

St. Mary's County Public Schools

Survey of  
Teacher Participation  
in  
**High-Quality  
Professional  
Development**

*2005-2006*

Report by

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June, 2006

Survey Administration and Data Exhibits by  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

June 2006

### Overview:

#### *Organizational Structure and Goals of Professional Development—*

Professional development is a continual focus of school and system improvement efforts. This is illustrated through the reorganization within the school system, with a strong emphasis on professional development. The Director of Professional and Organizational Development is responsible for working with the Superintendent's School Support Team for guiding change efforts and supporting instructional improvement efforts.

The goals of professional development are consistent with the Master Plan and ESEA goals. Specifically, professional development initiatives are based on identified needs to build capacity for improvement related to these goals. In addition, professional development is designed using student data, examining root causes, teacher observation and performance, and school improvement targets. Therefore, specific objectives for professional development are differentiated based on the needs of teachers and schools. A key goal is to ensure that all efforts are high quality professional development that are aligned with the Maryland Professional Development Standards that are sustained, job-embedded, and meaningful work that is evaluated and monitored throughout the process. A focus on high quality professional development has been clearly articulated as an emphasis in school improvement planning and across the system. The survey described below provides evidence that this goal is being reached.

#### *Survey of Teacher Participation in High-Quality Professional Development—*

Professional development continues to be a focus in terms of educational efforts to improve student achievement. *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) stresses the need for schools and school systems to provide "high-quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom focused" professional development. NCLB also requires states to report annually on teacher participation in high-quality professional development.

During the spring of 2004, MSDE commissioned a survey conducted by Policy Studies Associates, Inc., in which teachers were asked to report on their participation in five categories of professional development for that school year. In the spring of 2006, St. Mary's County Public Schools commissioned the survey to be administered locally, since MSDE elected not to administer the survey statewide. The survey administered in the spring of 2006 is similar to the instrument used for the 2003-2004 school year to allow for comparisons between the two survey administrations. The five categories that represented long-term professional development activities (i.e., those that lasted more than one day) are:

1. Graduate Courses
2. Workshops, Institutes, and Academies
3. Coaching or Mentoring Programs
4. Job-Embedded Professional Development Activities
5. Conferences or Professional Meetings

## **Identification of Participation in High-Quality Professional Development Activities**

MSDE set a vigorous standard to identify teachers as participants in high-quality professional development activities. This threshold was set based on the definition stated in NCLB, as well as the Teacher Professional Development Standards (2004). More specifically, teachers were counted as having participated in high-quality professional development in one or more of the five categories of professional development if their responses to questions fit the following patterns, meeting 15 of 17 indicators (see Table 1 on the following page):

- Reporting being “very involved” or “somewhat involved” in two of the four activities and decisions about *planning and decision making*; **and**
- Reporting that the professional development “frequently” or “sometimes” included each of the five learning activities about *the learning opportunities*; **and**
- Reporting that the follow-up “frequently” or “sometimes” include each of the four activities about *follow-up*; **and**
- Reporting that they benefited “to a great extent” or “to some extent” in each of the four areas about *benefits*.

### **Key Findings:**

- **45% of teachers reported participating in one or more of the five categories of activities that are defined as high quality activities.** This is an increase of 9% over the previous survey.
- **The high standard of professional development is consistently illustrated in response patterns.** Teacher responses ranking experiences as high quality have increased, though the standard remained high. Of particular note, the percentage of teachers who participated in job-embedded professional development who ranked the experience as high quality increased by 9%. Participation in job-embedded professional development increased by 17%.
- **Participation in high-quality professional development increased in every content area, every grade level, and for all groups of teachers** regardless of years experience.
- **Teacher experiences that met the criteria for high quality increased in all activities.** Teacher involvement in planning and decision making, participation in activities to increase knowledge and skills, and follow-up increased in all areas.

### **Response Rates:**

The overall response rate for St. Mary’s County Public Schools was **57%** (45% for 2004).

