Part B. Proposal Description
This grant application seeks funding to create a "Superintendent's Academy" through a partnership with the Freetown – Lakeville School District, several high need school districts, the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMB) and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.).

The overarching goal of the Superintendent's Academy is to demonstrate how school leaders can solve real problems and facilitate team building through the use of online communication technologies. These techniques will be explored through goals that address the following needs: providing quality instruction to superintendents in high priority areas of need, building future leaders and expanding access to the M.A.S.S. mentoring program.

Goals #1 Provide Instruction in High Priority Areas of Need
> The Superintendent's Academy will provide new and existing superintendents with courses, delivered online, that address high priority areas of need.
> (See attachment 2 for detailed course descriptions)

Objectives:
- identify and develop new courses in K-12 administration through the University of Massachusetts Boston Division of Corporate, Continuing and Distance Education.
- provide a safe network where superintendents can develop skills, network and receive mutual support.
- provide PDP points for superintendents on waivers or seeking re-certification to show mastery of material.
- examine the teaching and learning implications of technologies for the facilitation of online learning.

Outcomes:
> Using the combined expertise of the University of Massachusetts, M.A.S.S. and experienced leaders within the community the academy will design and deliver online learning curriculum in high priority areas of need to include; technology for administrators, curriculum and instruction, leadership development, school financing and universal design for all.

Goal #2 Building Future Leaders Through Online Collaboration
The Superintendent's Academy will facilitate the formation of online collaborative teams within districts that will provide superintendents with opportunities to identify and cultivate internal candidates to become future leaders. All online collaboration activities will include current subject matter research, access to experts within the field, and advise on team building and implementation. (See attachment 2 for detailed course descriptions)

Objectives: Superintendents and Administrators will:
- explore creative strategies for distributing leadership opportunities and responsibilities.
- examine the teaching and learning implications of technologies, like the Virtual Education Space, (VES) as it pertains to the formation of online collaborative teams.
- monitor, contribute and evaluate online collaborations that facilitate team building to solve real problems of consequence.

- discuss how online collaboration can assist in identifying future leaders by assessing the team performance of district personnel as they complete complex tasks and create intricate products.

Outcomes:

Effective online collaboration depends upon well-planned activities that address existing needs within the district. The academy will develop several activities that superintendents can use to initiate the process. They will include developing and assessing the district wide technology plan, integrating technology and curriculum, and implementing 21st Century skills for all students.

Goal #3 Facilitate Peer-to-Peer Collaboration and Mentoring

The Superintendent's Academy will introduce new practices and communications technologies into the M.A.S.S. mentoring program to provide high need school districts increased access to experienced superintendents.

Objectives:

- update the M.A.S.S. website to accommodate an online mentoring program.
- retrain existing mentors on the benefits of online mentoring.
- develop curriculum that explores real cases that commonly occur in education.
- use communications technology to facilitate peer-to-peer collaboration.

Outcomes:

The academy will create an online mentoring program that uses the "case method" to examine relevant issues in education administration. Experienced superintendents will provide relevant materials, guidance, and timely informative feedback to nurture new superintendents.

Part B. Proposal Description of Impact

The Superintendent's Academy is based upon the idea that superintendents will embrace communications technology as an instrument for organizational change. Studies of similar applications in the field of education have been met with outstanding results[i] but it cannot be assumed that superintendents will easily endorse these new methods. Like top executives in any organization they have little patience for projects that produce extraneous work or fail to produce results. The academy anticipates successful implementation by placing leaders in highly structured activities where they can monitor, contribute and evaluate how district personnel solve real problems. This will allow them to witness first hand how online learning and collaboration can be effective instruments of change.

The Superintendent's Academy believes that strong leadership and effective communication are critical ingredients to effectively lead school reform efforts. We will address both by leveraging current technologies and research to address high priority needs in curriculum and instruction, school leadership and instruction for all. The impact of this, top-down approach, will have far reaching implications for every administrator, principal, teacher, and student. Not only will each sector gain value by reexamining critical issues but they will also become empowered to actively participate in school reform through an online collaboration process that gives a voice to all concerns.

Year One Impact:
To initiate the pilot program 20 districts have agreed to form a partnership. We felt this to be an appropriate critical mass to test the academy's design.

- Online Learning Courses will include at least 3 people from each district who will participate in three courses. Technology for Administrators, Universal Design for All and 21st Century Skills.
   (Total involvement: 3 people x 20 districts x 3 courses = 180 people)
- Online collaboration teams will be facilitated by superintendents and include up to 15 people.
   (Total involvement = 15 people x 20 districts= 300 people x2 projects= 600 people)
- Superintendents Mentoring Program will include a pool of assistant superintendents, administrators, and curriculum coordinators weighted to favor high need districts.
   (Total involvement= 30 assistants and 2 mentors=32 people)
   Year one Total personnel involved approximately 800 people

Year Two Impact:
For the second year of the grant we will target an additional 20 school districts, which would account for the following participants:

- Superintendents Online Learning Courses will include at least 3 people from each district who will participate in six courses.
   (Total participation=3 people/district x 40 districts x 6 courses = 720 people)
- 40 districts will create online collaboration teams to solve 4 problems
   (Total involvement = 15 people x 40 districts= 600 people x 3 projects= 1800 people)
- 40 districts will provide 3 assistant superintendents for the mentoring program.
   (Total involvement = 3 people x 20 districts= 60 people and 2 mentors =62 people)
   Year two Total personnel involved approximately 2582 people

   2-year project total involves approximately 3382 people

2a. Rationale: Why is this project needed?
National studies point to a pending shortage of qualified candidates choosing to apply for superintendent positions. The most significant reason for this shortage appears to be that the jobs of superintendent have become immense and often overwhelming. Salary levels seem inadequate when compared to their growing responsibilities. In addition, almost 40% of the superintendents responding to a 2000 M.A.S.S. survey said that they plan to retire in four years or less.

> Most districts are not staffed in ways that provide support for these leaders or that take away any of the myriad of logistical, budgetary, legal and other tasks which they are responsible for. . . In order for principals and superintendents to effectively lead school reform efforts, improvements are needed in their preparation and on-the-job support. [ii]

The Superintendent's Academy proposes to help school administrators to succeed by providing much needed improvements in their preparation and on-the-job support. While traditional schools of education often fail to bridge the gap between theory and practice the University of Massachusetts Boston has decided to form partnerships with experienced practitioners and organizations in the field. These partnerships guide the design of the academy toward offering practical solutions to solve real problems rather than a more theoretical approach.

The academy is also built upon the principle that effective use of communications technologies must be implemented to achieve organizational change. While the private sector transitions toward a "knowledge economy" fueled by advances in communications technology most superintendents still fail to recognize, much less utilize technology. Where team building through online collaboration, peer-to-peer tele-mentoring and anytime, anywhere access to relevant curriculum has been implemented exciting results have been monitored.

> When students are active in accessing information, communicating with others, and sharing ideas, computer mediated communication (CMS) is effective in building communities of learners across time and distance and in fostering collaborative environments that facilitate the construction of knowledge[iii].

2b. Rationale: What conditions are in place?

The University of Massachusetts Boston, will make available all it's distance learning delivery capabilities via both online technologies and through it's advanced videoconferencing facilities. Currently UMass Online delivers programs under the auspice of the Division of Corporate, Continuing and Distance Education. CCDE has over 120 courses developed predominantly by UMB faculty. Enrollment exceeds 1600 students in one of the 3 masters degrees and 6 certificate programs currently offered online.

