruction**: This course is designed to provide educators the skills to design learning environments that meet the needs of diverse learners including those with disabilities, who are English language learners, and from poverty within a tiered system of support. Participants will learn the instructional practices that address the learning needs of all students, including students with high-incidence disabilities. Course taught by instructors from Ribas Associates.](http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/mtss/differentiated-instruction-syllabus.docx)
* [**Partnering with Families of Middle and High School Students with Disabilities:** This course is designed to enhance educators’ knowledge of family engagement and the skills required to develop collaborative partnerships with families of middle and high school students with disabilities. When we speak of achieving “success,” we encompass not only the end goal of postsecondary transition for students with disabilities, which is to prepare them for further education, employment, independent living, and community participation, but also the process goal of creating optimal conditions of communication and trust so that professionals, students and families can work together effectively. This course will focus on family engagement, models of partnership, the requirements of the law, research findings, effective communication, understanding and working with families, including issues specific to family systems, cultural competence, adolescents, transition and post-secondary options. As a final project, course candidates will create their own plan to achieve family-professional partnership and family engagement in their school or district. Course taught by instructors from Federation for Children with Special Needs.](http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/mtss/partnering-middle-high-school-syllabus.docx)
* **[Partnering with Families of Preschool and Elementary School Students with Disabilities:](http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/mtss/partnering-preschool-elementary-syllabus.docx)** [The purpose of this course is to equip educators with the knowledge and skills required to develop and strengthen collaborative partnerships with families of pre-school and elementary students with disabilities.  When we speak of strengthening partnerships, we mean the process goal of creating optimal conditions of communication and trust so that professionals and families can work together effectively.  This course will focus on models of family engagement, requirements of educational law, research findings, effective communication, and understanding and working with families, including issues specific to early childhood, transitions, family systems, and cultural competence.  As a final project, course candidates will create their own action plans for enhancing family-professional partnerships with their own schools and districts. Course taught by instructors from Federation for Children with Special Needs.](http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/mtss/partnering-preschool-elementary-syllabus.docx)

* **Engaging All Learners: An Introduction to Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** The ultimate goal for education is for students to become motivated, resourceful, and strategic in pursuit of rigorous learning goals. Based in the brain science of learning, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) offers a framework to design proactively for all learners in tier one classrooms, including diversity of race, socioeconomic, gender, culture, and learning skills. In this introductory UDL course, participants will explore the UDL framework, including focus on the Engagement, Perception, and Executive Function networks of the brain, and innovate practical strategies to maximize learning. Course taught by instructors from CAST.
* **Creating and Sustaining Positive School-Wide Learning Environments:** This course is designed to provide educators with the skills and knowledge to design and sustain positive, school-wide learning environments within a tiered system of supports. Participants will review the research regarding the interaction between behavior and learning, and learn successful models of primary, secondary and tertiary supports and interventions.  Course taught by instructors from Fitchburg State University.