Response rates by school level are:

- |                               | <u>2006</u> | <u>2004</u> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| • Elementary school teachers: | 68%         | (57%)       |
| • Middle school teachers:     | 47%         | (30%)       |
| • High school teachers:       | 48%         | (38%)       |

*For each of the reports of data, the response rate for 2006 is indicated with the 2004 data indicated in parentheses.*

**Table 1**  
**Using Survey Data to Define High-Quality Professional Development**

<b>PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING</b>					
<b>Indicators:</b>	<b>Very Involved</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>Involved</b>	<b>Seldom Involved</b>	<b>Not Involved</b>
■ Determine content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ Determine learning activities					
■ Set expectations for outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ Participate in evaluation of course as professional learning					
<b>LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES</b>					
<b>Indicators:</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Never</b>
■ Explanations of key concepts and theories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ Demonstrations of skills and strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ Opportunities to practice skills and strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ Feedback and assessment of understanding of key concepts and theories	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ Feedback and assessment of mastery of skills and strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>FOLLOW UP</b>					
<b>Indicators:</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Never</b>
■ Ongoing opportunities for conversations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ Explanations/presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ Demonstrations of skills and strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ Feedback and assessment on mastery of skills and strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>BENEFITS</b>					
<b>Indicators:</b>	<b>Great Extent</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>Some Extent</b>	<b>Limited Extent</b>	<b>Not at All</b>
■ Increased knowledge of subject(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ Increased academic rigor in instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ More differentiated instruction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
■ Increased ability to contribute to planned improvement efforts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>or</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

**Summary of results:**

Results from selected exhibits are included below. All exhibits from the survey can be found in the complete attachment of exhibits from the survey administration.

**Exhibit 1  
Participation in High-Quality Professional Development 2005-2006**

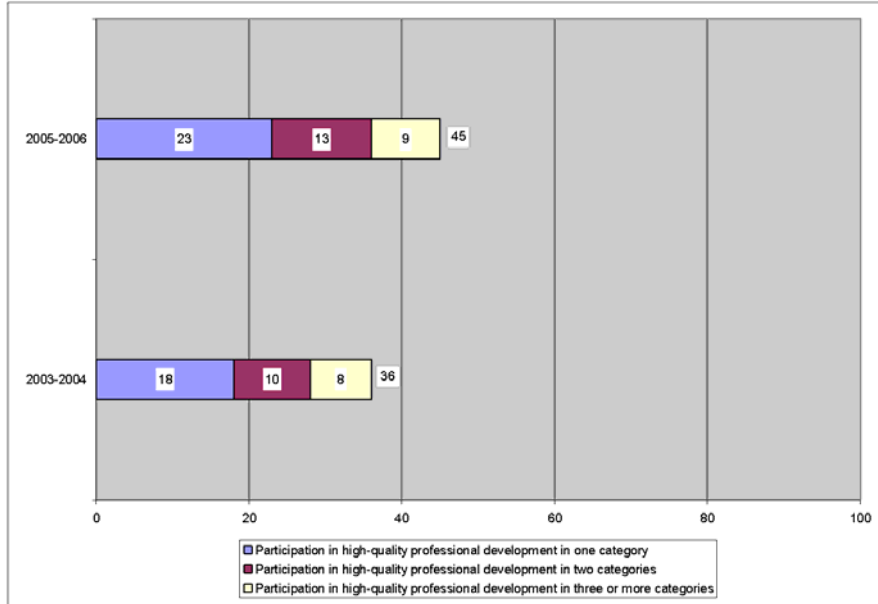


Exhibit reads: An estimated 45 percent of teachers reported participating in high-quality professional development in one or more of the five categories of activities included in the survey. This compares to 36 percent in 2003-04. In 2006, 23 percent of teachers reported participating in high-quality professional development in one category, 13 percent participated in high-quality professional development in two categories, and 9 percent participated in high-quality professional development in three or more categories.

