

I. Issue – Professional Development

Professional development is defined as continuing education opportunities for education faculty to develop new knowledge and skills through in-service education, conference attendance, work shops, institutional visitations, earning higher degrees, and so forth. The goal of professional development is for educators to work together to enhance educational goals for the individual educator, school and students. Georgia requires educators to complete professional learning activities for certification renewal.

II. Executive Summary

By unanimous vote at their August 25, 2011 meeting, the State Education Finance Study Commission approved recommendations for funding at the Department of Education for professional development centered around statewide strategic initiatives, funding to add school-level administrators to the staff development formula at 1% of salaries, and that the Department of Education work with the Professional Standards Commission to recommend new category-level expenditure controls.

III. Current Situation/Practice/Funding Method

There are two types of renewable certificates in Georgia: Clear Renewable and Performance Based certificates. Each certificate is valid for a 5 year period, during which time one of the following requirements must be met for renewal:

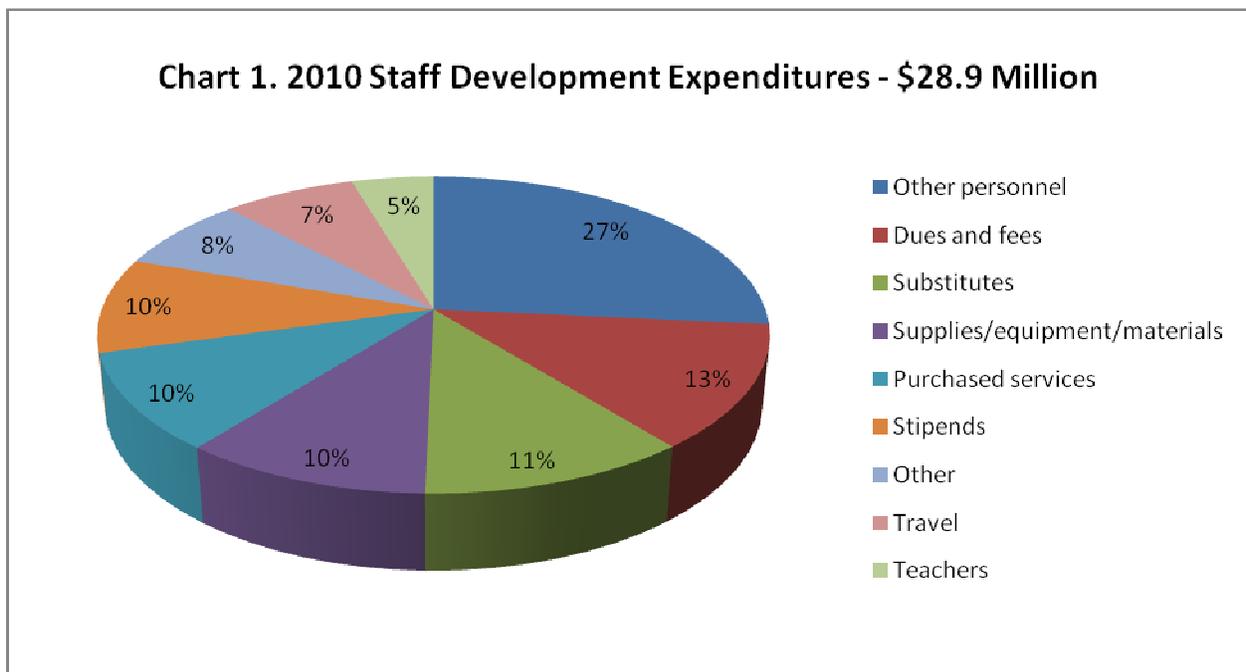
- 6 semester hours of college course work;
- 10 credits of Georgia Professional Learning Units;
- 10 Continuing Education Units;
- 10 credits based on U.S. DOE Teacher-To-Teacher Workshops or completion of one full year of acceptable school experience (working in another state on a valid certificate issued by that state).

Funds for staff development are earned each year by school systems through the QBE funding formula. State Board of Education rules specify that funds budgeted for professional learning should be used primarily for activities that enhance skills directly related to student achievement. The Board rule allows staff development funds to be expended on the following activities:

- Release time for teachers to serve as mentor teachers
- Release time for teachers to participate in professional learning activities (ie, substitute teachers)
- Travel for professional learning purposes
- Professional and technical service fees for instructors and consultants
- Instructional equipment for professional learning
- Training materials and supplies

- Stipends - If there is evidence that the competencies gained are aligned with an individual plan or school/district improvement plan and that competencies gained have been demonstrated in the classroom/work setting
- Reimbursement for expenditures upon successful completion of approved conference, workshops or courses
- Any other QBE program

Staff development expenditure data from FY 2010 is shown below. The largest expenditure category is for other personnel. This can include staff development training for administrators, salaries for central office staff who provide actual staff development training, as well as funds for clerical staff to process paperwork involved in staff development. About half the expenditures are spent on stipends, purchased services, supplies/equipment/materials, substitute teachers and dues and fees. The Other category mainly includes funding for benefits associated with administrative personnel and substitutes reflected in the other categories. Funding for travel and release time for teachers make up the smallest expenditure categories.