Online courses are supported by the Prometheus learning management system and are supplemented by Centra Symposium software. The UMB Distance Learning Video Production Center uses the MITI line to deliver programs in state and has recently expanded to include access to Internet 2. Resources include providing streaming video and audio for use in online courses. (See attachment 2 for detailed technology descriptions)

The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, (M.A.S.S.) and UMB have worked for the past year on setting up the conditions for a Superintendent's Academy. They have identified potential participants, created an organizational structure and articulated a philosophical approach that offers a high probability for success. However, UMB is currently unable to fund the development of new courses without a minimal enrollment guarantee while M.A.S.S. believes that districts would first need to "see" what they are paying for before they would commit. Both parties have concluded that outside funding would be needed to "seed" the project until a fee structure based upon increasing the M.A.S.S. yearly dues can be implemented.

3. Implementation Strategy, Activities and Timeline

Project Participants:

- Project Administrator, Dr. William P. Conners, Superintendent of schools for Freetown - Lakeville, serves as Chairman of the Technology Committee for the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. He began working in the public school setting as a special educator. Past roles have included school psychologist and administrator of special education.

- Project Coordinator and lead developer, Robert Kelley, Ed.M., is currently an adjunct instructor for the University of Massachusetts Boston and previously served as the production coordinator for TEAMS Distance Learning, a federally funded Star Schools project. His recent studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Education have focused on the effects of technology on teaching and learning.

- Project Liaison, Pat Martin earned her Doctorate in Education from Boston College and currently serves as the Director of Technology Initiative for M.A.S.S. She will act as a liaison between the partners, will promote the academy at area conferences and will develop a funding mechanism that will assure the long term sustainability of the academy.

Implementation Strategy:

Facilitating the successful integrate of online learning and collaboration into the daily lives of superintendents will require a delicate balance between theory and application. This project will use the "case method" design philosophy[iv], which favors the exploration of content through the examination of real problems. This method is consistent with the "situated learning theory"[v] which states that "Situations might be said to co-produce knowledge through *activity*. To ignore the situated nature of cognition defeats the goal of providing usable, robust knowledge." Based upon these guiding principles the academy will favor the theoretical exploration of new ideas through the application of technology to solve real problems.

3b. Support for high need students and teachers:
Strong leadership is required in order for school reform to take place. The lack of leadership at the district level is both a symptom and a cause for the problems that face high need students and teachers. If stable, long-term leadership can be maintained in high need districts then sustainable education reform can be addressed from the top and implemented down through the organization. The superintendents academy can address this lack of leadership by providing quality instruction, identifying internal candidates for new leadership roles and creating a mentoring program that will pair experienced leaders with those who wish to gain experience.

Another problem that many high need districts face is poor communication, which begins at the top and trickles down to every administrator and teacher in the system. The online collaboration activities that are designed by the academy provide the benefit of allowing teachers, curriculum developers and administrators to work together to solve real problems. Where those energies are directed toward curriculum and instruction they can have a dramatic impact on student performance.

3c. Timeline
Year One Fall 2003
1. A needs survey will be conducted to determine the computer literacy skills of the student population. This assessment would be used as a base line for the time-series evaluation discussed later in this application.

2. The network will be built, through database technology, to includes all potential participants. Software and ITV capabilities of participating districts will be identified and tested.

3. "Technology for Administrators" will be developed as the prerequisite online course for the academy. (see attachment 2 for detailed course descriptions)

4. The "Superintendents Academy kick-off " will hold a face-to-face meeting at UMB and deliver a "live" simulcast via the Centra, desktop videoconferencing system.

5.   "Technology for Administrators" will be offered as the prerequisite course to the academy.

6. "Universal Design for All" will be developed as an online course to support a standards-based approach to the instruction of a diverse population, especially those with special needs.

7. Upgrades to the M.A.S.S. website will be completed to create an academy presence and to facilitate the online migration of the M.A.S.S. mentoring program.

8. Online surveys will be administered after each quarter as part of the time-series assessment project.

9. A course review committee, including district partners, UMB faculty and MASS representatives will be assembled to monitor program integrity and accessibility issues.

Spring 2004
1. "Universal Design for All" will be offered to superintendents and administrators.

2. Online Collaboration in "District wide Technology Planning" will be facilitated through the use of the Virtual Education Space, (VES).

3.   "21st Century Skills", an online course will be developed to assist in identifying and evaluating how to prepare students for the 21st century.

4. Planning will begin on a second Online Collaboration project called, "Integrating Technology into the Curriculum."

Summer 2004
1. "21st Century Skills" will be offered to superintendents and administrators.

2. "Integrating Technology into the Curriculum" an online collaboration project will be facilitated through the use of the Virtual Education Space, (VES).

3. "Tele-mentoring" between high need districts and M.A.S.S. will begin.

4. "Leadership Development" an online course will be developed to allow participants to engage in a series of leadership strategies in simulated situations.

5. At the M.A.S.S. annual Executive Institute results of the pilot year project will be shared and recruitment of new partners will begin.

6. Online survey #4 will be administered as part of the time-series assessment project and the data will be analyzed and recorded as a year end summary. A year end report to the Department of Education will be prepared.

Year 2 Fall 2004
Year two will see the addition of 20 new districts, which will involve updating the academy database and rebuilding the network to accommodate new participants. A new scheduling system will be implemented that will address a two track system where new participants can access introductory classes while second year participants have new options.

1. "Technology for Administrators" will be offered to new participants and a new "Leadership Development" course will be offered to second year participants.

2. "Tele-mentoring" between high need districts and M.A.S.S. will begin.

3. "21st Century Skills" an online collaboration project will be facilitated through the use of the Virtual Education Space, (VES).

4. "Integrating Technology into the Curriculum." an online course will be developed to examine how technology can be used in a standards-based curriculum to enhance student performance.

Year 2 Spring 2005
1. "Universal Design for All" will be offered to new participants and "Integrating Technology into the Curriculum" will be introduced.

2. Online Collaboration in "District wide Technology Planning" will again be facilitated through the use of the Virtual Education Space, (VES).

3. The Superintendents Tele-mentoring project will continue.

4. "School Finance" an online course will be developed and will explore the relevant budget issues facing superintendents and administrators.

Year 2 Summer 2005
1. "School Finance" an online course will be offered to administrators and superintendents.

2. "Integrating Technology into the Curriculum" an online collaboration project will be facilitated through the use of the Virtual Education Space, (VES).

3. At the M.A.S.S. annual Executive Institute results of the second year project will be shared and a fee-based model will be introduced.

4. Online survey #7 will be administered as part of the time-series assessment project and the data will be analyzed and recorded as a year end summary. A final report to the Department of Education will be prepared.

4a. Partnership
The Superintendent's Academy is a partnership between the University of Massachusetts Boston, and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents and many high need districts in the commonwealth. The Freetown-Lakeville School District will serve as the fiscal agent, through the direct involvement of Superintendent Dr. William P. Conners.

Representatives from these organizations have been in dialog for several years, working to achieve an effective collaboration that could benefit the children of Massachusetts. UMB is strategically positioned to provide both pedagogical and technical support for the distance learning project, as well as a campus site for those times when participants need

to work together. The synchronous and asynchronous capabilities of UMB made it a natural choice.

Representatives from all participating districts, UMB and MASS will proctor all programs, formulate evaluations and analyze the evaluation results while working to establish a long-term program to support new superintendents in Massachusetts.

5a. Inclusion and Universal Design

Access to a high quality education is a commitment made by each of the University of Massachusetts campuses, and stated prominently on each website where potential students, faculty and staff catch their first glimpse of our campus culture. Now that classrooms are moving to "virtual space" maintaining our commitment to accessible high quality education is far more complex.

