District Capacity Project

Evaluation Report

Findings from two years of program implementation

Prepared for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

December 5, 2014

Contents

[Executive Summary i](#_Toc405541152)

[Introduction i](#_Toc405541153)

[Program Implementation i](#_Toc405541154)

[Program Impact iii](#_Toc405541155)

[Introduction 1](#_Toc405541156)

[Program Overview 1](#_Toc405541157)

[External Evaluation 2](#_Toc405541158)

[Program Implementation 3](#_Toc405541159)

[District Teams and Projects 3](#_Toc405541160)

[DCP Facilitators 6](#_Toc405541161)

[Statewide Capacity Institutes 8](#_Toc405541162)

[Labor-Management-Community Collaboration Toolkit 8](#_Toc405541163)

[Common Challenges 9](#_Toc405541164)

[Program Impact 11](#_Toc405541165)

[Impact on DCP Teams 11](#_Toc405541166)

[Impact on Districts 12](#_Toc405541167)

[Conclusion 16](#_Toc405541168)

[Appendix A: DCP Theory of Change 17](#_Toc405541169)

[Appendix B: Survey Results 18](#_Toc405541170)

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

In fall 2012, the newly established Massachusetts Education Partnership (MEP) launched the District Capacity Project (DCP), a two-year initiative to accelerate the efforts of school districts to raise student achievement through the development and strategic use of collaborative skills, practices, and policies in the area of labor-management relations. The program articulates its theory of change as follows:

“When labor and management leaders collaborate on strategies for improving teaching and learning, they strengthen relationships, build trust and improve the quality of their practice, creating the conditions needed for sustained educator and student success.”

In its first two years, seven districts actively participated in DCP – Berkshire Hills, Boylston Elementary, Brockton, Fall River, Leominster, Malden and Springfield. Through the project, teams consisting of labor and management representatives worked collaboratively to address specific projects focused on the development of practices, structures, and policies that impact student achievement and well-being. Teams equally represented labor and management and included the superintendent, union president, a school committee member, teachers, and administrators. Participating district teams each received up to 100 hours of support from a skilled facilitator. Teams and facilitators met regularly (typically monthly) throughout the two-year engagement. In addition, teams were required to participate in project-wide Capacity Institutes that provided intensive training, team planning and networking opportunities.

Program funding was provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) through its federal Race to the Top award, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the NEA Foundation, and participating districts through required contributions. Ongoing management of DCP is provided by the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy. While some of the program funding is directed to cover program administrative staff and their activities, the Rennie Center also provides in-kind support, including ongoing attention from its executive director, and contributions of expertise and resources to promote the initiative.

In January 2013, ESE contracted with the UMass Donahue Institute to conduct a mixed-methods evaluation of DCP. The primary purpose of the evaluation was to provide formative feedback to inform the development, implementation, and sustainability of the project. This report presents findings from the first two years of program implementation in relation to program implementation and early impact.

## Program Implementation

**District Teams**

Overall, DCP teams have embraced the initiative and made notable progress in relation to their identified projects, which address a range of topics from issues such as culture and relationships, to more defined initiatives such as designing district professional development plans, creating new professional positions, and establishing a new school. Many are working to share their collaborative practice more broadly within their districts. The full report provides brief summaries of district projects and their implementation status as of June 2014.

**DCP Facilitators**

In many ways the crux of the DCP intervention is the support that the facilitators provide to each of the district teams. Facilitators make extensive use of interest-based practices, team-building skills, and collaborative approaches to guide DCP teams in execution of a jointly developed work plan. DCP facilitators’ support has been highly customized to the specific needs of each team.

Survey data reveal that DCP team members highly value the support provided by their facilitators. All respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their facilitator. Similarly, the vast majority of respondents (97%) said that their facilitator’s experience and skills matched the needs of the district. Finally, the vast majority agreed that their facilitator had strong overall knowledge of K–12 education issues (100%), provided helpful insight or feedback (100%), effectively promoted collaboration among the members of the DCP team (98%), effectively supported implementation of the team’s work plan (98%), and supported team building within the district (96%).

The DCP facilitators meet periodically as a Community of Practice to address administrative issues, share district updates, and support each other. Although perhaps not originally envisioned as such, the facilitator group has been instrumental in shaping the nature of the program, including planning for statewide Capacity Institutes, designing the project’s approach for Years 2 and 3, and planning to expand the number of participating districts. Through observation of their meetings, it is clear that each facilitator is highly committed to the project and motivated to provide exceptional support to the teams participating in the project.

**Statewide Capacity Institutes**

Statewide Capacity Institutes are a key element of the DCP project design. The project has identified three overarching goals for each of these meetings: (1) networking and relationship building among districts; (2) professional development, including leadership development by all districts; and (3) providing “team time” for planning work within district teams. While it was challenging to be away from the district to participate in Capacity Institutes, all survey respondents reported that the institutes were of value. In particular respondents cited the opportunity to share with teams from other districts and time set aside to work with their own teams.

**Labor-Management-Community Collaboration Toolkit**

One requirement of the funding agreement with ESE was that DCP would develop a program curriculum. During the project’s first year, the DCP leadership struggled to conceptualize what a curriculum would look like in a program with such a high level of district customization. During this time period, DCP accomplished a lot of preliminary work by creating or identifying useful training materials, but did not attempt to develop a coherent curriculum with defined scope and sequence. Early in Year 2, the Rennie Center identified an expert consultant to lead the curriculum development component of the project. With agreement from ESE, the deliverable changed from a formal curriculum to a toolkit for educators, with resources and guidance related to core activities focused on improving labor-management collaboration. The toolkit provides background on labor-management collaboration in K-12 contexts, strategies for enhancing collaboration, and real world examples of effective collaboration. It also includes an extensive list of available tools, trainings, and resources.

## Program Impact

In its first two years of operation, DCP has been successful in building a strong foundation for collaboration within DCP teams. Several teams persisted with the program despite external challenges such as difficult negotiations, leadership transitions, and divergent views on critical issues. Several teams came through these periods of difficulty and delay – often referred to by the DCP staff as “bumps in the road” – with increased levels of trust, as DCP helped them to get better at engaging constructively with conflict. Furthermore, the projects undertaken by DCP teams enabled most of them to establish new practices and structures for doing their work, with the intent to positively impact student learning and achievement.

DCP explicitly requires that district teams tackle projects with direct linkages to student achievement, and each of the seven teams did so, across a wide spectrum of subjects and approaches. DCP project leadership asserts, however, that there are two key measures of DCP’s success: a) whether teams identify and complete a particular project with some degree of impact on student achievement, and b) whether they have improved working relationships and developed strong collaborative processes in a way that will allow them to be successful, both with DCP and future projects. From DCP’s perspective, the push to change the way leaders work – and thus change the culture and practice of districts, buildings, and classrooms – should be front and center.

