

3.6—LICENSED PERSONNEL EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Definitions

“Flexible PD hours (flex hours)” means PD hours that an employee is allowed to substitute as PD activities, different than those offered by the District, but are still aligned to the employee’s professional growth plan (PGP), the employee’s school’s school-level improvement plan (SLIP), or the District’s professional development plan (PDP).

“Immediate family member” means the same as in Policy 3.8—LICENSED PERSONNEL SICK LEAVE.

“Professional development (PD)” means a set of coordinated, planned learning activities for District employees who are required to hold a current license issued by the State Board of Education as a condition of employment¹ that:

- Is required by statute or the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE); or
- Meets the following criteria:
 - Is part of the professional development hours or professional learning credits, as determined by DESE, required by law or by DESE;
 - Improves the knowledge, skills, and effectiveness of teachers;
 - Improves the knowledge and skills of administrators and paraprofessionals concerning effective instructional strategies and methods;
 - Leads to improved student academic achievement; and
 - Is researched-based and standards- based; or
- May incorporate educational technology as a component of the professional development including without limitation taking or teaching an online blended course.

As part of the District’s District Strategic Plan (DSP), the District shall develop and implement a PDP for its licensed employees. The District’s PDP shall, in part, align District resources to address the PD activities identified in each school’s SLIP and incorporate the licensed employee’s PGP. The PDP shall describe how the District’s categorical funds will be used to address deficiencies in student performance and any identified academic achievement gaps between groups of students. At the end of each school year, the District shall evaluate the PD activities’ effectiveness at improving student performance and closing achievement gaps.

The goal of all PD activities shall be improved knowledge and skills to facilitate individual, team, school-wide, and District-wide improvement designed to ensure that all students demonstrate proficiency on the state’s academic standards. The PDP shall be research-based and standards-based and in alignment with applicable DESE Rules and/or Arkansas code.

Teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals shall be involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the plan for their own PD offerings. The results of the evaluation made by the

participants in each program shall be used to continuously improve PD offerings and to revise the PDP.

Each licensed employee shall receive a minimum of thirty-six (36) hours of PD annually to be fulfilled between June 1 and May 31..² A licensed employee may be required to receive more PD than the minimum when necessary to complete the licensed employee's PGP, but not to exceed sixty (60) total hours of PD..³ All licensed employees are required to obtain thirty-six (36) hours of approved PD each year over a five-year period as part of their licensure renewal requirements. PD hours earned in excess of each licensed employee's required number of hours in the designated year cannot be carried over to the next year.

All employees shall attend all local PD training sessions as directed by the employee's supervisor. The District shall determine on an annual basis how many, if any, flex hours of PD it will allow to be substituted for District scheduled PD offerings. The determination may be made at an individual building, a grade, or by subject basis. The District administration and the building principal have the authority to require attendance at specific PD activities. Employees must receive advance approval from the building principal for activities they wish to have qualify for flex PD hours. To the fullest extent possible, PD activities are to be scheduled and attended such that teachers do not miss their regular teaching assignments. Six (6) approved flex hours credited toward fulfilling the licensed employee's required hours shall equal one (1) contract day. Hours of PD earned by an employee that are in excess of the employee's required hours but are either not at the request of the District or not pre-approved by the building principal, shall not be credited toward fulfilling the required number of contract days for that employee..⁴ Hours earned that count toward the licensed employee's required hours also count toward the required number of contract days for that employee. Employees shall be paid their daily rate of pay for PD hours earned at the request of the District that necessitate the employee work more than the number of days required by their contract..⁵

Approved PD activities that occur during the instructional day or outside the licensed employee's annual contract days may apply toward the annual minimum PD requirement.

Teachers and administrators who, for any reason, miss part or all of any scheduled PD activity they were required to attend, must make up the required hours in comparable activities, which are to be pre-approved by the employee's appropriate supervisor. The PD to be made up may be obtained by any method, online or otherwise, approved by DESE. Licensed employees who are prevented from obtaining the required PD hours due to their illness or the illness of an immediate family member have until the end of the following school year to make up the deficient hours. This time extension does not absolve the employee from also obtaining the following year's required hours of PD.