**Participation in High-Quality Professional Development**

	<b>SMCPS 2006 (2004)</b>	<b>Maryland (2004)</b>
Participation in one or more high-quality professional development activities	<b>45% (36%)</b>	<b>44%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participated in high-quality PD in one category</li> <li>Participated in high-quality PD in two categories</li> <li>Participated in high-quality PD in three or more categories</li> </ul>	<p>23% (18%)</p> <p>13% (10%)</p> <p>9% (8%)</p>	Not identified

**Exhibit 2**  
**Participation in Professional Development, by Category**

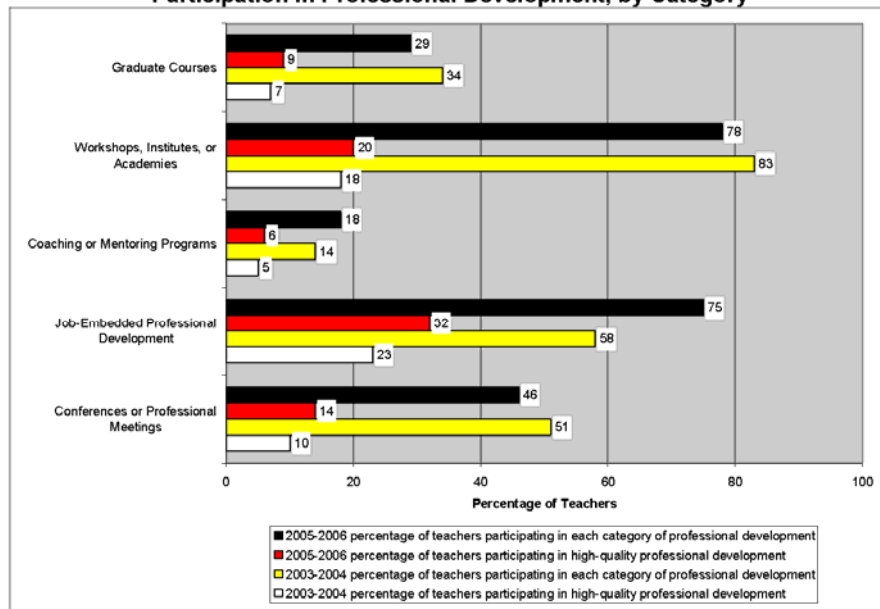


Exhibit reads: An estimated 29 percent of teachers reported enrolling in one or more graduate course(s) and an estimated 9 percent of teachers reported that the course(s) were of high quality in 2005-2006. This compares to 34percent and 7 percent in 2003-04.

**Participation in High-Quality Professional Development, by Category**

	<b>SCMPS</b>		<b>Maryland</b>
	<b>2006</b>	<b>(2004)</b>	<b>(2004)</b>
Graduate courses	<b>29%</b>	(34%)	34%
• reported experience as <u>high quality</u>	<b>9%</b>	(7%)	10%
Workshops, institutes, or academies	<b>78%</b>	(83%)	75%
• reported experience as <u>high quality</u>	<b>20%</b>	(18%)	22%
Coaching or mentoring programs	<b>18%</b>	(14%)	13%
• reported experience as <u>high quality</u>	<b>6%</b>	(5%)	5%
Job-embedded professional development	<b>75%</b>	(58%)	61%
• reported experience as <u>high quality</u>	<b>32%</b>	(23%)	24%
Conferences or professional meetings	<b>46%</b>	(51%)	37%
• reported experience as <u>high quality</u>	<b>14%</b>	(10%)	11%

\*\*Note: reports of experiences as high quality are percentages of the percentage in that category. Teachers were counted as having participated in high-quality professional development in one or more of the five categories of professional development if their responses to questions fit the following patterns, meeting 15 of 17 indicators.

**Exhibit 3**  
**Participation in High-Quality Professional Development, by Grade Level**

	<b>Percent</b>	
	<b>2006</b>	<b>(2004)</b>
Elementary	<b>51%</b>	<b>(41%)</b>
Middle	<b>35%</b>	<b>(28%)</b>
High	<b>44%</b>	<b>(33%)</b>

**Exhibit 4**  
**Participation in High-Quality Professional Development, by Years of Experience**

	<b>Percent</b>	
	<b>2006</b>	<b>(2004)</b>
3 years or less	<b>51%</b>	<b>(48%)</b>
4 or more years	<b>43%</b>	<b>(33%)</b>

**Exhibit 5**  
**Participation in High-Quality Professional Development,**  
**by Primary Content Area of Current Teaching Assignment**