Web-based trainings are in the process of being developed at UMB to ensure that all faculty have the skills to reduce accessibility and usability barriers. A Course Review Committee has been proposed to evaluate each course beginning with the following criteria:

- Section 508 guidelines for overall accessibility

- W3C guidelines for the multimedia components of the online courses

- Instruction design practices for usability including clarity, consistency and systematic use of language, simplicity of navigation, formatting to convey meaning

5b. Inclusion and Professional Development

Universal Design for All has been identified by the academy as one of the high priority areas of need for which an online course will be developed. "UDL for All", will lay the foundation for applying UDL principles to goal setting, instruction, and assessment. (See attachment 2 for a detailed course description)

6a. Evaluation

To determine whether the participants use of online technologies have improved while being served by the academy the project coordinator will conduct an evaluation using a time-series design. The time-series approach will define a single unit, (participants use of communications technologies) with measurements that proceed each course or online collaboration for the duration of the program. The data, collected using online surveys, will allow program developers to track changes in the participants behavior regarding the use of online technology. It will not only query a participants use of communication technologies but also the types of activities that were associated with the application.

In addition, the use of online learning technologies for instruction offers many built-in opportunities for evaluation. Within the Prometheus course management system there is a student tracking system that allows the project coordinator to monitor the participation of each student. This "click trail" offers valuable data that will inform the design of specific tasks and activities. Also, the backbone of all online collaboration rests in the process of sharing ideas with collogues through threaded discussions. These reflective exercises

offer the opportunity for participants to examine both the process and the content. Since these activities are permanently recorded they offer a valuable source of material to be used in qualitative analysis.

7. Detailed Budget Description

The superintendent's academy will benefit from the extensive investments that the University of Massachusetts has made in online learning tools. Over 50% of the funds requested for this grant will be applied to providing high quality professional development. No school district will need to invest money in equipment or software and the university's IT department is prepared to support new members with online training and technical assistance.

A	The project coordinator will be the primary contact person for the Department of Education and he will recruit and assist instructors, maintain contacts, schedules, attend DOE meetings and conduct program evaluations			
A	Project Coordinator $50/hr x 8hr = $400/day 75 day/year			$30,000
B	Instructors will develop and facilitate online courses and collaborations. Their responsibilities will include attending software and pedagogical training, subject matter research, creating an online syllabus and populating the course website, facilitating the eight week course and evaluating the participants performance. Instructors will be paid by the standard UMB rate which has been determined by averaging the preparation and facilitation time of instructors over the past three years.			

B	Launch Date		Design Cost $50/hr x 80hrs	Facilitation Cost $50/hr x 60hrs	Year 1 Totals
Online Courses	Fall 2003	*Tech for Admin	$3,000	$4,000	
	Spring 2004	Universal Design	$3,000	$4,000	
	Summer 2004	*21st Century Skills	$3,000	$4,000	
			$9,000	$12,000	$21,000
Online Collaboration	Fall 2003 Spring 2004	*Tech Planning	$3,000	$4,000	
	Summer 2004	Int. Tech and Cur.	$3,000	$4,000	
			$6,000	$8,000	$14,000
					$35,000

C	Online mentors will develop and facilitate an online mentoring program. Their responsibilities will include attending software and pedagogical training, participating in a four week online course, subject matter research, creation of "cases" for examination of relevant issues and biweekly responses to the participants comments for 5 weeks. Develop a 4 week mentor training course			

C	Launch Date		Design Cost $50/hr x 40hrs	Facilitation Cost $50/hr x 40hrs	Year 1 Totals
	Fall 2003	Train the Trainers	$2,000		
Online	Spring 2004	(2)Case Studies		$2,000	
Mentoring	Summer 2004	Tele-mentoring	$2,000		
			$4,000	$2,000	$6,000
D	Upgrade of MASS website to include a Superintendent's Academy presence and increased database capabilities for survey's, registration and contact information.				

D	Launch Date	Technical Support $50/hr x 100hrs			Year 1 Totals
Website Upgrade	Fall 2003	$5,000			$5,000

E	The MASS internship program will solicit graduate students to assist in the development, facilitation and evaluation of the academy. Participants will be solicited from local colleges.

E	$50/hr x 80hrs	Fall 2003 $3,000	Spring 2004 $3,000		$6,000
Internships					

F	UMB online training costs for instructors to attend Prometheus and Centra software training sessions and 2 online pedagogical training sessions.

F	Prometheus	Centra	Pedagogical I	Pedagogical II	Year 1 Totals
UMB Training Costs	$50/hr x 2hr= $100	$50/hr x 2hr= $100	$50/hr x 2hr= $100	$50/hr x 2hr= $100	
(7) people trained	$700	$700	$700	$700	$2,800

G	Technical support for all UMass online students includes access to all ITV facilities, 24/7 access to web tutorials and 8-8pm user phone support. The cost to the university is estimated to be $40/person per year.

G			Year 1 Totals
Technical Support	$40 per pupil	(180) people trained	$7,200

H	Supplies and materials: Laptop for Production Coordinator Compaq Tablet PC TC1000 cost approximately $1800. You Can Teach Online Textbook: for 40 participants @$3 5 each cost $1,400.

H **Supplies**	Laptop $1,800	Textbooks $1,400		$3,200
			Totals	$95,200

Fairview-Lakeville School District Administration cost to include: hosting financial data, processing P.O.'s and related financial services. @5% of total	$4,760
Year 1 Grand Total:	$99,960

See attachment 3 for Year 2 budget projections

[i] Dede Chris, The Role of Emerging Technologies for Knowledge Mobilization, Dissemination and use in Education. Commissioned by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. DOE

[ii] Leadership Challenges: Supply and Demand in Massachusetts Schools. (Study conducted for the MA Education Reform Review Commission (MERRC)

[iii] Dede Chris, Designing and Studying Learning Experiences That Use Multiple Interactive Media To Bridge Distance and Time, *Current Perspectives on Applied Information Technologies.* Vol. 1: Distance Education. Charalambos Vrasidas and Gene V Glass, (Eds.).

[iv] The Case Method, Harvard Business School

[v] Situated Cognition and the Culture of Learning. John Seely Brown, Allan Collins and Paul Duguid
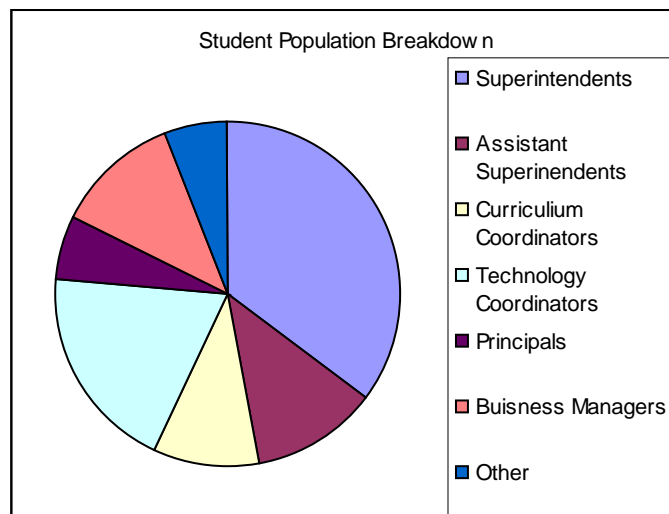
1.1 Year – End Report Form: Since the form was not consistent with the formatting of this document the table was included as ATTACHMENT F.

1.2 Impact on Superintendents: Since the first Superintendents Academy kick-off in November of 2003, 51 administrators from 38 different districts have participated in online courses. 23 new superintendents were trained in online technologies as part of the M.A.S.S. Mentoring program. In addition, over 100 districts have expressed interest in upcoming events through the promotion of the academy at M.A.S.S. conferences, roundtables and via fax, email and web technologies.

Our primary mission is providing online professional development to help fulfill meaningful tasks with more insight, support and efficiency. We target the educational needs of new and existing superintendents and as such our courses, supervised by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Director of Professional Development Paul Andrews reflect their needs. Based upon enrollment data, superintendents represent our largest student population. This is due to our close affiliation with M.A.S.S. and the aggressive promotional campaign conducted which targeted this underserved population.