To receive credit for a PD activity, each employee is responsible for obtaining and submitting documents of attendance, or completion for each PD activity the employee attends. Documentation is to be submitted to the building principal or the building principal's designee. The District shall maintain all documents submitted by its employees that reflect completion of PD programs, whether such programs were provided by the District or an outside organization.

Employees who do not receive or furnish documentation of the required annual PD jeopardize the accreditation of their school and academic achievement of their students. Failure of an employee to receive required annual hours of PD in any given year, unless due to illness as permitted by law, DESE Rule, and this policy, shall be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination.

Teachers' PD shall meet the requirements prescribed under the Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS).

All District teachers that are in their first year of employment as a teacher shall receive the following PD to the extent the PD was not received as part of the teacher's licensure program:

1. Two (2) hours of PD on:
 - A. Child maltreatment and mandated reporters;
 - B. Parent, family, and community engagement;
 - C. Mental health awareness and teen suicide awareness and prevention;
 - D. For educators providing instruction in Arkansas history, Arkansas history; and
 - E. Bullying prevention that includes a Recognition of the relationship between incidents of bullying and the risk of suicide;
2. Thirty (30) minutes of professional development in human trafficking prevention; and
3. Dyslexia professional awareness

The District shall provide PD for one (1) of the prescribed pathways to obtaining a proficiency credential in knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction for teachers in:

- Kindergarten through sixth grade (K-6) who are teaching:
 - o Math;
 - o Science;
 - o Social studies; and
 - o English language arts; and
- Kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) who are:
 - o In special education resource teaching English language arts; and
 - o reading specialists.

The District shall provide PD for one (1) of the prescribed pathways to obtaining an awareness credential in knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction for all other teachers.

A teacher shall demonstrate proficiency or awareness in knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction as is applicable to their teaching position by completing the prescribed proficiency or awareness in knowledge and practices of the scientific reading instruction credential Either:

1. As a condition of licensure; or
2. Within one (1) year if the teacher is:
 - A. Already licensed with an awareness credential and is moving to a position that requires a proficiency credential; or

B. Employed under an individual licensure plan.

A teacher who fails to demonstrate proficiency within the time provided may be afforded an opportunity to demonstrate proficiency by being placed in intensive support status. The District Shall document each teacher that has not demonstrated either proficiency or awareness as part of the District's PD reporting.

Teachers may be required to receive additional PD designed to enhance their understanding of effective parent, family, and community engagement strategies in accordance with the teacher's PGP. Administrators may be required to receive additional PD designed to enhance their understanding of effective parent, family, and community engagement strategies and the importance of administrative leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to parent, family, and community participation in accordance with the administrator's PGP.

Beginning in the 2023-24 school-year and every fifth year thereafter, all licensed personnel shall receive two (2) hours of PD in mental health awareness and teen suicide awareness and prevention, which may be obtained by self-review of suitable mental health awareness and suicide prevention materials approved by DESE.

Beginning in the 2024-25 school-year and every fifth year thereafter, all licensed personnel shall receive two (2) hours of training related to bullying prevention and recognition of the relationship between incidents of bullying and the risk of suicide.

Beginning in the 2025-26 school-year and every fifth year thereafter, all District personnel shall receive two (2) hours of PD related to child maltreatment required under A.C.A. § 6-61-133.

By the beginning of the 2024-25 school year and every fourth year thereafter, a school counselor shall receive Youth Mental Health training to learn the risk factors and warning signs of mental health issues in adolescents; the importance of early intervention; and how to help an adolescent who is in crisis or expecting a mental health challenge.

In addition to the mental health training otherwise required by this policy, all district employees shall receive mental health awareness training.

Anticipated rescuers shall receive training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of automated external defibrillators as required by DESE Rule and the District's Cardiac Emergency Response Plan. Such training shall count toward the required annual hours of PD.

Starting in the 2024-2025 school year and every two (2) years thereafter, principals, guidance counselors, teachers, and other relevant school personnel with direct contact and supervision of students shall receive seventy-five (75) minutes of training, in person or online, on the recognition of signs and symptoms of seizures and the appropriate steps for seizure first aid that is consistent with training programs and guidelines developed by the Epilepsy Foundation of America. In addition, at least two (2) employees at each school shall receive training that is consistent with training programs and guidelines developed by the Epilepsy Foundation of America to:

1. Administer or assist with the self-administration of:

- A seizure rescue medication or medication prescribed to treat seizure disorder symptoms; and
 - A manual dose of prescribed electrical stimulation using a vagus nerve stimulator magnet; and
2. Recognize the signs and symptoms of seizures and the appropriate steps to be taken to respond to these symptoms.