Additionally, in many participating districts collaborative practices are making their way into the district and its schools. Most notably, a**s a direct outgrowth of DCP, four of the seven districts participated in interest-based bargaining training through the Massachusetts Education Partnership, and/or began using interest-based practices as they engaged in contract negotiations. In this way, the first two years of DCP have demonstrated that using non-contractual issues as an opportunity to practice labor-management collaboration can prompt the stakeholders to transfer those skills to collective bargaining, adopting a more collaborative approach.**

Reflecting on changes since the start of DCP, labor and management participants responding to the survey overwhelming report that:

* Collective bargaining, which was once viewed as an obstacle to achieving improvements in educational outcomes, has become an effective means for improvement.
* They are substantially more confident that the state of labor management relations in their districts is sufficient to address the need for performance improvement in education.
* The day-to-day relationship between the superintendent and local union leaders is more collaborative and less adversarial, as are relationships between teachers and school administrators.
* School personnel are more involved in making decisions about school operations, and in developing strategies to improve school performance, and they are more frequently encouraged to share their opinions of school programs and practices.

The value that participating district administrators, school committees, and union leadership place on the support provided by DCP is clearly demonstrated in the decision of five of the seven original districts to make a significant financial contribution ($15,000) that will enable the work to continue for a third year. DCP leadership is clear in its resolve to help the five “Year 3” districts make more explicit linkages between DCP work and student achievement. Another challenge will be helping those districts to establish the structures and support that will allow collaboration to persist in the long term. Impact on student achievement and sustainability will be key areas of focus for continuing program evaluation work.

As this report is being finalized, DCP leaders are in the process of engaging a new cohort of districts to enter the program in 2014-2015. Those districts will benefit from the lessons learned by the first cohort. DCP participants, leadership and facilitators have a better understanding of how to use DCP resources to develop and work with labor-management teams. Together, they are making meaningful progress on the DCP’s twin purposes: 1) to enable districts, schools and teams to build cultures of collaboration *and* 2) to make progress on specific projects that affect student learning.

# Introduction

## Program Overview

In fall 2012, the newly established Massachusetts Education Partnership (MEP) launched the District Capacity Project (DCP), a two-year initiative to accelerate the efforts of school districts to raise student achievement through the development and strategic use of collaborative skills, practices, and policies in the area of labor-management relations. MEP was formed with the goal of improving student achievement and success through collaborative labor-management relations in school districts across the Commonwealth. The partners are the American Federation of Teachers – Massachusetts, Collins Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston, Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy at Northeastern University, Institute for Work and Employment Research at the MIT Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, Massachusetts Teachers Association, and Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy

Along with the New Superintendents Induction Program and the District Governance Support Project, DCP is a key component of collaborative efforts within the state to establish effective educational governance and leadership, and thus strengthen district capacity to improve schools and positively impact student achievement. DCP contributes to these efforts by working with a diversity of leaders within districts to develop and use collaborative skills, practices, and policies to improve labor-management relations.

The program articulates its theory of change[[1]](#footnote-1) as follows:

“When labor and management leaders collaborate on strategies for improving teaching and learning they strengthen relationships, build trust, and improve the quality of their practice, creating the conditions needed for sustained educator and student success.”

DCP’s overarching goals are to

* Accelerate student performance through effective labor-management practices;
* Increase engagement and leadership in school/district governance practice, and effectiveness;
* Improve school and district-wide culture among teachers, administrators, and members of the community; and
* Improve and sustain a system of supports for effective labor-management practices.

The objectives for Year 1 were to build a strong foundation for collaboration within DCP teams as well as to develop and implement work plans for identified DCP projects. Year 2 objectives were to increase the focus on student achievement, foster more team-driven work that promoted independence from DCP facilitators, and expand collaborative practice from its central office into school buildings and classrooms.

In its first two years, seven districts actively participated in DCP. Through the project, teams consisting of labor and management representatives worked collaboratively to address specific projects focused on the development of practices, structures, and policies that impact student achievement and well-being. Teams equally represented labor and management and included the superintendent, union president, a school committee member, teachers, and administrators. Participating district teams each received up to 100 hours of support from a skilled facilitator. Teams and facilitators met regularly (typically monthly) throughout the two-year engagement. In addition, teams were required to participate in project-wide Capacity Institutes[[2]](#footnote-2) that provided intensive training and networking opportunities.

Program funding was provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) through its federal Race to the Top award, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the NEA Foundation, and participating districts through required contributions. Ongoing management of DCP is provided by the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy. While some of the program funding is directed to cover program administrative staff and their activities, the Rennie Center also provides in-kind support, including ongoing attention from its executive director, and contributions of expertise and resources to promote the initiative.

## External Evaluation

In January 2013, ESE contracted with the UMass Donahue Institute to conduct a mixed-methods evaluation of DCP. The primary purpose of the evaluation is to provide formative feedback to inform the development, implementation, and sustainability of the project. Key data sources for the evaluation include

* A review of extensive program documentation including district work plans, meeting notes, facilitator reports, and quarterly project reports submitted to ESE;
* Informal observation of facilitators meetings, district team meetings, and project-wide Capacity Institutes, as well as ongoing consultation and discussion with DCP project directors;
* Focus groups with DCP facilitators (November 2013 and June 2014); and
* Two web-based surveys of district team members. An initial survey was administered in April 2013 and a follow-up survey in May 2014 as the second year of DCP drew to a close. In addition to selected references in the report narrative, responses to the May 2014 survey are provided in Appendix B.

This report presents findings from the first two years of program implementation in relation to program implementation and its early impacts. UMDI and the Rennie Center are in the process of contracting directly to continue the program evaluation in Year 3 and beyond.

# Program Implementation

## District Teams and Projects

**Recruitment**

The DCP application process took place in August and September of 2012. The project invited proposals from 95 districts meeting one or more of the following criteria: districts in Gateway Cities, Urban Superintendent Network districts with fewer than 30,000 students, districts participating in the New Superintendent Induction Program or the District Governance Support Project, or districts that had attended a national labor-management meeting sponsored by the US Department of Education. Invitations were sent to both management and labor representatives from each of the eligible districts and there were two informational webinars for those who were interested in learning more about the program. Four key state associations (Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, American Federation of Teachers – Massachusetts, Massachusetts Teachers Association) played important roles in disseminating invitations and making introductions that facilitated the staff’s follow-up through email, phone, or in-person conversations, involving at least 40 of the 95 districts.