Funds for staff development are earned based on a percent of salary. While there have been some changes in the rates used to calculate staff development, the basic formula remains the same. Historically, staff development earnings were based on 1.5% of salary for certificated personnel. Salaries of administrators were originally included in the earnings but were removed in FY01. In FY03, earnings were reduced to 1% of salary due to budget reductions. The total cost of this reduction is estimated at about \$20 million.

As you can see in Table 1 below, earnings for staff development have increased over the last 10 years. Because staff development funding is linked to salaries, any pay raise or enrollment growth will result in increased staff development earnings. However, earnings for staff development have remained somewhat flat over the last few years – due to very small enrollment growth, increased class size (fewer teachers) and no changes in the statewide salary schedule. Based on the current 1% multiplier, staff development earned about \$39.6 million in QBE funds for FY12. However due to austerity reductions, relaxed expenditure controls and certification renewal requirements, many systems may spend far less than that this fiscal year.

Table 1: Staff Development Earnings and Expenditures

Fiscal Year	Earnings	Expenditures
FY 2002	\$ 28,707,302	\$ 41,085,130
FY 2003	\$ 30,364,923	\$ 39,713,572
FY 2004	\$ 31,146,339	\$ 34,732,391
FY 2005	\$ 31,984,312	\$ 34,851,021
FY 2006	\$ 33,684,357	\$ 38,601,821
FY 2007	\$ 35,892,274	\$ 41,843,892
FY 2008	\$ 37,554,931	\$ 41,559,218
FY 2009	\$ 38,688,323	\$ 41,682,447
FY 2010	\$ 39,272,227	\$ 29,885,028
FY 2011	\$ 39,668,188	N/A
FY 2012	\$ 39,682,431	N/A

A look at expenditure data reveals that, like most other items funded in QBE, school systems have typically spent more on staff development than they have earned through the formula. This trend is consistent even from FY03 – FY09 as school systems dealt with some level of austerity. However, this trend changed in FY10 as the economy dipped again and school systems experienced even deeper reductions. As a result of budget cuts and austerity reductions over 10% of formula earnings, spending on staff development dropped below earnings in FY10. As cuts to QBE deepened in FY11 and federal ARRA funds dried up in FY12, school systems needed maximum flexibility to absorb reductions. As a result, the General Assembly in HB 192 lifted all expenditure controls for direct instruction, media center, staff development, and 20 Additional Days of Instruction through FY15. In addition, during the 2010 Legislative Session, the General Assembly passed House Bill 1307 which temporarily suspends PLU requirements for five years (July 1, 2010 through July 1, 2015) on certificate renewals. Expenditure data for FY11 is not yet available to determine the impact of those changes.

IV. Other States

States provide funding for professional development in a variety of ways. Some states provide a set allocation per student or per teacher. Alabama funds professional development based on the rate appropriated per teacher by the state legislature. Arkansas funds \$50.00 times the school district's previous school year average daily membership. Other states, like Georgia, provide funding based on a percentage of the overall budget allocation or payroll. Massachusetts funds 3% times the amount allotted for teaching and support staff payroll. Some states, like Oregon, allow districts to apply for a School Improvement and Professional Development grant. Finally, some states provide funding for strategic initiatives. For example, South Carolina has a grant program aimed at increasing the academic performance of students in grades K-5 in the core academic areas of reading, mathematics, social studies and science.

When it comes to certificate renewal, other states have requirements similar to Georgia. The average certificate is valid for 5 years and educators must earn an average of 90-100 PLUs (contact hours) for renewal, which can be earned in a variety of ways. Some states have chosen new methods to earn, evaluate and deliver professional development.

Vermont is a state that has required intensive professional learning as a part of their education practice for a long time. In Vermont, for a teacher to advance from a Level I to a Level II License, or to renew a seven year Level II License, a teacher must have a data-driven individual professional growth plan that meets the requirements of the Five Standards for Vermont educators (learning, professional knowledge, collegiality, advocacy, accountability). The individual professional growth plan is written with the collaboration of the Local and Regional Standards Boards, overseen by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators and administrators. Teachers earn the nine units (or 15 hours per credit unit) required through a combination of university coursework, school based performance development, independent projects, and mentoring (no process in place for monitoring yet). Once a teacher reaches the time to renew their license the teachers are required to present a portfolio to local standards boards for approval. These portfolios contain evidence of their work during the process, reflection on the work and their teaching, along with a new Individual Professional Development Plan.

