

Elbert County Schools  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES  
2014-2015

**1. Contact Hours and Log Sheets**

Minimum Hours The minimum for one professional development activity is 10 contact hours (one PLU). Training activities for more than one PLU shall be in multiples of 10 contact hours. No more than eight contact hours of instruction shall be conducted per day with a maximum of four PLUs earned per week. Contact hours do not include time spent at lunch or travel.

Log Sheets/Forms

- a. Participants may record activities that are less than 10 contact hours on the School-Focused Professional Growth Activities Log sheet.
- b. At the conclusion of the school year, hours accumulated during these professional growth activities may be totaled and turned in to the Associate Superintendent for credit toward certification renewal. Log sheets may only be maintained for one academic year at a time and should be turned in at the end of each academic year.

**2. Stipends**

Conditions for Stipends Stipends may be awarded to certified and eligible licensed personnel only when the following conditions are met:

The individual . . .

- a. is selected for a stipend by school system administrator(s) according to priorities that are annually determined by the local board of education.
- b. participates in an approved activity outside the normal contract time.
- c. agrees (in stipend application) to reimburse the system for the stipend if he/she leaves the school system without rendering at least one month's service (20 working days) after receiving the stipend.

Stipend Restrictions NO professional development stipends shall be awarded to individuals for participation in the following activities:

- a. Reviewing or selecting textbooks
- b. Personal educational or professional travel
- c. Professional conferences attended during contractual period
- d. Correspondence courses, independent study courses, or collegiate course work
- e. Serving on school or system committees or performing task(s) for the system

Stipend Awards

- a. Stipends shall be awarded according to the following incremental plan:
  - ½ day (3-4 contact hours during non-contractual period) \$ 50.00
  - ¾ day (5-6 contact hours during non-contractual period) \$ 75.00
  - full day (7-8 contact hours during non-contractual period) \$100.00Exceptions to these stipend amounts may be made depending on grant awards or special opportunities that have prior approval of system-level administrators.
- b. Contact hours do not include time spent at lunch or travel.

**3. Reimbursement Procedures for Stipends and Professional Development Expenditures**

Prior Approval All professional development expenditures including requests for stipends, substitute teacher salaries, and reimbursement for conference expenses must be approved at both the building and system level prior to the activity.

Advanced Degrees Staff development funds may not be used to assist a teacher in earning an advanced degree.

System Critical Need Areas Teachers who agree to earn certification in a system-identified critical need area (*including but not limited to Gifted endorsement and ESOL certification*) may apply for tuition reimbursement. In order to be considered for the tuition reimbursement program teachers are expected to

- a. request the reimbursement in writing prior to the semester they will enroll in courses.
- b. earn at least a “B” in the course.
- c. sign a contract agreeing to teach in the Elbert County School System for a period of one year for each semester of tuition reimbursement.
- d. furnish the system a copy of the grade earned and tuition receipt at the completion of the course.
- e. repay the tuition reimbursement if the teacher elects not to complete a program of study or leaves the school system prior to completing the courses required for additional certification.

RESA Courses Teachers taking a RESA class may apply in advance for a stipend or reimbursement of any registration or fees associated with the course. Stipends or reimbursement will be considered only if the course is based on an identified school or system instructional need. Funds will be awarded after the course is completed and required documentation has been submitted to the Associate Superintendent.

State and National Conferences or Workshops Professional Development Funds may be used to pay registration, meals, lodging and travel expenses when the conference/workshop has been identified as the most appropriate activity to meet an identified system or school professional development need.

#### **4. Approval for Professional Development Activities.**

Administrative Approval The building principal and Associate Superintendent must approve and sign off on all off-site professional development activities prior to the teacher’s participation.

*Within a school year certain days are considered essential for effective school operation. These days include pre-planning, the first three and the last three days of the school year for students, the days immediately preceding and following holidays, and post-planning. Request for personal and professional leave on these days must be approved by the principal or immediate supervisor and then forwarded to the Associate Superintendent.*

Documentation The staff member must complete all required forms and have them approved prior to his/her participation in any off-site professional development activity. In order to complete this process, it is recommended that paperwork be submitted to the Associate Superintendent 10 days prior to the date of the activity.

Registration and Fees for Off-Site Workshops or Conferences Staff members are responsible for making necessary arrangements with school administration for payment of registration and any fees or expenses associated with an off-site professional development activity. With prior approval from the building principal, the staff member may apply for reimbursement upon completion of the activity. To receive reimbursement, the staff member should complete the local expense form and attach a copy of his/her professional leave form.

Responsible Use of System Funds Every effort should be taken to minimize costs associated with off-site professional development activities. It will be the expectation that all staff observe the following:

- a. Rates for hotel accommodations should be compared and selected based on best price and proximity to the site of the professional development activity.
- b. All tax-exempt forms should be submitted at the hotel site.
- c. Transportation costs should be minimized by using system transportation when it is the best option.