Despite this extensive outreach, proposals were received from only eight districts[[3]](#footnote-3)—Berkshire Hills Regional, Boylston Elementary, Brockton, Fall River, Leominster, Malden, Springfield and Swampscott. In its first quarterly report to ESE, DCP acknowledged this disappointing response rate and cited several key factors based on feedback from eligible districts. Perhaps most obviously, the timing of the application process was problematic, given that districts were extremely busy starting a new school year. Furthermore, many districts were discouraged by the time demands of the project as articulated in the recruitment materials, including monthly team meetings and multiple days off site over the course of the two-year engagement. Finally, many districts noted the challenge of recruiting teams of labor, district administration, and school committee representation who were prepared to work collaboratively. In October 2012, DCP notified all eight applicant districts that they had been selected to participate in the program. However, Swampscott withdrew from the project shortly thereafter, apparently due to conflicts among the required team members.

In March 2013, having been encouraged by multiple MEP leaders and participants, Lowell expressed an interest in joining the project. A small delegation attended the June 2013 Capacity Institute followed by a delegation of 12 attending the September 2013 Capacity Institute. With support from a DCP facilitator, the Lowell team identified a DCP project: developing a fifth year of high school. The team faced significant internal challenges, however, and it was not able to gain the traction around their project that was necessary to further its participation. Lowell formally withdrew from DCP in October, with district leaders expressing an interest in a possible future return.

During the project’s first two years, several other districts actively considered participation at their own expense, though ultimately none of them chose to fully engage with the project. Although the evaluator does not have direct feedback from those districts, it seems likely that the limiting factors were budgetary considerations, time limitations, competing priorities, and the challenge of assembling the required labor-management team.

**Team Composition**

As described in the introduction, DCP teams are required to equally represent labor and management and include the superintendent, union president, a school committee member, teachers and administrators. Some teams also include other stakeholders, for instance community members and union field representatives. Over time, several teams have expanded their membership while maintaining a balance between labor and management representatives.

May 2014 survey data indicate that DCP team members were quite satisfied that their teams included the individuals needed to advance the districts’ efforts to establish (or improve) cultures of collaboration and make progress on their identified projects. Suggestions for improving team composition related to expanding the teams to include additional members, particularly ensuring staff representation across educational levels (elementary, middle, and high school) and/or including educators from additional school buildings.

Reflecting on team composition during their June 2014 focus group, the DCP facilitators engaged in an extended discussion about the value of union field representative engagement as a member of the team. In general, field rep involvement was considered a real benefit—particularly in the interest of having collaborative practice carry over to the bargaining table. Several facilitators advocated for making the field rep one of the required team members (along with the superintendent, local union president, and a school committee representative). In the end, the group agreed that DCP should strongly recommend including the union field rep on the DCP team, but agreed that it should remain a local decision, as the nature of the relationship between the district and union field rep varies from district to district.

Another facilitator stressed the importance of helping team leaders determine how to select the most effective members of their teams—both as they are initially getting organized and when an existing team is considering expanding. The facilitator noted the importance of selecting teachers who bring strong relationships with their colleagues and/or the ability to contribute additional perspective to the team discussions. It seems logical that the same would also be true of other team members, be they school committee representatives, additional administrators, or community representatives. In addition to active consultation by the facilitator, DCP staff should consider developing guidance about what qualities to look for in prospective DCP team members.

**District Projects**

Overall, DCP teams have embraced the initiative and made notable progress in relation to their identified projects, which address a range of topics from issues such as culture and relationships, to more defined initiatives such as designing district professional development plans, creating new professional positions, and establishing a new school. Many are working to share their collaborative practice more broadly within their districts. The following are brief summaries of the projects and their implementation status as of June 2014, in each the seven districts. It is noteworthy that five teams have committed to continuing with DCP for a third year, at a considerable expense to the district.[[4]](#footnote-4)

*Berkshire Hills* focused on developing district-wide supports to cultivate a culture of collaboration within teams in order to increase their effectiveness in promoting student growth. After conducting research about effective team-building strategies, including a study of the needs of 37 existing teams within the district, the team designed and produced a toolkit to support effective teaming. The toolkit includes guidelines, diagnostics, rubrics and norms for building and maintaining effective teams.

*Boylston Elementary* developed a comprehensive and sustainable professional development plan that was approved by the school committee in May. As part of its efforts to develop that plan through an effective collaborative process, the team engaged DCP Content Expert John D’Auria. Together they worked to foster a constructive professional environment by improving communication, particularly as relates to having “difficult conversations” and creating a sustainable professional learning community (PLC). The district is now considering participation in MEP’s Interest-Based Bargaining training.

*Brockton* is planning for a new three-strand language immersion school with the mission of integrating the diverse languages and cultures of the city. The school would provide instruction in English as well as in Portuguese, French, and Spanish. As part of its efforts the team conducted site visits to other bilingual programs in the region and conducted “market research” through surveys and community meetings, reaching 2600 families. During Year 2 they made a formal presentation to the school committee, began planning the program model and structure for the new school, and considered facility needs and options. Although the district is facing a significant budget crisis, it does appear likely that they will be able to continue this work and engagement with DCP for a third year, with a September 2016 targeted opening date for the new school.

*Fall River* is supporting and further developing professional learning communities in every school in the district, with the goal of encouraging shared decision making and risk taking among staff. As part of this effort, the team developed and administered a district-wide faculty survey, achieving a 75% response rate and generating useful information for consideration in developing PLCs. This survey informed a subsequent district-wide professional development day co-led by the Center for Collaborative Education. The session, which involved 150 educators, focused on PLCs and collaboration. The district is currently working to integrate PLCs in the instructional leadership teams of each school.

*Leominster* worked collaboratively to develop a new teacher leader program, which created additional work time and compensation to allow selected highly effective teachers to support their colleagues through professional development, mentoring, curriculum development, and special projects.[[5]](#footnote-5) In May 2013 the team’s proposal was adopted by both the union and school committee. The team was able to secure $70,000 in district funding to support seven teacher leader positions in the 2013–2014 school year and the superintendent received school committee approval, as well as additional funding, to expand the program to ten positions in the 2014–2015 school year.

In Year 2, the Leominster team was successful in proposing a redesigned school calendar based on feedback from a district-wide teacher survey. The changes, which are taking effect in the 2014–2015 school year, include providing common planning time during the school day for pre-K and Kindergarten teachers. The team also focused on establishing a structure to ensure that the use of interest-based practices will become standard practice for decision making throughout the district. Their approach will lead to the selection of school-based facilitators and a series of additional interest-based practices training for educators across the district in the 2014–2015 school year.

*Malden* has been focusing on supporting student achievement by building a culture of dialogue among all educators and stakeholders. During the first year of DCP participation, the district held two “Days of Learning” aimed at sharing the skills and tools needed to foster the desired culture. One key aspect of this is working to support development of that culture within the Linden STEAM Academy[[6]](#footnote-6)—an Innovation School serving students in grades K–8—and to share that school’s work with the rest of the district. In an effort to build the capacity of the district to engage many additional people in the work to transform district culture, the team organized four full days of intensive leadership development for 18 educators representing all schools in the district. After the training, the DCP team expanded to include those individuals, providing a structure to develop DCP work plans for each school. The team also designed and administered a survey of school climate across the district, which attained a 70% response rate. School-based teams will use the survey data to inform plans for DCP Year 3.

