



Professional Development (PD)

Professional Development (PD) is organized training required for licensed teachers, administrators, and some classified staff to increase their knowledge and improve their skills to ensure all students demonstrate proficiency on state academic standards.

Each district is required to develop a plan that spells out the PD activities for the district. Each plan must be aligned with district's Arkansas Comprehensive School Improvement Planning (ACSIP) and target students' needs as identified through student achievement data (ACA§6-17-704(c)(1)).

Guidelines

Currently all certified educators must complete 60 hours of professional development annually to maintain their licensure in Arkansas. However, in the 2014-15 school year, educators will be required to obtain just 36 hours of PD to maintain their license, according to ADE rules that are still being developed. This reduction is the result of PD funding cuts made during 2013 special legislative session. Despite the cut in hours for licensure, districts will still be required to provide teachers 10 days (60 hours) of PD, because it remains a part of the standard 190-day teacher contract established in statute.

For PD courses and training to be approved, all related activities must be aligned to the State Board of Education standards. PD must relate to the following focus areas: content (K-12), instructional strategies, mentoring, supervision, or peer coaching. There are a variety of ways to earn PD credit, including workshops, curriculum planning, conferences, college or university course work, and distance or online learning provided by ADE through the Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN). However, putting up or making a bulletin board; clerical work

associated with the ACSIP or other required documentation; and administrative faculty or team meetings do not count toward professional development credit.

PD Funding

The state provides additional funding to help districts pay for professional development programs. This money is one of four restricted state categorical funds. (The others are Alternative Learning Environments, English Language Learners, and National School Lunch). PD funding, like other state categorical funds, is considered restricted, meaning districts can only use the money on the programs for which it is intended. Districts are allowed to spend PD funding only on specific activities, such as conferences, web-training, workshops, or other PD activities.

In 2003, Act 59 of the 2nd Extraordinary session authorized up to \$50 per student for 2004-05 PD funding. Districts receive PD disbursements based on their average daily membership (ADM) calculated from the previous year. This amount remained unchanged until the 2011-12 school year. That year PD funding increased to \$51 and went up by \$1 each school year through 2014. In the 1st Extraordinary Session of 2013, the General Assembly passed Act 2, which reduced PD funding from \$54 per student to \$32.40 for the 2014-15 school year. The Act was implemented to generate savings to support the public school employee health insurance plan.

School Year	Per Student PD Funding Amount
2010-11	\$50
2011-12	\$51
2012-13	\$52
2013-14	\$53
2014-15	\$32.40

In 2005, the Legislature passed Act 2318, creating the Arkansas Online Professional Development Initiative (§6-17-707). Section 29 of Act 2131 of 2005 authorized the Department of Education to use up to \$4 million of the total PD appropriation for the online PD program. This funding reduces the amount of PD funding distributed to districts by about \$8.50 per student.

The idea for the program was to create one online system that each school district could not have afforded to develop individually. The special language provision setting aside \$4 million has been included in every Public School Fund appropriation since 2005. ADE manages the online system by awarding grants to AETN and other organizations to set up and maintain a portal for online courses, known as ArkansasIDEAS.

The chart below shows the total PD funding distributed to districts, charters and the online PD program. The right-hand column provides the amount distributed just to the districts.

School Year	Total PD Funding	Total PD Funding for Districts
2010-11	\$23 M	\$18.9 M
2011-12	\$23.1 M	\$19.4 M
2012-13	\$24.2 M	\$19.8 M

PD Expenditures

In 2012-13, districts (not including the charter schools) received a total of \$19.8 million. Districts are allowed to transfer money between categorical funds, and in 2012-13, they transferred nearly \$2 million of their NSL funding to their PD funds. Of those total funds, districts spent \$20.8 million.

School Year	Total PD Expenditures by Districts
2010-11	\$17.7 M
2011-12	\$20.1 M
2012-13	\$20.8 M