

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PLAN 2023-2026

Watertown City School District

WWW.WATERTOWNCSD.ORG 1351 Washington Street, Watertown NY 13601

Watertown City School District Professional Learning Plan 2023-2026

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District Mission

The Watertown City School District is committed to building a caring culture that fosters lifelong learners and responsible citizens.

Vision

Professional learning is recognized as an integral element of the overall instructional program. The purpose of the professional learning program is to enhance the knowledge and skills of the staff to enable each student to reach their full potential as a contributing member of our society.

Introduction

The Watertown City School District Professional Learning Plan reflects the diversity of the teachers, administrators, and parents of the district. Teachers and principals represent the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The Committee on Special Education assistant chairperson provides expertise in special education. The parent member has been an active participant in the Parent-Teacher Organization. The assistant superintendent for instruction provides the central office viewpoint.

The members of the team are committed to representing the needs of their home schools/workplaces while working together to develop a plan for the professional development of the district staff that will enable them to provide quality instruction for all students.

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Professional Development Committee Membership

Name	Title
Stephanie Yancey	Social Worker - WHS
Karen Meeker	15:1 Special Education Teacher - WHS
Jayson St. Croix	Technology Integration Specialist - District
Allison Gilliam	AIS English Teacher - WHS
Tracy Hall	15:1 Special Education Teacher - Wiley
Rachel Marston	12:1:3:1 Teacher - WHS
Lisa Blank	Director of STEM
Tara Elmer	Technology Integration Specialist - District
Alison MacLean	English Teacher - Case
Stacey Eger-Converse	Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Julie Swenson	Instructional Coach K-6

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New York State Department Regulations and Requirements

This professional learning plan complies with Commissioner Regulations 100.2 (dd) that requires each district and BOCES to collaboratively create professional learning plans that are reviewed annually. Additionally, professional learning activities outlined in this plan provide teachers with the opportunities needed to meet and maintain the Continuing Teacher Leader Education (CTLE) requirements as defined by The Board of Regents in Subpart 80-6 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education to implement Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2015 relating to the registration process for any holder of a classroom teaching, school leader and teaching assistant certificate that is valid for life (Permanent, Professional and Level III Teaching Assistant) and the establishment of Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) requirements for Professional and Level III Teaching Assistant certificate holders.

Teachers will have opportunities to participate in staff development during the school day, after school, on weekends, and in the summer. It is expected that all staff will participate in a minimum of 12 to 18 hours of staff development each year, although staff will have opportunities to attain many more hours each year. The Watertown City School District and the Professional Learning Committee are firmly committed to the importance of having teachers plan, deliver, and evaluate professional development activities. It is anticipated that between 10 and 20 percent of the staff will be involved and have responsibility for planning and presenting professional learning, which will result in a commitment of an additional 10 to 40 hours.

Watertown City School District will provide Professional Certificate holders with certificates acknowledging completion of workshops, trainings, and professional learning opportunities qualifying for CTLE credits. Certificates will include participant's name, date of workshop, number of hours, topic, and type of activity or program. My Learning Plan will be the platform for maintaining and tracking professional development work for each staff member.

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Philosophy

Professional learning at Watertown City School District is a vital component of our commitment to furthering the growth of our staff. We are committed to high-quality, research-based professional learning to provide ongoing growth for practitioners within our organization, as well as to the assessment of ongoing professional development initiatives. Professional learning provided to internal employees is tailored to the needs of the individual staff member, and building, alignment across grade levels (PK-12) and, when appropriate, is continuous and sustained. For additional information, see the calendar for PK-12 activities in Appendix B.

We strive to provide professional learning in alignment with the New York State Professional Development Standards (<http://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/pdf/pdstds.pdf>):