*Springfield* is working on developing staff capacity to “turn difficult conversations into learning.” Through DCP, they have engaged John D’Auria of Teachers21 who is widely acknowledged as an expert consultant and trainer on this topic. The district has valued the work so highly that it significantly expanded the membership of its DCP team to include principals and leaders of the administrators’ union, bringing the team up to 12 members. Furthermore, the district and labor union jointly committed up to $30,000 to support expansion of professional development related to the “difficult conversation” work, allowing the active participation of six school-based teams in Year 2. The DCP team also added a second goal of ensuring successful implementation of the Springfield Effective Educator Development System (SEEDS) the district’s new educator evaluation system, through active monitoring, critique and improvement efforts. As the school year ended, the team made a commitment to engage in up to 12 hours of intensive meetings in July and August to identify, articulate, and adopt a set of improvements to SEEDS, vowing to make these changes, orient all staff to them during summer PD sessions, and implement them in September, 2014.

## DCP Facilitators

In many ways the crux of the DCP intervention is the support that the facilitators provide to each of the district teams. Facilitators make extensive use of interest-based practices, team-building skills, and collaborative approaches to guide DCP teams in execution of a jointly developed work plan. DCP facilitators’ support has been highly customized to the specific needs of each team.

Facilitator recruitment was a key activity in the project start-up period. The DCP leadership worked with the MEP board to identify individuals who met the following criteria:

* Skilled at intensive facilitation and support of collaborative teams
* Specialist in effective collaborative practice
* Skilled user of interest-based processes
* Deeply knowledgeable about public schools and systems
* Able to help teams identify shared interests, understand and address conflicts, listen to and address particular concerns or ideas, and keep teams focused as they frame and pursue their work
* Able to ensure quality and continuity of meeting work, foster strong relationship building, and document progress

Staff then engaged in an intensive process to identify, contact, interview and vet prospective facilitators. After discussions with 12 candidates, 7 were asked to join the DCP project as facilitators. In the second quarterly report to ESE, the project directors described each as follows:

* Andrew Bundy (supporting Springfield)—a long-time strategic planning expert with extensive experience as the facilitator of labor-management collaborations to close achievement gaps.
* Carol Doherty (supporting Boylston Elementary)—a former teacher, president of the MTA, long-time university administrator, and current school committee member
* Lainy Fersh (supporting Fall River)—a skilled facilitator of public-private collaborations in the K-12 and community sectors.
* Tim Fitzgerald (supporting Leominster)—a former labor leader with more than 15 years of experience as a neutral facilitator of labor-management collaboration using the interested-based process.
* Mel Myler (supporting Malden)—a long time labor leader and trainer at the local, state, and national level.
* Mary Ellen Shea (supporting Berkshire Hills)—a professional arbitrator with extensive experience in the state’s public schools.
* Ray Shurtleff (supporting Brockton)—a leading HR professional with 40 years of experience in Massachusetts school systems and experience as a K-12 labor-management coach.

Survey data reveal that DCP teams highly value the support provided by their facilitators. All respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their facilitator. Similarly, the vast majority of respondents (97%) said that their facilitator’s experience and skills matched the needs of the district. Finally, the vast majority agreed that their facilitator had strong overall knowledge of K-12 education issues (100%), provided helpful insight or feedback (100%), effectively promoted collaboration among the members of the DCP team (98%), effectively supported implementation of the team’s work plan (98%), and supported team building within the district (96%).

**Content Experts**

As originally conceptualized, each DCP team was to be assigned two facilitators – one with a focus on process and the other on content. In the early stages of implementation, however, project staff determined that teams were most in need of process support and that content facilitation would be most effectively engaged once the process work was well underway. Thus use of content experts was rather limited in DCP Year 1, but as teams progressed with implementation of their work plans in Year 2, they engaged content experts more to help achieve their goals.

Five of the seven districts engaged content experts. Berkshire Hills took advantage of an online course focused on PLCs. Boylston and Springfield worked on “difficult conversations” with John D’Auria of Teachers21. Brockton used DCP and district funding to send team members to the National Association for Bilingual Education conference. Fall River used a combination of DCP and district funding to engage the Center for Collaborative Education to provide district-wide professional development related to PLCs. All survey respondents indicated that the content expert’s expertise and experience were matched to their team’s needs.

**Community of Practice**

The DCP facilitators meet periodically[[7]](#footnote-7) as a Community of Practice to address administrative issues, share district updates, and support each other. Although perhaps not originally envisioned as such, the facilitator group has been instrumental in shaping the nature of the program, including planning for statewide Capacity Institutes, designing the project’s approach for Years 2 and 3, and planning to expand the number of participating districts. Through observation of their meetings, it is clear that each facilitator is highly committed to the project and motivated to provide exceptional support to all of the teams participating in the project.

## Statewide Capacity Institutes

Statewide Capacity Institutes are a key element of the DCP project design. The project has identified three overarching goals for each of these meetings: (1) networking and relationship building among districts; (2) professional development, including leadership development by all districts; and (3) providing “team time” for planning work within district teams. DCP held two Capacity Institutes during Year 1 and three during Year 2. While many DCP team members reported that they found it challenging to be away from their district for Capacity Institutes, all survey respondents reported that the institutes were of value. In particular respondents cited the opportunity to share with teams from other districts and time set aside to work with their own teams.

## Labor-Management-Community Collaboration Toolkit

One requirement of the funding agreement with ESE was that DCP would develop a program curriculum. During the project’s first year, the DCP leadership struggled to conceptualize what a curriculum would look like in a program with such a high level of district customization. During this time period, DCP accomplished a lot of preliminary work by creating or identifying useful training materials, but did not develop a coherent curriculum with defined scope and sequence. In the June 2013 quarterly report, the DCP co-directors identified the following challenges in their curriculum development efforts:

* Difficulty defining “core concepts” around which to build a formal curriculum for labor management leaders.
* Potential for duplication of effort with national initiatives developing related curricula.
* Time constraints and the benefits of learning by doing. Should limited DCP time be spent delivering curriculum or actively helping leaders collaborate on projects that will change educational practice?

Early in Year 2, the Rennie Center identified an expert consultant, Geoff Marietta of Harvard’s Public Education Leadership Project, to lead the curriculum development component of the project. With agreement from ESE, the deliverable changed from a formal curriculum to a toolkit with resources and guidance related to core activities focused on improving labor-management collaboration. The toolkit provides background on collaboration within the labor-management community, strategies for enhancing the community’s collaboration, and real world examples of effective community collaboration. It also includes an extensive list of available tools, trainings, and resources.

