



## District and School Assistance Centers Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Overview

In the late fall of 2009, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) will open six regionally based District and School Assistance Centers (DSACs) to help identified districts and their schools strategically access and use professional development and targeted assistance to improve instruction and raise achievement for all students. The DSACs initially will fulfill the Department's responsibilities outlined in the ESE Framework for Accountability and Assistance by giving first priority for assistance to districts in Corrective Action or districts with schools in Corrective Action or Restructuring.

In collaboration with partner organizations, DSACs will use a regional approach that leverages the knowledge, skills, and expertise of local educators to address shared needs through an emphasis on expanding district and school capacity for sustained improvement. Each DSAC will be led by a recently retired superintendent working part time to partner with districts to assess their strengths and needs and to strategically coordinate assistance to districts. In addition, each DSAC is contracting with successful principals and district leaders to provide focused assistance to selected Title I schools. DSACs will also include data, literacy and mathematics specialists as part of their assistance teams.

During the course of the first year and summer, DSACs will offer a limited menu of professional development and targeted assistance aimed at addressing key district and regional needs. Examples of assistance that could be offered include:

### Focused Professional Development including:

- Principal leadership development for standards based schools
- Sheltered English Immersion strategies for teachers at elementary and secondary levels (Categories 1 – 4)
- Foundations in Literacy, Reading Informational Text, and Writing
- Intensive Mathematics Content training, Algebraic Thinking, and Rational Numbers
- Universal Design for Learning, and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports

### Assistance to Support Implementation of Effective Practices including:

- Training on and modeling of tools to observe classroom practice, build effective use of common planning time, and use data for district level strategic decisions
- Networks for superintendents, principals, mathematics and literacy leaders, coaches, and/or teachers
- Data reporting and analysis to support district self assessment and evaluation

DSACs will be located in one of the partner organizations participating in the Executive Office of Education's Readiness Center Initiative in each of the regions - Berkshires, Pioneer Valley, Central, Northeast, Greater Boston, and Southeast. Over time, each DSAC will develop partnerships and coordinate with the Readiness Center Consortium and other regional organizations to design and deliver assistance to districts.