1. **Designing Professional Development:** Professional development design is based on data; is derived from the experience, expertise and needs of the recipients; reflects best practices in sustained job-embedded learning; and incorporates knowledge of how adults learn.
2. **Content Knowledge and Quality Teaching:** Professional development expands educators' content knowledge and the knowledge and skills necessary to provide developmentally appropriate instructional strategies and assess student progress.
3. **Research-based Professional Learning:** Professional development is research-based and provides educators with opportunities to analyze, apply, and engage in research.
4. **Collaboration:** Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge, skill, and opportunity to collaborate in a respectful and trusting environment.
5. **Diverse Learning:** Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge and skills to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.
6. **Student Learning Environments:** Professional development ensures that educators can create safe, secure, supportive, and equitable learning environments for all students.
7. **Parent, Family, and Community Engagement:** Professional development ensures that educators have the knowledge, skill, and opportunity to engage and collaborate with parents, families, and other community members as active partners in their children's education.
8. **Data-driven Professional Practice:** Professional development uses disaggregated student data and other evidence of student learning to determine professional development learning needs and priorities, to monitor student progress, and to help sustain continuous professional growth.
9. **Technology:** Professional development promotes technological literacy and facilitates the effective use of all appropriate technology.
10. **Evaluation:** Professional development is evaluated using multiple sources of information to assess its effectiveness in improving professional practice and student learning.

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Needs Assessment

The Professional Learning Plan of the Watertown City School District reflects the mission and needs of the district. The needs of the district were identified through analysis of multiple sources of quantitative and qualitative data, including student performance on New York State Assessments and teacher-reported needs related to the New York State Learning Standards. (For a complete list of data used to identify needs in Watertown CSD, see Appendix C.)

Organizational Professional Development Goals

1. Establish a culture that thrives on collaborative conversations and utilizes both internal and external experts to share knowledge and practices.
2. Help staff to create learning environments that are grounded in 21st-century learning theories and practices and build on technology and interdependent communicative approaches to drive student learning.
3. Focus on meeting the needs of all students regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment, including high-performing students, English Language Learners, and students with disabilities.
4. Identify community needs impacting the learning environment and discuss possible solutions to meeting these needs.

Evaluation

This is a comprehensive plan for all professional staff that recognizes the diversity of needs among individual teachers based on prior experience and education. Continuous growth opportunities for staff to work within and between grade levels, departments, and buildings, is a priority. Professional Learning Plan activities will be evaluated using a variety of formats including classroom and peer observation, lesson plans and units, evaluation forms on My Learning Plan, feedback from families and teachers, and reflection logs. The plan itself will be evaluated annually by the Professional Learning Committee.

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Curriculum Cycles

The district will support professional learning focused on curriculum, instruction, and assessment by conducting curriculum cycles on a three-year rotation. The rotation can be adjusted to accommodate state initiatives that require attention to content areas. Within the rotation cycles, a content area will receive at least one year of focus to address standards implementation, instructional approaches, research-based strategies, improve assessments, and work on anything else that is deemed relevant by administration and the curricular experts in that area. Additionally, during the year of focus, particular attention will be given to provisions for internal and external professional development in the designated content areas. Focus areas will receive financial priority for staff to attend training and for textbook purchases.

Focus Areas for Curriculum Cycles

2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
World Languages 7-12 Physical Education K-12 Health K-12 Computer Science 9-12	Social Studies K-6 Social Studies 9-12 Computer Science K-12 (digital fluency/typing) Math 9-12 Career Development & Occupational Studies / Student Achievement Commencement Credential 9-12	CTE/Tech 7-12 Science K-12 Social Studies 7-8	Math K-8 ELA K-12 Music/Art K-12

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Overview of Activities (internal PD)

While New York State requires a focus on English as a New Language, Watertown City School District also has a high percentage of students with disabilities who require particular attention to their instructional needs. Each category of addressed professional development will have a focus on how this is applicable to students who have exceptional needs.

Essential Questions for 2022-2025			
Areas of Focus for Professional Development Training	Essential Questions	Supporting Data From Needs Analysis	Supporting Structures/ <i>Resources</i>
Mental Health *Emotional & Behavioral Support *Self-harm *Substance use/abuse	Why is it important to students and staff, and how do we incorporate this into the classroom?	<i>Qualitative – Teacher/Administrator Conversations</i>	Superintendent’s Days Faculty Meetings <i>Child Mind Institute</i>
	How do we understand and recognize emotional distress or mental health disorders?	<i>Qualitative – Teacher/Administrator Conversations</i>	Small Group Sessions (volunteer basis) <i>Turnkey Training from Rage to Reason, SPACE (Yale University)</i>
	What is the role of trauma/poverty on emotional well-being, specifically trauma and poverty in a rural setting vs. an urban setting?	<i>Qualitative – Teacher Survey</i>	Superintendent’s Days ½ day releases Faculty Meetings <i>Panorama Philadelphia ACES Book/Article Studies</i>
ENL	How do we provide instruction that facilitates learning among all students, including English Language Learners?	<i>Required by NYS *15 hours per 5 years for all *50 hours per 5 years for ENL-certified teachers</i>	Superintendent’s Days ½ day releases Nassau BOCES ENL Plus Online Courses

