

General

Providing professional development activities that improve the knowledge of teachers and principals and, in appropriate cases, paraprofessionals, in:

- a) Content knowledge.
Providing training in one or more of the core academic subjects that the teachers teach;
and
- b) Classroom practices.
Providing training to improve teaching practices and student academic achievement through (a) effective instructional strategies, methods, and skills, and (b) the use of challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards in preparing students for the State assessments.

Big 5

Providing professional development activities that improve the knowledge of teachers and principals and, in appropriate cases, paraprofessionals, regarding effective instructional practices that:

- a) Involve collaborative groups of teachers and administrators;
- b) Address the needs of students with different learning styles, particularly students with disabilities, students with special needs (including students who are gifted and talented), and students with limited English proficiency;
- c) Provide training in improving student behavior in the classroom and identifying early and appropriate interventions to help students with special needs;
- d) Provide training to enable teachers and principals to involve parents in their children's education, especially parents of limited English proficient and immigrant children; and
- e) Provide training on how to use data and assessments to improve classroom practice and student learning.

Parental involvement is best encouraged through regular, two-way, and meaningful communication about student learning and other school activities. Effective strategies may include

- (1) promoting the understanding that parents are true partners in their children's education and communicating the need for parents to help their children succeed in school, and
- (2) providing parents with specific suggestions, on an ongoing basis, about ways to encourage learning at home and ways to be actively involved in their child's education at school.

Increasing Access to Excellent Educators

- Developing and implementing mechanisms to assist schools to effectively recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, principals, and specialists in core academic areas (and other pupil services personnel in special circumstances).
- Developing and implementing strategies and activities to recruit, hire, and retain highly qualified teachers and principals. These strategies may include
 - a) providing monetary incentives such as scholarships, signing bonuses, or differential pay for teachers in academic subjects or schools in which the LEA has shortages;
 - b) reducing class size;
 - c) recruiting teachers to teach special needs children, including students with disabilities, and
 - d) recruiting qualified paraprofessionals and teachers from populations underrepresented in the teaching profession, and providing those paraprofessionals with alternate routes to obtaining teacher certification.
- Developing and implementing initiatives to promote retention of highly qualified teachers and principals, particularly in schools with a high percentage of low-achieving students, including programs that provide teacher mentoring from exemplary teachers and administrators, induction, and support for new teachers and principals during their first three years; and financial incentives to retain teachers and principals with a record of helping students to achieve academic success.
- Carrying out professional development programs that are designed to improve the quality of principals and superintendents, including the development and support of academies to help them become outstanding managers and educational leaders.
- Carrying out programs and activities that are designed to improve the quality of the teaching force, such as innovative professional development programs that focus on technology literacy, tenure reform, testing teachers in the academic subject in which teachers teach, and merit pay programs.
- Hiring highly qualified teachers, including teachers who become highly qualified through State and local alternate routes to certification, and special education teachers, in order to reduce class size, particularly in the early grades.
- Carrying out teacher advancement initiatives that promote professional growth and emphasize multiple career paths (such as paths to becoming a mentor teacher, career teacher, or exemplary teacher) and pay differentiation.