The feedback that we have received from superintendents based upon our formative evaluations of Technology for Administrators and Understanding School Finance Online has been generally supportive[1]. They sited the greatest strengths were:

- the dedication and knowledge of the instructors
- the timeliness and relevance of the materials
- the productivity support tools that helped in their everyday jobs

While it is gratifying to hear that we have, in some ways, accomplished our goal it is also important to note that many challenges still exist. Technical challenges among superintendents were exceedingly high. Log-in problems, uploading plug-ins and navigating through the course management system created an inordinate amount of frustration among some users. While online tutorials were created to address these challenges often users did not access them and the University of Massachusetts help desk received very few calls for assistance. In most cases technical problems were not addressed unless a member of the academy became proactive and

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[1] ATTACHMENT C Understanding School Finance Evaluation Conclusions

sent an email or called on the phone. There seems to be a gap between the superintendents technical self perception, 93% feel they have the necessary hardware and computer skills[2] and their actual skill levels. The TSAT for Administrators self Assessment Tool administered prior to Understanding School Finance supports this assumption.[3] Normally a face-to-face meeting is conducted to issue passwords and review software but it proved difficult to arrange a common time for superintendents to drive to the University of Massachusetts Boston Campus. Additional online tools are being created to address this shortcoming.

Student accountability is an issue that causes some concern. Because academy courses are voluntary and not attached to a degree or licensure program participation among superintendents is below the six hour a week industry standard. Often pressing issues within a district cause conflicts which force superintendents to miss deadlines or drop out of classes. Through phone surveys and the tracking software within the course management system we discovered that superintendents rarely collaborated on discussion boards or through file sharing. Collaboration is one of the most powerful aspects of online learning because it provides learners with an opportunity to reflect and apply new knowledge yet superintendents failed to see the value in participation.

The reasons that superintendents sited for their lack of interest in collaboration were:

- lack of time, discussions require reading and posting comments two or three times a week.
- lack of trust, there is a risk in publicly recording comments that might be controversial.
- lack of understanding, until you experience the benefit's you often do not see the pay-off.

The results of our needs assessment[4] support many of these findings. While there is overwhelming support by superintendents for online learning courses, 88% surveyed would participate, 58% stated they would be able to spend less than two hours a week online. From these results we conclude that some sort of outside incentive is needed to increase the motivation of the participants. While we still believe that providing professional development to help fulfill meaningful tasks with more insight, support and efficiency is essential the fact that superintendents failed to fully participate in online threaded discussions presents a problem for the development of future courses because instructors rely upon them to determine what students are thinking and to provide the necessary feedback. The issues of incentives and increased participation will be addressed later within this document as we address the self-sustainability of the academy.

1.2 **Impact on Aspiring Superintendents:** While superintendents represented the largest individual group of students; assistant superintendents, curriculum coordinators, business managers and principals combined to represent two-thirds of our student population. Our secondary goal is to provide a means for district's to identify and nurture future leaders and encouraging participation by aspiring administrators was a step towards meeting that goal. The majorities of aspiring administrators heard about or were encouraged to take courses through their superintendent.[5] In addition, superintendents expressed a willingness to find and recruit new leaders in their districts.[6] 56% said they would act as practicum supervisors and another 34% were willing to identify and encourage new administrators to explore new career paths.

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[2] ATTACHEMENT D Superintendents Academy Needs Assessment results.
[3] ATTACHEMENT B TSAT for Administrators results.
[4] ATTACHEMENT D Superintendents Academy Needs Assessment results.
[5] ATTACHMENT C Understanding School Finance Evaluation, Enrollment & Participation Levels
[6] ATTACHEMENT D Superintendents Academy Needs Assessment results.

The profile for student participation among aspiring administrators was different than those of existing or new superintendents[7]. The technical skill levels of this group were more advanced and many surveyed mentioned that they had taken online courses in the past. They formed the majority of the course high-end users, those who spent more than 3 hours per week online, and they also were the most active participants in the threaded discussion. While many in this category expressed similar time constraints they were more conscientious about completing assignments on time.

The reason for their increased participation might be that they had more to gain from learning the material, the prospect of promotion or the opportunity to impress leaders within their district. One example from Understanding School Finance illustrates this point. The discussion was about the relationship between the district strategic plan and the budget and the following comment was made by an aspiring administrator, *"This discussion comes at an incredibly fortunate time. On Saturday, members of the administrative team met with an educational consultant and representatives from the local community to review the current Strategic Plan Draft. Part of the day involved small group work, in which we were asked to identify the gaps between the reality and the goals identified in the Strategic Plan Draft."*

Our original design concept was to facilitate the mentoring process where superintendents could interact online with teams within their own district to solve real problems but that type of cross-role dialogue never materialized because superintendents failed to participate in discussions. In most cases the course instructor provided most of the feedback to aspiring superintendents so discussing solutions to tough financial problems with an experienced superintendent was possible only if the participant was willing to spend the time to analyze the problem. Once they committed to an exercise they could then receive feedback from an experienced practitioner who could act as a mentor.

1.2 **Impact on the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents:** M.A.S.S. is dedicated to the unique professional and advocacy concerns of school superintendents and assistant superintendents. They offer a variety of face-to-face professional development institutes throughout the school year. Paul Andrews, the Director of Professional Development supervises the association's workshops and has helped integrate online learning into the organizations existing offerings. While M.A.S.S. has always expressed interest in offering materials online in many ways the Superintendents Academy was breaking new ground. Their leadership team, under transition for the first half of the grant, acknowledged that, "online learning was the future," but they had made no prior efforts to examine the impact of technology on the organization nor did they understand the process involved in designing online courses. Perhaps our biggest oversight in the grant application was the failure to calculate how much time and energy would be needed to help M.A.S.S. transition from face-to-face instruction to an online delivery method. As a result the majority of the academy's effort for the first six months was spent preparing the leadership team for the transition. It should be noted that all organizations have experienced similar growing pains and how they react is based upon a number of factor including the organizations size, technical expertise and its leadership's willingness to move in a new direction.

Retired superintendents and busy working professionals act as content consultants for M.A.S.S. and they provide the necessary policy and implementation experience but they often struggled with the technology and shift in pedagogy. They were most comfortable with a traditional instructional setting and found it a burden to organize, and document their experiences for online delivery. As we work through these problems we are also discovering that sometimes experts don't turn out to be good online instructors. The University of Massachusetts has experience in

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[7] ATTACHMENT C Understanding School Finance Evaluation Conclusions

helping institutions address these common issues. The Instructional Technologies Center; (ITC) is staffed with specialists who conduct workshops and work individually with staff members but M.A.S.S. has not yet maximized the universities resources mostly because their staff lacks the time and proper incentives to participate. As with any new initiative the transition has had mixed results but overall M.A.S.S. has made major strides towards the kind of institutional change that accompanies the implementation of new technologies.

1.2   Describe how the project will be maintained during the two-year grant period.

In Year 1 the groundwork for our development was completed. The academy established a physical presence at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Phone, fax, email and communication within the university system were created. Communication and unity of purpose with our partners at UMB, M.A.S.S. and with Freetown – Lakeville was established through a series of planning meetings which resulted in the creation of our course offerings and schedules. Spreading the word of our existence through an active promotion campaign included face-to-face presentations and the production of our website.(www.academy.umb.edu). Finally in the late fall and early spring we began to prepare and teach online courses.

Several proposals are currently being examined to ensure the long term success of the Superintendents Academy. Each involves an increase in scale that would either require additional funding or a more modest self-sustaining model. Listed below are four proposals that will be developed during the second year of funding:

Plan A: Creation of an Administrators Licensure Program throughout the University of Massachusetts System. Designed similar to the Leadership in Urban Schools program at UMB this certificate would satisfy the DOE requirements for administrative licensure and could be later expanded to meet doctorial requirements at the graduate college of education. Courses could be accessed online through any college in the university system and practicum requirements would be supervised by M.A.S.S. Development of this program is currently being discussed within the graduate college of education and outside funding is being sought.