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Standards	How can we develop an evolving standards-based curriculum that focuses on rigor, relevance, and authenticity and instruction that facilitates learning among all students?	<i>Quantitative – Performance Assessment Results</i> <i>Qualitative – Teacher/Administrator conversations</i>	Superintendent’s Days Faculty Meeting Follow-Ups Grade-Level/Department Meetings Data Meetings <i>Professional Content-Based Conferences</i>
Laws & Policies	How can we create avenues for student success based on regulation changes?	<i>Quantitative – Grad Rate</i> <i>Qualitative – Teacher/Administrator conversations</i> <i>NYSED Blue Ribbon Commission and other Regulatory Changes</i>	Superintendent’s Days Faculty & Department Meetings ½ day releases
	How do we support teacher understanding of the APPR process?	<i>Qualitative – Teacher/Administrator conversations</i>	New Teacher/Staff Orientation
Technology <i>Please see WCSD Technology Plan</i>	What works best to engage students in 21 st century learning?	<i>Qualitative - WCSD Technology Plan, Teacher Survey (1:1)</i>	Faculty Meetings ½ day releases
Meeting Students Needs	How do we know when to step in and help or step back? How do we support teachers with students who require accommodations and modifications for behavior / instruction? What steps do we take to support students when situations escalate?	<i>Quantitative – Grad Rate</i> <i>Qualitative – Teacher/Administrator conversations</i>	Superintendent’s Days Faculty & Department Meetings ½ day releases Data Meetings

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Provisions for Teachers Certified in Bilingual and English Language Learner (ELL) Education

Teachers possessing a Professional certificate in the certificate title of English to Speakers of Other Languages (all grades) or a holder of a bilingual extension under section 80-4.3 of this Title, must complete their CTLE hours with a minimum of 50 percent in language acquisition aligned with the core content area of instruction taught, including a focus on best practices for co-teaching strategies, and integrating language and content instruction for English language learners.

ENL Professional Development Activities (English as a New Language, formerly ESL)

Neighboring districts have seen a significant increase in the population of students in need of ENL services. With a mandate from NYSED to provide a minimum of 15 hours of professional development in this area, Watertown CSD is making strides to educate all staff on how to best serve students with language acquisition needs.

Essential Questions	Professional Learning Opportunities
<p><i>Why ENL PD?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regulations Overview (CR-154) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ENL Teacher’s Survival Guide ● NYSED ENL Topic Briefs ● R-BERN (Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network) workshops/materials/podcasts ● Use of WCSD ENL teachers to provide training ● Nassau BOCES ENL Plus Online Courses (purchased annually) <p>Minimum Hours Per Year: 3 for all faculty/10 for ENL instructors</p>
<p><i>What is ENL at WCSD?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Language Acquisition Theory ● Language Arts Progressions Overview 	
<p><i>Building Capacity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instructional Strategies ● Understanding Cultural Differences ● Family Outreach & Support ● SIFE (Students with Interruptions in Formal Education) Curriculum ● Scaffolding Instruction ● Instructional strategies 	
<p><i>How do we create a growth culture?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relate growth mindset work to ENL instruction ● Data on ENL instruction in WCSD 	
<p><i>What else do we need in our district to support ELLs?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instructional strategies ● Modifying Curriculum/Language ● Technology support specific to ENL ● Verbal Translation/Interpretation Needs Resources 	
<p><i>How do we continue to support ELLs outside of the classroom?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extra-curricular involvement ● Community partnerships 	

Professional Development Accountability Structure

For all teachers, teacher assistants, aides, long-term substitutes, and administrators who attend professional development in the district, there is an expectation that:

- An opportunity to formally evaluate professional development will be provided.
- An ongoing dialogue relevant to professional development subject matter will be perpetuated and encouraged, enabling both the presenter and the audience to share and offer feedback on material presented.

For all teachers, teacher assistants, aides, long-term substitutes, and administrators who attend professional development outside of the district, there is an expectation that knowledge and materials will be shared with colleagues.

