Guiding Questions for Planning Effective Professional Development

Identifying Needs

- What outcomes do we want for our students?
- How are we doing? What is our current level of performance as a school and at each grade level (kindergarten through third grade)?
- How far do we need to go to improve student outcomes and reach our goals in reading?
- What more do we need to do and what instructional adjustments need to be made?
- What instructional areas and grade levels should be targeted by the professional development plan?

Developing a Plan

- How often do teachers participate in professional development designed specifically to address effective reading instruction? Are teachers required to attend? Are there incentives and/or administrative support for attendance?
- Is there a school- or campus-level professional development plan in place that is related specifically to reading? If not, who will be involved in developing a plan?
- What skills/topics will be emphasized during site-based professional development?
- Does the plan reflect a commitment to reading achievement for all students by providing teachers with research-based information on reading instruction?
- Are the selected topics for training aligned with the district's *Reading First* plan and scientifically based reading research?
- Are topics coordinated so that they complement rather than conflict with each other?
- Does the sequence of topics align with the teachers' instructional needs? (e.g., a session on grouping at the beginning of the year aligns with teachers' needs and increases the likelihood that teachers will implement small-group reading instruction)

Adapted from Vacca, J. L., & Mraz, M. (2002). Professional development. In S. B. Wepner, D. S. Strickland, & J. T. Feeley (Eds.), *The administration and supervision of reading programs* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Resources and Logistics

- How much has been budgeted for training? Are there sufficient funds to cover all related expenses (e.g., location, presenters, materials, etc.)?
- How can other stakeholders (e.g., higher education faculty or local business partners) be involved in the implementation of the plan?
- Where and when will the session(s) be held?
- Does the publisher offer pre-packaged training modules or materials?
- What materials are needed? How many are needed?
- How will new or reassigned teachers have access to the information after the training?

Using External Consultants

- How many presenters are needed and how will they be prepared to address site-specific needs?
- Are the presenters qualified to conduct the sessions? Do they have knowledge of *Reading First* goals and SBRR? Have they conducted professional development for similar audiences?

Sustainability

- How often and what type of follow-up (e.g., demonstrations) will be provided?
- Has the coach attended "train the trainer" professional development to build the school's capacity to deliver on-site training?

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