



FAQs about Professional Development

Ongoing professional development (PD) is part of quality educational processes and delivery. Effective professional development should permeate educational organizations at all levels, including teaching, staff and leadership. Maintaining currency is part of professional growth and development, but it is only one of the elements necessary to improve student and school achievement. Schools and school districts need to develop and implement professional growth plans for all staff, using a framework that incorporates standards for quality professional development. For their part, educators need to remember that sustained professional development is just as important to improving student and school achievement as their preparation and training were for initial licensure and the beginning of their careers.

Why: I'm an educator (teacher, special service provider, principal, administrator) and have been one for 5, 10, 15 years. Why does PD apply to me?

There are two reasons you need to know about professional development:

- It's meant to measurably improve teaching and administering, and, consequently, student and school achievement.
- In Colorado, it's required.

Who: I've moved from the provisional license to a professional one. Am I still required to demonstrate professional growth?

Yes. As part of keeping a professional license current and demonstrating professional growth, all educators are required to complete a minimum of five credit hours, or equivalent, every five years prior to license renewal.

Where: Where can I get more information about Colorado's requirements for licensure renewal?

Click on the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and Educator Licensing Applications Wizard links on the Colorado Department of Education's Educator Licensing Home page for information concerning renewal of licenses.

What: To keep my license current, what do I need to know about what qualifies as professional development for educators?

- Relevant professional development activities are required for license renewal. To be relevant, PD activities must relate to the licensed professional's existing or potential endorsement area(s) of expertise, or competence in delivering instruction, or teaching literacy or numeracy. PD activities accepted for any one of the licensee's areas of endorsement shall apply equally to renewal of any professional educator license or endorsement held by the applicant.
- Credit Hours: Six semester hours or ninety clock hours, completed within the five-year period preceding the date of expiration of the license to be renewed, are required.

- College or University Credit: Credits earned from accepted four-year or graduate institutions of higher education, or from accepted community, technical or junior colleges, are accepted. Courses must be directly related to the standards for professional development as provided in section 12.02 of these Rules, and must be documented by submitting official transcripts with the application for licensure renewal.
- Educational travel, documented and verified by the educational professional's supervisor, shall be acceptable professional development activities. One semester hour of credit may be accepted for each 15 clock hours of educational travel. Travel to and from the intended destination is not counted in calculating clock hours accumulated. Educational travel shall be directly applicable to the endorsement area of the licensee.
- Involvement in School Reform: One semester hour of credit for each 15 clock hours of participation, verified by the licensee's supervisor, may be accepted and applied toward PD. Acceptable activities may include, but are not limited to:
 - Membership on school site or district accountability or improvement committee(s);
 - Curriculum, standards or assessment development or implementation, in the licensee's endorsement content area;
 - Implementation of standards;
 - Development or implementation of a literacy or numeracy improvement program(s).

What: Are there other experiences that may count as acceptable PD activities?

- Ongoing professional development: Ongoing professional development and training experiences must be related to the licensee's present or future endorsement content areas(s) or in the areas of literacy or numeracy. Such activities may include, but are not limited to:
 - Attendance or presentation at professional conferences;
 - Service on state-wide or national educational task forces or boards;
 - Professional research and publication;
 - Supervision of student teachers, or interns;
 - Serving as a mentor;
 - Pursuit of national educator certification;
 - Effective use of assessments in planning for instructional delivery and in individualizing student instruction.

How: How can schools and school leaders ensure quality PD opportunities?

- Professional development, just like induction and mentoring, requires planning and preparation. Developing a comprehensive plan is essential.
- Making increased student and school achievement the central goal of all professional development plans is essential.
- On-the-job professional growth doesn't happen easily in isolation. Therefore, ongoing planning and strategies designed to encourage partnerships and collaborative efforts for professionals are essential.
- Building a school climate that values professional growth and development is essential.
- Resources need to be sufficient and dedicated for staff development. Incentives to encourage and reward quality professional growth activities and further educational achievement are essential.

What: What are some of the key elements of a comprehensive professional development plan?

A PD Framework

✓	Plan related to licensees' endorsement content area(s), or in the areas of literacy or numeracy
✓	Plan tied directly to helping achieve school/district's goals and focused on student learning
✓	A collaborative endeavor – teachers and administrators work together in planning and implementation
✓	PD opportunities tied to achieving school-based goals
✓	Sustained, long-term plan differentiated by professionals' roles
✓	Research-based plan focused on measurably improving student and school achievement

Where: Are there resources available to help design and implement effective PD plans?

The National Staff Development Council is an organization devoted to professional development for all educators. In addition to establishing standards and guidelines for professional development plans and programs, the Council is a source of publications and research about professional development. You can access the Council at <http://www.nsd.org/>