

*PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
HANDBOOK*

2018 - 2019 School Year

*Preparing Outstanding
Leaders of Tomorrow*

Polo R-VII School District

POLO R-VII SCHOOL DISTRICT Professional Development Handbook

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It is the purpose of the Polo R-VII Professional Development Program to improve the instructional process in the Polo R-VII School District by providing for the professional growth and development of new and practicing teachers. This is to be done by assessing needs and developing, implementing and evaluating professional development growth. This shall be a cooperative effort involving teachers, administrators and the Board of Education.

PHILOSOPHY

Professional development is defined as the educational improvement experiences gained by all school-related personnel by participating in activities systematically planned and implemented toward the goal of improved instruction. It is a continuing process whereby the individual refines skills, becomes aware of new developments, techniques and information; all of which help to broaden and clarify the perspective with which the individual's job responsibilities are approached. The fundamental purpose of professional development as it applies to an educational system is that students will receive an even better, more meaningful education.

Responsibility for an individual's professional development lies both with the school district and the individual teacher. It is also recognized that professional development opportunities should be both flexible and available to meet individual needs and interests.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Membership

The Professional Development Committee (PDC) will consist of faculty members with equal representation from level division (Elementary, Middle School, High School) in the district.

From a slate of eligible faculty members composed of nominees and/or volunteers, the PDC members are to be selected by the teachers, librarians and counselors employed by the Polo R-VII School District. To be eligible for selection, the teacher, librarian or counselor must be a certified staff member with at least two years successful teacher experience and at least one year in the Polo R-VII School District. The PDC members will be selected for a three-year term. Terms will be staggered so that only one member from each building level will be selected at a time. Administrators may be asked to serve as ex-officio members to the committee.

Each year new members shall be elected no later than March, trained in April and begin service in April.

The members of the PDC will elect a chairperson, vice chairperson/treasurer and a secretary at the first organizational meeting in April. The officers shall be elected annually and serve a one-year term. The chairperson shall call and preside at all meetings, keep the superintendent informed of committee activities and perform other tasks common to the office. The vice chairperson/treasurer shall preside in the absence of the chairperson, assume such duties when the chairperson is unable to fulfill the responsibilities of the office and keep all financial records. The secretary/record keeper shall maintain notes concerning business conducted during committee meetings and perform any tasks common to the office.

Training of Committee Members

The Polo R-VII School District will train their own members or send them to programs prepared by colleges, universities, associations or organizations. Training should address the following topics:

1. The role and responsibilities of committee members in assisting both beginning and practicing teachers. Discussion should cover their role as defined by statute and district policy. In addition, districts may wish to explain the authority of other key people in the professional development process.
2. Guidelines for effective group interaction. It also may be advisable to emphasize the committee's role in improving communication among teachers, administrators and higher education representatives.
3. The need for confidentiality and the ethical responsibilities of members.
4. Effective methods for assessing the in-service needs of practicing teachers and how to use that information in setting in-service priorities.
5. Resources (people and publications) that can provide information and services related to professional development.
6. How to evaluate the district's professional development activities and use the results to improve programming.
7. The criteria used in the performance based teacher evaluation system.
8. An overview of current theory and models of instruction and classroom management. Such information would help committee members select in-service programs for their districts.

Responsibilities of Committee Members

In accordance with the law and Board Policy, the Professional Development Committee "shall work with the beginning teachers and experienced (practicing) teachers in identifying instructional concerns and remedies; serve as a confidential consultant upon a teacher's request; assess faculty needs and develop in-service opportunities for school staff and present to the proper authority faculty suggestions, ideas and recommendations pertaining to classroom instruction within the district."

*NOTE: Matters discussed by a teacher and the professional development committee will be held in confidence, but would not be considered "privileged information". If, for example, someone is called upon to testify in court.

NEW TEACHER ASSISTANCE

The Polo R-VII School District is committed toward providing professional development programs for beginning teachers who have no prior teaching experience. This will be done by providing assistance in programs which enable them to polish their skills, observe master teachers and be observed by mentor teachers and discuss feedback, thereby improving their chances for success and encouraging them to stay in the profession.