At least once every three (3) years, persons employed as athletic coaches; licensed teacher coaches; or competitive or noncompetitive spirit coaches shall receive training related to the recognition and management of concussions, dehydration, or other health emergencies; students' health and safety issues related to environmental issues; communicable diseases; and sudden cardiac arrest. The training may include a component on best practices for a coach to educate parents of students involved in athletics on sports safety. Athletics coaches, licensed teacher coaches; or competitive or noncompetitive spirit coaches shall maintain a Basic Life Support certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and automated external defibrillation.

For each administrator, the thirty six (36) hour PD requirement shall include training in data disaggregation, instructional leadership, and fiscal management. This training may include the Initial, Tier 1, and Tier 2 training required for Superintendents and other designees by DESE's Rules Governing the Arkansas Financial Accounting and Reporting System and Annual Training Requirements.

Building level administrators shall complete the credentialing assessment for the teacher evaluation PD program prior to conducting any summative teacher evaluations.⁷

Teachers required by the superintendent, building principal, or their designee to take approved training related to teaching an accelerated learning class shall receive up to thirty (30) hours of credit toward the hours of PD required annually.

Licensed personnel may earn up to twelve (12) hours of PD for time they are required to spend in their instructional classroom, office or media center prior to the first day of student/teacher interaction **provided** the time is spent in accordance with state law and current DESE rules that deal with PD. Licensed personnel who meet the requirements of this paragraph, the associated statute, and DESE Rules shall be entitled to one (1) hour of PD for each hour of approved preparation.

The District shall make available annually to licensed personnel at least thirty (30) minutes of professional development on recognizing the warning signs that a child is a victim of human trafficking and reporting a suspicion that a child is a victim of human trafficking.

In addition to other required PD, personnel of Alternative Learning Environments shall receive PD on classroom management and on the specific needs and characteristics of students in alternative education environments.

District administrators as well as licensed personnel selected by the superintendent or building principal shall receive training on the appropriate use of restraint and seclusion in accordance

with DESE's Advisory Guidelines for the Use of Student Restraints in Public School or Educational Settings and is in compliance with the requirements of A.C.A. § 6-18-2409. The names of District staff who have received certified training on the use of physical restraint shall be provided to all District staff at least annually.

As part of the District's implementation of the District's multi-tiered behavioral intervention procedures, District administrators as well as building personnel selected by the superintendent or building principal shall receive training in the use of the District's multi-tiered behavioral intervention procedures to be employed by school personnel to prevent, defuse, evaluate, and debrief a crisis and conflict situation.

Employees who are members of the District's behavioral threat assessment team shall receive basic and advanced behavioral threat assessment training through the Arkansas Center for School Safety of the Criminal Justice Institute or another organization or entity approved by the state board.

The District shall not require a school employee to complete or participate in implicit bias training, which is defined as a training or educational program designed to expose an individual to biases that the training's or educational program's developer or designer presumes the individual to unconsciously or unintentionally possess that predispose the individual to be unfairly prejudiced in favor of or against a thing, person, or group to adjust the individual's pattern of thinking in order to eliminate the individual's unconscious or unintentional bias or prejudice. A District employee may leave a training that the employee is attending if the employee determines that the training addresses implicit biases. The District shall not take adverse employment action against an employee for the employee's failure or refusal to complete or participate in implicit bias training.

The District shall provide ongoing professional development on the effective and ethical use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools that shall include:

- Understanding the capabilities and limitations of AI tools;
- Best practices for integrating AI into daily instructional and administrative duties; and
- Ethical considerations, including appropriate use, transparency, and data privacy.

The following PD shall count toward a licensed employee's required PD hours to the extent the District's PDP or the employee's school's SLIP includes such training, is approved for flex hours, or is part of the employee's PGP and it provides the employee with knowledge and skills for teaching:

- Students with intellectual disabilities, including Autism Spectrum Disorder;
- Students with specific learning disorders, including dyslexia;
- Culturally and linguistically diverse students;
- Gifted Students.

