

Tapestry Public Charter School Policy Manual

Professional Development Policy

Adopted: 9/29/2025

The Tapestry Public Charter School Board adopts the following policy, effective on the date of adoption by the Board.

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- I. Definition of Professional Development
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I. Professional Development Day — Definition & Policy

A Professional Development Day (PD Day) is a planned, school-approved work day during which an employee participates in structured learning activities (in-person or online) *directly related to their professional responsibilities, the school's instructional goals, or required certification/recertification.*

What counts as a PD Day?

Qualifying activities include (but are not limited to):

- Workshops, conferences, seminars, or webinars with clear learning objectives and agenda.
- College/university coursework or credentialing classes directly tied to the employee's assignment or certification.
- Job-embedded coaching, peer observation, or instructional rounds that include pre/post reflection.
- Curriculum or assessment training required by the school/district or state (e.g., GaDOE required trainings).
- Approved school/district in-service or team planning days.

What does not count as a PD Day?

- Personal enrichment activities unrelated to job duties (e.g., hobby classes).
- Vendor sales demonstrations without substantive instructional content.
- Activities you attend for personal networking only (unless learning objectives are documented).

- Vacation, personal leave, or substitute-covered time that is not focused on approved learning.

Examples — Acceptable vs Not acceptable

Acceptable:

- A teacher attends a literacy conference that aligns with the SIP and provides an agenda.
- A counselor completes a required certification module for their role.

Not acceptable:

- A staff member attends a personal time-management seminar unrelated to duties.
- An employee requests PD the week before state testing without justification and no substitute plan.

II. Minimum criteria for approval: A PD activity must meet all of the following:

1. **Relevance:** Clearly connected to the employee's job duties, the school improvement plan (SIP), or certification requirements.
2. **Learning objectives:** A stated set of learning objectives or an agenda is provided.
3. **Quality evidence:** Sponsor/presenter credentials and/or conference agenda, or course syllabus.
4. **Coverage plan:** Substitute coverage (if required) and plan for student instruction are arranged.
5. **Budget clarity:** Funding source identified (employee, school, grant, or district) and travel/costs approved if applicable

III. Approval process & timelines (recommended)

1. **Request submission:** Employee submits PD request with required documents at least:
 - a. 14 calendar days before conferences/out-of-district events;
 - b. 5 calendar days before local workshops/webinars;
 - c. 30 days for coursework that requires schedule adjustment.
2. **Supervisor review:** Principal reviews against criteria within 5 business days.
3. **Decision & logistics:** If approved, confirm substitute coverage, funding, and any schedule changes.
4. **Attendance & documentation:** Employee provides proof of attendance (certificate/receipt), provides copy of agenda, and completes a brief post-PD reflection/share within 10 school days of attendance.
5. **Follow-up:** Employee completes any required deliverables agreed at approval.

Exceptions: Last-minute emergency PD (e.g., mandatory state training with short notice) may be expedited at supervisor discretion.

IV. Funding, Time-Off, and Pay

- **Paid PD:** If the activity occurs during the employee's regularly scheduled work day and meets approval criteria, time is considered paid work time and does not reduce accrued sick/personal/vacation leave..
- **Overtime time:** Non-exempt employees require prior approval for any time that would trigger overtime.
- **Costs & travel:** Conference registration, travel, and lodging require advance written approval. If an employee registers without prior approval, reimbursement is not guaranteed.
- **Substitutes:** If the employee's attendance requires a substitute, the Principal must confirm coverage before final approval.

V. Required Documentation

Before approval: Agenda, learning objectives, sponsor info, cost estimate, substitute plan (if applicable).

After attendance (within 10 school days): Certificate of attendance or receipt, provide a copy of the agenda, brief reflection (1 page or 10-minute share), and any resources or next steps for the team.

VI. Employee Handbook Wording

Professional Development Days (PD Days) — Employees may request approval to attend PD activities for the following:

- Advance instructional practice
- Support school goals, or
- Meet certification requirements.

Requests must be submitted in writing with an agenda/learning objectives and substitute coverage plan at least 14 days prior (conferences) or 5 days prior (local PD). Approved PD requires submission of attendance proof and a brief staff share/reflection within 10 school days. Funding and substitute coverage require prior approval. The Principal or designated supervisor will review all requests against relevance, impact, provider quality, and cost.