	<b>Percent</b>	
	<b>2006</b>	<b>(2004)</b>
English/Language Arts/Reading	<b>39%</b>	<b>(35%)</b>
Mathematics	<b>35%</b>	<b>(23%)</b>
Social Studies	<b>38%</b>	<b>(24%)</b>
Science	<b>42%</b>	<b>(29%)</b>
Special Education	<b>38%</b>	<b>(35%)</b>
Elementary school teacher assigned to multiple subjects	<b>56%</b>	<b>(46%)</b>
Other	<b>42%</b>	<b>(35%)</b>

**Exhibit 12**  
**Participation in High-Quality Professional Development,**  
**by Grade Level and Category**

	<b>Grade Level</b>			
	<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>Middle School</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Other School</b>
Graduate courses	28 (21)	33 (33)	33 (13)	NA (NA)
Workshops, institutes, or academies	28 (18)	24 (24)	25 (26)	25 (NA)
Coaching or mentoring program	37 (58)	27 (7)	26 (24)	NA (NA)
Job-embedded professional development activities	50 (36)	30 (34)	43 (51)	67 (NA)
Conferences or professional meetings	28 (17)	33 (22)	31 (20)	33 (NA)

Exhibit reads: An estimated 28 percent of elementary school teachers who reported participating in one or more graduate course(s) reported that the graduate course(s) was of high quality. This compares to 21 percent in 2003-04.

**Exhibit 8**  
**Teacher Experience That Met Maryland's Criteria for High Quality:**  
**Workshops, Institutes, or Academies**

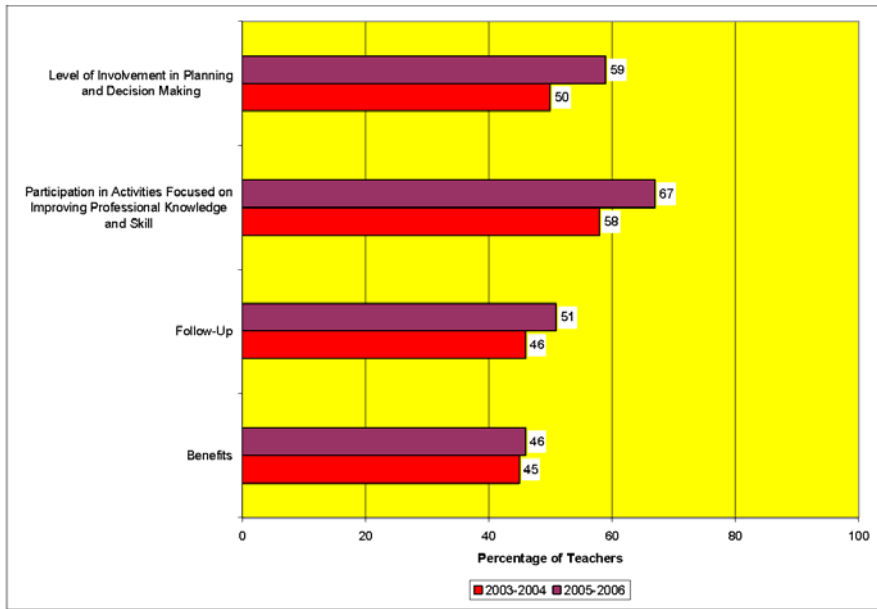


Exhibit reads: An estimated 59 percent of teachers who reported participating in workshops, institutes, or academies reported involvement in planning and decision making that met Maryland's criteria for high quality in 2005-2006. This compares to 50 percent in 2003-04.

