

Professional Learning in PAUSD

Vision for Professional Learning

Professional Learning is a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving teachers', principals' and support staffs' effectiveness in raising student achievement. In order to provide all students the highest-quality learning environment in every Palo Alto school, all certificated and classified staff must be continuously engaged in Professional Learning.

All teachers are expected to complete a minimum of 18 hours of professional learning aligned to district, site and individual goals every two years. Teachers have a variety of options for compensation. Teachers may:

- earn professional growth units that count toward salary increase (contact HR for more information *before* beginning any professional learning activities).
- at the principal's discretion, attend out-of-district conferences paid for by the site
- earn a Professional Learning Stipend

Professional Learning Stipend FAQs for Teachers

Teachers will earn the Professional Learning Stipend by engaging in 18 hours of eligible professional learning activities outside the workday and beyond those activities provided during designated staff development days. The Professional Learning Stipend may be earned annually.

- **Why the new expectation?**

The district is committed to fostering a culture of ongoing professional learning in PAUSD in order to create an environment in which every staff member is actively engaged in professional learning that enhances their ability to improve the experience and education of our students. The stipend is one of many options for compensation.

- **What counts towards getting the stipend? What qualifies?**

Professional Learning activities that qualify for the stipend are connected to site and/or district goals. Activities:

- Must be pre-approved by your principal and be aligned to district, site and/or individual professional goals that support student learning
- Must occur outside of contract hours
- May be in-or-out of district workshops or other professional learning activities

- May not be compensated for in any other way by district or site funds
 - May include approved University coursework (for teachers already at 90 units), as long as those units are not later applied to earn a stipend for a higher degree.
 - Include approved in-district collaborative Professional Learning activities
- **Can I take all year to accumulate the hours? How often should I complete the 18 hours?**

A two-year cycle for Professional Learning hours will begin in the 2014-2015 school year. All teachers are expected to complete 18 hours of Professional Learning every two years. Teachers can earn the stipend annually if they plan and complete 18 hours of eligible professional learning activities in a given year. The year for the stipend runs from June 1 to May 31 each year.

2013-2016 Timeline

- **2013-14:** Program begins (teachers are eligible to earn stipend annually and may begin accumulating hours toward the professional learning expectation)
 - **2014-15:** First two-year cycle of professional learning expectation begins.
 - **2015-16:** Second year of the two-year cycle of professional learning expectation. All teachers must complete 18 hours of professional learning between June 1, 2013 and May 31, 2016.
- *Note: Teachers may earn the stipend annually if they choose, the stipend year run from June 1 to May 31 each year.***
- **What if I do more than 18 hours? Can I get paid?**
The \$1200 professional learning stipend is a district stipend. Site principals may allocate site resources to support additional professional learning.
 - **What if I attend a district workshop that is more than 18 hours, can I receive additional payment for the hours over the 18?**
If the entire workshop is scheduled for more than 18 hours, teachers will be compensated at the negotiated hourly rate for the number of hours above 18 to complete the workshop in its entirety (applies to in-district workshops only). If teachers choose to take separate workshops that total more than 18 hours for their professional learning they will earn the \$1200 stipend.

- **How do I figure out how many hours I should count for a workshop or conference?**

You may include hours that are spent learning toward your stipend. Count the length of time you spent in the actual session. Lunch breaks, social or networking opportunities are not eligible.

- **Can I combine earning units with the stipend if the activity takes that long?**

Professional Learning activities can be used for either a stipend or for units. If an activity takes longer than 15 hours (for a unit) or 18 hours (for a stipend), the extra hours cannot be used for the other purpose. Either, however, can be used to fulfill the expectation for professional learning.

Note: Generally teachers are better served by applying coursework towards advancement on the salary schedule because it leads to a permanent increase in salary as opposed to a one-time stipend.

- **If I attend an out-of-district workshop how do I obtain the required signature on the form?**

In lieu of a signature, obtain a certificate of attendance during your workshop. Write “see attached” in the signature portion of the form.

