



## **Supporting D3A2 Professional Development Through Evaluation**

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**A Preliminary Annual Report to  
the Ohio Department of Education**

*Executive Summary*

June 29, 2007

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**Report**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has designed the comprehensive Data Driven Decisions for Academic Achievement (D3A2) initiative to serve as a uniform system that enables teachers and administrators statewide to access and use various types of educational data. Additionally, D3A2 provides educators with content resources that align with state standards and assessments. Developing the D3A2 system has involved a collaborative approach among multiple stakeholder groups that attend to various aspects of the system including its associated professional development.

D3A2's external evaluation team, consisting of Hezel Associates and the Evaluation Services Center at the University of Cincinnati (ESC), will conduct a statewide evaluation of D3A2 that focuses on obtaining an in-depth understanding of the initiative's quality and effectiveness through a combination of formative and summative research activities that will take place over three years. The external evaluators have prioritized the need to gather an accurate, comprehensive understanding of the current landscape surrounding data use and professional development across Ohio to inform D3A2's professional development during the evaluation's first year. Since September 2006, we have worked closely with ODE, the LDS Evaluation Advisory Group and the D3A2 Professional Development Committee to stay abreast of changes as they arose, collect feedback, and coordinate efforts. These relationships enabled us to conduct four key formative evaluation activities during the first year of the D3A2 evaluation: statewide surveys and case studies of current data use and professional development needs, interviews with districts in various stages of adopting D3A2 and observations of initial D3A2 training.

This preliminary annual report documents the evaluation team's methods, findings and recommendations from the work conducted to date. We will prepare a final report once we complete our Year 1 activities during the summer and fall of 2007. Through systematic analysis of findings from the evaluation's first year activities, the evaluation team recommends design features such as content and formats that enable D3A2 professional development to attend to practitioners' most pressing statewide needs.

Key recommendations and strategies from the statewide surveys, case studies and observations of initial D3A2 training include:

**Recommendation:** Include 'product training' as part of D3A2 professional development.

**Recommendation:** Offer D3A2 professional development (including product training) at least quarterly.

**Recommendation:** Use D3A2's professional development as an opportunity to convey how D3A2 can make educators' existing professional practice easier.

**Strategy:** Convey D3A2's future capacity to accommodate local assessment data in addition to state assessment data.

**Strategy:** Convey to educators that D3A2 will provide them with access to instructional resources that can extend applications of assessment data by facilitating evidence-based instruction.

**Recommendation:** Offer D3A2 professional development to three separate audiences: District-level administrators, school-level administrators and teachers.

**Strategy:** Focus the professional development content for *district leaders* on building a culture for using state assessment data in their districts and schools by leveraging existing features.

**Strategy:** Focus the professional development content for *school leaders* on developing their technical skills and working with teachers on issues related to data.

**Strategy:** Focus the professional development content for *teachers* on conveying the value that using state assessment data can offer for enhancing instruction and developing teachers' technical skills for analyzing data.

**Recommendation:** Offer D3A2 professional development in different formats for administrator and teacher audiences.

**Recommendation:** Ensure that D3A2 fully dovetails with existing local data management systems and can be easily adopted by districts that do not yet have a data management system in place.

**Strategy:** Ensure that the transition to D3A2 requires as little of the participants' time as possible.

**Recommendation:** Ensure that D3A2 provides easy access to state data, instructional resources and short-cycle assessments through formative product testing.

**Recommendation:** D3A2 should address the potentially complex sociopolitical context in which it will be implemented.

**Strategy:** Develop modulated features that could be adopted in phases.

**Strategy:** Leverage existing local administrators and teachers who truly understand assessment for instruction to facilitate the full integration of D3A2 into the local culture.

**Strategy:** Conduct a focused, retrospective inquiry into one district’s data-driven culture to identify best practices that may apply statewide.

**Recommendation:** The present format, content, and objectives of the initial training, as well as the supporting technology and materials, were effective overall and comprise a sound professional development model for D3A2 which could be replicated throughout the state with similar results. Particularly with the recently developed D3A2 Scripted Training Document now available, it is appropriate to schedule and promote future initial trainings.

**Recommendation:** Providing specific post-training expectations for participants in D3A2 training is likely to assure stronger leadership as these individuals introduce the system to their districts and buildings. Guidance and support for these targeted leaders as they familiarize staff in their districts with D3A2 are apt to generate greater “buy in”; in other words, knowledge, skill development, and enthusiasm for the system among those who did not attend the initial training. Recommended activities or venues for these regional, district, and building leaders would assist them in conveying the message about, and garnering support for, D3A2. Requesting follow-up reporting, even at a very simple level, by these targeted individuals regarding their efforts in building D3A2 knowledge and support among other staff would clarify their leadership role and give project administrators a better sense of what they are actually accomplishing in their capacity as leaders.

**Recommendation:** Greater emphasis on the videos associated with specific system components during training and directing staff to the video component in the D3A2 User Manual as part of the training sessions may enhance staff perceptions that these videos are valuable in their learning about, and use of, the system.

**Recommendation:** Ensure that initial D3A2 trainings are offered after re-rostered data are fully available to all training participants.

The D3A2 evaluation team’s examination of existing data usage practices and professional development needs across Ohio provides ODE and the D3A2 Professional Development Committee with a comprehensive baseline understanding of the landscape into which D3A2 will roll out statewide. Statewide surveys of administrators and teachers combine with case studies, interviews and observations to illustrate the strengths and opportunities that will confront users who choose to adopt D3A2 in the coming years. Above all, the initial evaluation activities conducted during Year 1 establish that administrators and teachers face similar challenges associated with using state assessment data, yet they have different professional development needs and local contextual issues associated with adopting D3A2. By anticipating users’ challenges and

attending to their needs, D3A2's professional development will be well-positioned to significantly impact the way educators across Ohio think about and use state assessment data to inform their professional practice.