**Exhibit 9**  
**Teacher Experience That Met Maryland's Criteria for High Quality:**  
**Coaching or Mentoring Programs**

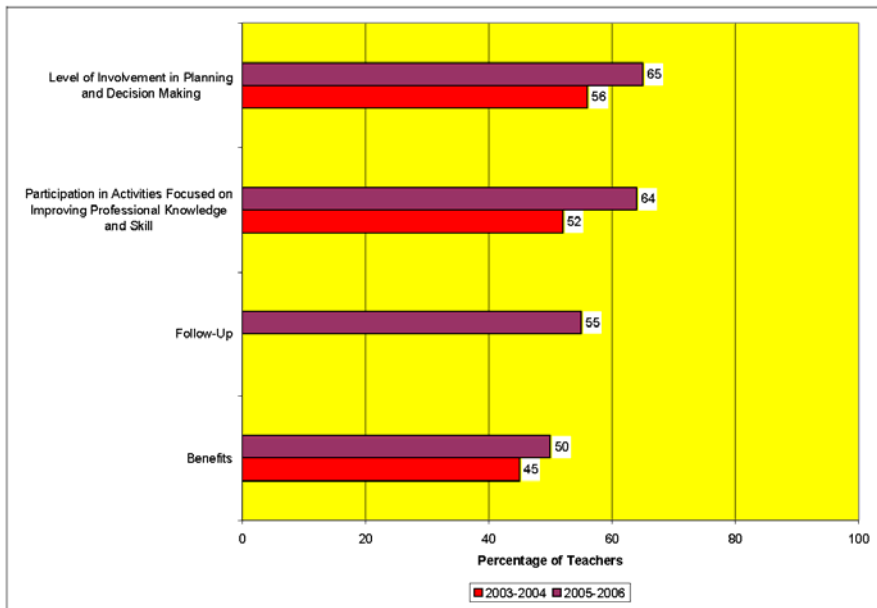


Exhibit reads: An estimated 65 percent of teachers who reported participating in a coaching or mentoring program reported involvement in planning and decision making that met Maryland's criteria for high quality in 2005-2006. This compares to 56 percent in 2003-04.

**Exhibit 10**  
**Teacher Experience That Met Maryland's Criteria for High Quality:**  
**Job-Embedded Professional Development**

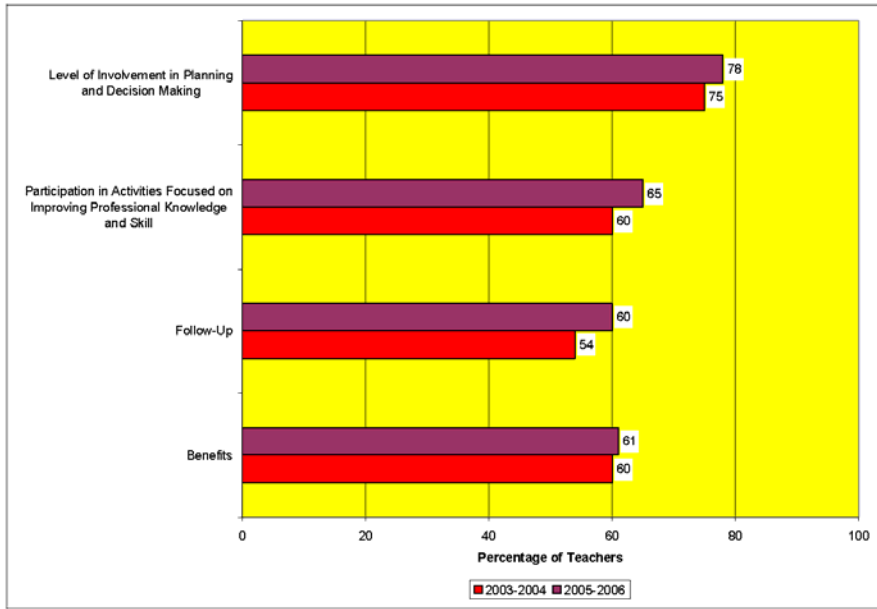


Exhibit reads: An estimated 78 percent of teachers who reported participating in job-embedded professional development reported involvement in planning and decision making that met Maryland's criteria for high quality in 2005-2006. This compares to 75 percent in 2003-04.