Approved PD activities may include:

- Conferences, workshops, or institutes;
- Mentoring or peer coaching;
- Study groups;
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification;
- Distance and online learning (including ArkansasIDEAS);
- Internships;
- Programs administered by DESE, an education service cooperative, district, or school;
- Approved college/university course work;
- Action research
- Individually guided (to be noted in the employee's PGP).

PD activities shall relate to the following areas:

- Content (K-12);
- Instructional strategies;
- Student assessment and data-driven decision making;
- Advocacy, leadership, and fiscal management;
- Systemic change process;
- Standards, frameworks, and curriculum alignment;
- Supervision;
- Mentoring;
- Principles of learning and developmental stages;
- Cognitive research;
- Parent, family, and community engagement and academic planning;
- Collaborative learning community;
- Student health and wellness; and
- The Code of Ethics for Arkansas Educators.

Additional activities eligible for PD credit, as included in the District's PDP, employee's school's SLIP, and licensed employee's PGP, include:

- School Fire Marshall program (A.C.A. § 6-10-110)
- Tornado and earthquake safety (A.C.A. § 6-10-121)
- Literacy assessment, mathematics assessment, or both (A.C.A §6-15-2907)
- Assessment security and confidentiality (A.C.A. §6-15-2907)
- Emergency plans and the emergency communication method with law enforcement (A.C.A §6-15-1302);
- Anti-bullying policies (A.C.A. §6-18-514)
- TESS (A.C.A. §6-17-2806)
- Student discipline training (A.C.A. §6-18-502)
- Youth mental health (A.C.A. §6-18-2004)
- Comprehensive School Counseling Program (A.C.A. § 6-18-2004)
- Training required by DESE under the Arkansas Educational Support and Accountability Act and fiscal and facilities distress statutes and rules; and
- Annual lockdown drills (6-15-1303)

Cross References: 3.8—LICENSED PERSONNEL SICK LEAVE
3.50—ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATOR CERTIFICATION
3.58—LICENSED PERSONNEL USE OF ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE
4.37—EMERGENCY DRILLS
4.60—STUDENT BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION AND RESTRAINT
5.2—PLANNING FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Legal References: Standards For Accreditation 1-B.4, 3-A.4, 3-B.1, 4-G.1, 4-G.2
DESE Rules Governing Professional Development
DESE Rules Governing the Arkansas Educational Support and
Accountability Act
DESE Rules Governing school-based Automated External Defibrillator
(AED) devices and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) programs in
Arkansas Public Schools
DESE Rules Governing the Arkansas Financial Accounting and Reporting
System and Annual Training Requirements
DESE Rules Governing the Right to Read Act
DESE Rules Governing Student Special Needs Funding
DESE Advisory Guidelines for the Use of Student Restraints in Public
School or Educational Settings
A.C.A. § 6-10-121
A.C.A. § 6-10-122
A.C.A. § 6-10-123
A.C.A. § 6-15-1004(c)
A.C.A. § 6-15-1302
A.C.A. § 6-15-1303
A.C.A. § 6-15-1703
A.C.A. § 6-15-2907
A.C.A. § 6-15-2911
A.C.A. § 6-15-2912
A.C.A. § 6-15-2913
A.C.A. § 6-15-2914
A.C.A. § 6-15-2916
A.C.A. § 6-16-1203
A.C.A. § 6-17-124
A.C.A. § 6-17-429
A.C.A. § 6-17-703
A.C.A. § 6-17-704
A.C.A. § 6-17-708
A.C.A. § 6-17-709

A.C.A. § 6-17-710
A.C.A. § 6-17-711
A.C.A. § 6-17-2806
A.C.A. § 6-17-2808
A.C.A. § 6-18-502(f)
A.C.A. § 6-18-514(f)
A.C.A. § 6-18-708
A.C.A. § 6-18-720
A.C.A. § 6-18-2004
A.C.A. § 6-18-2404
A.C.A. § 6-18-2408
A.C.A. § 6-18-2409
A.C.A. § 6-20-2204
A.C.A. § 6-20-2303 (16)
A.C.A. § 6-41-608
A.C.A. § 6-61-133

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