## Common Challenges

There are four fairly common challenges that have arisen with multiple teams. The first is the need to ensure team effectiveness. In Year One, teams hit a variety of snags that impeded progress. In response, DCP set out program-wide guidelines and practices to help teams function most effectively. Since the core intervention of DCP is the use of a structured, facilitated labor-management team, DCP staff used the Year Two work plan requirements to challenge teams to address three potentially problematic areas of team practice:

* *Communications:* To maintain collaborative relationships and continue to move forward with team work plans, each team was asked to develop a communication plan for routinely relaying the substance of its work throughout the district, so that its work would be widely known and understood, and so that it would not have to “renegotiate” the details each time it needed to go back to its wider constituencies (union leadership, school committee, central office staff, etc.).
* *Calendaring:* Several teams had struggled with protecting their team meeting times. DCP required that teams articulate their meeting dates for the entire year, to reduce scheduling and productivity issues, and protect the time needed for the project.
* *Ground rules/norms:* Teams varied a lot in the degree to which they articulated how they intended to work with one another. DCP challenged all teams to define their ground rules/norms, so that all teams have norms of their own making, and abide by them in their dealings with one another. One new norm requirement was that teams establish a policy that no team member could leave the team without first explaining to his or her reason for departing.

The second challenge is continuing to move the DCP work forward despite inevitable changes in team membership, particularly when those changes involve the superintendent, union leadership, or school committee representation. The DCP leadership feels strongly that one of its most significant accomplishments was its ability to maintain work with districts that went through periods of leadership change, including Berkshire Hills (abrupt departure of a team member over a decision-making conflict), Brockton (new superintendent), Boylston (new school committee leadership), and Fall River (new union leadership). In addition, several teams deliberately grew in size, in response to program development and changes in strategy. Such expansions were uniformly successful.

Third, more than one team felt the impact of labor-management issues external to DCP, Several districts faced serious budget challenges in 2014; several entered into collective bargaining during the 2012-14 period; and all struggled with the implementation of multiple externally imposed programs and policies. In nearly all cases, DCP teams have managed to persevere with only minimal disruptions to the process. The exception was Boylston where those issues led to a prolonged break from the work in Year 1. Clearly the project’s first priority is to keep those external issues from derailing progress on DCP work plans. However, as the project leaders and facilitators have already identified, it will also be important to develop protocols for discontinuing DCP support when it is no longer possible to make sufficient progress on the identified work plan. It is hoped that doing so will allow DCP to effectively redeploy resources either among existing districts or to provide support to additional districts.

Finally, there is a persistent issue of capacity: the sheer amount of work to be accomplished by DCP teams and their members can exceed the available capacity to get things done. In order to make progress it is important for teams to determine how their ideas will be implemented. While individual team members can take on components of the work, DCP work will not be sustainable if those responsibilities come in addition to already demanding full time jobs. Often, neither labor nor management feels that they have enough time to do this work. Many teams have experienced uneven levels of engagement from the central office and union leaders of this work. Those individuals are routinely pulled, sometimes quite abruptly and with great urgency – away from the DCP table.

Unfortunately, the resource constraints in most districts will not allow for commitment of significant additional resources to support implementation of DCP projects. As such, the program’s challenge is to effect change with a limited range of time, access and opportunity. DCP staff believes that the most effective strategy is integrating implementation of DCP projects into the districts’ ongoing work such that stakeholders see DCP as a new and better way to address their most pressing challenges. In the words of project co-director Andrew Bundy, they are “betting on the capacity of the Labor Management experience – how different it is, how stimulating and rewarding it can be, and how closely aligned it is with a shared, passionate interest of the leaders – to carry the day.”

# Program Impact

## Impact on DCP Teams

Reflecting on themselves as individuals, survey respondents report that the program had positive impacts on their problem-solving approach (93%), way of communicating with others (92%), vision for improving student achievement (87%), and day-to-day practice as an educator (75%).

As noted by team members when asked to share the most useful thing they learned through DCP:

“Plans are essential, but the PROCESS of planning, where ideas are hashed out, is critical.”

“It has been extremely powerful for me to be able to be more open-minded to others’ opinions, and finding positive ways to share my disagreements while still remaining collegial.”

“Having ‘positions’ is not as powerful as surfacing options. In the past the members of this group had positions and spent most of their time at odds. Now they work as one group.”

“To balance inquiry with advocacy, to separate intent from impact, the emotions are data, and that we need to understand that our perspective is just one perspective and might not be the only perspective that makes sense.”

Survey data show that DCP teams have changed over the course of their engagement with the program. At the end of Year 2, 99% of survey respondents described the working relationship among their team members as collaborative compared to 70% at the start of DCP. Furthermore, 90% reported that their DCP team incorporated new ways of working as a team. Respondents rated their monthly team meetings and progress between meetings as more productive than they were at the start.

In the words of a few team members:

“All three components (administration, school committee, teachers) now have a better understanding of the demands placed on each.”

“The team has built a working relationship of trust that comes from action steps that have taken place since the original meetings. We have met the goals set by the team and made great strides toward improving school culture.”

“The team has developed deep listening skills which are vital to successful collaboration.”

“A shared, common vision has allowed members to stick to the agenda of moving schools and the district forward in order to focus on raising student achievement.”

Without exception, DCP facilitators report increased levels of trust and engagement among DCP team members with particularly noteworthy examples in a few districts as described below:

* In *Fall River* the superintendent signaled a strong commitment by including the team’s work on PLCs among the professional practice goals for her performance evaluation. This contributed to better engagement among all team members.
* *Berkshire Hills* benefitted from its rather deliberate, process-oriented approach to DCP work in the first year. By Year 2, the team had developed enough trust among its members that they no longer need to process everything as a large group, but could divide the work among individuals and/or small teams, review and discuss resulting drafts, and then finalize their plans. This has allowed them to increase the pace of progress on the substance of their DCP project. Furthermore, the superintendent was very clear that he wanted the team members to be independent and bring their own ideas to the table. This provided psychological and political safety leading to more open and honest communication among members of the team.
* After a four-month hiatus from the project due to protracted and difficult contract negotiations, the team from *Boylston* renewed its commitment to DCP and their identified project, the development of a three-year professional development plan. Upon their return to DCP, the team’s facilitator noted that there was significantly more exchange and dialogue among members, including a willingness to challenge ideas and offer alternatives.

In reflecting on persistence and engagement across district teams, project co-director Andrew Bundy made a strong case that in nearly all instances, a team’s “survival” of difficulties (challenging negotiations, leadership transitions, resource constraints, strong disagreements about program and policy, etc.) has actually led to increased levels of trust. He cited DCP’s focus on building district capacity to effectively communicate and collaborate as helping team members get better at managing conflict, learning from it, and becoming more effective as a result of engaging constructively with that conflict. It should be noted that effective collaboration does not imply the absence of conflict. As effectively articulated in the following quote from the project’s January 2014 quarterly report:

“Effective organizational learning work and systems improvement work are often rooted in conflict, in making sense of significant differences of perspective, and in the challenge of building trust while staying true to one’s values and beliefs.”

