



A year to go in first five-year, 100-hour cycle

Start checking your PD records now

by Martha O. DeBlieu

What's in your professional development (PD) record? If you are a teaching staff member who has been working continuously in New Jersey since Sept. 1, 2000, consider taking a good look at your PD records. Now is the perfect time to assess your progress in meeting the state's five-year, 100-hour professional development requirement.

Why? Believe it or not, the clock is running. The end of the first five-year professional development cycle is a little more than one year away—on Sept. 1, 2005. So, if you still have a significant amount of work to do to meet the 100-hour responsibility, don't delay or wait until the last minute.

Isn't the PD initiative going away?

To paraphrase Mark Twain, rumors of the initiative's demise are greatly exaggerated. In fact, they are downright wrong. The State Board of Education readopted slightly modified professional development regulations as part of the newly revised licensing rules this past Dec. 17.

The regulations still require 100 hours of professional development in every five-year cycle.

The amended rules include new standards for teachers, only slightly modified professional development standards, and some clarifications on such issues as Professional Improvement Plans (PIPs) for newly hired experienced educators and Local Professional

Development Committee elections. The regulations are not due to sunset until January 2009.

Who has to meet the requirement?

The five-year, 100-hour professional development requirement applies to all full-time and part-time teachers who are required to hold either an instructional or educational services license.

Remember, to be permitted to accrue time toward the 100 hours, teaching staff members must hold a standard certificate and have a Professional Improvement Plan (PIP).

Consequently, first-year, novice teachers do not begin to work toward the requirement until they have both elements. The state education commissioner and State Professional Teaching Standards Board decided that this allows those teachers to concentrate on their important first year of teaching. Any professional activities they undertake that year contribute toward their professional growth and show their commitment to continuing in the profession.

The newly amended regulations (6A:9-15.2 [a]) provide for newly hired teachers who have a standard certificate to get a PIP quickly so they can get started on meeting the requirement. They state: "All new teachers with standard certificates must fulfill this requirement and must therefore have a Professional Improvement Plan (PIP) within 60 days of a local board of education's approval of the employment contract. The initial five-year professional development requirement shall commence on the effective date of the PIP and be completed exactly five years from that date."

How should we check our progress?

Consider taking these steps now:

1. Check to make sure that there is a record of your professional development hours. This record ideally should be attached to your Professional Improvement Plan (PIP) or, at the very least, in your personnel file. As part of each year's summary conference, your supervisor should have signed off on the professional development you completed each year to meet your PIP.
2. Review the types of professional development activities that make up your hours. Activities which support and/or enhance the profession can only constitute up to 75 of the 100 required hours.
3. If you haven't yet completed the 100 hours, map out how you plan to reach that goal before the Sept. 1, 2005 deadline.
4. If you already have reached the 100-hour mark, concentrate on learning about and implementing collaborative, educator-driven approaches to professional development, such as study groups and action research. When the next five-year cycle begins, you'll be practiced at using these approaches.

What counts?

Under the state regulations (6A:9-15.2 [b]), "The content of each teacher's professional development shall be specified in a PIP . . . and be developed . . . to meet the needs of the individual teacher in the context of his or her job."

That means any professional development must meet the goals outlined in your PIP. Keep that in mind when

you are reviewing which activities to undertake.

In addition, when calculating your hours, remember that certain activities—specifically those termed “activities which support and/or enhance the profession”—can constitute only up to 75 of the 100 hours.

The “Professional Development Framework: What Counts” provisions, developed by the State Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB) and approved by the commissioner, show that professional development can take many forms. In the framework they include:

- programs counted hour-for-hour;
- programs that support and/or enhance the profession, with the time which can be accrued specifically defined; and
- independent study.

✓ Programs that count hour-for-hour

Programs that count hour-for-hour include:

- **Formal courses (including in-class or online), conferences, workshops, seminars, institutes, and other such programs.** With college courses, each college credit equals 15 hours. Therefore, a three-credit course equals 45 hours.
- **Courses, seminars, and/or other activities** required for maintenance of licenses or certificates (such as social worker or school nurse) and which are issued by professional organizations or government entities. The hours for a specific course will count only once within a five-year period, even if it must be taken more times.
- The process of **developing curriculum** focused on the Core Curriculum Content Standards, including but not limited to research, writing, and revision.

✓ Activities which support and/or enhance the profession

Activities which support and/or enhance the profession are defined not only in the total number of hours which they can make up toward the 100 hours, but also in how the activities themselves are calculated.

These activities include, but are not limited to, grant writing, mentoring a preservice or novice teacher, professional service on boards or committees, and teaching a course or workshop.

- **Service on boards/committees**—A maximum of **10 hours per year** for all boards/committees combined may be counted for PD credit. Such service and specific goals of the experience must be identified in the PIP.
- **Mentoring novice teacher or preservice teacher**—The mentor of a novice teacher and the cooperating teacher for a preservice teacher will accrue one hour of PD credit for each week of working with that individual. Any teacher working with a teacher education student or group of students in a junior practicum earns three PD hours a semester.
- **Teaching a course/workshop**—Presenters or teachers of courses or workshops shall accrue the actual clock hours spent in delivering the first presentation of a program, plus PD hours based on **two hours of preparation time for every hour of delivery time.** The teaching or presenting of the same or a similar course or workshop shall count only once in a five-year cycle.

✓ Independent professional studies

This category allows for some of the sustained, continuous, job-embedded, activities which encourage educators to work collaboratively on common concerns or issues, such as action research, study groups, lesson study, and textbook review.

