Group 1
Priority 3: Special Education Paraprofessional Professional Development

Background
This grant has been developed to improve educator practice and outcomes for students with disabilities by generating professional development activities that are in alignment with state, district, school and/or educator goals and priorities, including educator evaluation.

With the articulated priority of Results-Driven Accountability by the Federal Office of Special Education Programs, one of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (ESE) goals is to improve educator effectiveness. The successful outcomes of students with disabilities correlate strongly with the competency of the personnel working directly with them. Special education and general education teachers have overall responsibility for creating a successful learning environment, including instruction that challenges and meets the needs of all learners. As noted in Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2014-3: Identifying the Need for Paraprofessional Support, special education paraprofessionals often provide individual and direct assistance to students with disabilities. Paraprofessionals must receive high quality training that will prepare them to work in tandem with special education and general education teachers to provide effective evidence-based instruction and services to students with disabilities. Additionally, it is important to support their acquired knowledge and skills with high quality supervision.

Description
Professional development activities funded under this priority will advance improved outcomes for students with disabilities by supporting special education paraprofessional growth in knowledge and skills. Topics for evidence-based PD may include:

- Orientation – Role Clarification
- Characteristics of Learners (Disabilities)
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Instructional Content and Practice
- Supporting the Teaching and Learning Environment
- Facilitating Positive Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills
- Communication and Collaborative Partnerships
- Professionalism and Ethical Practices

Examples of Possible Activities
Activities for evidence-based PD (conducted before, during, and/or after school hours) may include, but are not limited to:

- Paraprofessional mentoring and on the job training
- Teacher/paraprofessional training
- Teacher/paraprofessional orientation handbook development
- Workshops
- Classes
- Consultative Services
- Other PD activities related to this priority

Note: 274 funds should not be expended solely for the creation of products such as handbooks, curricula, etc. These PD funds must be used for activities that clearly align with the Massachusetts Standards for High Quality Professional Development.

Demonstration of Proficiency
A requirement of high quality PD is that educators apply their learning and demonstrate subsequent proficiency in the relevant subject area. The proposal for PD activity(ies) funded under this grant program must include a description of the evaluation process that will be used, i.e., how the district will assess and measure the changes in educator knowledge, skills, and/or practices resulting from the proposed PD to ensure that it is meeting the targeted goals relevant to the desired student outcomes.
Educators may demonstrate proficiency in this priority area through means such as:

- Classroom observations
- Paraprofessional surveys
- Teacher/mentor surveys
- Exhibiting student support academically, socially, and/or emotionally
- Sharing knowledge of paraprofessional handbook content
- Exhibiting effective educator collaboration

In order to better disseminate promising practices statewide, ESE may request that districts share information about and outcomes resulting from this PD.

Training and Networking Opportunities
The ESE will offer districts the opportunity to attend one or more statewide training and networking meetings in 2015-2016 related to these priorities. These meetings may include opportunities for focused training and technical assistance, collaboration, and the sharing of best practices in this priority area and the others identified in the RFP. More information about these meetings will be announced in the fall of 2015.

OVERVIEW OF FUND CODE 274 NARRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Professional Development Assurances Statement

A. Overview: Please select one of the following FY2016 priorities. All professional development (PD) in this application must align with the selected priority below.
   1. Which priority will the proposed PD address?
   2. Choose the topic(s) that best aligns with the proposed professional development.

B. Propose the activity(ies) to be funded through the 274 grant:
   1. Identify and briefly describe the proposed PD activity(ies).
   2. Identify the goal(s) and objective(s) for the proposed PD.

   Note: Goal(s)/objective(s) must target improvement in educator practice and demonstrate a relationship to student outcomes. For the priority selected, the proposal must identify one SMART Goal for student learning outcomes and one for educator learning outcomes. If more than one activity is intended to be funded under this priority, outcomes must be aligned as described in the SMART Goals.
   a. SMART Goal – Learning outcomes for students with disabilities
      (Smart Goal Definition: Specific and strategic; measurable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, results-focused; timed/tracked)
   b. SMART Goal – Learning outcomes for Educators
      (Smart Goal Definition: Specific and strategic; measurable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, results-focused; timed/tracked)
   c. Does the proposed PD support any state, district, school, and/or educator goals or priorities? Please Explain.

3. For each activity, provide a proposed timeline, including the number of contact hours and the name(s) of provider(s).

   Note: If you are proposing individualized, rather than school or district-wide PD and have yet to identify a provider(s), please describe the type of provider you will be seeking and how you will ensure that the selected professional development will be aligned with the above priority and contribute to district professional development goals.

4. Describe the job embedded activities or plans for participants to apply their learning to the particular content and/or context.

5. Identify the professional role(s) of targeted participants
   - District Level Administrators
   - Special Education Teachers
   - Principals
   - Parents
   - Teachers
   - Paraprofessionals
   - Related Service Providers
C. Data-based Rationale for PD Activities:
   1. What data did you analyze that led you to this proposed PD?
      - IDEA Part B State Performance Indicator Data
      - IDEA Part B Determination Level Data
      - Performance Data
      - MCAS Results
      - Teacher Surveys
      - Conditions for School Effectiveness Data
      - School Safety Discipline Report
      - Other____________________

   2. Based on the data you analyzed, what is the rationale for the proposed PD?

D. Outcomes and Evaluation: How will you assess and measure the changes in educator knowledge, skills, and/or practices resulting from the proposed PD to ensure that it is meeting the targeted goals relevant to the desired student outcomes?