

SHENENDEHOWA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Clifton Park, New York

Guidelines for Use of Professional Development Days

Pursuant to the Agreement between the Shenendehowa Teachers Association and the Shenendehowa Central School District, each professional staff member shall have three (3) professional days available. As stipulated, "Two (2) of those days may be used for such activities as attending a conference or professional development course/workshop, visiting another school, instructional planning, or other similar activity associated with his/her assignment. One (1) of those professional days shall be used for a purpose deemed relevant and related to District goals approved by the Board of Education. Request for use and scheduling of these three (3) days shall be initiated by the professional staff member and subsequently considered and approved by the building Council on Professionalism (COP)."

It is therefore essential that all buildings have a working COP. Names of committee members should be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction by no later than September 15th of each year in order to ensure expedient provision and engagement of professional development endeavors.

Recognizing that there will be instances and individuals that may warrant the use of more than the three aforementioned days and coupled with the increasing need to effectively and efficiently manage student contact time and scarce financial resources, current delivery models and use of time must be scrutinized. The number of professional development days provided beyond the three (3) referenced in the Agreement are ultimately approved through the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

Shenendehowa continues to offer high quality professional development, most of which has traditionally occurred during the instructional day. However, efforts shall be made to minimize the loss of instructional time, placing an emphasis on student/teacher contact time. The district will continue to encourage suggestions for professional development that minimize the loss of instructional time.

Furthermore, the district professional development plan as formulated by the Professional Development Committee (PDC) and approved by the Board of Education is aligned with the district goals. This reinforces the steadfast focus on the maximization of staff time and effort. The ultimate success of any such endeavors hinges on a true spirit of cooperation, recognizing limitations of time and resources.

The district is committed to providing quality professional development with our "in-house" professional developers, mentors, and coaches. The three lead teachers for technology also serve a critical role in the professional development cog, providing leadership and support in all aspects of instructional technology. Additionally, academic administrators, building principals and district-level administrators work with teachers, outside consultants, and speakers to align the professional development with the many district educational goals and the direction of NYSED on educational initiatives and mandates. In order to more effectively support planning, attendance, and accounting of instructional resources, the attendance/absence form has been updated to more accurately reflect and document professional development requests and other district planning initiatives.

A COP shall be established in each building to review and track all absence notifications and requests. Prior notification and approval for any professional leave is always necessary. Absence forms documenting professional leave need to be submitted at least two (2) weeks prior to the related absence. Once the request is approved, a signed copy shall be return to the teacher who must arrange for an appropriate substitute.

Guidelines for Professional Development Planning:

The following guidelines are established to ensure fidelity within the process of providing professional development and planning opportunities for the teaching staff.

- 1) Review STA Contract section 8.2 (b) School Council on Professionalism on establishing a building team.
- 2) Communicate to staff and COP members the process for submission and approval of professional development absences.
- 3) Review the district goals, available for reference on the Shenendehowa website.
- 4) COP teams shall meet on a regular basis to review all professional development day requests for prior approval.
- 5) COP teams should maintain a calendar of all professional development days and verify the accuracy of the information quarterly. The same tracking system should be used to record participation in district committees, planning teams, and department-related curriculum work even though those absences are not approved through the COP team itself.
- 6) All requests for professional development days must be carefully reviewed by the COP for alignment with district goals and current educational practices.
- 7) A building COP may approve a maximum of three (3) days per teacher. Teachers may request additional professional development days from the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. The Assistant Superintendent will coordinate any approval with the appropriate building administrator.
- 8) Professional development days for activities such as a conference, professional development course/workshop, visiting another school, instructional planning, or other activity associated with the teacher's assignment will be reviewed by the COP for approval at least two (2) weeks prior to the requested day.
- 9) Any such approval must be signed by the building principal, demonstrating consent and support.
- 10) Please note, for "out of district" conferences, an additional form must be submitted.
- 11) Prior notification is required for on-going district committees, planning teams, and department-related curriculum work. Whenever feasible, two (2) weeks notice should be given. These absences must be appropriately documented on the absence form, initialed by the Academic Administrator and building administrator, and then forwarded to the building's main office.
- 12) Questions, concerns, or requests for additional time for professional development aligned with district goals should be directed to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.