

**160-3-3-.04 PROFESSIONAL LEARNING.**

**(1) DEFINITIONS.**

(a) **Competencies** - knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by personnel to carry out satisfactorily the duties and responsibilities of assigned positions.

(b) **Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP)** – the comprehensive plan of a school system or a school that directs all educational activities and informs all educational decisions, for all programs and all funding sources, state and federal. This plan represents the school system’s comprehensive, integrated plan for school improvement. The CSIP comprises the basis of the system’s Consolidated Grant Application.

(c) **Needs** – conditions in which the actual status of personnel, with respect to knowledge of and performance in their fields of employment, is below the level of performance desired by the individual supervisor or the employing organization.

(d) **Professional Learning** – an integral part of the system and school CSIP detailing the method for establishing, coordinating and maintaining professional learning programs that address the assessed needs of all students, and school and system personnel.

(e) **Professional learning** - learning opportunities that are aligned with the approved CSIP of a school or school system.

(f) **Professional Learning Advisory Committee** - a representative committee that advises and assists the system coordinator in the assessment of professional learning needs, determination of priorities, content and quality of activities, evaluation of the program and modification of the professional learning portion of the system’s CSIP.

(g) **Professional Learning Coordinator** - the system superintendent or designee whose job description includes responsibilities and functions for administering, coordinating and directing the local professional learning program.

(h) **Program evaluation** - the determination of overall quality and effectiveness of professional learning activities in relation to the system and school CSIPs, including formative and summative assessments.

(i) **Stipend** – funds awarded to system certified personnel, paraprofessionals and aides for having successfully completed learning opportunities that have occurred at any time during the fiscal year outside of an employee’s normal contract/work hours.

**(2) PLAN FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING.**

(a) **Statement of Policy.** The local board of education shall adopt a policy that requires the preparation and implementation of a system-level CSIP. This plan shall include comprehensive professional learning as a major component. Professional learning funds shall be used for activities that enhance the skills and knowledge of all school system personnel, school board members and school council members, which directly relate to improving student achievement. In addition, the policy shall require the appointment of a professional learning coordinator and the appointment of a professional learning advisory committee.

(b) **Local Professional Learning Planning.** Each school system shall develop three-year professional learning plans that will be included in the school system's CSIP. Such professional learning plans shall organize and direct all professional learning activities for the system regardless of the source of program or funding. The Department shall approve these three-year plans and conduct formative assessment of their progress. Assurances pertaining to these plans as specified by the Department shall be signed by the local superintendent and included as part of the annual consolidated application to the Department. This plan, and related budgets, shall be reviewed and updated annually by the local school system.. The plans shall provide for the following.

1. Policy and procedures for assuring that each school within the school system has a CSIP that addresses comprehensive professional learning as a major component and is aligned with the system CSIP. The school CSIP shall include at least the following:

(i) Procedures to assure that all certified staff and paraprofessionals have the opportunity to participate in the identification of individual and/or collective professional learning activities for their school.

(ii) Procedures to assure that all individual and collective professional learning activities are aligned with the school CSIP.

2. System and school plans shall identify annual, measurable student outcomes.

3. Administrative procedures that provide for reporting all professional learning activities for all personnel in one comprehensive plan and for implementation of the comprehensive plan as approved.

4. Professional learning programs that address the assessed needs of all students, and school and system personnel as identified through analysis of student data, the evaluation of the effectiveness of instructional programs, and other means deemed

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appropriate by the school system. For professional personnel and paraprofessionals, the annual personnel evaluation process shall also be used to identify professional learning needs.

5. Professional learning activities according to priorities that are determined annually by the local board of education.

6. Professional learning program descriptions that include statements of need, objectives, activities, evaluations and budget information (see Rule 160-3-3-.10 Professional Learning Unit (PLU) Program Approval).

7. Procedures of the Professional Learning Advisory Committee appointed by the local board of education or superintendent and as defined/described in paragraph (1)(f) of this rule.

8. Procedures for conducting formative and summative program evaluation.

9. A comprehensive budget that indicates all possible local, state and federal fund sources to support the plan.

10. An annual report to the local board of education from the local school system superintendent describing the progress in meeting the goals and objectives of the comprehensive Professional Learning Plan.

**(c) Expenditures of Funds.**

1. Professional learning funds may be expended for one or more of the following.

(i) Release time for teachers to serve as mentor teachers.

(ii) Release time for teachers to participate in professional learning activities, i.e., substitute teacher salaries and employee benefits.

(iii) Travel for professional learning purposes.

(iv) Professional and technical service fees and expenses for instructors and consultants.

(v) Instructional equipment for professional learning purposes.

(vi) Training materials and supplies.

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(vii) Stipends.

(viii) Reimbursement for expenditures of persons who successfully complete conferences, workshops or courses approved by the Professional Learning Advisory Committee.

(ix) For any other Quality Basic Education (QBE) program.

2. Stipends may be awarded only if

(i) There is evidence that the competencies gained during the professional learning activity are aligned with an individual plan, or a school or district improvement plan.

(ii) There is evidence that the competencies gained have been implemented/ demonstrated in the classroom/work setting.

3. Funds budgeted for professional learning should be used only to compensate personnel for activities that relate to school and school system educational programs.

4. Funds budgeted for professional learning should be used primarily for activities that enhance the skills of certified personnel and directly relate to student achievement.

5. No state professional learning funds should be used to compensate individuals for the primary purpose of obtaining an advanced degree and/or certification endorsements, unless such advanced degree and and/or certification endorsements are earned at the request of the school system to meet an identified need, or as part of an approved individual professional growth plan.

6. QBE formula “staff and professional development” funds should not be used to pay stipends to school board members or to school council members who are not employees of the school system.

(e) **Annual Report.** School systems shall submit an annual report to the Department at a time and with a content designated by the Department.

(f) **Submission of the Plan.** The three-year CSIP and budget shall be submitted to the Department at a time and in a manner identified by the Department. Each year the system superintendent shall sign assurance, as an integral part of the annual consolidated application, that a CSIP is being maintained in good order in the school system.

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Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-86; 20-2-167(a)(3); 20-2-182(h); 20-2-204; 20-2-210;  
20-2-217; 20-2-230; 20-2-231(c); 20-2-232.

**Adopted: November 18, 2003**

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