



Regional Teacher Development Centers: A Plan to Promote Teacher Quality and Address Maine's Teacher Shortages

Maine's Education Crisis

- Our schools are struggling with a lack of fully prepared classroom teachers, especially in the subject areas of math, science, modern languages, and special education.
- Because of those conditions, this year Maine schools have over 1,800 classroom teachers who hold only "conditional certification." Those individuals lack the required professional credentials and preparation for full "permanent" certification.
- University courses leading to certification, both in pedagogy and content disciplines, are not readily available to conditionally certified teachers, particularly in rural areas.
- Many teachers, in the early years of their careers, lack mentors and others to help them adjust to their new profession. As a result, they frequently experience frustration and failure. High numbers of new teachers decide to leave the profession, worsening teacher shortages and affecting the quality of the educational experience of their students.
- No adequate mechanism or structure exists within Maine to meet the need for individual teacher development in every region of the state.

The Case for New Approaches

- The Maine Legislature is considering a proposal to streamline the process that allows college-educated individuals to change careers and enter teaching.
- Research documents a strong correlation between student achievement and the number of teachers with a Master's degree. The University of Maine System is committed to providing teachers with broader, statewide access to graduate-level education, but needs additional resources to do so.
- More of Maine's teachers would undertake the rigorous candidacy process for the prestigious National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification if more local and regional supports were put in place to assist them through the process.
- A number of already-funded multi-year, statewide initiatives

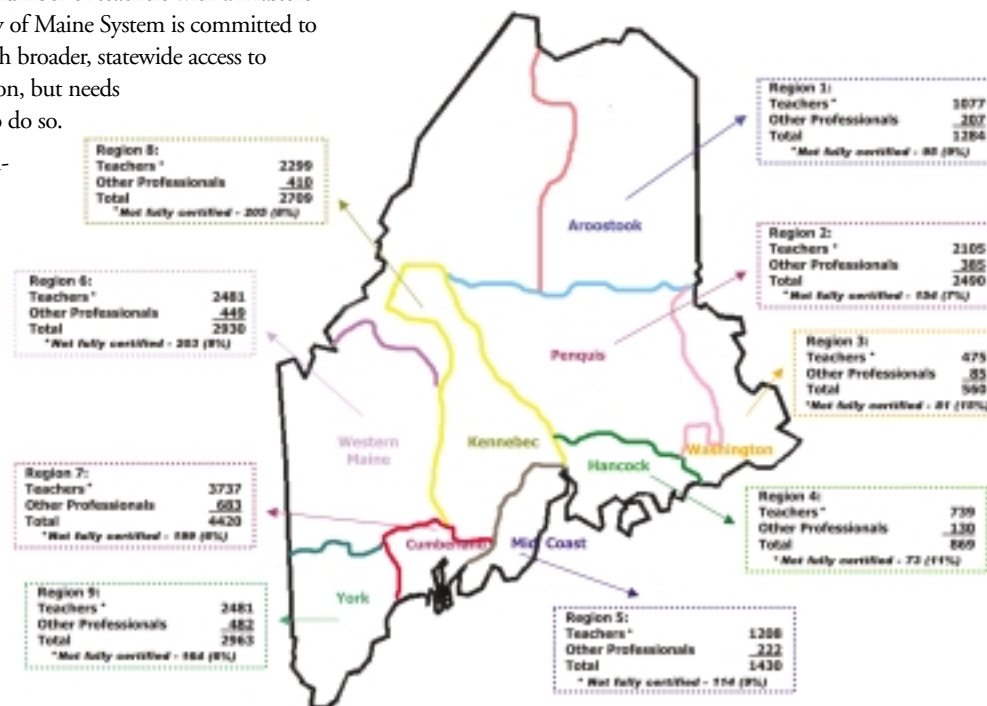
are underway in Maine, such as a Gates Foundation high school reform project, an NSF Maine Math and Science Teacher Education Collaborative, a Center for Research in Math and Science Education, the Maine Learning Technology Initiative, and a federally sponsored Transition to Teaching project. Coordinating these activities, locally and regionally, can assist in matching professional development opportunities with the most pressing needs.

Regional Teacher Development Centers

How the RTDCs Would Work

- University of Maine System campuses, the state's school superintendents and the schools they represent, and the Maine Department of Education would create eight teacher development centers throughout the state. The RTDCs would ask each of the existing regional school superintendents groups to create a board of directors that will oversee the center in their respective regions. (See Figure 1)
- The RTDC plan does not require building or acquiring any new facilities. The regional centers would be housed in available space in a school or other facility located centrally in the region.
- Existing formal partnerships between a University System campus and regional schools will be considered for key roles within the RTDCs.

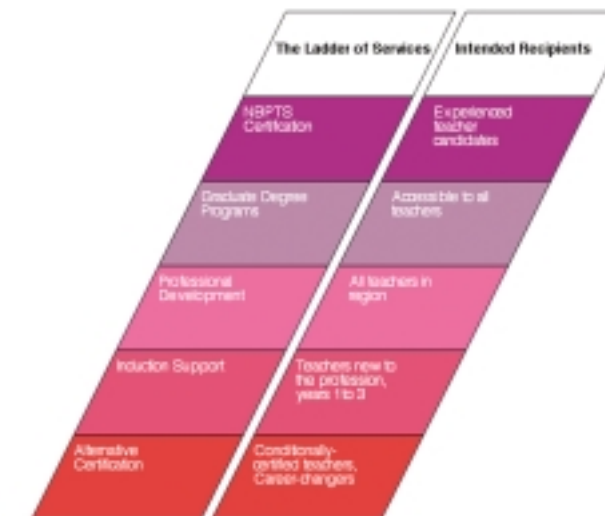
FIGURE 1: Teachers and Other Professional Staff by Maine Superintendent Region



Scope of Services

- The services of each Regional Teacher Development Center would be developed sequentially, starting with alternative certification and continuing through induction support, professional development, graduate degree offerings, and candidacy support for certification under the auspices of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (See Figure 2)
- Each RTDC would be responsible for monitoring teacher development needs in the region. Additional services could be incorporated where deemed necessary (e.g., adding training components for individuals holding Educational Technician positions in the schools).

