



Responsible Office: Office of Academics

BOARD POLICY 4600

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

PURPOSE

The Board of Trustees acknowledges that effective professional learning is embedded in a culture committed to continuous improvement and informed by data and research on student and educator learning. The nationally recognized Standards for Professional Learning shall serve as the framework for comprehensive District wide professional learning. These standards include a commitment to learning communities, shared leadership, resources, data, learning designs, implementation and outcomes. This policy, and any associated regulations and procedures, shall establish and implement the guidelines related to professional learning within the Washoe County School District.

POLICY

1. The District recognizes the importance of the successful implementation of a system of effective professional learning to support school improvement, assist faculty and staff in developing the skills necessary to raise academic achievement for students and improve the effectiveness of faculty and staff in the educational system.
 - a. Professional learning must directly impact teacher practice to ensure all students attain proficiency in rigorous content that prepares them for college and highly-skilled careers.
 - b. Professional learning supports student outcomes through a focus on increasing student engagement, creating positive conditions for learning, supporting parent/family engagement, and improving school culture and operations.
2. Professional Learning Task Force (PLTF)
 - a. The District shall implement and maintain a Professional Learning Task Force. Under the leadership of the Director of the Department of Professional Learning, the Professional Learning Task Force shall ensure cross-departmental stakeholder collaboration in the planning, development, delivery, and evaluation of District wide professional learning.

- b. The Professional Learning Task Force shall be comprised of staff from across the District to include, but not limited to, the Offices/Departments of Curriculum & Instruction, Special Education, English Language Learners, Gifted and Talented, Assessment, Accountability, 21st Century Learning, Social / Emotional Learning, Equity and Diversity, Family-School Partnerships, School Performance, Grants, Regional Professional Development Program, Leadership Development, and Teacher Induction/In-Service and Mentoring. In addition to school-site administrators and teachers, stakeholders include Professional-Technical administrators and Education Support Professionals.

3. Administrators

- a. Administrators play an integral role in supporting the learning needs of all students and ensure school operations function smoothly. Administrators will engage in professional learning to sharpen instructional leadership skills and gain in-depth knowledge about educational trends and issues.
- b. All school and central office administrators will participate in regularly scheduled professional learning during the contract calendar.
- c. A wide variety of professional learning opportunities aligned with the standards of professional practice in the District's Professional Growth System will be provided to administrators.

4. Teachers

- a. Teachers, as licensed professionals, have the primary responsibility for the learning process and academic outcomes of students. Teachers are encouraged to engage in continuous professional learning that improves and supports the learning needs of all students.
- b. All teachers will participate in two full days of professional learning during the contract calendar.
- c. All teachers will be provided time, consistent with the negotiated agreement, to participate in professional collaboration and learning based on grade level, subject and/or content area.
- d. A wide variety of professional learning opportunities aligned with the standards of professional practice in the District's Professional Growth System will be provided to teachers during non-contract hours such as after school, Saturdays and breaks, for which teachers can alternatively choose to receive credit.

5. Education Support Professionals (Instructional)

- a. The professional learning of Education Support Professionals is aligned with and dependent on the learning goals for students. Education support professionals support instruction and the academic achievement and personal needs of students and their families.
- b. All Education Support Professionals will be provided the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of job-related professional learning opportunities aligned with the standards of professional practice in the District's Professional Growth System for which participants will receive professional learning certificates.
- c. Mentor programs and induction training will be provided to newly hired Education Support Professionals.

DEFINITIONS

1. As defined by Learning Forward (2011), Professional Learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students:
 - a. occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment;
 - b. requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning;
 - c. requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning;
 - d. uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning;
 - e. integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes;
 - f. applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long term change; and
 - g. Aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. All WCSD educators' professional skills and knowledge will increase resulting in improved professional instructional effectiveness, which in turn, will result in elevated levels of student achievement District wide.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

1. This policy reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan.
2. This policy aligns with the following WCSD governing documents:
 - a. Board Policy 4117, Licensed Employee Probation and Evaluation
3. This policy complies with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) to include:
 - a. Chapter 388, System of Public Instruction, and specifically:
 - i. NRS 388.090 Minimum number of days of school; application for alternative schedule; application for reduction in minutes or additional minutes; scheduling for closure because of natural disaster, inclement weather or accident.
 - b. Chapter 389, Examinations, Courses, Standards and Graduation, and specifically:
 - i. NRS 389.0187, Development of model curriculum for English language arts and mathematics; distribution; authorized use by teachers and regional training programs for professional development
 - c. Chapter 391, Personnel, and specifically:
 - i. NRS 391.280 – 391.298, Educational Conferences; Professional Development
 - ii. NRS 391.500 – 391.556, Regional Training Programs For The Professional Development Of Teachers And Administrators; Nevada Early Literacy Intervention Programs
4. This policy complies with federal laws and regulations, to include:
 - a. Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
 - b. Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA)

REVIEW AND REPORTING

1. This document shall be reviewed as part of the bi-annual review and reporting process, following each regular session of the Nevada Legislature. The Board of Trustees shall receive notification of any required changes to the policy as well as an audit of the accompanying governing documents.

2. Administrative regulations, and/or other associated documents, will be developed as necessary to implement this policy.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
3/24/2015	1.0	Adopted (replaced Board Policy 4130, In-Service)