Plan B: Expanded access to the Superintendents Academy so that courses offered free to M.A.S.S. members only can be accessed by others. Currently a limited number of courses will be offered each year for PDP points. Under the expanded academy plan new course titles will be offered and graduate credits will be awarded for existing titles. In an effort to increase participation outside funding is being sought to include partnering with other professional organizations like MESPA, MSSAA, MOEC and MASCD.

Plan C: M.A.S.S. / UMB subsidized continuation would involve an increase in M.A.S.S. dues to allow its membership free or reduced tuition to academy courses. UMB would reduce the cost per student based upon the number of participants and M.A.S.S. would continue to support and promote all the courses that would have been developed. New course titles would be discussed and the development costs would be shared. This plan offers limited growth potential but can be self sustaining based upon the reputation and interest garnered during the first two years.

Plan D: The UMB unsubsidized continuation plan would allow the university to offer open enrollment to courses at existing university rates ($570.). M.A.S.S. would continue to promote courses and M.A.S.S. consultants would act as instructors. Demand for such courses will be determined throughout the year and a feasibility study will be included in the grants final report.

2. Implementation Strategies, Activities, and Timeline

2.1 Partners and Services

Throughout the first year we felt that we needed to better understand our student population so our evaluation team conducted several formative evaluations[8] and in the spring a comprehensive needs assessment was conducted[9]. Based upon our needs assessment conducted in July[10] 88% of the superintendent's surveyed expressed interest in online courses. They also said that they would recommend courses to staff members that exhibited leadership potential so we expect a large demand for our Year 2 offerings. Several strategies have been formulated in direct response to observations made earlier in this document regarding the impact we have had to date. They include:

1. To better serve existing and new superintendents who participate in online courses we are altering the structure of courses so that students can have direct access to lectures and support materials without following a weekly schedule that includes deliverables and accountability to the online instructor. This shift from an online course design model to a performance support model will address the superintendent's desire for quick access to information and will eliminate the accountability issues that plagued prior course designs.

2. Online mentoring for first year superintendents will be increased to provide an additional method for examining current issues and to provide the opportunity for collaboration among new superintendents. Our secondary goal will be to establish an experienced online cohort for future courses.

3. A shift in focus to include more aspiring superintendents will be integrated into our promotion campaign. Developing future leaders has always been the focus of this grant and the sheer number of aspiring administrators, estimated to be 400[11], combined with the fact that they are more experienced online learners supports the idea that to become self-sustaining we must widen the net to include a broader student population.

4. Offer online courses in School Law and Budgeting and expand online courses to include School Improvement Planning and Curriculum Audits. Both will involve closer coordination between existing M.A.S.S. face-to-face workshops and online components that involve teams within districts. Katie Spinos, Assistant Superintendent of Burlington Public Schools will be the lead designer and will work closely with DOE personnel on its implantation.

5. Increased presence at the M.A.S.S. October Technology Leadership Conference to include a seminar on Online Learning Basics and Team Development / Capacity Building; How Technology Supports Professional Development that Solves Real Problems.

6. Continue to work with M.A.S.S. to build organizational capacity. As currently structured there is no staff person dedicated to the promotion or internal management of the academy. Because it is such a small organization comprised of contract consultants no one person currently has the time or experience needed to maintain the momentum. The self

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[8] ATTACHMENT A Technology for Administrators Formative Evaluation, ATTACHMENT B TSAT results ATTACHMENT C Understanding School Finance
[9] ATTACHMENT D Needs Assessment
[10] ATTACHMENT D Needs Assessment
[11] ATTACHMENT D Needs Assessment

sustainability of the Superintendents Academy relies in large part upon the progress M.A.S.S. makes as it continues to grapple with changes in its instructional delivery.

The Superintendents Academy allows any member of M.A.S.S. to openly enroll in any of the course offerings. Each district is personally invited to register members of their staff based upon a first come first serve basis. To date no district has been denied access to any courses. Because of our open enrollment policy it is difficult to predict who will participate until a course is announced and enrollment is finalized. Most often participants enroll based upon the topic of the course. We have not openly publicized our next course because a start date has yet to be determined but already seven school districts have been identified and included in the Schedule C document.

We believe that these efforts will help integrate online technologies into the current professional development offerings at M.A.S.S. and as a result increase our visibility as well as providing additional opportunities for superintendents to become exposed to online learning. The goal by the end of Year 2 is to create a larger demand for online services.

2.2 Describe the professional development activities for this project
The Superintendents Academy plans to offer the following professional development opportunities to meet our goal of providing online instruction that assist in the performance of meaningful tasks with more insight and efficiency. They also provide a means for identifying and nurturing future leaders:

Online courses:
- **Understanding School Finance** (Fall 2004) Based upon prior response and the current demand Dave Tobin will update and teach this course which will review the concepts and components of Chapter 70 and associated requirements. Enable participants to locate and understand school finance information, estimate next year's revenue streams and spending requirements and become comfortable interpreting and explaining to others information that is readily available to all concerning your school district's budget information.

- **Understanding School Law** (Fall 2004) Attorney Mike Long has developed and will teach this course which will provide the student with a sufficient knowledge of school law to recognize, evaluate, and assess events occurring in schools or districts, considering the legal duties and responsibilities individuals involved, for purposes of meeting those legal duties and determining district action or policy.

- **School Improvement Planning** (Spring 2005) Katie Spinos, Burlington's Assistant Superintendent will plan an teach a course on how to effectively implement the school improvement planning process to improve instruction, identify and target resources and build capacity by examining models that meet DOE criteria and improves performance, determining level's of improvement, exchanging consensus strategies and ownership and building community involvement.

- **Leadership in Education** (Summer 2005) Topic and instructors are currently being developed.

Workshop Series:
- **Team Development and Capacity Building** (Spring 2005) As part of the M.A.S.S. Technology Leadership Conference guest speakers and area organizations will promote multiple models for team building within districts. Topics will include how to build capacity, the role of technology in professional development and how online collaboration can be used to facilitate collaboration to solve real problems.

Study Groups:
- To help M.A.S.S. leadership and their staff to transition effectively into new methods of delivering instruction monthly meetings have been designed to examine relevant issues and to discuss solutions. Topics will include; blended learning, online collaboration through threaded discussions, the impact of technology on instructional design and the role of technology in professional development.

Universal design and access to a high quality education is a commitment made by each of the University of Massachusetts campuses, and stated prominently on each website where potential students, faculty and staff catch their first glimpse of our campus culture. Now that classrooms are moving to "virtual space" maintaining our commitment to accessible high quality education is far more complex.

Web-based trainings are in the process of being developed at UMB to ensure that all faculty have the skills to reduce accessibility and usability barriers. A Course Review Committee has been proposed to evaluate each course beginning with the following criteria:

- Section 508 guidelines for overall accessibility
- W3C guidelines for the multimedia components of the online courses
- Instruction design practices for usability including clarity, consistency and systematic use of language, simplicity of navigation, formatting to convey meaning

Follow-up activities in the online world have proven to be a difficult task. Courses have a finite life span and then participants scatter and go about their business as usual. It is however not uncommon for participants to continue online professional relationships once a course has concluded. To facilitate this process the academy will create a separate online location within it's website (www.academy.umb.edu) which will provide continued access to productivity tools, lectures and file sharing possibilities beyond the life of a course. Building a virtual community of practice that provides the tools and climate for thoughtful discussions is a long-term goal that can only take place once participants begin to see value in online collaboration. To begin the process and then let it dissipate would set a poor example and would jeopardize our efforts for a long term self sustaining project.

We estimate based upon our needs study and promotional efforts that over 100 administrators will participate in our online professional development programs at an average participation rate of 20 hours per course.