In New Mexico, educators are on a 3-Tiered Licensure System. This system was signed into law in 2004 and is meant to ensure teacher quality through accountability and support. When someone first enters into the teaching profession they are issued a Level I Provisional Teacher License, which is a 5 year non-renewable license. For the first year the teacher will be assigned a mentor and assessed annually. At the beginning of each year the teacher, along with the principal, must develop a Professional Development Plan that is based on the 9 teacher competencies. A Level I teacher must advance to Level II to remain a teacher in New Mexico. This can be done after three years of experience or by the end of the fifth year, which is the end of the Level I License valid period. To advance to Level II (Professional Teacher) they must complete an approved mentoring program, three complete academic years of teaching at Level I and demonstrate increased teaching competencies by submitting a Professional Development Dossier to

the Public Education Department. A teacher can choose to remain at Level II for the remainder of their career if they continue to demonstrate Level II competencies and renew every nine years.

New Jersey did not have any professional development requirement for teachers until 1998. It was then that the Professional Teaching Standards Boards was created. Now each school level committee must follow the state professional development standards and create school professional development plans that are evaluated by a county board. Teachers in New Jersey are required 100 hours of professional learning into teachers' annual professional development plans, mandated mentoring and induction programs for beginning teachers. In the past, professional development was done more outside of the school, but now the goal is earning the hours through more embedded professional learning activities in the school. These hours should align with the teacher's annual professional development plan; not part of license renewal since New Jersey does not have recertification requirements.

V. For Consideration

A study committee was formed in the 2010 Legislative Session to review the Professional Learning Units in Georgia. The committee consisted of members from the House of Representatives along with many members of the education community: teachers, administrators, the Department of Education, the Professional Standards Commission and others. During the course of this study committee there was an overall consensus that 1) there is disconnect between professional development and certificate renewal 2) the delivery of PLUs in the past has been disjointed and 3) there is no way to measure the impact of the professional development in the classroom. The result of this study committee's work was a list of 11 recommendations for the General Assembly regarding professional development.

As a result, there were three resolutions brought up during 2011 Legislative Session urging action on certain recommendations: HR 459, HR 489 and HR 491. Some of the recommendations have already been passed into code and the Professional Standards Commission, along with Department of Education, will be working together to revise the current professional development standards.

Recommendations from House Professional Learning Study Committee:

- 1) Support the funding and implementation of House Bill 280.
- 2) By 2015, PSC should establish new rules requiring the demonstration of the impact of professional learning on student achievement
- 3) Implement revised professional learning rules
- 4) Rule change on certificate upgrade for advanced degrees
- 5) Support Race to the Top application regarding the use of data for instructional improvement
- 6) Definition be adopted by DOE for professional development

- 7) Course on Georgia ethics for teachers
- 8) Support ongoing work to streamline and refine evaluation instruments for teachers and leaders to be used consistently statewide
- 9) When state revenues allow, funding should be increased for professional learning
- 10) Tiered certification
- 11) Development of performance based coaching endorsement programs

The State Education Finance Study Commission can continue to build upon this work by considering how the state can develop and implement a funding mechanism to deliver effective professional development that will lead to improved student achievement.

VI. Additional Information

*** Learning Forward Association- formally the National Staff Development Council***

<http://www.learningforward.org/stateproflearning.cfm>

<http://www.learningforward.org/news/2010Phase3TechnicalReport.pdf>

<http://www.gapsc.com/help.asp#P>

<http://teachnm.org/programs/3-tiered-licensure-system/3-tls-overview.html>

VII. Final Commission Recommendation

The Commission recommends funding at the Department of Education for professional development centered on statewide strategic initiatives.

Example areas where statewide professional development could be beneficial include the new common core GPS training, and support for under-performing educators. The Math/Science mentors program is an example of professional development funded as a statewide strategic initiative.

The Commission recommends including school-level administrators in the professional learning formula. Principals could use the additional professional development as they transition from teaching positions into school leadership. The Subcommittee discussed and rejected the idea of adding central office personnel into the formula.

The Commission also recommends that the Department of Education work with the Professional Standards Commission to recommend new category-level expenditure controls to ensure that the state funds are being used for the most appropriate purposes to help align professional learning with results in improved student achievement.

The Commission recommends phasing in funding for these changes as follows:

FY2013

1.0 % of staff salaries distributed to LEAs (no change)

0.01% of staff salaries distributed to DOE to seed funding to restructure professional learning

FY2014

1.0 % of staff salaries, including school-level administrators, distributed to LEAs

0.15 % of staff salaries distributed to DOE for strategic initiatives

FY2015

0.9 % of staff salaries distributed to LEAs

0.25% of staff salaries distributed to DOE for strategic initiatives