



Professional Development and Extra Duty Time

This brief addresses the following areas:

- Key findings from a literature review of components of effective professional development
- Review of professional development funding history in Arkansas
- Analysis of current district professional development funding and expenditures
- Review of current PD and extra duty time practices in Arkansas districts as reported in the district survey

Research on Effective Professional Development (PD)¹

Available research has identified a series of necessary elements for an effective professional development, including that it: (1) is both content- focused and models effective practice to implement the content; (2) incorporates active learning such as interactive activities, discussions, and demonstration lessons; (3) is collaborative, allowing teachers the opportunity to share ideas and collaborate in their learning; (4) allows for job-embedded practice of what they learned in their classrooms, as well as observing other teachers; (5) includes coaching to provide personalized support to teachers; (6) is of a sufficient duration to allow teachers time to learn, practice, implement, and reflect; and (7) is aligned with school goals, state and district standards and assessments, and other professional learning activities including formative teacher evaluation.

History of Funding for PD in Arkansas

The state first provided PD funding in 2004-05, based upon the recommendations of the 2003 adequacy study. Funding was intended to allow districts to implement an effective professional development program which would include: (1) time during the summer for intensive training institutes; (2) on-site coaching for all teachers; (3) collaborative work with teachers in their school during planning and preparation periods; and (4) funds for trainings. This funding was provided in three ways: (1) extending the teacher contract to allow for 10 days for professional development, (2) instructional facilitators (coaches) in the matrix; and (3) additional funding for trainings through a PD categorical fund. The length of the teacher contract and number of instructional facilitators in the matrix has not changed, but the amount of funding provided through the PD categorical fund has fluctuated over time.

Current District PD Funding and Expenditures

Arkansas currently provides \$40.25 per student for professional development through a separate categorical fund with \$27.40 per student being directly provided to districts, and the remainder being used to fund the state's online PD system and professional learning communities (PLC) pilot program. This is in addition to the PD days within the teacher contract,

¹ Archibald, Coggshall, Croft, & Goe, 2011; Darling-Hammond, Hylar, & Gardner, 2017; Labone, & Long, 2016

and the 2.5 Instructional Facilitators in the funding matrix. In addition to state PD funding, districts also use other state and local funds, as well as receiving federal funding to pay for professional development. Looking at funding and expenditures for professional development between 2016-2020, districts consistently spend more on PD (when considering all funding sources) than is provided through the state categorical fund. According to data collected by the Bureau of Legislative Research (BLR), in FY20, districts spent \$70.88 per student on PD; when excluding federal funds, this meant that districts were expending \$38.68 per student compared to the \$27.40 per student they were provided through the PD categorical fund. This difference was funded through transfers from the ESA categorical fund (44%); matrix funds (34%); and other sources (22%). PD funds are primarily used for purchased services (about two-thirds of expenditures), which includes consultants, speakers, course registration fees, travel and substitutes, and another 25 percent of PD expenditures are for salaries and benefits.

Current PD and Extra Duty Time Practices in Arkansas Districts

In a survey of all district and charter-system administrators, respondents were asked about their current professional development and extra duty time practices. Respondents reported that:

- The majority of districts (54%) have 10 days of professional development each year, while another 32% of districts have more than 10 days of professional development annually. The remaining 14 percent have less than 10 days, with a minimum of 5 days.
- On average, professional development occurs primarily during the summer (62% of PD days), as well as through trainings or conferences during the school year (19% of PD days), during planning/collaboration periods during the school day (15% of PD days), and through early release/late start days (5% of PD days).
- PD days are most frequently led by school administrators (33% of PD days), Education Cooperative staff (22 % of days), and district staff (19% of days). About 10% of days are led by teachers and another 10% are led by outside consultants.
- PD days are used to address state/federal determined topics (31% of PD days), district or charter system determined topics (24% of PD days), school leader determined topics (23% of PD days) and teacher determined topics (22% of PD days).
- When asked about what PD topics were particularly helpful or effective, respondents frequently noted that the professional learning community (PLC) model and R.I.S.E. (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence) Arkansas training, among others.

Respondents also reported that in the majority of districts and charter systems (68%), teachers on average had 45 to 59 minutes of planning a day, with 1-2 periods for collaboration a week (51% of districts).

The matrix provides \$50 per student for supervisory aides to reduce the amount of time teachers have on extra duties outside of instruction. District and charter systems reported that: (1) teachers had a duty-free lunch daily (94% of responses), (2) the number of days teachers supervised lunch, recess or pick up/ drop off varied between daily (1/3 of districts) to 1-2 times a week (1/2 of districts). Teachers had regular daily “office hours” where they were available to students in about 40% of districts, while another 25 percent of districts said this ranged from 1-4 times per week. Teachers were generally not compensated for these extra duties.

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