- An evaluation will be completed on My Learning Plan.
- A note-catcher also will be accessible in collecting quality information from the session(s). The assistant superintendent of instruction will use this information to create quarterly newsletters to share with the entire district and post on the web site.
- A library of resources collected from workshops, etc. will be in a common area in each building (PD Space) to provide regular access to capacity-building materials.
- Staff who attend external professional development will share at least one newly acquired idea or material at presentations within a district professional development day at the end of the year and/or a department/grade-level meeting. These could encompass leading a group circle discussion, providing a formal presentation, videoing oneself implementing a new approach or strategy with students at work and sharing this with colleagues, or providing a book/article study.
- An ongoing dialogue relevant to professional development subject matter will be perpetuated and encouraged, enabling both the presenter and the audience to share and offer feedback on material presented.

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Provisions for Mentoring Program

The Watertown City School District Mentoring Program is defined by Board of Education policy, as outlined below:

All new teachers at Watertown City School District holding an initial certificate must complete a mentored teaching experience within their first year of employment as a teacher. The purpose of the mentoring program is to provide support for new teachers, retention of teachers, and to increase the skills of new teachers.

The mentoring program shall be developed and implemented consistent with any collective bargaining obligation required by Article 14 of the Civil Service Law (i.e., the Taylor Law); however, Commissioner's Regulation does not impose a collective bargaining obligation that is not required by the Taylor Law.

In accordance with Commissioner's Regulations, the elements of the mentoring program include:

Procedure for Selecting Mentors	The assistant superintendent for instruction informs the WEA (Watertown Education Association) president of new staff hires. The WEA president then works with building administration to assign a mentor to each new teacher.
Role of the Mentors	The role of the mentor is to serve as an instructional leader and provide guidance and support to the new teacher in instructional practice, classroom management, building relationships and rapport with stakeholders, and district and building logistics.
Preparation of Mentors	Mentors will attend a brief training course at the beginning of the school year. Mentors will receive regular support from the building-level administrators throughout the school year, and they will attend bi-annual progress meetings with their new teachers.
Types of Mentoring Activities	<p>A variety of activities will be provided for both mentors and new teachers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A calendar of helpful ideas with topics for discussion and things to address during each month of the school year. ● All staff members have access to the My Learning Plan district and Jefferson-Lewis BOCES workshop calendars. ● Mentors, coaches, and administrators will check in regularly with new teachers via classroom visits. ● Release time will be provided to both the mentor and new teacher for observing one another and discussing instructional practices. ● Mentors and new teachers will come together at quarterly progress meetings to discuss strengths, needs, and best practices. ● NYSUT New Member Workshops ● Effective Teaching ● New Staff Orientation (2-3 days in August) ● K-6 new teachers will have an opportunity, monthly, to receive instructional support from an instructional specialist (<i>this is a non-evaluative visit</i>).
Time Allotted for Mentoring	Mentors will be compensated for up to ten (10) hours of time <i>each semester</i> outside of the instructional day to meet with their new teachers. Up to four half-days per year will be provided for mentors and new teachers to observe one another's classrooms and discuss best practices (substitutes/coverage will be provided). Mentors and new teachers will attend semesterly progress meeting with the assistant superintendent of instruction.

Mentoring of Teachers

All teachers new to the Watertown City School District who have not received prior mentoring will be assigned a mentor teacher. The mentor teacher and the new teacher will meet regularly, as outlined in the Mentoring Plan, so that the mentor can provide support to the new teacher in a variety of areas. Additional components of the mentor program will include:

- All staff new to Watertown City School District will attend New Staff Orientation in August.
- All first-year teachers will have an opportunity to attend the NYSUT New Member workshop, a two-part series in both the fall and spring, in their first year of employment.
- Mentors will be required to attend a brief training course on the WCSD mentor program.
- New teachers in the Mentoring Program will have an opportunity, monthly, to receive instructional support from an instructional specialist. *This is a non-evaluative check-in.*
- Both the assigned mentor and the new teacher will have release time to complete informal observations of one another's instructional approach(es), with time provided for debriefing and discussion. *(A minimum of a half-day per quarter is required; substitutes/coverage will be provided.)*
- The building principal will check in regularly with the new teachers in his/her building, and the mentors, either through monthly meetings or drop-in observations (non-evaluative) to classrooms.
- The mentor and new teacher will be afforded planning time on a regular basis.
- All new teachers and mentors will participate in bi-annual meetings with embedded professional development around instructional strategies, classroom management, and reflection on practice.

