



Professional Development Flex FAQ's Bulletin 2017-18 School Year

The goal of this document is to provide teachers in the School District of Wisconsin Dells with general information about the Flexible Professional Development program (PD Flex). PD Flex was created in the SDWD beginning with the 2014-15 school year. The goal of the program is to provide teachers flexibility through multiple options to obtain a set amount of hours for professional development in lieu of only offering district-wide professional development opportunities. This allows teachers a more customized approach to their professional development, rather than a traditional "one size fits all." The goal is that all teachers can find opportunities that are more relevant to them as individuals rather than the traditional approach. As student demographics change (we are nearly a 30% minority school district), our classroom approach and approach to professional development must also. According to research over the past twenty years, most adults learn best when instruction is relevant, varied, active, and continuous. For 2017-18, we have focused our PD offerings to be more in line with the [SDWD Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) that was created by the community and school district in June 2016.

PD Flex days replace a set number of student contact and traditional in-service days.

Answers to Commonly Asked Questions:

Why does the School District of Wisconsin Dells prioritize this type of professional development?

The belief of the District is that this approach to professional development can be more effective than a single platform model because it allows individuals to select events that are more pertinent to their position in the District, or where they are in their individual career journey. The need for continuous improvement for educators is embedded in [Wisconsin's Guiding Principles for Teaching and Learning](#). In addition, prioritization for professional development aligns with the [Wisconsin Teaching Standards](#), as well as the [Visions, Goals & Core Beliefs of the CESA 6 Educator Effectiveness Model](#). Further, continuous improvement aligns with the [School District of Wisconsin Dells Mission Statement and Strategic Plan](#). As mentioned in the introductory paragraph, research supports that we learn best when instruction is relevant, varied, active, and continuous. More information about the importance of professional learning as it relates to educator effectiveness can be found by visiting the [Learning Forward Website for the Standards for Professional Learning](#).

How many PD Flex Hours must I complete during the 2017-18 school year?

Each teacher must complete **22 hours**. ***You need to plan accordingly.*** Our best advice is to take advantage of some of the summer offerings to get at least a portion of the required hours completed prior to the beginning of the school year. Beginning in the Summer of 2017, teachers have been assigned to a small portion of their overall PD Flex. Just as in years past, there will be intermittent offerings after school throughout the upcoming school

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year. Enrolling in a book study is a great way to get hours professional learning. Reading is a high impact activity and it is recommended that everyone participate in at least one book study per year.

How am I compensated for my PD Flex hours?

You receive contract pay every two weeks throughout the year. Your check reflects payment for the PD Flex hours, meaning, that each teacher is expected to work 188 days during the 2017-18 school year. This equals pay for 178 student contact days + 1 Welcome Back/Open House Day/Work Day, +1.5 Days for Parent-Teacher Conferences, + 1 district-wide inservice day +.5 post school check out days, + 3 Holidays + 3 PD Flex days. Basically, you are compensated as a portion of every check throughout the year.

How do I document my hours as proof of attendance at an event or in an activity?

Generally, if there is a facilitator, she/he is asked to provide a sign in sheet or take attendance. The real documentation comes from you in My Learning Plan. Each teachers has pre-loaded "PD Flex Reflection Forms" in MLP. *NEW for 2017-18 is that you will only have one form in your MLP. On this form, you can document and reflect on individual events and save. Once you have completed all of your hours, you can submit for feedback and approval.*

Where do I find information about upcoming PD Flex Events?

All pre-approved events are posted on the [Office of Curriculum and Instruction Professional Learning Calendar](#). These are distinguishable by being on the calendar in **green highlighting**. Clicking on this will give you some additional information about the event, facilitator(s), etc. *NEW for 2017-18 is that you can only register for events online through this calendar. Directions for doing this have been provided.*

Are "other" events such as collaborations and trainings acceptable for PD Flex credit?

Yes. In the event that your grade-level or department plans collaboration specific to a district initiative (curriculum review, textbook adoption, new programming), it may be approved for PD Flex. Collaboration is the key.

Does my team need pre-approval for a collaboration day such as those named above?

Yes. Your principals, Dawn Sine and Brian Grove are your contacts for this approval.

Can I seek out other events that are out-of-district?