## Impact on Districts

**Strong Focus on Broader Dissemination of Collaborative Practice**

Six of the seven districts explicitly engaged in some effort to involve a wider group in the culture of collaboration. Some common approaches included adding members to DCP teams and/or working to disseminate collaborative practice more broadly within the district.

* Through its DCP project, the *Berkshire Hills* team worked to develop more collaborative approaches in PLCs and other existing teams throughout the district.
* The DCP team in *Boylston* was enlarged to include a senior curriculum leader and an additional union representative. The full faculty and staff of the district met with content expert John D’Auria to engage in a district exchange about improving outcomes for students.
* *Fall River* added a second school committee member and sponsored a large (150-person) professional development session for instructional leadership teams from all schools and members of the high school faculty senate. The purpose of the session was to introduce a new approach to PLCs. The team sees implementation of a PLC approach within each school as the primary way to spread labor management collaboration and improve teaching practice.
* In addition to adding a principal to its membership (a role not previously represented), the *Leominster* DCP team worked to spread its own interest-based practice more widely in the district. The district’s DCP work plan for Year 2 focused on developing an approach for selecting school-based facilitators and a series of additional trainings.
* *Malden* launched an ambitious effort using a “train-the-trainer” model to develop skills in the district-wide leadership of “communities of dialog.” Through this effort, 18 people—including two leaders from each of four schools and ten teachers—completed four full days of intensive leadership development. In addition, district and labor leaders came together in an effort to use interest-based bargaining approaches in their contract negotiation process, and worked with an MEP interest-based bargaining facilitator. Both the superintendent and union leadership cited this as a direct outgrowth of their DCP participation.
* After enlarging its team to include principals and labor leaders at the middle level of central office, *Springfield* chose six schools and several other district teams to join the intensive work on turning hard conversations into learning and improved student outcomes. It also engaged in a systematic critical review of the educator evaluation system in the district, and expanded its work to include more than 200 educators in Year 2.

Overall, survey respondents reported that compared to how things were before DCP,

* DCP educators are substantially more confident that the state of labor management relations in their districts is sufficient to address the need for performance improvement in education.
* The day-to-day relationship between the superintendent and local union leaders is more collaborative and less adversarial, as are relationships between teachers and school administrators.
* School personnel are more involved in decisions about school operations, developing strategies to improve school performance, and encouraged to share opinions of school programs and practices.

**Adoption of Collaborative Approaches to Contract Negotiations**

**As a direct outgrowth of DCP, several districts participated in interest-based bargaining training and/or began using interest-based practices as they engaged in contract negotiations.**[[8]](#footnote-8) **This demonstrates that using non-contractual issues as an opportunity to practice labor-management collaboration can prompt the stakeholders to transfer to those skills to a more collaborative approach to collective bargaining. A strong example of this is Fall River, where the DCP facilitator offered the following observation:**

**“The team has reflected on the broader impact that working collaboratively through the DCP has had on the relationship between the administration, the Fall River Education Association, and school committee. Their new contract was bargained quickly (over a few meetings) as opposed to the last contract bargaining process that took in excess of a year. The number of grievances being filed has decreased, and the resolution of existing grievances has been expedited. The team feels strongly that modeling this collaboration at the district level is encouraging more positive collaboration at the school level.”**[[9]](#footnote-9)

**Reflecting back to how things were before DCP, 56% of survey respondents indicated that collective bargaining had been an obstacle to achieving improvements in educational outcomes in their district. This is in stark contrast to their perspective at the end of DCP Year 2 with only 14% characterizing collective bargaining as a minor obstacle and nearly a third describing it as a significant means for improvement.**

**Making the Link to Student Achievement**

As noted in discussion of dissemination of collaborative practice, in many DCP districts the work in DCP’s second year shifted from a somewhat centralized focus to more engagement at the school level. Yet, it is challenging to *directly* and *concretely* link the DCP work of many district teams to the ultimate long-term goal of improving student achievement. Most teams engaged in process-oriented work that focused on improving collaboration relative to projects that have the *potential* to set the stage for improving student achievement, but there is a continuum in terms of how directly the work will impact students in their classrooms.

* *Brockton*, which is planning for a new three-strand bilingual school, is directly focused on student achievement. The team is effectively implementing its work plan, but is less explicitly working to improve collaboration among labor and management stakeholders in ways that seem to be central to the work of other teams. It does seem that the team came into DCP with good relationships and a collaborative orientation and there appears to be overall general agreement on their objective and approach.
* *Leominster*’s Year 1 project—creation of new teacher leader positions referenced above—was similarly concrete and student learning-focused. The individuals filling those positions worked with other teachers and educators on projects in the areas of District-Determined Measures (part of the new educator evaluation system) as well as curriculum-related work in English language arts, mathematics, and STEM. The goal is to promote continuous improvement for educators and schools by having teacher leaders work with their teacher peers on in-class activity, professional development, mentoring, curriculum development and special projects. Leominster’s Year 2 work—disseminating interest-based practice to schools throughout the district and establishing a district-wide calendar—was much more process oriented.
* *Berkshire Hills* linked its “effective teaming” project to the goal of aligning its curriculum to the Common Core standards, which will then presumably drive student achievement. The team intends to use student achievement indicators to highlight teaming practices correlated with closing achievement gaps.
* *Boylston*’s project of developing a three-year professional development plan focused on building a tiered system of support. The team was very clear about integrating explicit classroom connections into the plan and monitoring whether they are put into practice. This holds the potential to impact student achievement if an effective plan is developed *and* implemented.
* One key component of *Springfield*’s “difficult conversations” work is improving implementation of the district’s educator evaluation and development system (known as SEEDS) with the ultimate goal of increasing educator effectiveness and thus student learning outcomes. This represents a shift in focus from learning skills in DCP Year 1 to applying skills in context in Year 2.
* *Fall River* sees its work on embedding an effective PLC approach district-wide as central to both improving the working environment for teachers and improving student achievement. The PLC work does not have a specific district-wide content area focus, but allows individual schools and the teams within them to determine what initiatives to pursue.
* *Malden*’s project is focused on establishing a “culture of dialogue” throughout the district, applying this work with fidelity in all schools, and supporting the development of the district’s STEAM Academy, which is an Innovation School. The team has met with considerably more success in engaging people in training and reflection, and reports less momentum on its work with the school.