Besides those enumerated above, these studies also can include but are not limited to sabbaticals, fellowships, internships, teacher exchanges, portfolio development, online workshops or programs, and contributions to professional literature. These are excellent vehicles for individuals to use in meeting specific needs or addressing specific concerns. When

an individual decides to develop an independent study program for such study, he/she must adhere to the following procedures:

- The individual’s PIP must include a **written rationale** demonstrating how his/her proposed plan is consistent with the state standards for professional development.
- The individual and his/her immediate supervisor must discuss the **projected number of hours** which will be spent in such study.
- Over the course of the independent study, the staff member will maintain a **log of actual hours completed.**

In general, whether or not you’ve met the hourly requirement, consider first and foremost the quality of the activity. Be sure the activity is not only what counts, but also what matters.

The PTSB recommends that “educators design their personal professional development to include district inservice and activities related to their professional development goals with a focus on content knowledge and methods of enriching and broadening pedagogy.” In addition, it recommends that individuals create a plan that “is unique to their specific needs; considers school and district goals; and is balanced over time among a variety of professional development experiences.”

What’s new?

The recently revised regulations (6A:9-15.2 [c & d]) also specify that each teacher’s professional development shall align with the new Professional Standards for Teachers (6A:9-3.3) and the Professional Development



Standards (6A:9-15.2 [d]). These standards are also contained in the regulations and can be viewed at <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev/index.html>.

What responsibility do teachers have in meeting the 100-hour requirement?

“Each active teacher shall be required to complete 100 clock hours of State-approved professional development every five years,” the regulations (6A:9-15.2 [a]) say.

They further specify in 6A:9-15.4[a] that “. . . it shall be each teacher’s responsibility in conjunction with district board of education policies to take whatever steps are necessary in order to meet the requirement.”

How do part-time teachers meet the requirement?

The state-approved “Professional Development Framework: What Counts?” document indicates: “A part-time teacher is required to accrue 50 hours of professional development within each five-year cycle. A part-time teacher is defined as one who is employed on a regular basis for the school year, but for less than the full school day or week.”

The following formula is used to handle cases where teachers move back and forth between full- and part-time employment within these five years.

The formula calculates the hours required under years the individual was employed part time, added to the hours required for the years employed full time. For example, the number of hours a teacher who is employed part time for three years and full time for two years would be calculated as follows: $(3/5 \times 50 = 30) + (2/5 \times 100 = 40) = 70$ total hours required.

What if I was on leave during the five years?

A teacher on leave for one year or less has the option to accrue professional development hours if: (a) the teacher has a PIP for the school year; (b) the teacher and the supervisor have signed off on the PIP; and (c) the teacher has delineated the potential professional development opportunities.

If these elements were not in place, then the five-year PD clock is suspended until a PIP is in effect.

Full-time teachers serving as full-time local education association presidents should be considered “teachers on leave” and should follow the procedures for these teachers.

What responsibilities do districts share?

The regulations call for “continuous monitoring, constructive support, and timely intervention,” specifying that districts must assist, support, and monitor teachers’ efforts in meeting the requirement.

The regulations (6A:9-15.4 [b]) state: “In addition to enforcing the requirement, the State and employing district board of education shall actively assist and support teachers’ efforts to meet the professional development requirement.

“Specifically, it is the responsibility of the local supervisor and district administrator through the PIP process or applicable non-public school evaluation process to monitor the teacher’s efforts continuously **through progressive supervision** where a teacher’s progress is inadequate.”

The Department of Education (DOE) monitors compliance through the annual evaluation process for school districts.

What will districts do at the end of the five-year period?

The regulations (6A:9-15.5[a-3]) say: “The district administration shall provide documentation of each teacher’s fulfillment of the professional development requirement. Following the first five-year cycle, the district administration shall be required to report annually to the department all instances of non-compliance and a description of actions to address them.”

What if a teacher doesn’t complete the 100-hour requirement?

Teachers are professionals, and we believe that, as professionals, they will comply with the regulations.

The initiative was designed to enhance the critical role that professional growth plays in teaching and learning and define both teachers’ and districts’ responsibilities in the process. That’s why the N.J. Department of Education correctly has focused on the positive aspects of the regulations, rather than

emphasizing or responding to the negative.

However, keep in mind that the regulations clearly note the responsibility of “the local supervisor and district administrator through the PIP process . . . to monitor the teacher’s efforts continuously **through progressive supervision** where a teacher’s progress is inadequate.”

They also state (6A:9-15.5 [a-2]): “In any instance where an individual teacher fails to make annual progress toward meeting the requirement, or where a professional fails to satisfy the requirement fully within the five-year period, the district administration shall take appropriate remedial action applying sound and accepted principles of progressive supervision as well as by using existing laws and rules to the fullest extent.”

Any difficulties which occur should be considered on a case-by-case, individualized basis.

NJEA strongly encourages members to take the professional development requirement seriously.

Can I carry over hours to the next five-year cycle if I’ve exceeded the 100-hour requirement?

No. You cannot carry over any added professional development time to the next five-year cycle.

Consider any additional professional development you complete as a bonus in enhancing your practice. Use those added opportunities to explore new approaches to professional development.

Does PD make a difference?

Educators and researchers agree that professional development has a positive impact on teacher and student success.

The initiative seeks not only to elevate the importance of professional development, but ultimately to continue to improve the variety, quality, and long-term impact of the activities that educators experience. 🏠

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