Yes. Through the regular budgeting process, you may request to attend Summer Workshops that are out of the District. NOTE: Attending a workshop during a work day throughout the school year does *not* qualify. REMINDER: Your PD Flex Days are considered work days, so attendance during a regular work day, though valuable, does not qualify for PD Flex.

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I see that more opportunities are becoming available on Saturday's in the area. If I attend one of these events does it qualify for PD Flex.

Yes. Saturday is not considered a regular work day. Please seek prior approval before you attend a Saturday event from your principal. If there is a fee for attendance and you did not budget for it, contact your principal.

Are any PD Flex Events required for me to attend?

There are events that may be required for attendance. The organizers will attempt to make these events as flexible as possible through offering repeated sessions throughout the summer.

Who do I contact about pre-approval of an out-of-district event?

Contact your principal, Dawn Sine, or Brian Grove. From there you will receive approval or denial.

I am taking university courses for credit as part of my license renewal. Can I claim these hours for PD Flex?

Depends. As many of you know, DPI does not require specific credits for license renewal, just credits period. To gain approval as PD Flex, please notify your principal, Dawn Sine, or Brian Grove. Your request will be considered. Approval or denial will be based on the credits being pertinent to your position and how well the course aligns with District and State priorities ([Agenda 2017](#)). You can accrue 50% of your PD Flex hours taking out of district courses. 1 Credit can qualify for 4 PD Flex Hours, 2 Credits for 8 PD Flex Hours, and 3 Credits for 12 PD Flex Hours.

I am taking a credited course for licensure which has been pre-approved for PD Flex, but I also want to attend district sponsored PD Flex events. What do I do?

Assuming you need the credits, and have been pre-approved for PD Flex with the course the decision is up to you for what you claim as your time. Again, keep in mind that it is inevitable that some trainings will be offered only through PD Flex.

The District is requiring me to attend a summer workshop that is longer than three days or I have elected to attend a training that is longer than three days. How do I handle this in terms of PD Flex?

If the District is requiring you to attend or you have elected to attend and have been pre-approved, you will receive additional compensation for any hours/days past the three days that you claim for PD Flex in the form of the standard Curriculum Rate. For example, if you are attending the WSMI (Wisconsin State Math Institute) this summer for five days, you will can claim three days for PD Flex and submit for pre-approved Curriculum Rate for the additional two of attendance. If you believe you will be attending an event that is going to take you past the PD Flex required hours you can pre-request curriculum rate.

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I have learned a lot about a specific topic or method and implemented it with effectiveness in my classroom. I believe others would benefit from a PD Flex Event. How do I go about proposing this?

Contact Brian Grove. In-house facilitation of PD Flex events is highly encouraged.

When can I begin to accumulate PD Flex Hours for the 2017-18 school year?

June 7, 2017 would be the official date.

What is the deadline to have all of my hours completed and reflections done in My Learning Plan?

May 1, 2018.

I surpassed the required number of hours of PD Flex in 2016-17. Can I carry this surplus of hours over to 2017-18?

No. The overall goal of professional development is that it is job-embedded and continuous. *The required hours are the minimum, not the maximum.*

What happens if I am unwilling or unable to complete my required number of PD Flex Hours?

By planning accordingly, we believe the offerings and opportunities are diverse enough for everyone to complete their required number of hours prior to the May 1, 2018 deadline. If you are someone who has had difficulty completing the required hours in the past, one suggestion would be to participate in a book study. Each book study is valued at 8 hours unless otherwise noted. Of this, there are only three face-to-face one hour meetings allowing you to complete the reading at times that work best for you. Another suggestion is to complete a good chunk your hours in the summer prior to the school year. There are currently 7 summer book study options available and there will be multiple others throughout the 2017-18 school year as well.

If you predict that you may have difficulty completing the hours on time and you know in advance, talk to your principal or Brian Grove about further personalizing a plan. Although this situation can be avoided, it is better than waiting until May 1st to communicate your issue. Should you not complete the required hours on time, you will see a deduction for the number of hours including the cost of your benefits during the next regular payroll. This may further result in an improvement plan for the individual in the *Educator Effectiveness System* since Professionalism is one of the standards. If this non-compliance becomes more than a one-time occurrence, then you may be subject to a recommendation for further disciplinary action. Again, it is the belief of the District that the diversity of the provided events and options as well as early and consistent communication of expectations clearly defines the scope of PD Flex for the teacher well enough for all to complete the hours on time.

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