Although part of DCP is an explicit requirement that districts will tackle projects that are ultimately about advancing student achievement, project leadership asserts that the real measure of DCP’s success is not only whether teams identify and complete a particular project that has concrete impact on teaching and learning. DCP is also concerned with whether participating educators have improved their working relationships and developed strong collaborative processes in a way that will allow them to be successful with future projects, and with multiple teams, throughout a district. From this perspective, the push to change the way leaders work and thus change the culture of districts, buildings, and classrooms should be front and center: it is at the core of what DCP does. But this focus on how the work gets done only has value if it has impact on teaching and learning in the district. DCP leaders recognize these two central challenges. The first is to advance the student achievement-focused initiatives of each of the DCP teams, so that they achieve concrete, documented results. The second is to get others (especially current and potential funders and to some extent even DCP team leaders) to see DCP teams’ skill-building, leadership development, and process-focused work as the essential pathway to their successful completion of these concrete and consequential teaching and learning projects. Year 3 will serve as a particularly pivotal period in the maturation of these two aligned purposes of DCP.

# Conclusion

In its first two years of operation, DCP has been successful in building a strong foundation for collaboration within DCP teams. Several teams persisted with the program despite external challenges such as difficult negotiations, leadership transitions, strong differences in judgment, and resource constraints. Many came through with increased levels of trust, as DCP helped them to get better at engaging constructively with conflict. The projects undertaken by DCP teams hold the potential to establish and institutionalize new programs, practices, structures and policies that can positively impact student learning and achievement.

Additionally, in many participating districts collaborative practices are making their way more broadly into the district and its schools. Most notably, a**s a direct outgrowth of DCP, several districts participated in interest-based bargaining training and/or began using interest-based practices as they engaged in contract negotiations. This demonstrates that using non-contractual issues as an opportunity to practice labor-management collaboration can prompt the stakeholders to transfer those skills to a more collaborative approach to collective bargaining.**

Reflecting on changes since the start of DCP, survey respondents overwhelming report that:

* Collective bargaining, which was viewed as an obstacle to achieving improvements in educational outcomes, has become an effective means for improvement.
* They are substantially more confident that the state of labor management relations in their districts is sufficient to address the need for performance improvement in education.
* The day-to-day relationship between the superintendent and local union leaders is more collaborative and less adversarial, as are relationships between teachers and school administrators.
* School personnel are more involved in making decisions about school operations, and in developing strategies to improve school performance, and they are more frequently encouraged to share their opinions of school programs and practices.

The value that participating district administrators, school committees, and union leadership place on the support provided by DCP is clearly demonstrated in the decision of five of the seven original districts to make a significant financial contribution ($15,000 each) to enable the work to continue for a third year. DCP leadership is clear in its resolve to help Year 3 districts make more concrete in their focus on student achievement. Another challenge will be helping those districts to establish the structures and support that will allow collaboration to persist in the long term. Impact on student achievement and sustainability will be key areas of focus for continuing program evaluation work.

As this report is being finalized, DCP leadership is in the process of engaging a new cohort of districts to enter the program in 2014-2015. Those districts will benefit from the lessons learned from working with the first cohort. DCP leadership and facilitators have a better understanding of how to use DCP resources to build, develop, and work with labor-management teams to build a culture of collaboration *and* make progress on projects that can advance student achievement.

# Appendix A: DCP Theory of Change

* Teachers and administrators lead system changes
* Long-term teaming leads to organizational structures, daily collaborative practices, and sustainable policies
* High-trust adult learning cultures support student-centered learning and innovation
* Teachers and administrators share accountability for the success of every student
* Participants learn to speak up, balance advocacy with inquiry, have difficult conversations, experiment, and apply lessons learned
* Quality of decision-making, shared ownership of new initiatives, and fidelity of implementation all increase
* High performing teams increase in number, and become powerful agents of improvement and change in schools and system-wide
* Superintendent, Union President, and School Committee leader form team
* Team strengthens capacity to collaborate with support from skilled, outside facilitator
* Team co-creates and pursues DCP work plan linked to greater student learning and success
* Team networks with other DCP district teams and experts to build skills and support change

# Appendix B: Survey Results

This appendix provides response frequencies for closed-ended items from the June 2014 DCP Team Survey.

1. Which of the following best describes your role in the district?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Response | % |
| Administrator | 26 | 43% |
| Teacher | 21 | 35% |
| School Committee member | 3 | 5% |
| Union/Community Representative | 9 | 15% |
| Paraprofessional | 1 | 2% |
| Total | 60 | 100% |

2. To what extent do you agree that your DCP team included the individuals needed to advance your district's efforts to?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total Responses |
| Establish (or improve) a culture of collaboration | 48% | 52% | 0% | 0% | 61 |
| Make progress on your identified DCP project | 41% | 53% | 7% | 0% | 59 |

4. Overall, how would you describe the working relationship among members of your DCP team?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Very Collaborative | Somewhat Collaborative | Somewhat Adversarial | Very Adversarial | Total Responses |
| How things were at the start of DCP | 30% | 40% | 22% | 8% | 60 |
| How things are now | 60% | 39% | 2% | 0% | 57 |

5. To what extent has your DCP team incorporated new ways of working as a team?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | Response | % |
| Strong extent | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 17 | 29% |
| Moderate extent | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 36 | 61% |
| Little extent | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 5 | 8% |
| No extent | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 1 | 2% |
| Total |  | 59 | 100% |

7. How would you rate the productivity of your monthly DCP team meetings?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Very Productive | Somewhat Productive | Somewhat Unproductive | Very Unproductive | Total Responses |
| How things were at the start of DCP | 23% | 55% | 20% | 2% | 60 |
| How things are now | 49% | 44% | 7% | 0% | 57 |

8. How would you describe your team's productivity in terms of making progress on tasks between DCP meetings?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Very Productive | Somewhat Productive | Somewhat Unproductive | Very Unproductive | Total Responses |
| How things were at the start of DCP | 17% | 52% | 28% | 3% | 60 |
| How things are now | 31% | 62% | 7% | 0% | 58 |

9. In your opinion, how would you describe your team's progress in relation to its DCP workplan?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | Response | % |
| Largely On Track | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 34 | 58% |
| Somewhat On Track | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 21 | 36% |
| Somewhat Off Track | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 4 | 7% |
| Very Off Track | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 0 | 0% |
| Total |  | 59 | 100% |

10. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your DCP facilitator?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Strongly Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree | Total Responses |
| Has strong overall knowledge of K-12 education issues | 77% | 23% | 0% | 0% | 60 |
| Provides insight or feedback that you find helpful | 73% | 27% | 0% | 0% | 60 |
| Effectively promotes collaboration among the members of your DCP team | 75% | 23% | 2% | 0% | 60 |
| Effectively supports implementation of your team's work plan | 73% | 25% | 0% | 2% | 59 |
| Supports team building within the district | 68% | 28% | 3% | 0% | 60 |

11. How well were your DCP facilitator's experience and skills matched to the needs of your district?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | Response | % |
| Very well matched | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 44 | 75% |
| Somewhat well matched | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 13 | 22% |
| Somewhat mismatched | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 2 | 3% |
| Very mismatched | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 0 | 0% |
| Total |  | 59 | 100% |

