

School system goals and improvement practices shall be based upon the annual assessed needs of system personnel identified through as analysis of student data, the individual personnel evaluation process, an annual evaluation of system instructional programs, or other priorities set by the local school system or mandated by the State Board of Education or state law

The following items, in addition to local Policy GAD, are designed to meet the requirements of the state program for staff and professional development.

Organizational Structure

A. Associate Superintendent of Student Learning

The Superintendent will appoint the Associate Superintendent of Student Learning to carry out responsibilities for bringing together all professional **learning** planning activities and report those in one comprehensive plan.

B. Professional **Learning** Advisory Committee

A committee, the membership of which is representative of probable participation in professional **learning** activities, will be appointed by the **Associate Superintendent for Student Learning**. This committee will include county office staff, directors of **student learning**, school-based administrators, and teachers. The role of the advisory committee will be to advise and assist the Associate Superintendent of Student Learning with respect to the assessment of needs, determination of priorities, content of activities, and evaluation of the program.

Administrative Procedures

A. Planning

There are several activities pursuant to bringing together all professional **learning** planning activities. The following items address major planning activities:

1. The Principal is responsible for the development, administration and compilation of the results of an annual Professional **Learning** Needs Assessment for his/her school. The Principal and the school improvement team are responsible for developing site-based professional **learning** growth opportunities to meet the needs of certified and non-certified personnel. These plans are presented to the Associate Superintendent of Student Learning for approval.

2. The Directors **of Student Learning** for each level are responsible for compiling professional **learning** needs based on their meetings with Principals, Assistant Principals, teachers, and others. In planning meetings with the Associate Superintendent of Student Learning, these needs are discussed and plans are made to meet these needs for the system. The Directors **of Student Learning** are responsible for developing system-wide professional **learning** growth opportunities related to curriculum implementation. These plans are submitted to the Associate Superintendent of Student Learning for approval.
3. The various Department Heads are responsible for compiling professional **learning** needs for the personnel in their departments. The Department Heads are responsible for developing and planning for professional **learning** growth opportunities for the personnel in their department.
4. The Associate Superintendent of Student Learning is responsible for compiling the needs from the principals, the Directors **of Student Learning** and the department heads and **consolidating these into the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan submitted to the state.**
5. **Prior approval by the Associate Superintendent of Student Learning, in consultation with the Professional Learning Council, shall be received BEFORE participating in any professional learning activity for which PLU credit is sought. A Course/Workshop Proposal will be submitted following the guidelines established by the current Professional Learning Management System for approval. It will be ensured that each approved PLU no matter what its origin, i.e. school system, RESA, college, or private or public provide, or the state, has been judged to be of high quality and appropriate content and that it will enable participating personnel to contribute to their school’s annual CSIP and/or the system’s annual CSIP.**
6. **PLU’s shall be earned by an individual only in the following four categories:**
 - a. **Field(s) of Certification**
 - b. **School/System/Individual Improvement Plan**
 - c. **Annual Personnel Evaluation**
 - d. **State/Federal Requirements**
7. **Each PLU activity shall include:**
 - a. **Goals of the PLU activity**
 - b. **A description of the components of each PLU activity planned for PLU credit**
 - c. **Competencies (knowledge, skill and attitudes) to be demonstrated in this PLU activity**
 - d. **Dates**
 - e. **Instructor(s) and qualification**
 - f. **Location(s) of the activity**

- g. Strategies, e.g. lecture/demonstration, hands-on activities, field or group work, simulations, practicum**
 - h. Criteria and procedures to verify that the individual has completed the preparation phase at an acceptable level and has earned PLU's**
8. Instructor Fees for county employees may be paid if instruction is delivered after the contract day according to the current fee established annually. **The number of instructors actually delivering the instruction, unless contracted otherwise, must divide the set fee for each PLU awarded.** Fees for outside consultants are paid based on a signed contract between the vendor and the approved county administrator arranging for the instruction.