Professional Development Plan/Professional Growth Plan

The Professional Development Committee will ensure that each beginning teacher, with no experience, in the district has a Professional Development Plan/Professional Growth Plan.

The plan must address the teacher's first two years in the classroom. The goals identified in the plan should relate, in part, to the evaluation criteria depicted in the district's teacher evaluation criteria. It should be noted that the purpose of the Professional Development Plan/Growth Plan is to assist, not to evaluate, the beginning teacher. The plan must respond to individual needs and may take into account results of the fourth-year college assessment if provided.

The beginning teacher's mentor should initiate preparation of the professional development plan. Ideally, this process should begin as soon as the new teacher is hired by the district. Subsequently, planning between the mentor and beginning teacher should occur prior to or during the first month of the school year. The new teacher's mentor, principal and higher education representative shall help the teacher with this process. The first semester plan shall consist of basic orientation needs (ie. areas such as discipline, understanding of district policies and use of curriculum guides, equipment and materials). At the beginning of the second semester, the plan will be expanded by the planning team (new teacher's mentor, building principal and possibly a higher education representative) to include individual needs based on the Performance Based Teacher.

Evaluation and the teacher's own individual needs. Copies of the initial plan and all subsequent revisions should be filed in the new teacher's building where it will be readily available for review and updating. Each member of the planning team should be provided with a copy of the plan.

Mentor Teachers

The Excellence in Education Act suggests and the amended rule for teacher certification (5CSR 80-800.010) requires that beginning teacher support systems include a mentor program. The mentor is described as a "coach, trainer, positive role model, developer of talent and opener of doors". This emphasizes that the role of the mentor teacher is "helper", not an "evaluator".

To be eligible to serve as a mentor teacher, an individual must have at least five years successful teacher experience. A mentor must be willing to receive mentor training. Professional Development Committee will appoint teachers to be mentors and the building principal will approve. When possible, the mentor should be teaching the same grade level and should be in the same area of certification as the beginning teacher. An administrator certified in the same grade level as the beginning teacher could serve as a mentor, if necessary.

The professional development committee shall be responsible for arranging training for mentors. The training shall address the following topics:

1. The role and responsibilities of all members of the new teacher's professional development team, including new teacher, the mentor teacher, the supervisor (typically the building principal) and the higher education representative.
2. The role and responsibilities of the professional development committee.
3. Techniques of coaching and counseling.
4. The format and content of the professional development plan
5. How to use the teacher evaluation (including the fourth-year college assessment) to help the beginning teacher draw on areas of strength.
6. Resources (people and publications) available to beginning teachers at the district, higher education, regional and state levels.
7. Techniques of classroom observation.
8. Current theory and models of instruction and classroom management.
9. Skills most important during the first two years of teaching.

The mentor will be a member of a planning team to include the beginning teacher, the building principal, a representative from the sending institution when appropriate and the mentor. The principal and/or mentor will initiate planning meetings and expanding the professional development plan as necessary.

The mentor should help the beginning teacher accomplish the goals identified in the professional development plan and acquire needed professional skills during the first two years. The district will cooperate in allowing the mentor and beginning teacher opportunities to meet and counsel together.

In some cases, it may be advisable to reassign the mentor teacher. When a vacancy occurs, the principal shall recommend a replacement to the PDC committee for approval.

Higher Education Assistance for the Beginning Teacher

According to the law, beginning teacher assistance programs "shall include assistance from the teacher education institution which provided the teacher's training if such training was provided in a Missouri college or university".

It shall be the duty of the superintendent of schools to notify the appropriate sending college or university when graduates are hired. The assistance from the sending institution or reciprocal institution may vary to include on-site visits, a telephone support network, a newsletter, seminars or summer institutes.

