

The District Capacity Project (DCP), an Initiative of the Massachusetts Education Partnership

The District Capacity Project (DCP) builds the capacity of Massachusetts' school districts to drive improvements in student achievement. By learning and mastering effective labor-management collaboration and teaming practices, DCP teams of superintendents, union presidents, school committee members, teachers and administrators work together with DCP facilitators to:

- Co-design and implement initiatives to advance student learning and success;
- Increase teacher engagement in leadership of school and district innovation efforts;
- Improve problem solving, decision making and fidelity of implementation;
- Develop skills, structures, and policies that can sustain collaborative practice over time.

Using collaborative teaming and interest-based practices, each DCP team works to identify reform strategies that address local needs. They draft an MOU that establishes principles for guiding their work; they engage in training sessions focused on relationship-building and collaborative planning; and they develop an agreed upon work plan, timeline, and project goals. Third party facilitators help teams work through difficult issues, while transitioning responsibility for carrying work forward to team members. A priority of this carefully developed teaming process is to ensure DCP teams and projects build capacity.

The DCP operates under the aegis of the Massachusetts Education Partnership (MEP). The MEP is led by the American Federation of Teachers - MA, MA Association of School Committees, MA Association of School Superintendents, and the Massachusetts Teachers Association, along with representatives from four of the Commonwealth's most prominent education research institutions: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University, the University of Massachusetts Boston, and the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, which is DCP's lead agency. The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) is a non-voting MEP board member.

Boston's District Capacity Project Focus and Team

The Boston DCP is a labor-management committee specifically focused on a collaborative process to reform professional development for teachers. This joint committee of BPS labor and management representatives is committed to redesigning professional learning for BPS educators to make it more effective, and more responsive to teachers' needs through collaboration. Boston joined the statewide project in January 2015 with the strong support of the Boston Teachers Union and previous administration. Dr. Chang and members of the District's Executive and Senior Leadership Teams endorsed the District's continued participation in the project, and the current team reflects the commitment of the BTU and the District to work collaboratively to create a more effective professional learning system.

Related planning and implementation of tasks is ongoing, and the team meets monthly to confer about the progress of its work. The team's primary focus over the past six months has been to create a framework/theory of action to articulate the key elements of a newly designed professional learning system. An external consultant, with significant experience in labor-management collaboration, facilitates the work of the team.

Boston's DCP Team includes:

Dr. Tommy Chang, Superintendent
Barbara Deane-Williams, Senior Deputy Superintendent
Caitlin Gaffny, Teacher, Tobin K-8
Christine Landry, Principal Leader
Michael Loconto, Boston School Committee
Chris Marino, Special Projects Director, Office of the Senior Deputy Superintendent
Kimvy Nguyen, Teacher, Higginson Lewis School
Emily Qazilbash, Assistant Superintendent of Human Capital
Monica Roberts, Assistant Superintendent of Engagement
Andrew Rollins, Principal, Mildred Avenue School
Jacob Stern, Office of Data and Accountability
Richard Stutman, President, Boston Teachers Union
Doannie Tran, Assistant Superintendent, Professional Learning
Paul Tritter, Director of Professional Learning, Boston Teachers Union
Shakera Walker, Director of Teacher Development, Office of Human Capital
Melissa Wender, Teacher, Jeremiah Burke High School

Elaine Fersh, Boston DCP Facilitator