

160-3-3-.04 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING.

(1) **DEFINITIONS.**

(a) **Allowable funds** – expenditures that are permissible by the guidelines of the funding source.

(b) **Annual report** – a report to be submitted each year to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) by each Local Educational Agency (LEA) describing the impact of the professional learning process for the year.

(c) **Best practices** – evidenced-based instructional approaches that lead to increased educator effectiveness and student learning.

(d) **Comprehensive improvement plan** – a multi-year plan from each Local Educational Agency required by the Georgia Department of Education that includes major components of data, identified needs, goals, objectives, implementation steps, evaluation, and budget.

(e) **Instructional Coach** – an individual who provides intensive, differentiated support to educators in order to favorably impact adult practices, student practices, and student achievement.

(f) **Knowledge, Skills, Practices, and Dispositions** – the critical components addressed in professional learning: Knowledge: What one learns and understands. Skills: What one is able to do. Practices: What one implements routinely. Dispositions: What one values and is willing to do.

(g) **Local Educational Agency (LEA)** – a local school district pursuant to local board of education control and management.

(h) **Mentor** – an individual who shares guidance, knowledge and experiences to support educators.

(i) **Multiple data sources** – information acquired from different sources (e.g. student achievement data, teacher/leader effectiveness measures, perception data, and demographics, etc.) that when brought together is much more powerful than that acquired from a single source.

(j) **Professional learning** – the comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving educator effectiveness resulting in increased student achievement.

(k) **Professional learning coordinator** – LEA or school level designee that is responsible for facilitating the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the LEA’s or the school’s professional learning.

(l) **Professional learning plan** – a component of the school’s or LEA’s comprehensive improvement plan detailing the professional learning process that is needed to support the major components of the improvement plan.

(m) **Professional Standards Commission (PSC)** – a state agency that grants educator licensure.

(n) **Stipend** – funds awarded by an LEA to certified personnel and paraprofessionals for having successfully completed learning opportunities that have occurred at any time during the fiscal year outside of the employee's normal contract/work hours.

(2) PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PLAN (A component of the LEA Comprehensive Improvement Plan).

(a) Requirements.

1. It is the responsibility of the school principal, Local Educational Agency (LEA) leaders and state leaders to ensure that teachers and other LEA personnel engage in on-going professional learning as part of the LEA’s comprehensive improvement plan.

2. Professional learning must be consistent with major research findings and best practices that result in the learning of all students.

3. Each LEA shall provide on-going professional learning that is aligned with Professional Standards Commission (PSC) rules and demonstrates the impact of professional learning on educator and student performance.

(b) Local Professional Learning Planning

1. As a component of the LEA’s existing comprehensive improvement plan, each LEA shall assign the responsibility to facilitate the development of a multi-year plan for professional learning to a professional learning coordinator.

2. The professional learning component of the comprehensive improvement plan shall organize and direct all professional learning that enhances the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of LEA personnel regardless of the funding source.

3. The professional learning component of the comprehensive improvement plan is reviewed and updated annually by a team of stakeholders. An annual budget shall be developed to support implementation of the LEA’s professional learning by aligning allowable local, state, and federal funds.

4. This comprehensive improvement plan, with the professional learning component included, and supporting budgets shall be submitted annually by the LEA for approval by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). Assurances shall be signed by the LEA superintendent and included as part of the annual comprehensive improvement plan.

5. The **LEA** shall assign the responsibility of a professional learning coordinator to facilitate the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the LEA's professional learning. The plan for professional learning should be based on multiple data sources including, but not limited to, student achievement and teacher/leader effectiveness measures. The plan and its implementation shall be aligned to rigorous standards for professional learning.

6. The **school** shall assign the responsibility of a professional learning leader to facilitate the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the school's professional learning designed to be support and be an integral part of the school improvement plan. The plan for professional learning should be based on multiple data sources including, but not limited to, student achievement and teacher/leader effectiveness measures. The plan and its implementation shall be aligned to rigorous standards for professional learning.

(c) Expenditures of Funds.

1. Professional learning funds may be expended for one or more of the following:

- (i) Staffing options and compensation to support a professional learning coordinator, instructional coaches, mentors, and teacher and principal leaders;
- (ii) Compensation to teachers, leaders, and instructional coaches for facilitating professional learning outside contracted hours;
- (iii) Release time for teachers to serve as mentors/instructional coaches;
- (iv) Substitute teacher salaries/benefits for release time for teachers to participate in professional learning;
- (v) Travel for professional learning purposes;
- (vi) Professional and technical service fees and expenses for instructors and consultants;
- (vii) Instructional equipment, materials and supplies for professional learning purposes;
- (viii) Training materials and supplies;

(ix) Stipends.

(x) Reimbursement for expenditures of persons who successfully complete conferences, workshops or courses approved by the professional learning coordinator and in accordance with the LEA's policy.

2. Each LEA shall develop a local policy regarding the payment of stipends. Stipends may be awarded only if the following conditions exist:

(i) There is evidence that the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions gained from the professional learning activity are aligned to an approved individual plan, or a school or LEA initiative and/or product, and/or specific goals; and

(ii) There is evidence that the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions developed through participation in or facilitation of professional learning have been implemented/demonstrated in the classroom/work setting; and

(iii) Participation occurs beyond regular contract hours, days, or school year.

3. Funds budgeted for professional learning shall be used to enhance the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions primarily of certified personnel related to improving teaching and learning as measured by student achievement.

4. Expenses may be paid for a degree, additional coursework and/or certification endorsements earned at the request and approval of the LEA to meet an identified LEA need.

5. State and federal funds designated for professional learning shall not be used to pay stipends to school board members or to school council members who are not employees of the LEA.

(d) Annual Report.

1. Each LEA shall annually report to the GaDOE. The timeline and content will be designated by the GaDOE. Annual data will be used to inform policy, communicate statewide initiatives, and inform effectiveness of professional learning.

(e) Submission of the Plan.

1. The LEA multi-year comprehensive improvement plan and budget shall be submitted to the GaDOE at a time and in a manner identified by the GaDOE.

2. Each year the LEA superintendent shall sign an assurance, as an integral part of the comprehensive improvement plan, assuring that the requirements within this rule are addressed to support implementation of professional learning.

(f) This rule shall become effective July 1, 2015.

Authority O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-86; 20-2-167(a)(3); 20-2-182(h); 20-2-201.1; 20-2-204;
20-2-210; 20-2-217; 20-2-230.

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