

3.6—LICENSED PERSONNEL EMPLOYEE TRAINING

For the purposes of this policy, 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 employment that:

- a. Is required by statute or the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE); or
- b. Meets the following criteria:
 - 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.

All employees shall attend all local PD training sessions as directed by his/her supervisor.

As part of the District's School District Support Plan (SDSP), the District shall develop and implement a professional development plan (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 school-level improvement plan (SLIP) and incorporate the licensed employee's professional growth plan (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.

Each licensed employee shall receive a minimum of thirty-six (36) hours of PD annually to be fulfilled between July 1 and June 30. A licensed employee may be required to receive more PD than the minimum when necessary to complete the licensed employee's PGP.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.

Licensed employees who are prevented from obtaining the required PD hours due to their illness or the illness of an immediate family member as defined in A.C.A. § 6-17-1202 have until the end of the following school year to make up the deficient hours. Missed hours of PD shall be made up with PD that is substantially similar to that which was missed and can be obtained by any method, online or otherwise, approved by ADE. This time extension does not absolve the employee from also obtaining the following year's required hours of PD. Failure to obtain required PD or to make up missed PD could lead to disciplinary consequences, up to termination or nonrenewal of the contract of employment.

The goal of all PD activities shall be improved teaching and learning knowledge and skills that result in 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 ADE 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 SLIP.

Flexible PD hours (flex hours) are those hours that an employee is allowed to substitute PD activities, different than those offered by the District, but are still aligned to the employee's PGP, the employee's school's SLIP, or the District's PDP. 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 qualified 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

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.

To receive credit for his/her PD activity, each employee is responsible for obtaining and submitting documents of attendance, or completion for each PD activity he/she attends. Documentation is to be submitted to the building principal or 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.

To the extent required by ADE Rules, employees will receive up to six (6) hours of educational technology PD that is integrated within other PD offerings, including taking or teaching an online or blended course.

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 him/her 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.

Beginning in the 2013-14 school-year and every fourth year thereafter, all mandated reporters and licensed personnel shall receive two (2) hours of PD related to child maltreatment required under A.C.A.

§ 6-61-133. For the purposes of this training, "mandated reporters" includes school social workers, psychologists, and nurses.

Beginning in school-year 2014-15 and every fourth year thereafter, teachers shall receive two (2) hours of PD designed to enhance their understanding of effective parental involvement strategies.

Beginning in school-year 2014-15 and every fourth year thereafter, administrators shall receive two (2) hours of PD designed to enhance their understanding of effective parental involvement strategies and the importance of administrative leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to parental participation.

Beginning in the 2015-16 school-year and every fourth year thereafter, all licensed personnel shall receive two (2) hours of PD in teen suicide awareness and prevention, which may be obtained by self-review of suitable suicide prevention materials approved by ADE.

Beginning in the 2016-17 school-year and every fourth year thereafter, teachers who provide instruction in Arkansas history shall receive at least two (2) hours of PD in Arkansas history as part of the teacher's annual PD requirement.

Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, the District shall provide professional development for one (1) of the prescribed pathways to obtaining a proficiency credential in knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction for teachers licensed at the elementary level or in special education and professional development for one (1) of the prescribed pathways to obtaining an awareness credential in knowledge and practices in scientific reading instruction for teachers licensed in an area other than the elementary level or in special education. The professional development will be designed so that, by the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, all teachers employed in a teaching position that requires an elementary education license or special education license shall demonstrate proficiency in knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction and all other teachers shall demonstrate awareness in knowledge and practices of the scientific reading instruction.

Anticipated rescuers shall receive training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of automated external defibrillators as required by ADE Rule. Such training shall count toward the required annual hours of PD.

At least once every three (3) years, persons employed as athletic 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; ~~and~~ 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.

All licensed personnel shall receive training related to compliance with the District's antibullying policies.

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 ADE'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.⁶

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

By the end of the 2014-15 school-year, teachers shall have received professional awareness on the characteristics of dyslexia and the evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia.⁷ Teachers required by the superintendent, building principal, or their designee to take approved training related to teaching an advance placement class for a subject covered by the College Board and Educational Testing Service 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 ADE rules that deal with PD. Licensed personnel who meet the requirements of this paragraph, the associated statute, and ADE Rules shall be entitled to one (1) hour of PD for each hour of approved preparation.

Licensed personnel shall receive five (5) PD hours for each credit hour of a graduate level college course that meets the criteria identified in law and applicable ADE rules. A maximum of fifteen (15) such hours may be applied toward the thirty six (36) hours of PD required annually for license renewal.⁸ 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 ADE's Advisory Guidelines for the Use of Student Restraints in Public School or Educational Settings.

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 his/her required annual hours of PD in any given year, unless due to illness as permitted by law, ADE Rule, and this policy, shall be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Approved PD activities may include:

- Conferences/workshops/institutes;
- Mentoring/peer coaching;
- Study groups/learning teams;
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification;
- Distance and online learning (including ArkansasIDEAS);

- Micro-credentialing approved by ADE;
- Internships;
- State/district/school programs;
- Approved college/university course work;
- Action research; and
- Individually guided (to be noted in the employee's PGP).

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.