FIGURE 2: The Ladder of Services Provided by the RTDCs



Governance

- Initially, the University of Maine System would undertake the development and coordination of the centers.
- Ultimately, each of the centers would operate under the direction of a Board of Directors comprised of representatives of the regional superintendents organization(s), teachers from the schools, one or more campuses of the University of Maine System, the Maine Department of Education (MDOE), and where appropriate, representatives of existing regional partnerships.
- The Board of Directors would have several responsibilities:
 - establishing a system for determining, communicating and prioritizing local education agency (LEA) needs and interests to the RTDC to enhance responsiveness
 - identifying the teachers in the region to receive RTDC support

- arranging staffing for each Center
- coordinating the delivery of programs to meet those needs
- recommending policy changes, when deemed necessary, to local school districts within the region
- providing oversight for operations of each Center.

The Benefits of a Regional Approach

- The RTDC plan is consistent with evolving State public policy calling for more regional collaboration of services. The anticipated benefits include improved services and greater efficiencies.
- The RTDC concept creates an enduring infrastructure for future partnership work between Maine's public universities and its PreK-12 schools.
- Current school initiatives tend to focus on broad-based school and district needs rather than on the individual teacher's specific professional development needs. Though the RTDC initiative will exist within the context of school improvement initiatives underway in schools, it will focus on assisting the individual teacher and supporting individual teacher development.

Funding

- The annual cost of each center would range from \$175,000 (the Aroostook RTDC) to \$350,000 (the Cumberland RTDC). Cost estimates are related to the number of teachers employed in the region. (See Figure 1)
- Federal grants, foundation awards, and other external funding sources are being sought to help develop the RTDCs and to support personnel and operational costs.
- The Chancellor of the University of Maine System has committed to providing foundational funding for the initiative. In addition, the University of Maine has received a five-year grant under the Title II Transitions to Teaching program that can assist in supporting a small portion of the development costs of the RTDCs.
- Local school systems are expected to provide support for their participating teachers. (See Figure 3)

FIGURE 3: Anticipated Funding Sources of the RTDCs during the first four years

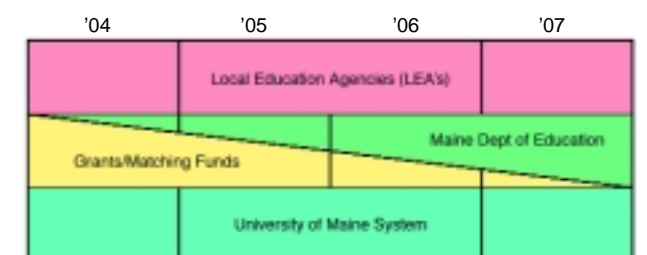




FIGURE 4: Funding of the RTDCs during the phase-in period

Regional Centers	2004	2005	2006	2007
Mid-Coast	\$200k	\$200k	\$200k	\$200k
Western Maine	\$300k	\$300k	\$300k	\$300k
Washington-Hancock	200k	200k	200k	200k
Aroostook	175k	175k	175k	175k
Cumberland		350k	350k	350k
Piscataquis		200k	200k	200k
York			250k	250k
Kennebec			225k	225k
UMS Coord. Office	140k	144k	148k	152k
RTDC Totals	\$1,015k	\$1,569k	\$2,048k	\$2,052k
Chancellor's Office Contribution	250k	250k	250k	250k
University of Maine's "Transitions to Teaching" Grant Contribution	250k	300k	150k	150k
Local School Districts	150k	225k	300k	300k
Additional Funding Needed	\$365k	\$744k	\$1,348k	\$1,352k

* This is a planning model; order of Regional Center phase-in is subject to change

- New federal funding provided to Maine school districts under the No Child Left Behind Act can be pooled regionally to contribute toward the continuing support for the RTDCs.
- Maine's proposed Essential Programs and Services funding model, an alternative framework for funding schools, includes designated funding for professional development as part of the legislative appropriation annually, a portion of which could be dedicated to the support of these regional services.

FIGURE 5: Proportionate Funding Plan among the Partners for Sustaining the RTDCs beyond '07

	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12
Local School Districts (Federal Teacher Quality Funds)					
Maine Dept of Education					
University of Maine System					

Sustaining the Partnership

- The University of Maine System, the Maine Department of Education, and the participating school districts will be expected to share the costs of sustaining the RTDC functions. The combined contributions from these three partners will assure the continuation of these regional services once they complete the development phase. (See Figure 5)
- The University of Maine System, through its Public Education Partnership Action Plan,* has committed to providing greater statewide access to graduate programs for teachers, as well as assisting with induction and alternative certification programs.

*The RTDC initiative is the first step in implementing the University System's Public Education Partnership Action Plan. For more information on that plan, visit www.maine.edu or call 973-3240.



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The University of Maine System is the largest educational entity in Maine, with over 34,000 students enrolled in credit-bearing courses at its seven universities, 10 University College outreach centers, and over 100 community distance education sites. Each year the University System awards over 4,600 two-year, four-year, and graduate degrees.

