425 STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORING

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a staff development program and structure to carry out planning and reporting on staff development that supports improved student learning.

Transferred in part from MSBA model policy 425 and 619 and District 318 Policy GCI 3/21/2011. Revised Oct. 2021, Sept. 2022, 8/8/23, 9/23/24, 7/14/25, 8/24/26

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II. ADVISORY STAFF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AND SITE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAMS

A. The School Board will establish an Advisory Staff Development Committee to develop a Staff Development Plan, assist Site Professional Development Teams in developing a site plan consistent with the goals of the Staff Development Plan, and evaluate staff development efforts at the site level.

1. The majority of the membership of the Advisory Staff Development Committee shall consist of teachers representing various grade levels, subject areas, and special education. The Committee also will include nonteaching staff, parents and administrators.

2. Staff members of the Advisory Staff Development Committee shall be appointed by the building site teams. Other members may include (a) volunteer parent representative(s) and ex officio members. Building site teams shall appoint replacement members of the Advisory Staff Development Committee as soon as possible following the resignation, death, serious illness or removal of a member from the Committee.

B. Each site will establish a Professional Development Team.

1. Members of each Site Professional Development Team will be established at each school site.

2. The majority of each Site Professional Development Team shall be teachers representing various grade levels, subject areas and special education.

III. DUTIES OF THE ADVISORY STAFF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

A. The Advisory Staff Development Committee will develop a Staff Development Plan that will be reviewed and subject to approval by the School Board once a year.

The school district shall place a high priority on staff development including activities, programs and other efforts to implement the Graduation Standards effectively and to upgrade that implementation continuously. Staff development plans will be consistent with the district's strategic plan and Teaching & Learning model.

B. The Staff Development Plan must contain the following elements:

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1. Staff development outcomes that are consistent with the education outcomes as may be determined periodically by the School Board;

2. The means to achieve the Staff Development outcomes;

3. The procedures for evaluating progress at each school site toward meeting educational outcomes; consistent with relicensure requirements under Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.187;

4. Ongoing staff development activities that contribute toward continuous improvement in achievement of the following goals:

    a. Improve student achievement of state and local education standards in all areas of the curriculum, including areas of regular academic and applied and experiential learning, by using best practices methods;

    b. Effectively meet the needs of a diverse student population, including at-risk children, children with disabilities, English learners, and gifted children, within the regular classroom, applied and experiential learning settings, and other settings;

    c. Provide an inclusive curriculum for a racially, ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse student population that is consistent with state education diversity rule and the district's education diversity plan;

    d. Improve staff collaboration and develop mentoring and peer coaching programs for teachers new to the school or district;

    e. Effectively teach and model violence prevention policy and curriculum that address early intervention alternatives, issues of harassment, and teach nonviolent alternatives for conflict resolution; and

    f. Effectively deliver digital and blended learning and curriculum and engage students with technology; and

    g. Provide teachers and other members of site teams with appropriate management and financial management skills.

5. The Staff Development Plan also must:

   a. Support stable and productive professional communities achieved through ongoing and schoolwide progress and growth in teaching practice;

   b. Emphasize coaching, professional learning communities, classroom action research, and other job-embedded models;

   c. Maintain a strong subject matter focus premised on students' learning goals consistent with Minnesota Statutes section 120B.125;

   d. Ensure specialized preparation and learning about issues related to teaching English learners and students with special needs by focusing on long-term systemic efforts to improve educational services and opportunities and raise student achievement; and

   e. Reinforce national and state standards of effective teaching practice.

6. Staff development activities must:

   a. Focus on the school classroom and research-based strategies that improve student learning;

   b. Provide opportunities for teachers to practice and improve their instructional skills over time;

   c. Provide opportunities for teachers to use student data as part of their daily work to increase student achievement;

   d. Enhance teacher content knowledge and instructional skills, including to accommodate the delivery of digital and blended learning and curriculum and engage students with technology;

   e. Align with state and local academic standards;

   f. Provide opportunities to build professional relationships, foster collaboration among principals and staff who provide instruction, and provide opportunities for teacher-to-teacher mentoring; and

g. Align with the plan, if any, of the district or site for an alternative teacher professional pay system.

h. Provide teachers of English learners, including English as a second language, and content teachers with differentiated instructional strategies critical for ensuring students long-term academic success, the means to effectively use assessment data on the academic literacy, oral academic language, and English language development of English learners, and skills to support native and English language development across the curriculum; and

i. Provide opportunities for staff to learn about current workforce trends, the connections between workforce trends and postsecondary education, and training options, including career and technical education options.