ASSISTANCE FOR EXPERIENCED TEACHERS NEW TO THE DISTRICT

A “Buddy Teacher” will be assigned to any teacher new to the district who has two or more years of teaching experience. The Buddy Teacher may be appointed by the building principal or PDC. The duty of the Buddy Teacher will be to provide the new teacher with information needed to teach effectively in the Polo R-VII School District. A checklist *(Orientation of Practicing Teacher New to the District) will be utilized to guide the Buddy Teacher in his/her responsibilities.

ASSISTANCE FOR PRACTICING TEACHERS

The Polo R-VII School District’s professional development committee shall assess the inservice needs of practicing teachers annually. Practicing teachers are those teachers employed full or part-time by our school district, certified under the rules governing teacher certification to serve as a classroom teacher, librarian or counselor and who have two years teaching experience in the state of Missouri. The assessment instrument shall be selected by PDC and will be based on the district’s instructional goals and objectives and the criteria in the district's performance based teacher evaluation system.

The committee will collect and analyze the results of the assessment, prioritize the needs, set objectives and select or design actions to meet the identified needs to improve instruction within the school district. The district will provide in-service for each practicing teacher. In-service activities may include lectures by noted authorities, on-site visits by consultants, opportunities for continuing education, building-level in-service activities, participation in local, state and national conferences and release time for visitation of other classrooms and/or schools.

The PDC will evaluate the success of the district’s in-service programs. Participants will be asked to rate each activity and suggest ways to improve future efforts.

GUIDELINES FOR CONFERENCE REQUESTS

Professional development funds are to be used to achieve the academic goals of the building and district’s professional development plan in support of the district’s Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).

1. Complete the Professional Development Workshop/Conference Attendance Request form (see Appendix).
2. Submit completed request form to building level principal. If approved, the building level principal will submit the Professional Development Workshop/Conference Attendance Request form to the superintendent. If approved, the superintendent will submit the form to the Professional Development Chair for approval by the PDC committee.
3. Approval to attend a conference/workshop must be obtained before attending the event in order to receive funding from the Professional Development Committee.
4. If approved then it is the responsibility of the teacher to fill out the actual expenses column and turn it into the Elementary Principal for reimbursement.
5. Upon returning from the conference/workshop, complete the PDC Follow-Up Form and submit to the PDC Secretary.

GUIDELINES FOR TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Employees requesting tuition reimbursement must complete and submit the Tuition Reimbursement Intent Request form (see Appendix) by April 1st. Completed tuition reimbursement forms must be submitted to the Professional Development Committee Chairperson prior to the April PDC meeting. Employees need to have their building level principal approve tuition reimbursement form prior to submitting to PDC. Once approved by PDC, tuition reimbursement forms will be submitted to Central Office by May 1st. Employees are eligible for tuition reimbursement after working for the school district for 1 year.

Appropriations for tuition reimbursement cannot exceed 25% of PDC funds for any one year. The remaining 75% of PDC funds will be allocated to areas of improvement as indicated by the District's CSIP plan. The maximum reimbursement rate will be no more than 3 credit hours or \$800 per person per year. The following criteria as established in DESE's Missouri Professional Learning Guidelines for Student Success (2013) will be utilized when determining eligibility for tuition reimbursement funds from PDC:

- Eliminate temporary certificates when requested by the district to teach in a shortage area.
 - Assist a staff member to become certified in another area where teaching help is deemed necessary by the district. For example, consider a teacher one course short of being qualified as a counselor. The district needs another counselor and would like to hire this teacher as a counselor. If approved by the PDC regulations, professional development money could be used to pay for the tuition of this course.
- Help progress toward a master's degree or above if identified in the District Professional Development Plan, in the educator's Individual Professional Growth Plan and the advanced degree sought is in the educator's content area of teaching.
- Help enrich subject/grade level teaching
- Keep teaching certificates current if identified in the district professional development plan as a district priority.

Verification items must be turned into Central Office in order to be reimbursed for the course. Items include: copy of payment (credit card statement or cancelled check) and copy of transcript. *To change your salary on the salary schedule, original transcripts must be received by September 1.