Staff Development

Staff Development is viewed by the Bethany Board of Education (Board) as a continuous systematic effort to improve educational programs in the Bethany Public School District (District) through 1) staff involvement in organized program planning, implementation, and evaluation efforts, and 2) activities to upgrade the skills, knowledge, and ability of educators to improve student learning.

Each certified employee shall annually participate in a program of professional development, of not fewer than eighteen (18) hours in length. The professional development program shall:

1. be a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving teacher and administrator effectiveness in increasing student knowledge achievement;
2. focus on refining and improving various effective teaching methods that are shared between and among educators;
3. foster collective responsibility for improved student performance;
4. be composed of professional learning that is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards, conducted at the school among educators and facilitated by principals, coaches, mentors, and distinguished educators or other appropriate teachers, occurs frequently on an individual basis or among groups of teachers in a job-embedded process of continuous improvement, and includes a repository or best practices for teaching methods developed by educators within the school that is continuously available to such educators for comment and updating;
5. include training in culturally responsive pedagogy and practice.

The principles and practices of social-emotional learning shall be integrated throughout the components of such program of professional development described in items 1 through 5 above.

Staff development experiences, made available by the District directly, or through a Regional Education Service Center (RESC), with another board of education shall be consistent with any goals identified by the certified employees and the District.

The Board believes that the staff development experience should be comprehensive, sustained, and intensive enough to improve teacher and administrator effectiveness in raising student performance, and foster collective responsibility for improved student performance.

Teachers must constantly review curricular content, teaching methods and materials, educational philosophy and goals, social change, and other topics related to education to enhance the capabilities of educators to improve student learning. The Board recognizes that it shares with its certified staff responsibility for upgrading and updating of teacher performance and attitudes. The Board and teachers' organizations support the principle of continuing training of teachers and the improvement of instruction.

All employees shall be provided opportunities for the development of increased competence beyond that which they may attain through the performance of their assigned duties.

The Superintendent shall establish a Steering Committee, consisting of certified employees, including at least one (1) union representative, and other school personnel deemed appropriate. The duties of the committee shall include, but not be limited to, participation in the development of a teacher evaluation and support program for the District, the development, evaluation, and annual updating of a comprehensive local professional development plan, in fulfillment of the statutes, for certified employees of the District. Such plan shall 1) be directly related to the educational goals proposed by the Board pursuant to state law, and 2) be developed in full consideration of the priorities and needs related to student social-emotional learning pursuance to Connecticut General Statutes § 10-148a, as amended, and student outcomes as determined by the State Board of Education, and 3) provide for the ongoing and systematic assessment and improvement of both teacher evaluation and professional development of the Board's professional staff members, including personnel management and evaluation training or experiences for administrators, and 4) be related to regular and special student needs and may include provisions concerning career incentives and parent involvement.

The members chosen by the Superintendent to be on the Steering Committee shall serve at the pleasure of the Board.

Special efforts shall be made to prepare teachers and other school personnel to meet the needs of students of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Planning and implementation of such programs shall be done cooperatively by administration, teachers, and parent advisory groups. Special effort shall also be given to administrators and/or supervisors in training pursuant to their obligations in the evaluation of the teacher.

Staff development activities should respond directly to the educational and/or safety needs of the student body. The in-service program shall fulfill all applicable statutory requirements, especially those delineated in Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220a, as amended and/or based on guidance from federal, state, and local health authorities.

The Superintendent will allow any paraprofessional or classified employee of the District to participate, on a voluntary basis, in any in-service training program provided to certified staff on those topics mandated per Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220a, subsection (a).

The Superintendent is to report annually to the Board on the professional development program and its effect with recommendations for changes as needed.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes § 10-27
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220a, as amended
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-153b
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-226f
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-226g
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-145b, as amended
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-148a, as amended
Connecticut General Statutes § 10-151b

Legal Reference: Public Act 17-32
Public Act 17-37

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Policy revised: August 12, 2020
Policy revised: December 8, 2021

Source: CABE

Connecticut General Statutes 10-220a - In-service Training

A. Required In-service Topics for Certified Personnel

1. Nature and the relationships of drugs and alcohol to health and personality development and procedures for discouraging their abuse.
2. Health and mental health risk reduction education including, but not limited to the prevention of risk-taking behavior by children and the relationship of such behavior to substance abuse, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection and AIDS, violence, teen dating, domestic violence, and child abuse.
3. School violence prevention and conflict resolution and the prevention of and response to youth suicide and the identification and prevention of bullying and response to bullying, as defined in Connecticut General Statutes § 10-222d, subsection (a), as amended. (Boards that implement an evidence-based model approach approved by the State Department of Education are not required to provide in-service training on the identification and prevention of and response to the prevention of bullying.)
4. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other emergency life-saving procedures, as identified by the District.
5. Requirements and obligations of a mandated reporter regarding reporting of child abuse and neglect.
6. Training in the detection and recognition of, and evidence-based structured literacy interventions for, students with dyslexia.
7. Training in the awareness of human trafficking issues.
8. Culturally responsive pedagogy and practice.
9. Principles and practices of social-emotional learning shall be integrated throughout all components of the professional development program, as appropriate.

B. Optional In-Service Topics for Certified Personnel

The State Department of Education, within available appropriates and utilizing available materials, shall make the following subject matter available to boards of education:

1. Domestic violence and teen dating violence.
2. Mental health first aid training.
3. Trauma-informed practices for the school setting to enable teachers, administrators, and pupil personnel to more adequately respond to students with mental, emotional, or behavioral health needs.
4. Second language acquisition, including, but not limited to, language development and culturally responsive pedagogy.
5. Topics approved by the State Board of Education upon the request of local or regional boards of education as part of in-service training programs pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes § 10-220a, section 3.
6. Holocaust and genocide education and awareness.
7. African-American and black studies.
8. Puerto Rican and Latino studies.
9. Native American History.

B. Optional In-Service Topics for Certified Personnel - continued

10. Personal Financial Management.
11. The historical events surrounding the Great Famine in Ireland.

Revised March 14, 2018
Revised January 8, 2020
Revised December 8, 2021

Source: CABE