2.3 High needs Districts
Strong leadership is required in order for school reform to take place. The lack of leadership at the district level is both a symptom and a cause for the problems that face high need students and teachers. If stable, long-term leadership can be maintained in high need districts then sustainable education reform can be addressed from the top and implemented down through the organization. The Superintendents Academy addresses this lack of leadership by providing quality instruction,

identifying internal candidates for new leadership roles and creating a mentoring program that will pair experienced leaders with those who wish to gain experience.

The School Improvement Planning workshop is designed to provide opportunities for teachers, curriculum developers and administrators to work together on curriculum and instruction issues and will have a dramatic impact on student performance.

Because of our open enrollment policy it is difficult to predict who will participate in our academy until a course is announced and enrollment is finalized. Last year eight high needs districts participated in academy activities and we expect that number to increase.

2.4 Timeline
See ATTACHEMENT G: Plan Goals, Objectives, and Expected Outcomes Form –Year 2

3. Partnership
3.1 Collaboration with higher education

The Superintendent's Academy is a partnership between the University of Massachusetts Boston, and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents and many high need districts in the commonwealth. The Freetown-Lakeville School District will serve as the fiscal agent, through the direct involvement of Superintendent Dr. William P. Conners.

UMB is strategically positioned to provide both pedagogical and technical support for the distance learning project, as well as a campus site for those times when participants need to work together. The synchronous and asynchronous capabilities of UMB made it a natural choice. Representatives from all participating districts, UMB and MASS will proctor all programs, formulate evaluations and analyze the evaluation results while working to establish a long-term program to support new superintendents in Massachusetts.

4. Evaluations and Accountability Plan
4.1 Evaluation questions: Our Year 2 evaluation plans include three areas of focus;

- **Summative course evaluations** will be implemented to investigate the overall strengths and weaknesses of each course and to obtain an overall picture of the Academy's online program.
- **Formative evaluation** of the *School Improvement Planning Workshop* will investigate the successes and failures of a hybrid model of online learning, which will combine face-to-face meetings with online components. This course will also emphasize a more collaborative approach to learning by requiring teamwork in face-to-face settings and virtual settings.
- **Needs Assessment** of Potential Future Leaders To investigate the needs of potential future leaders to better understand the ways in which the Academy can develop and deliver online courses that help this promising audience achieve leadership roles.

4.2 Goals Objectives and Outcomes
Since this form was not consistent with the formatting of this document the table was included as ATTACHMENT G.
4.3 Evaluation Methods: For summative evaluations of courses a survey will be designed and participants will be asked to complete the survey, online, at the completion of each course. In addition, tools within the course management system will be used to obtain data regarding participation levels. The formative evaluation of our hybrid course will include a survey and interns will contact participants for phone interviews. The needs assessment will be conducted via

email, phone, and/or fax and will be asked to submit the names of *at least* 2 potential leaders from their district. A survey will be designed for potential district leaders.

5.1 Budget Description:
The Superintendents Academy will continue to benefit from the extensive investments that the University of Massachusetts has made in online learning tools. No school district will need to invest money in equipment or software and the university's IT department is prepared to support new members with online training and technical assistance. The cost of unlimited access to the universities instructional technology they be $125.00 per student based upon an estimated impact of 80 students. The switch from billing the university for individual services to a per student fee was implemented to establish a subsidized fee structure that could be used in a self sustaining model. Estimates for Year 2 Telecommunication services are $10,000.

Robert Kelley will again act as the project coordinator and will be the primary contact person for the Department of Education and he will recruit and assist instructors, maintain contacts, schedules, attend DOE meetings and assist in the program evaluations. He will be contracted as a consultant to work approximately 1.5 days per week at a rate of $50 per hour for a total of 600 hours or $30,000. The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents will also act as consultants to assist in the promotion and production of new materials. For their services a sum of $5000 will be paid at the rate of $50 per hour.

5.2 The majority of funds will be used to design and teach new courses at a rate of $50 per hour. $30,000 has been allocated to specialist who will create new online content in the subject areas or finance, law, curriculum and leadership. An additional $13,000 is requested for online instructors. The combined total of $43,000 will be used to produce high quality professional development in Year 2.

In an effort to create a hybrid model of instruction that includes both face-to-face and online technologies the academy would like to hire a nationally respected expert on capacity building to speak at the winter meeting for MASS. It is estimated that $5000. will be required to pay for the travel and speaking fees.

Interns for the Superintendents Academy proved to be a valuable asset to the overall mission and at a rate of $25 per hour they also provided a cost effect means for assisting in the instructional design of materials, the production of web-based technologies. They also assisted our lead evaluator in the production and dissemination of assessment materials. $5000 is requested to maintain their participation.

It is now required that outside evaluators monitor progress and $5000 is being requested to continue the fine work that Hilde Hockwald has provided as the academies lead evaluator. Several studies are currently being designed that will be critical to the long-term success of the grant.

The only cost for equipment is the request to purchase a computer projection system for presentations at MASS roundtables and conferences. Since few superintendents are familiar with online learning technology we have plans actively promote the academy and the benefits of online learning.

1. **Project Focus Area**

    B. Projects that partner with higher education institutions and public or private organizations with demonstrated expertise in the application of technology in instruction.

2. **Project Title**

    The Superintendents Academy

3. Project Summary

This grant application seeks funding to continue with the creation of the Superintendents Academy. Our goal is to provide online courses and resources for new and existing superintendents that will assist them in performing meaningful tasks with more insight and efficiency. In addition, we provide a means for district's to identify and nurture future leaders. Year one was spent aligning the goals of our partners and developing a shift in organizational attitudes towards new delivery methods for instruction. An active promotional campaign was also created to articulate these changes to our constituents and to get the necessary buy-in required to gain widespread acceptance. Year two will allow us to expand these efforts in addition to providing new course offerings and increasing our focus on developing future leaders.

4. Project Partner(s)

Dr. William P. Conners, Superintendent Freetown – Lakeville School District, 98 Howland Rd. Lakeville, MA 02347, (508) 923-2000 wconners@freelake.mec.edu
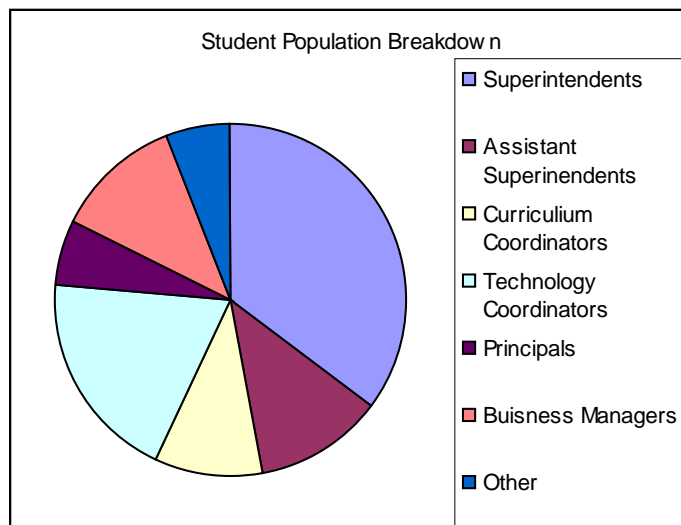
* Robert L. Kelley, University of Massachusetts, Boston Division of Corporate, Continuing and Distance Education, 100 Morrissey Blvd. Boston, MA 02125 (617) 818-4890 robert.kelley@umb.edu

Paul Andrews, Director of Professional Development, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, 132 Lincoln Street, Boston, MA 02111 (617) 451-1151 andrews@massupt.org

PART B - PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

1.2 **Impact on Superintendents:** Since the first Superintendents Academy kick-off in November of 2003, 51 administrators from 38 different districts have participated in online courses. 23 new superintendents were trained in online technologies as part of the M.A.S.S. Mentoring program. In addition, over 100 districts have expressed interest in upcoming events through the promotion of the academy at M.A.S.S. conferences, roundtables and via fax, email and web technologies.