**Exhibit 11**  
**Teacher Experience That Met Maryland's Criteria for High Quality:**  
**Conferences or Professional Meetings**

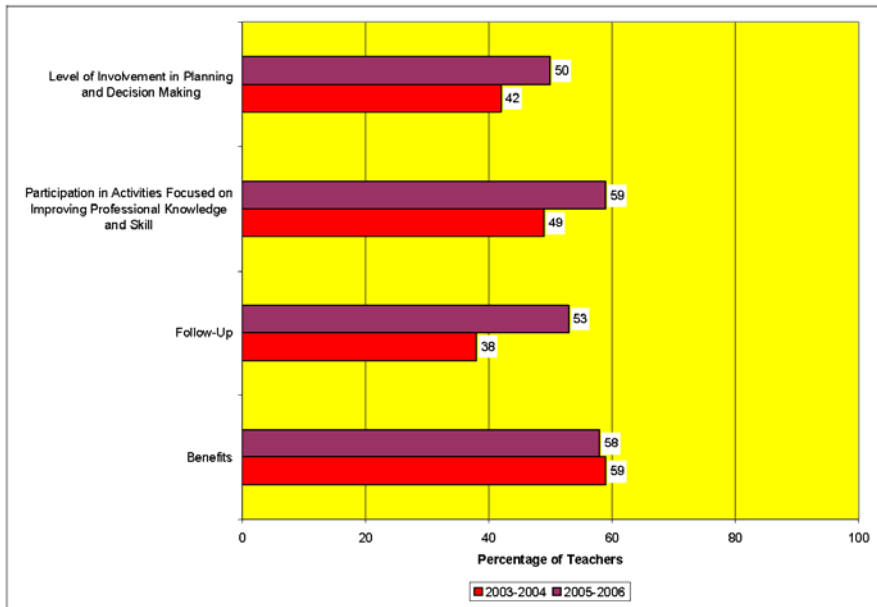


Exhibit reads: An estimated 50 percent of teachers who reported participating in conferences or professional meetings reported involvement in planning and decision making that met Maryland's criteria for high quality in 2005-2006. This compares to 42 percent in 2003-04.

## **Description of Categories of Professional Development**

### **Section I: Participation in Workshops, Institutes, and Academies**

Questions in this section ask about your participation in professional development activities that are typically called workshops, institutes, or academies, and that last a day or longer. Note that an activity that includes multiple sessions that add up to at least a day are included in this category of professional development. These activities include events that are planned and scheduled in advance and may take place during the regular school schedule or after school, on the weekend, or during the summer. They may be sponsored by your school or district. They may also be part of professional development school partnership or they may be sponsored by some other entity. They may also be residential programs that last for several days or a few weeks. These events may take place in schools, the district office, some other central facility, or on a college or university campus. These activities may include some follow up in schools and classrooms.

### **Section II: Participation in a Coaching or Mentoring Program**

Questions in this section ask for information about the experience of having a coach or mentor assigned to work with you as part of a new teacher induction program or a formal coaching or mentoring program sponsored by the district or some other entity. These programs may be sponsored by your district and they could also be part of a professional development school partnership. ***Note that questions in this section of the survey do not ask about informal coaching or mentoring relationships or other kinds of collaboration between individual teachers.***

### **Section III: Participation in Job-Embedded Professional Development Activities**

Questions in this section ask about your participation in job-embedded professional development activities. These activities often take place during the regular school day or before or after school. Typically they involve working with colleagues from your school or from other schools, including school-based professional development staff (e.g., subject area resource teacher). They may also be supported by a professional development school partnership. Some examples of job-embedded professional development include:

- Teacher study groups
- Teacher networks
- Meetings of grade, subject, or department teams (excluding meetings that focus on routine administrative and operational issues and tasks)
- Collaboration on curriculum development or lesson planning
- Collaboration on reviewing student work

***Note that job-embedded professional development as it is defined here does not include participation in coaching and mentoring programs included in the previous section of the survey.***

### **Section IV: Enrollment in Graduate Courses**

Questions in this section ask about your enrollment in graduate courses that began after July 1, 2005. Graduate courses are courses at the masters, doctoral, or advanced studies level available in any public or private institution of higher education in Maryland or any other state. Some graduate courses may also be part of a professional development school partnership.

### **Section V: Attendance at Conferences or Professional Meetings**

Questions in this section ask about your attendance at conferences and professional meetings. These include events such as annual meetings of professional associations or other organizations, as well as special purpose events that may occur only once. In many cases, these events will take place out of the district or perhaps even outside of Maryland.