PD activities shall relate to the following areas:

- Content (K-12);
- Instructional strategies;
- Assessment/data-driven decision making;
- Advocacy/leadership/fiscal management;
- Systemic change process;
- Standards, frameworks, and curriculum alignment;
- Supervision;
- Mentoring/peer coaching;
- Next generation learning/integrated technology;
- Principles of learning/developmental stages/diverse learners;
- Cognitive research;
- Parent involvement/academic planning and scholarship;
- Building a 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 safety drills (A.C.A. § 6-10-121);
- Statewide student assessments (A.C.A. § 6-15-2912);
- Test security and confidentiality (A.C.A. § 6-15-2907);
- Emergency plans and the Panic Button Alert System (A.C.A. § 6-15-1302);
- TESS (A.C.A. § 6-17-2806);
- Student discipline training (A.C.A. § 6-18-502);
- Student Services Program (A.C.A. § 6-18-1004);
- Training required by ADE under The Arkansas Educational Support and Accountability Act and fiscal and facilities distress statutes and rules; and
- Annual active shooter drills (6-15-1303).⁹

Notes: There are special rules that apply to part time employees who teach adults or are high school equivalency Test examiners. Since such employees apply to very few districts, they are not

included in this policy. PD for such employees is covered under 7.04 of the rules and A.C.A. § 6-17-706.

¹ If you have individuals employed as unlicensed teachers or administrators under a waiver, add “or are an unlicensed employee teaching under a waiver of licensure”.

² The rules make July 1 through June 30 the default. Districts using those dates no longer need documentation of its choice. Districts can still choose June 1 through May 30, but that choice would have to be documented. The documentation may be noted by the selection chosen for this policy and also in the District’s PDP required by A.C.A. § 6-17-704(c)(1).

³ A.C.A. § 6-17-2402(1) defines a "basic contract" as a teacher employment contract for 190 days that includes no less than six (6) days of PD. When calculated with the one hundred seventy-eight (178) mandatory student contact days and the two (2) parent-teacher conference days, this means there are four (4) days unassigned in the basic contract. Districts may use these days as additional student contact days, parent-teacher conferences, for classroom setup, or PD. The use for the days may vary from school to school or even from licensed employee to licensed employee, though days used for additional student contact days should be uniform throughout the district and staff. The use of the four (4) days may be assigned on the school calendar or otherwise accounted for in policy. If districts require employees to use those four (4) days for something other than PD but require the licensed employee to receive more than thirty-six (36) hours of PD, then the district must pay the employee for the additional hours of district mandated PD as set forth in footnote 5.

⁴ The number of contract days may vary between employees, but the concern here is with the number of contract days specified in each individual employee’s contract.

⁵ There is confusion surrounding districts requiring more than the required PD and employees who get more than their required hours, but do so of their own choosing. A.C.A. § 6-17-807(a) requires districts to pay a teacher their daily rate of pay for days worked in excess of the number in their contract. Each six (6) hours of PD equal one day worked. Teachers who are required/requested to attend six (6) more hours than would total the number of days in the employee’s contract have worked an extra day of their contract. This can be addressed by giving the employees a flex PD day off or paying them their daily rate of pay for the extra day worked. Teachers who are so dedicated that, on their own, they get more than their required PD hours do not get credit for a day worked for each six (6) hours of excess PD.

⁶ This requirement tracks the language in model policy 3.50—ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATOR CERTIFICATION and is based on A.C.A. § 6-15-202(f)(50). A corollary point to this policy's sentence is to make the hiring of any new administrator who will be responsible for conducting TESS summative evaluations contingent upon the new hire's successful credentialing for TESS evaluations. We suggest calling the ASBA staff attorney for language, including required completion dates and employment consequences, for both the hiring motion, and to include on the contract, where it should remain until TESS credentials are successfully obtained.

⁷ This is required by A.C.A. § 6-41-608. There is no statutory clarification regarding required hours of training, but teachers will need to be credited toward the required hours of PD for time

spent fulfilling the requirement. A.C.A. § 6-41-609 and 1.02.2.2 of the PD Rules delegate future dyslexia training to Higher Education.

⁸ We suggest reading A.C.A. § 6-15-1004(c) and Section 4 of the PD Rules. Both permit the district to require additional hours; however, if you choose to do so and the employee's required PD would total more hours than the number of contract days provided for in the employee's contract, then the employee is due his/her daily rate of pay for the excess hours. See footnote 5.

⁹ Districts are required to annually provide active shooter drill and school safety assessment training for all of its employees and, to the extent practicable, students, in collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency management personnel. Since this is statutorily required training (PD), employees get to count it toward their annual required hours.

Cross References: 3.50—ADMINISTRATOR EVALUATOR CERTIFICATION
 4.37—EMERGENCY DRILLS
 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
 ADE Rules Governing Professional Development
 ADE Rules Governing the Arkansas Educational Support and Accountability Act
 ADE Rules Governing the Arkansas Financial Accounting and Reporting System
 and Annual Training Requirements
 ADE Rules Governing Student Special Needs Funding
 ADE 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. § 6-17-429
 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. § 6-17-2806
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. § 6-20-2204
A.C.A. § 6-20-2303 (15)
A.C.A. § 6-41-608
A.C.A. § 6-61-133

Date Adopted: June 16, 2008
Last Revised: June 22, 2018