Our primary mission is providing online professional development to help fulfill meaningful tasks with more insight, support and efficiency. We target the educational needs of new and existing superintendents and as such our courses, supervised by the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Director of Professional Development Paul Andrews reflect their needs. Based upon enrollment data, superintendents represent our largest student population. This is due to our close affiliation with M.A.S.S. and the aggressive promotional campaign conducted which targeted this underserved population.

Student Population Breakdown

- Superintendents
- Assistant Superinendents
- Curriculium Coordinators
- Technology Coordinators
- Principals
- Buisness Managers
- Other

The feedback that we have received from superintendents based upon our formative evaluations of Technology for Administrators and Understanding School Finance Online has been generally supportive[1]. They sited the greatest strengths were:

- the dedication and knowledge of the instructors

- the timeliness and relevance of the materials

- the productivity support tools that helped in their everyday jobs

While it is gratifying to hear that we have, in some ways, accomplished our goal it is also important to note that many challenges still exist. Technical challenges among superintendents were exceedingly high. Log-in problems, uploading plug-ins and navigating through the course management system created an inordinate amount of frustration among some users. While online tutorials were created to address these challenges often users did not access them and the University of Massachusetts help desk received very few calls for assistance. In most cases technical problems were not addressed unless a member of the academy became proactive and sent an email or called on the phone. There seems to be a gap between the superintendents technical self perception, 93% feel they have the necessary hardware and computer skills[2] and their actual skill levels. The TSAT for Administrators self Assessment Tool administered prior to Understanding School Finance supports this assumption.[3] Normally a face-to-face meeting is conducted to issue passwords and review software but it proved difficult to arrange a common time for superintendents to drive to the University of Massachusetts Boston Campus. Additional online tools are being created to address this shortcoming.

Student accountability is an issue that causes some concern. Because academy courses are voluntary and not attached to a degree or licensure program participation among superintendents is below the six hour a week industry standard. Often pressing issues within a district cause conflicts which force superintendents to miss deadlines or drop out of classes. Through phone surveys and the tracking software within the course management system we discovered that superintendents rarely collaborated on discussion boards or through file sharing. Collaboration is one of the most powerful aspects of online learning because it provides learners with an opportunity to reflect and apply new knowledge yet superintendents failed to see the value in participation.

The reasons that superintendents sited for their lack of interest in collaboration were:

- lack of time, discussions require reading and posting comments two or three times a week.

- lack of trust, there is a risk in publicly recording comments that might be controversial.

- lack of understanding, until you experience the benefit's you often do not see the pay-off.

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[1] ATTACHMENT C Understanding School Finance Evaluation Conclusions
[2] ATTACHMENT D Superintendents Academy Needs Assessment results.
[3] ATTACHMENT B TSAT for Administrators results.

The results of our needs assessment[4] support many of these findings. While there is overwhelming support by superintendents for online learning courses, 88% surveyed would participate, 58% stated they would be able to spend less than two hours a week online. We asked superintendents to rate the component of an online course that you would anticipate to be the most helpful to your current work?

A. The chance to receive specific skill training/tips from an expert

5	4	3	2	1
44%	26%	18%	3%	9%

B. The chance to exchange knowledge and strategies online with leaders from other districts

5	4	3	2	1
38%	39%	13%	4%	4%

C. The chance to collaborate and problem-solve online with members of your own district

5	4	3	2	1
13%	12%	21%	22%	30%

D. The chance to form an online mentoring relationship with an experienced school leader

5	4	3	2	1
12%	13%	22%	21%	30%

Response B seems to contradict the notion that superintendents are uninterested in collaboration but it should be noted that 78% of the superintendents surveyed had never taken an online course before so while they might welcome an opportunity to collaborate the format (online threaded discussions) might not be the proper outlet.

The question of superintendent's motivation and incentives needed to increase participation in online courses was addressed in the following question; Rate from 1-5 what you believe the benefits of online courses provide to participants.

Professional Development Points (PDP)

5	4	3	2	1
39%	24%	21%	7%	9%

Graduate Credit

5	4	3	2	1
10%	16%	15%	17%	43%

State Induction or Administrators licensure

5	4	3	2	1
15%	13%	7%	12%	53%

Licensure renewal

5	4	3	2	1
46%	26%	12%	7%	9%

Increased intra-district collaboration and problem-solving opportunities

5	4	3	2	1
17%	19%	28%	18%	18%

Increased cross-district collaboration

5	4	3	2	1
20%	37%	26%	10%	7%

Increased technical skills and awareness of online learning

5	4	3	2	1
11%	22%	36%	15%	16%

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[4] ATTACHEMENT D Superintendents Academy Needs Assessment results.

From these results we conclude that some sort of outside incentive is needed to increase the motivation of the participants. While we still believe that providing professional development to help fulfill meaningful tasks with more insight, support and efficiency is essential the fact that superintendents failed to fully participate in online threaded discussions presents a problem for the development of future courses because instructors rely upon them to determine what students are thinking and to provide the necessary feedback. The issues of incentives and increased participation will be addressed later within this document as we address the self-sustainability of the academy.

1.2 **Impact on Aspiring Superintendents:** While superintendents represented the largest individual group of students; assistant superintendents, curriculum coordinators, business managers and principals combined to represent two-thirds of our student population. Our secondary goal is to provide a means for district's to identify and nurture future leaders and encouraging participation by aspiring administrators was a step towards meeting that goal. The majorities of aspiring administrators heard about or were encouraged to take courses through their superintendent.[5] In addition, superintendents expressed a willingness to find and recruit new leaders in their districts.[6] 56% said they would act as practicum supervisors and another 34% were willing to identify and encourage new administrators to explore new career paths.

The profile for student participation among aspiring administrators was different than those of existing or new superintendents[7]. The technical skill levels of this group were more advanced and many surveyed mentioned that they had taken online courses in the past. They formed the majority of the course high-end users, those who spent more than 3 hours per week online, and they also were the most active participants in the threaded discussion. While many in this category expressed similar time constraints they were more conscientious about completing assignments on time.

The reason for their increased participation might be that they had more to gain from learning the material, the prospect of promotion or the opportunity to impress leaders within their district. One example from Understanding School Finance illustrates this point. The discussion was about the relationship between the district strategic plan and the budget and the following comment was made by an aspiring administrator, *"This discussion comes at an incredibly fortunate time. On Saturday, members of the administrative team met with an educational consultant and representatives from the local community to review the current Strategic Plan Draft. Part of the day involved small group work, in which we were asked to identify the gaps between the reality and the goals identified in the Strategic Plan Draft. Because the various factions that would be involved in implementation of the plan were present, an accurate portrait was painted of the resources available to us as a district, and the areas or issues that still need to be addressed in order for us to achieve success as measured by the plan."*

Our original design concept was to facilitate the mentoring process where superintendents could interact online with teams within their own district to solve real problems but that type of cross-role dialogue never materialized because superintendents failed to participate in discussions. In most cases the course instructor provided most of the feedback to aspiring superintendents so discussing solutions to tough financial problems with an experienced superintendent was possible only if the participant was willing to spend the time to analyze the problem. Once they committed to an exercise they could then receive feedback from an experienced practitioner who could act as a mentor.

1.2 **Impact on the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents:** M.A.S.S. is dedicated to the unique professional and advocacy concerns of school superintendents and assistant superintendents. They offer a variety of face-to-face professional development institutes throughout the school year. Paul Andrews, the Director of Professional Development supervises the association's workshops and has helped integrate online learning into the organizations existing offerings. While M.A.S.S. has always expressed interest in offering materials online in many ways the Superintendents Academy was breaking new ground. Their leadership team, under transition for the first half of the grant, acknowledged that, "online learning was the future," but they had made no prior efforts to examine the impact of technology on the organization nor did they understand the process involved in designing online courses. Perhaps our biggest oversight in the grant application was the failure to calculate how much time and energy would be needed to help M.A.S.S. transition from face-to-face instruction to an online delivery method.