7. Staff development activities may include curriculum development and curriculum training programs, and activities that provide teachers and other members of site-based teams training to enhance team performance.

8. The school district may implement other staff development activities required by law and activities associated with professional teacher compensation models.

C. The Advisory Staff Development Committee will assist Site Professional Development Teams in developing a site plan consistent with the goals and outcomes of the Staff Development Plan.

D. The Advisory Staff Development Committee will evaluate staff development efforts at the site level and will report to the School Board on an annual basis the extent to which staff at the site have met the outcomes of the Staff Development Plan.

E. In addition to developing a Staff Development Plan, the Staff Development Advisory Committee also must develop teacher mentoring programs for teachers new to the profession or school district, including teaching residents, teachers of color, teachers who are American Indian, teachers in license shortage areas, teachers with special needs, or experienced teachers in need of peer coaching. Teacher mentoring programs must be included in or aligned with the school district's teacher evaluation and peer review processes under Minnesota Statutes, sections 122A.40, subdivision 8 or 122A.41, subdivision 5.

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F. The Advisory Staff Development Committee shall assist the School District in preparing any reports required by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) relating to staff development or teacher mentoring including, but not limited to, the reports referenced in Section VII. below.

IV. DUTIES OF THE SITE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM

A. Each Site Professional Development Team shall develop a site plan, consistent with the goals of the Staff Development Plan.

B. The Site Professional Development Team must demonstrate to the School Board the extent to which staff at the site have met the outcomes of the Staff Development Plan. The actual reports to the School Board can be made by the Advisory Staff Development Committee to avoid duplication of effort.

C. If the School Board determines that staff development outcomes are not being met, it may withhold a portion of the initial allocation of revenue referenced in Section V. below.

V. STAFF DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

A. Unless the School District is in statutory operating debt or a majority of the School District Board and a majority of its licensed teachers vote to waive the requirement to reserve basic revenue for staff development, the School District will reserve an amount equal to at least two percent of its basic revenue for: (1) teacher development and evaluation under Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.40, subdivision 8 or 122A.41, subdivision 5; (2) principal development and evaluation under section 123B.147, subdivision. 3; (3) professional development under section 122A.60; (4) in-service education for programs under section 120B.22, subdivision 2; and (5) teacher mentorship under section 122A.70, subdivision 1. To the extent extra funds remain, staff development revenue may be used for development plans, including plans for challenging instructional activities and experiences under section 122A.60, and for curriculum development and programs, other in-service education, teacher's workshops, teacher conferences, the cost of substitute teachers for staff development purposes, preservice and in-service education for special education professionals and paraprofessionals, and other related costs for staff development efforts. The School District may also use the revenue reserved for staff development for grants to the school district's teachers to pay for coursework and training leading to certification as either a college in the schools teacher or a concurrent enrollment teacher. To receive a grant, the teacher must be enrolled in a program that includes coursework and training focused on teaching a core subject.

B. The School District may, in its discretion, expend an additional amount of unreserved revenue for staff development based on its needs. This additional expenditure does not need to follow the allocation described in part V.A. above.

C. Release time provided for teachers to supervise students on field trips and school activities, or independent tasks not associated with enhancing the teacher's knowledge and instructional skills, such as preparing report cards, calculating grades, or organizing classroom materials, may not be counted as staff development time that is financed with staff development reserved revenue under Minnesota Statutes, section 122A.61.

VI. PROCEDURE FOR USE OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT FUNDS

A. On a yearly basis, the Advisory Staff Development Committee, with the assistance of the Site Professional Development Teams, shall prepare a projected budget setting forth proposals for allocating staff development and mentoring funds reserved for each school site. Such budgets shall include, but not be limited to, projections as to the cost of building site training programs, costs of individual staff seminars, and cost of substitutes.

B. Upon approval of the budget by the School Board, the Advisory Committee shall be responsible for monitoring the use of such funds in accordance with the Staff Development Plan and budget. The requested use of staff development funds must meet or make progress toward the goals and objectives of the Staff Development Plan.

C. Individual requests from staff for leave to attend staff development activities shall be submitted and reviewed according to school district policy, staff procedures, contractual agreement, and the effect on school district operations. Failure to timely submit such requests may be cause for denial of the request.

