



**Westfield Public Schools
Unit A & Unit B Professional Development Plan
2018-2019**

Professional Development Rationale:

Research has shown educator quality to be the most important influence upon student achievement. High quality professional development is essential to increase educators' knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs so that they may enable all students to learn at high levels. Professional development that is most effective in improving educator practice is results-oriented, data driven, constructivist in nature and job embedded.

Quality professional development has the power to increase educators' knowledge of academic content and teaching skills while changing what educators believe about student learning and how they interact with students. Powerful professional development can transform schools into places in which all adults and students are deeply engaged in learning and making meaning of their lives.

District Strategic Objective: Staff Development

Develop a focused, coordinated staff development program to cultivate the professional skills of all staff.

The District Strategic Plan is the driving force behind the District's Professional Development Plan. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires professional development goals to align with district and school plans. The three major goals the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education continue to foster are as follows:

1. Expanding education's knowledge of subject matter focusing on content and pedagogy.
2. Increasing teacher's knowledge of standards-based curriculum instruction and assessment.
3. Analyzing and reducing the gap between student achievement and student's actual progress.

In Westfield Public Schools there are established Professional Development Committees for both Unit A and Unit B Members. The major responsibility is to assess individual applications to assure their alignment with. The committees monitor the monies set aside in the local budget for the fiscal year. Other professional development funds may be accessed through grants.

The following are the established Unit A and Unit B District Professional Development Goals:

- **Goal 1:** To provide high quality professional development that focuses on increasing teachers' expertise in teaching to high standards.
- **Goal 2:** To improve teacher effectiveness with high quality professional development training that will result in increased student achievement and narrowing student achievement gaps.

Professional Development Application Guidelines and Procedures:

Professional development requests must be made using the following Westfield Public Schools Professional Development Workshop/Conference Application following guidelines and procedures as follows:

1. Professional development requests must be made using the [WPS Professional Development Application](#).
2. Course reimbursement requests must be made using the [WPS Course Tuition Reimbursement Application](#).
3. Applicants must complete all parts of the application and obtain their building principal's signature.
4. One form **per person** should be completed, except if applicants are planning on attending a workshop/training as a group – then one form should be completed listing all applicants.
5. All applications should be sent to the Office for Assessment & Accountability for preparation prior to committee meeting dates.
6. The Professional Development Committees will meet monthly to review/approve applications as indicated by the [Unit A & Unit B PD Committee Meeting Schedule](#).
7. All Original Applications will be kept on file in the Office of Assessment & Accountability.
8. An application status form will be sent to applicants with a copy to the building principal as follows:
 - a. **Approved Applications:**
 - i. Approved applications will be signed by the Director of Assessment & Accountability.
 - ii. A [Status Form](#) will be sent to the applicant and principal/supervisor for documentation of approval.
 - iii. The applicant must then complete a [Westfield Public Schools Travel Request Form \(Goldenrod Form\)](#) and forward it to the Office of Assessment & Accountability prior to attending the PD training/workshop.
 - iv. A copy of the approved application should be attached to the [Westfield Public Schools Travel Request Form \(Goldenrod Form\)](#).
 - b. **Denied Applications:**
 - i. Denied applications will be signed by the Director of Assessment & Accountability.
 - ii. A [Status Form](#) will be sent to the applicant and principal/supervisor indicating the reason the application was denied.
 - iii. Denied applications **cannot** be resubmitted for approval.

c. Incomplete Applications:

- i. Incomplete applications will be signed by the Director of Assessment & Accountability.
- ii. A [Status Form](#) will be sent to the applicant and principal/supervisor indicating the reason the application was considered incomplete.
- iii. Incomplete applications **can** be resubmitted for approval.

Tuition Reimbursement Application Guidelines:

Applications may be submitted for course reimbursement for **tuition cost only** under the following guidelines using the [WPS Course Tuition Reimbursement Application](#).

1. The PD Committee shall reimburse a professional employee for tuition of an outside course approved in advance in accordance with contractual language.
2. The course shall be directly related to the employee's area of teaching or supervisory responsibility.
3. Reimbursement shall be contingent upon the employee's obtaining a satisfactory grade.
4. Tuition reimbursement for approved coursework **will require** the following:
 - a. A copy of the grade transcript sent to the Office of Assessment & Accountability.
 - b. A final grade documented as a passing grade of *B* or *higher*.
5. Professional employees applying for course tuition reimbursement will be reimbursed on a first-come, first-serve basis.
6. An employee may apply for course tuition reimbursement for more than one course in any contract year and will be reimbursed for such additional courses, providing there are funds available after reimbursing all employees who have taken only one course. Such requests for reimbursement must be received no later than April 15th of the given school year.

Guidelines for Payment for ALL Approved Expenses:

1. Approved expenses must be submitted to the Office of Assessment & Accountability using the [Expense Voucher Form](#) and following the guidelines outlined in [Unit A and Unit B Application and Course Reimbursement Criteria](#).
2. Approved expenses should be submitted as soon as possible after attendance of conference/training.
3. Original receipts must be attached to the expense voucher form in order to process payment.
4. Copies (front and back) of canceled checks must be submitted if check payments were used to pay for expenses.
5. All expenses must be submitted by June 20th in order to be processed for payment, as the new fiscal budget begins July 1st.