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[5] ATTACHMENT C Understanding School Finance Evaluation, Enrollment Reasons and Participation Levels
[6] ATTACHMENT D Superintendents Academy Needs Assessment results.
[7] ATTACHMENT C Understanding School Finance Evaluation Conclusions

As a result the majority of the academy's effort for the first six months was spent preparing the leadership team for the transition. It should be noted that all organizations have experienced similar growing pains and how they react is based upon a number of factor including the organizations size, technical expertise and its leadership's willingness to move in a new direction.

Retired superintendents and busy working professionals act as content consultants for M.A.S.S. and they provide the necessary policy and implementation experience but they often struggled with the technology and shift in pedagogy. They were most comfortable with a traditional instructional setting and found it a burden to organize, and document their experiences for online delivery. As we work through these problems we are also discovering that sometimes experts don't turn out to be good online instructors. The University of Massachusetts has experience in helping institutions address these common issues. The Instructional Technologies Center; (ITC) is staffed with specialists who conduct workshops and work individually with staff members but M.A.S.S. has not yet maximized the universities resources mostly because their staff lacks the time and proper incentives to participate. As with any new initiative the transition has had mixed results but overall M.A.S.S. has made major strides towards the kind of institutional change that accompanies the implementation of new technologies.

1.3   Describe how the project will be maintained during the two-year grant period.

In Year 1 the groundwork for our development was completed. The academy established a physical presence at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Phone, fax, email and communication within the university system were created. Communication and unity of purpose with our partners at UMB, M.A.S.S. and with Freetown – Lakeville was established through a series of planning meetings which resulted in the creation of our course offerings and schedules. Spreading the word of our existence through an active promotion campaign included face-to-face presentations and the production of our website.(www.academy.umb.edu). Finally in the late fall and early spring we began to prepare and teach online courses.

Throughout the first year we felt that we needed to better understand our student population so our evaluation team conducted several formative evaluations[8] and in the spring a comprehensive needs assessment was conducted[9]. Based upon these documents and what was learned in Year 1 the academy feels it is now better prepared to scale up our project in Year 2. Several of the changes listed below are in direct response to observations made earlier in this document regarding the impact we have had to date.

1. To better serve existing and new superintendents who participate in online courses we are altering the structure of courses so that students can have direct access to lectures and support materials without following a weekly schedule that includes deliverables and accountability to the online instructor. This shift from an online course design model to a performance support model will address the superintendent's desire for quick access to information and will eliminate the accountability issues that plagued prior course designs.

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[8] ATTACHMENT A Technology for Administrators Formative Evaluation, ATTACHMENT B TSAT results
ATTACHMENT C Understanding School Finance
[9] ATTACHMENT D Needs Assessment

[10] ATTACHMENT D Needs Assessment

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We believe that these efforts will help integrate online technologies into the current professional development offerings at M.A.S.S. and as a result increase our visibility as well as providing additional opportunities for superintendents to become exposed to online learning. The goal by the end of Year 2 is to create a larger demand for online services.

1.3 Describe how the project will be scaled up after the two-year grant period.

Several proposals are currently being examined to ensure the long term success of the Superintendents Academy. Each involves an increase in scale that would either require additional funding or a more modest self-sustaining model. Listed below are four proposals that will be developed during the second year of funding:

Plan A: Creation of an Administrators Licensure Program throughout the University of Massachusetts System. Designed similar to the Leadership in Urban Schools program at UMB this certificate would satisfy the DOE requirements for administrative licensure and could be later expanded to meet doctorial requirements at the graduate college of education. Courses could be accessed online through any college in the university system and practicum requirements would be supervised by M.A.S.S. Development of this program is currently being discussed within the graduate college of education and outside funding is being sought.

Plan B: Expanded access to the Superintendents Academy so that courses offered free to M.A.S.S. members only can be accessed by others. Currently a limited number of courses will be offered each year for PDP points. Under the expanded academy plan new course titles will be offered and graduate credits will be awarded for existing titles. In an effort to increase participation outside funding is being sought to include partnering with other professional organizations like MESPA, MSSAA, MOEC and MASCD.

Plan C: M.A.S.S. / UMB subsidized continuation would involve an increase in M.A.S.S. dues to allow its membership free or reduced tuition to academy courses. UMB would reduce the cost per student based upon the number of participants and M.A.S.S. would continue to support and promote all the courses that would have been developed. New course titles would be discussed and the development costs would be shared. This plan offers limited growth potential but can be self sustaining based upon the reputation and interest garnered during the first two years.

Plan D: The UMB unsubsidized continuation plan would allow the university to offer open enrollment to courses at existing university rates ($570.). M.A.S.S. would continue to promote courses and M.A.S.S. consultants would act as instructors. Demand for such courses will be determined throughout the year and a feasibility study will be included in the grants final report.

Here are some preliminary numbers for the Year 2 budget. They include estimate costs for providing the following courses:

- Understanding School Law (Sept. 2004)
- School Improvement Planning (Feb 2005)
- Understanding School Finance (???)
- Curriculum Audits (June 2005)
- MASS Mentoring Support (4 modules launched throughout the year)
- Team Building Workshop (to support the Curriculum Audits Module)

Robert Kelley
Project Coordinator Job Responsibilities:

1. Represent project at DOE functions.   hours
    - Grant recipient introductory meeting 10/8   5
    - Evaluation criteria meeting (Nov)   5
    - Mid-year review 2/1   5
    - Technology Conference 3/22   3
    - MassCUE conference / Online Learning Panel 4/12   5
    - Leadership Academy 4/15   2
    - Final evaluation meeting 5/12   5

2. DOE paperwork
    - 170-A Grant application   40
    - Mid-Year Report   40
    - Grant Amendment documents   20
    - Continuation Proposal Year 2   40

3. Evaluation coordination
    - Time series evaluation   10
    - TSAT / DOE evaluation   10
    - Finance formative evaluation   10
    - Needs assessment   20

4. Budgeting
    - Create budget reports for DOE   10
    - Create budget reports for UMB   10
    - Process invoices   40
    - Database management   20
    - Budget meeting 5/14   2

5. Instructional Design
    - Document academy's educational philosophy   18
    - Create online learning tutorials   20
    - Academy kick-off, 11/3   5
    - Monitor instructor's participation   12
    - Monitor and track student participation   6
    - Prepare instructors for Online learning format
        a. Finance meeting 1/20, 1/30   8
        b. Mentoring Meeting, 4/15   4
        c. Mentoring meeting w/Dave Tobin, 5/5   4
        d. Mentoring meeting, 5/27   4
        e. Law meeting, 6/2   4
        f. Curriculum meeting, 6/21 & 6/30   6

6. Integrate Academy within the UMB campus
   - Physical presence in McCormick Hall   40
   - Email, Phone, Fax, Web accounts   10
   - Continuing Ed. / Graduate College of Ed coordination   20
   - Prometheus account management   20
   - Media Services coordination   40

7. Coordinate Internships
   - Recruit and orient Harvard doctorial student   40
   - Recruit and orient UMB database manager   40
   - Manage assignments and hours   10

8. Support vision & future growth
   - Academy Kick-off 11/3   5
   - UMB Continuing Ed website development   5
   - MASS Technology Leadership Conference   3

   - UMB / MASS Meetings
      - Promotion meeting 11/12   5
      - DOE meeting 11/24   5
      - Worchester   5
      - Promotion meeting 1/15   5
      - Mentoring Introductory Meeting 2/10   5
      - UMB update 4/16   5
      - UMB GCOE presentation 4/26   5
      - UMB / MASS year 1 review 6/9   <u>5</u>

$30,000/year = $50/hour x 600 hours   Total: 617 hours