B. Stipends

Stipends may be awarded to certified and non-certified personnel when the following conditions are met:

1. School/system administrators select courses/workshops for which to offer stipends according to priorities that are annually determined by the system or by the school.
2. The individual participates in an approved activity outside the normal contract time.
3. The approved activity is a college-credit course offered by a regionally accredited institution or an approved **PLU** course.
4. The system shall enter into a formal agreement with each person receiving a stipend specifying the amount of stipend, type of study, number of credits, and needs being addressed.
5. Stipends for new teachers will be paid on October 15th
6. No stipends shall be awarded to the individuals for participation in the following activities:
 - a. Revising or writing curriculum;
 - b. Reviewing or selecting textbooks;
 - c. Educational or professional travel;
 - d. Professional conferences;
 - e. Correspondence or independent courses;
 - f. Serving on school/system committees or performing tasks for the system.
7. Stipends shall be awarded at a rate not to exceed **\$200.00** per quarter hour of college credit or its equivalent (one staff development unit credit).
8. No stipend shall be awarded for less than one **PLU** credit. **No alternative PLU's will be accepted.**

9. The system shall withhold FICA and federal and state income tax. The employer's portion of FICA and Medicare deductions are allowable to charge to stipend funds. Stipends are not subject to teacher retirement withholding.

C. Awarding of Credit

Instructors for system and site-based courses shall submit **an electronic or manually** signed roster verification forms to the Professional Learning Department immediately upon completion of the course. Credit information will be taken directly from **the Course Registration process of the iPerform Professional Learning Management System and the attendance** verification roster. **Credit will be** posted to individual transcripts within thirty days of receipt of this verification roster. Participants should verify **their own credit by following procedures established within the iPerform automated professional learning management system**, after completing an activity. Copies of all rosters/verification forms are also kept on file for future reference/research.

1. It is the responsibility of the participant to be sure that **his/her attendance is recorded by the class instructor, upon completion of each professional learning session.**
2. Requests for outside credit (professional **learning** credit offered by other agencies) to be posted on the Columbia County Transcript should be approved by the principal or department head before participating in an outside agency activity.
3. When an activity is offered by **an outside** agency for which **Columbia County official PLU credit is sought**, a participant **must request prior approval, by submitting this activity on Columbia County Professional Learning course/Workshop Proposal form for approval to the Professional Learning Department.**
4. **PLU credit may be awarded and added to the professional learning transcript for participation in an outside agency activity, once prior approval is granted and attendance is verified by that agency. Attendance verification forms should be submitted to the Professional Learning Department. It will be the responsibility of the participant to follow these guidelines.**
5. Credit cannot be offered for taking the same course twice during the validity period of a certificate unless it is required for certification.
6. There are no partial **PLU'S**. One **PLU** equals 10 contact hours. **No more than eight contact hours of instruction shall be conducted per day with a maximum of four PLU's earned per week.**

7. Contact hours include actual clock hours of instruction received during the preparation phase of a **PLU** activity. Such contact may also include time spent in on-line computer courses where actual contact time can be verified. Contact may also include supervised practicums that are an integral and necessary part of an instructional program. Contact hours shall not include activities required for the on-the-job assessment or mastery verification or non-class time to develop or produce class assignments.
8. Credit is not awarded for independent studies.
9. The instructor may allow a participant to make up work missed for up to 10% of the total contact hours of the course. (For some courses, there is no way to make up classes or sessions missed. This is the decision of the instructor.) No more than 10% of the total contact hours will be allowed as excused absences, tardies, etc. Instructors do not have the flexibility to waive this rule. If there are extreme, extenuating circumstances, an appeal may be submitted to the Associate Superintendent of Student Learning. Attempting to use one or two hours from one activity to make up the same number of hours missed from another activity is not acceptable.

D. Grievances

A participant desiring to appeal the judgement of the instructor or Associate Superintendent of Student Learning regarding the granting of professional and staff development units of credit has the option to appeal through the following process:

1. Within one week of the judgement of the instructor, the participant must notify the Associate Superintendent of Student Learning in writing of the desire to appeal the judgement. The Associate Superintendent and participant will schedule a time to discuss the appeal. The Associate Superintendent of Student Learning will notify the participant of the decision made concerning the appeal within five working days of the discussion.
2. If the matter is not resolved through the process cited in number 1, the participant must submit written notification within five days to the Associate Superintendent of Student Learning of the participant's desire to appeal to the system's Professional **Learning** Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee will schedule a meeting with the participant and other appropriate individuals to discuss the appeal. The Associate Superintendent of Student Learning will notify the participant within five days of the decision of the Advisory Committee.
3. If the participant's grievance has not been resolved at this level, the participant may file an appeal through the normal grievance procedures of the Columbia County School System as outlined in the Policies of the Columbia County School System.

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4. Failure of an employee to appeal a decision concerning his/her grievance within five (5) work days shall be cause to consider that the case has been settled or the right to further appeal has been waived. A participant may withdraw a grievance at any time.

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Columbia County Board of Education