D. The school district may use staff development revenue, special grant programs established by the legislature, or another funding source to pay a stipend to a mentor who may be a current or former teacher who has taught at least three (3) years and is not on an improvement plan. Other initiatives using such funds or funds available under Minnesota Statutes, sections 124D.861 and 124D.862, may include:

1. additional stipends as incentives to mentors who are of color or who are American Indian;

2. financial supports for professional learning community affinity groups across schools within and between districts for teachers from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups to come together throughout the school year;
3. programs for induction aligned with the school district or school mentorship program during the first three (3) years of teaching, especially for teachers from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups; or
4. professional development focused on ways to close opportunity and achievement gaps for students of color and American Indian students; or
5. for teachers of color and American Indian teachers, graduate courses toward a first master's degree in a field related to their licensure or toward an additional license.

To the extent the school district receives a grant for any of the above purposes, it will negotiate additional retention strategies or protection from unrequested leave of absences in the beginning years of employment for teachers of color and teachers who are American Indian. Retention strategies may include providing financial incentives for teachers of color and teachers who are American Indian to work in the school or district for at least five (5) years and placing American Indian educators at sites with other American Indian educators and educators of color at sites with other educators of color to reduce isolation and increase opportunity for collegial support.

VII. PARAPROFESSIONALS, TITLE I AIDES, AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT STAFF

A. The school district must provide a minimum of eight hours of paid orientation or professional development annually to all paraprofessionals, Title I aides, and other instructional support staff. Six of the eight hours must be completed before the first instructional day of the school year or within 30 days of hire. The school district must consult the exclusive representative for employees receiving this training before creating or planning the training required under this section.

B. The orientation or professional development must be relevant to the employee's occupation and may include collaboration time with classroom teachers and planning for the school year.

C. For paraprofessionals who provide direct support to students, at least 50 percent of the professional development or orientation must be dedicated to meeting the requirements of this section. Professional development for

paraprofessionals may also address the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.363, subdivision 3.

D. A school administrator must provide an annual certification of compliance with this requirement to the MDE Commissioner.

VII. REPORTING

A. The School District and site staff development committee shall prepare a report of the previous fiscal year's staff development activities and expenditures.

1. The report must include assessment and evaluation data indicating progress toward district and site staff development goals based on teaching and learning outcomes, including the percentage of teachers and other staff involved in instruction who participate in effective staff development activities.

2. The report will provide a breakdown of expenditures for the following:

   a. curriculum development and curriculum training programs;

   b. staff development training models, workshops, and conferences; and

   c. the cost of releasing teachers or providing substitute teachers for staff development purposes.

   The report also must indicate whether the expenditures were incurred at the district level or the school site level, and whether the school site expenditures were made possible by the grants to school sites that demonstrate exemplary use of allocated staff development revenue. These expenditures must be reported using the uniform financial and accounting and reporting standards (UFARS).

3. The report will be signed by the superintendent and staff development chair.

E. To the extent the school district receives a grant for mentorship activities described in Section V.D., by June 30 of each year after receiving a grant, the site staff development committee must submit a report to the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board on program efforts

that describes mentoring and induction activities and assesses the impact of these programs on teacher effectiveness and retention.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 120A.41 (Length of School Year; Days of Instruction)
Minn. Stat. § 120A.415 (Extended School Calendar)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.125 (Planning for Students' Successful Transition to Postsecondary Education and Employment; Personal Learning Plans)
Minn. Stat. § 120B.22, subd. 2 (Violence Prevention Education)
Minn. Stat. § 121A.642 (Paraprofessional Training)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.187 (Expiration and Renewal)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.40, subds. 7, 7a and 8 (Employment; Contracts; Termination - Additional Staff Development and Salary)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.41, subds. 4, 4a and 5 (Teacher Tenure Act; Cities of the First Class; Definitions - Additional Staff Development and Salary)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.60 (Staff Development Program)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.70 (Teacher Mentorship and Retention of Effective Teachers)
Minn. Stat. § 122A.61 (Reserved Revenue for Staff Development)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.147, subd. 3 (Principals)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.861 (Achievement and Integration for Minnesota)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.862 (Achievement and Integration Revenue)
Minn. Stat. § 126C.10, subds. 2 and 2b (General Education Revenue)
Minn. Stat. § 126C.13, subd. 5 (General Education Levy and Aid)

Cross References: None