12. Overall, how satisfied are you with your team's DCP facilitator?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | Response | % |
| Highly Satisfied | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 43 | 74% |
| Mostly Satisfied | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 15 | 26% |
| Mostly Dissatisfied | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 0 | 0% |
| Highly Dissatisfied | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 0 | 0% |
| Total |  | 58 | 100% |

14. What content expert did your team work with?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Value | Total |
| Center for Collaborative Education | 6 |
| NABE conference | 7 |
| the DuFour online course | 7 |
| John D'Auria | 17 |
| None | 24 |

15. How well were that content facilitator's expertise and experience matched to the needs of your district?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Response | % |
| Very well matched | 18 | 67% |
| Somewhat well matched | 9 | 33% |
| Somewhat mismatched | 0 | 0% |
| Very mismatched | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 27 | 100% |

17. Overall, how much value did you get from the DCP Capacity Institutes?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | Response | % |
| Great value | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 36 | 61% |
| Moderate Value | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 23 | 39% |
| Little or No Value | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 0 | 0% |
| Total |  | 59 | 100% |

19. How would you describe DCP's responsiveness to your district's specific planning and practice needs?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | Response | % |
| Very Responsive | 34 | 57% |
| Somewhat Responsive | 26 | 43% |
| Somewhat Unresponsive | 0 | 0% |
| Very Unresponsive | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 60 | 100% |

21. To what extent has your experience with DCP impacted you as an individual?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Strong Positive Impact | Moderate Positive Impact | Little or No Impact | Moderate Negative Impact | Strong Negative Impact | Total Responses |
| Problem-solving approach | 43% | 50% | 7% | 0% | 0% | 60 |
| Way of communicating with others | 55% | 37% | 8% | 0% | 0% | 60 |
| Day-to-day practice as an educator | 28% | 47% | 25% | 0% | 0% | 57 |
| Vision for improving student achievement | 40% | 47% | 13% | 0% | 0% | 60 |

23. To what extent has the experience with DCP impacted your DCP team?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Strong Positive Impact | Moderate Positive Impact | Little or No Impact | Moderate Negative Impact | Strong Negative Impact | Total Responses |
| Problem-solving approach | 43% | 52% | 5% | 0% | 0% | 60 |
| Way of communicating with others | 50% | 48% | 2% | 0% | 0% | 60 |
| Day-to-day practice as educators | 30% | 48% | 22% | 0% | 0% | 60 |
| Vision for improving student achievement | 37% | 57% | 7% | 0% | 0% | 60 |

24. To what extent has the experience with DCP impacted your district more broadly?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Strong Positive Impact | Moderate Positive Impact | Little or No Impact | Moderate Negative Impact | Strong Negative Impact | Total Responses |
| Problem-solving approach | 28% | 48% | 23% | 0% | 0% | 60 |
| Way of communicating with others | 24% | 56% | 20% | 0% | 0% | 59 |
| Day-to-day practice as educators | 15% | 49% | 36% | 0% | 0% | 59 |
| Vision for improving student achievement | 27% | 50% | 23% | 0% | 0% | 60 |

26. Overall, to what extent has collective bargaining been an obstacle to or a means of achieving improvements in educational outcomes in your district?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Significant Means | Minor Means | Minor Obstacle | Significant Obstacle | Total Responses |
| How things were before DCP | 9% | 35% | 23% | 33% | 57 |
| How things are now | 30% | 56% | 14% | 0% | 57 |

27. How confident are you that the state of labor management relations in your district is sufficient to address the need for performance improvement in education?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Very Confident | Somewhat Confident | Slightly Confident | Not at all Confident | Total Responses |
| How things were before DCP | 9% | 36% | 33% | 22% | 55 |
| How things are now | 22% | 65% | 13% | 0% | 55 |

28. How would you describe the day to day relationships between the superintendent and local union leaders in your district?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Very Collaborative | Somewhat Collaborative | Somewhat Adversarial | Very Adversarial | Total Responses |
| How things were before DCP | 25% | 42% | 25% | 7% | 59 |
| How things are now | 54% | 44% | 2% | 0% | 59 |

29. How would you describe the day to day relationships between teachers and school administrators in your district?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Very Collaborative | Somewhat Collaborative | Somewhat Adversarial | Very Adversarial | Total Responses |
| How things were before DCP | 15% | 49% | 32% | 3% | 59 |
| How things are now | 20% | 64% | 15% | 0% | 59 |

30. How often are school personnel, especially teachers, involved in developing strategies to improve school performance?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never | Total Responses |
| How things were before DCP | 20% | 51% | 24% | 5% | 59 |
| How things are now | 46% | 41% | 14% | 0% | 59 |

31. How often are school personnel, especially teachers, encouraged to share opinions of school programs and practices?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never | Total Responses |
| How things were before DCP | 29% | 49% | 19% | 3% | 59 |
| How things are now | 56% | 32% | 12% | 0% | 59 |

32. How often are school personnel, especially teachers, involved in decisions about school operations?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Frequently | Occasionally | Rarely | Never | Total Responses |
| How things were before DCP | 17% | 44% | 32% | 7% | 59 |
| How things are now | 26% | 55% | 19% | 0% | 58 |

35. How many years have you been employed in the field of education?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Answer | Response | % | | 0-5 years | 3 | 6% | | 6-10 years | 8 | 16% | | 11 or more years | 39 | 78% | | Total | 50 | 100% | | Mean | 20.68 years | | |  |  |

36. What gender do you identify as?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Answer | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | Response | % |
| Male | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 22 | 39% |
| Female | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  |  | | 35 | 61% |
| Total |  | 57 | 100% |

40. Role

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Value | Total |
| Management | 26 |
| Labor | 34 |
| [No Value] | 1 |

1. A graphical representation of the DCP Theory of Change can be found in Appendix A. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. There were two Capacity Institutes (November and June) in Year 1 and three (September, March, and June) in Year 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Coincidentally, the project had been designed to serve eight districts in its first year. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Year 3 districts are each committing $15,000 of the estimated $32,000 program cost. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Leominster was the only DCP district to take on a project that required contract negotiations relatively early in the work—which teams were generally counseled to avoid. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Linden STEAM Academy is a conversion of the pre-existing K–8 Linden School. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Through the middle of Year 2, the facilitator team (referred to internally as a Community of Practice) benefitted from many face-to-face meetings. As support demands from the teams became more intense, it was not possible to bring them together as frequently and several meetings were replaced with conference calls. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. **Those districts included Berkshire Hills, Brockton, Fall River, and Malden. Of the remaining DCP districts, Leominster and Springfield already had strong foundations in interest-based bargaining and Boylston was actively considering pursuing the training.** [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. As quoted in the program’s April 2014 quarterly report [↑](#footnote-ref-9)