

Professional Development

The District recognizes that additional training and study are advantageous for the continued growth and ability of District employees. As part of a continuous program of instructional and administrative improvement, the District shall provide a minimum of three days of professional development annually for certified employees. A day of professional development is defined as six hours of actual contact time. Professional development time may be divided into no less than two-hour increments to facilitate delivery of professional development programs. By April 15 of each year, the District shall formulate a professional development plan that includes:

1. Goals and objectives appropriate to the professional development needs of teachers, school trustees, and all other school personnel;
2. Acceptable activities; and
3. Evaluation methods required for each activity in the plan.

The County Superintendent shall assist staff to develop and evaluate the plan. The committee shall include but not be limited to teachers, administrative personnel, and trustees. A majority of the committee shall be teachers. For independent, multi-grade elementary districts with supervising teachers, the County Superintendent may establish one committee to develop the plan for all of these schools in the county. The plan shall be on file with the County Superintendent or the Supervising Teacher. It shall be available to employees and the public.

Release Time for Professional Development

During the course of a year, there are often professionally related activities such as conventions, committee meetings, workshops, seminars, institutes, visitations and other activities that are related to the education profession in a general sense. The Board of Trustees recognizes that the professional personnel of the District will occasionally want to attend these activities.

Consultation by Certified Employees

Occasionally professional staff may ask for release in order to consult outside the District. On limited basis this type of professional activity may be permitted. A professional who is absent a few times during the year for this purpose may be contributing to the profession and to the District. On the other hand, if a teacher were absent from his/her classroom duties many times during the year, the loss of instruction for the students would likely not be offset by the other benefits. The guidelines to be used relative to these requests are:

1. A professional staff member may use his/her personal leave days as per the Public Schools/contract.
2. Such an individual may use professional leave for consulting work if approved by the Board. In making its decision the Board will consider such factors as the total number of absences of the teacher for all purposes during the year; the professional value of the consulting services to be provided by the teachers; maintenance of program effectiveness in the teacher's absence; availability of competent substitutes; and arrangements for substitute pay (see No. 3 below).
3. The beneficiary of the staff member's consultation service will reimburse the District for the cost of the substitute's pay. These arrangements are the responsibility of the consulting professional and must be made with the business office.
4. Where a certified employee uses vacation days for consultation, they shall be the sole concern of the employee.

Legal Reference: § 20-1-304, MCA
10.55.714, ARM

Pupil-Instruction-Related Day
Professional Development

Policy History:

Adopted on: 2008-09

Revised on: 01/28/19