CERTIFIED STAFF CONTINUING EDUCATION

The Colorado Springs School District 11 Board of Education (the Board) recognizes that a student's education is a process of growth in which certified employees play a key role. Effective educators are themselves regularly integrating professional learning and experience as a means to professional growth in serving student needs.

Professional growth experiences are designed to improve knowledge and skills necessary to the implementation of approved Colorado Springs School District 11 (the District) educational programs, to facilitate the implementation of Board objectives and state- or federally- mandated policies or procedures and to meet personal and professional growth needs which enhance the service of the employee to the District.

The District's interest in professional growth is reflected in salary schedules and reclassification, state recertification, and in budget provisions for funding staff development. In order to provide quality control for the state development program, the Board has approved the following regulations:

1. Definitions

a. Increment credit is used to identify those credits available for purchase in recognition of professional learning carried on under the auspices of the District. Increment credit will apply as accumulated hours on the salary schedule but will not apply as college credit toward an advanced degree.

b. College credit is credit awarded by institutions of higher education with programs of teacher education course work approved by the Colorado Department of Education.

c. Recertification hours ~~credit~~ are professional learning hours which are applicable to the renewal of a certified employees' certificate as specified in state law.

2. Increment Credit

This regulation identifies the different opportunities certified staff can pursue to earn and purchase increment credit for salary reclassification after the successful completion of professional learning courses. Sixteen (16) semester hours are required for salary reclassification. One increment credit is equivalent to 15 clock hours of professional learning. A certified staff member invests 240 hours in professional learning before they can pursue salary reclassification.

- The criteria for purchasing increment credit is identified on the Credit and Salary Advancement Criteria document (see Exhibit GBDA-E).
- Certified staff may utilize approved District professional learning courses and approved out-of-district professional learning courses as opportunities to purchase District increment credit. College and/or university credits are submitted, reviewed, and applied to staff's salary reclassification request by Human Resources. This type of request does not require an additional payment of fees.
- Courses approved for increment credit are also compatible with continuing education professional learning hours for CDE license renewal.

- In order to meet and maintain Colorado Department of Education's professional license recertification requirements, CDE requires certified staff to complete 90 hours of professional learning courses every 7 years.

a. In general, increment credit may be purchased for those professional learning events which are approved by District 11.
   - District 11 utilizes the Professional Learning Platform (PLP), the online professional learning module of the Power School suite, for employees to access professional learning events and courses aligned to their individual needs and interests.
     - A Course Catalog, containing hundreds of online, hybrid, and face-to-face courses are available for selection.
     - Staff interested in offering a course are required to complete and submit a comprehensive Course Proposal. (d11.org>employee tab>United Talent Professional Learning>login is your long email address and network password>click on "Propose a Course" on black bar at top of window>click on drop-down from "Propose Course" tab>click on "New Instructor Led Course" and follow the instructions.)
     - The Course Proposal form contains components of: how the course aligns to Strategic Plan Criteria, what type of credit is available, and the standards & elements of employee groups evaluation rubrics, assuring alignment of professional learning to employee groups' standards and elements.
     - Course approvals go through levels of approvals prior to being advertised on the PLP. School-based staff must seek supervisor approval of the course first. Next, depending on the content, the course will automatically be sent to the appropriate facilitator or director for approval of the content and credit. Finally, the Director of Professional Learning will approve the course has been aligned to employee group standards and consistency in expectations of course rigor and tasks completion.

b. Increment credit for undergraduate level courses may be approved for professional learning outside of District 11 by using the External Credit Request via the Professional Learning Platform. (d11.org>employee tab>United Talent Professional Learning>login>click on credit request on black bar at top of window>click on New Request>from drop-down, choose External Increment>review guidelines and expectations regarding External Increment Credit>click box "I have read and understand the acknowledgement">complete the form.)

c. If graduate-level college credit is available, an employee may choose to invest in obtaining credit via that institution.

d. In special situations, the District may cooperate with institutions of higher learning, other governmental agencies and certain community organizations to provide necessary professional learning opportunities to meet changing federal, state, District, and/or other programmatic requirements.

e. District instructional leaders will collaborate with the Director of Professional Learning to support the certified employees' changing professional licensure learning requirements which have been identified through federal, state, district, and programmatic expectations.

f. One increment credit will be granted for each 15 hours of professional learning that is

completed satisfactorily. A proportionate amount of time will be required for any other amount of credit (in half-credit units) to be granted.

g. Certified employees must attend the entire professional learning event(s) and meet all course requirements to earn increment credit.

h. Certified employees may purchase increment credit towards salary advancement based on District-provided professional learning when:

- The employee satisfactorily completes professional learning (content, provider, agency, materials, and programs) tied to changes in rule and requirement for position or licensure (specific content hours, qualifications, and/or certifications) which meet the needs of identified federal, state, district, and/or programmatic mandates.
- The employee receives no Extra Duty pay or stipend, whether paid by General or Grant funding.
    - Payments made by D11 to professional learning vendors for access to professional learning & resources (tuition, tuition reimbursement, consultants, registration for in-person or online conferences or courses, memberships allowing access to professional learning materials, supplies, books and fees, etc.) meeting the federal, state, District or programmatic expectations shall not constitute direct reimbursement to the employee.
    - If the District is unable to fulfill certified staff's professional learning needs to meet the federal, state, District or programmatic requirements, the District will collaborate with outside resources to provide access to the necessary learning and resources. In this case, the District will direct certified employees to District- approved learning options.
- The professional learning is taken on the employees' own time (summer, school breaks, after-contract hours, etc.)
    - If the professional learning takes place during contract time, the employee must report an absence through the Smart Find Express (SFE) using Teacher Leave or Professional Leave codes.
- Employees completing unapproved courses are not guaranteed the opportunity to purchase increment credit.

i. Credit cannot be received more than once for professional learning with basically the same content or course title during a five-year period.

3. College Ceredit

a. Credit for college courses is granted by the college and is verified by the Human Resources Office by means of an official transcript secured by the employee.
b. Official transcripts are defined as an original academic document certified by the college that contains the courses of study, a final grade, an official seal of the college, and include the transcript legend.

4. CDE License Renewal Hours (Recertification)

a. Course proposals to be offered for CDE license renewal hours ~~credit~~ must be submitted to the Professional Learning Office.

b. All District professional learning opportunities for which license renewal/recertification is approved, must meet the requirements of the Colorado Department of Education. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make certain that all requirements are met.

5. Eligibility

a. Certified employees, and certified substitutes, are eligible to participate in professional learning and earn hours towards CDE license renewal.

b. Contract licensed personnel will be given first consideration for enrollment.

c. Individuals not associated with the District may be admitted for class participation on a space-available basis.

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