**Note: A mentor checklist for the first week and month will be provided to ensure all first-year teachers have a common understanding of district procedures.*

Mentoring of Teacher Assistants/Aides

All instructional support staff new to the Watertown City School District will be assigned a mentor. The mentor and the new staff member will meet regularly, so that the mentor can provide support to the new staff member in a variety of areas. Additional components of the mentor program will include:

- All instructional support staff new to Watertown City School District will attend Day 1 of New Staff Orientation in August.
- Mentors will be required to attend a brief training course on the WCSD mentor program.
- Both the assigned mentor and the new instructional support staff will have release time to complete informal observations of one another's support approach(es), with time provided for debriefing and discussion. *(A minimum of a half-day per quarter is required; substitutes/coverage will be provided.)*
- The building principal will check in regularly with the new instructional support staff in their building, and the mentors, either through monthly meetings or drop-in observations (non-evaluative) to classrooms.
- All new instructional support staff and mentors will participate in meetings (2-4 times per year) with embedded professional development around behavioral support strategies, student management, and reflection on practice.

**Note: A mentor checklist for the first week and month will be provided to ensure all first-year teachers have a common understanding of district procedures.*

Provisions for School Violence Prevention and Intervention Training

Watertown City School District is committed to hiring teachers who have fulfilled the requirements of certification, including participation in workshops covering school prevention and intervention. Such workshops shall consist of at least two clock hours of training that includes but is not limited to, study in the warning signs within a developmental and social context that relate to violence and other troubling behaviors in children; the statutes, regulations, and policies relating to a safe nonviolent school climate; effective classroom management techniques and other academic supports that promote a nonviolent school climate and enhance learning; the integration of social and problem solving skill development for students within the regular curriculum; intervention techniques designed to address a school violence situation; and how to participate in an effective school/community referral process for students exhibiting violent behavior.

Upon request or determination of necessity, Watertown City School District will provide a refresher on school violence prevention and intervention.

In instructional settings, Watertown City School District will also utilize the interpersonal violence prevention education package provided by the State Education Department. These materials will be incorporated as part of the health or other related curricula or programs for students in Grades K through 12.

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Appendix A

A list of anticipated workshop topics or training to be offered during the 2023-2026 school years will be available across the Watertown City School District organization where CTLE credit will be awarded.

TOPIC


- ◆ AIS
- ◆ APPR
- ◆ Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
- ◆ English as a New Language
- ◆ Equipment Specific Training
- ◆ Explicit Direction Instruction
- ◆ Family Engagement
- ◆ Game-Based Learning
- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ Library Media Specialists
- ◆ Literacy
- ◆ Makerspace/Design Thinking
- ◆ My Learning Plan
- ◆ New Teacher Mentoring
- ◆ PBIS
- ◆ Positivity Project
- ◆ Professional Learning Communities
- ◆ Poverty
- ◆ Restorative Justice
- ◆ Right to Know
- ◆ RTI
- ◆ School Counseling
- ◆ School Safety
- ◆ Special Education
- ◆ Standards-Based Grading
- ◆ STEM/STEAM
- ◆ Student-Centered Learning
- ◆ Technology Integration

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Appendix B

Watertown CSD Professional Development Training 2023-2024

This will be updated annually.

Full Day 8 AM – 3 PM					Early Dismissal		
WHS	WHS	WHS	TBD	Location	TBD	TBD	TBD
09/05/2023	06/06/2023	02/06/2024	06/26/2024	Date	10/31/2023	01/26/2024	05/28/2024
District Welcome Back	TBD	TBD	Professional Sharing/ Vertical Alignment Meetings	11AM - Dismissal (building-specific times)	TBD	TBD	TBD

**Staff will be excused at the end of their contractual time.

Appendix C: Needs Assessment Sources

The members of the Professional Development Plan team analyzed the following data sources to identify the basis of our needs.

- ◆ BEDS Data
- ◆ Graduation and drop-out rates.
- ◆ Longitudinal data
- ◆ Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)
- ◆ School Report Card
- ◆ SIRS Reports (accountability and student tests scores)
- ◆ State benchmarks for student performance
- ◆ Student attendance rates
- ◆ Student performance on NYSED tests (3-8 and Regents), results disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, SES, and other special needs.
- ◆ Student/teacher ratios
- ◆ Teacher self-assessment
- ◆ Teacher surveys
- ◆ Teacher turnover rate