- **Can I use graduate courses to earn the stipend?**

Graduate courses are applied toward advancement on the salary schedule except for people who are at 90 units. If you are at 90 units on the salary schedule you can use coursework that meets site and/or district goals to earn the stipend as long as those units are not later applied for a stipend for a Master’s or Doctoral degree. You should obtain your principal’s approval.

- **I met the expectation. Is there a form that proves I did the 18 hours (not to get paid, but to show I met the expectation)? Who do I give it to?**

The goal of the Professional Learning expectation is to foster a culture of ongoing professional learning in support of student experience and education. If the hours are compensated for in another way (such as units or district-paid registration or travel expenses) the activity can still be used to fulfill the expectation for professional learning, but not qualify for the stipend. Watch for more information about how to document your professional learning aside from the stipend form.

- **Does summer school PD count for the stipend?**
No. Activities that are part of terms of employment for a position do not count towards the stipend or the professional learning expectation.

- **Can I change my mind and switch between units (pre-plan) and stipend**
Teachers are encouraged to plan ahead and weigh the options. All units for salary advancement must be pre-planned and approved by site administration and district HR prior to the activity. If a teacher would like to switch between the two options he/she should make the request to the Coordinator for Professional Development who will communicate with HR. Once a stipend has been paid teachers may not switch options.

- **How and when will I receive my stipend?**
The goal is to pay the stipend as soon as possible. It will appear on your paycheck as soon as it has been reviewed by the Professional Learning office and processed by payroll (within 1-3 months of submitting the completed form). For the summer and fall of 2013, turn in your completed form to the HR office (elementary) or to Judy Nishiyama (secondary).
Note: Only turn in your form when you have completed the full 18 hours.
Note: Stipends for work completed over the summer will be paid in September.

- **How do I offer feedback about the program?**
In-district professional development sessions will include a feedback/evaluation form. The Professional Learning committee will meet in the fall to identify ways for staff to provide feedback on the Professional Learning activities offered and planned for by the district.

- **What is the charge of the Professional Learning Committee? How can I find out more or get involved?**
The Professional Learning Committee consists of three administrators and three teachers. The committee will:
 - assist in identifying eligible professional learning activities;
 - assist in communicating with teachers about activities for professional learning stipend;
 - provide, collect and examine feedback on the effectiveness of professional learning activities offered by site and district on staff development days with the purpose of advising on next steps.

2013-2014 Members:

Teachers	Administrators
Corey Potter, Hoover Elementary School	Kelly Bikle, Coordinator for Professional Development
Fred Berghout, JLS Middle School	Katherine Baker, Director of Secondary Education
David Cohen, Palo Alto High School	Greg Barnes, Principal, Jordan Middle School

If you would like more information or are interested in being involved in future years contact the PAEA president.

- **Can I get paid to attend a workshop AND have the district pay the registration fees? How about travel expenses?**
To qualify for the stipend the employee must not be compensated in any other way, such as registration or travel expenses.
- **What if I forget to get approval? Can I get retroactive approval so I can be paid?**
Prior approval is required as it provides an opportunity for principals and teachers to discuss options for working toward district, site and individual goals. Approval of activities after the fact might not receive approval, and is at the principal's discretion.
- **Can I submit my form with fewer than 18 hours?**
To qualify for the stipend you must complete 18 hours of professional learning activities. Please do not submit your form until you have completed all 18 hours. Hours can be accumulated over the course of the summer and the school year(s).
- **What if I sign up for more than 18 hours of district workshops?**
The Professional Learning Stipend will be paid upon completion of 18 hours of professional learning. Compensation for additional professional learning hours are a site decision, need site administrative approval, and are part of the site budgeting process.

- **What if I am on leave or in a job-share, can I get the hours while on my non-work days?**

Yes. Teachers on leave are encouraged to complete their professional learning expectation before returning to a teaching position. Teachers in a job-share may complete their professional learning expectation on their non-PAUSD days, and those workshops may include district-offered workshop. **Note:** Stipends will be paid to the employee once he/she returns from leave.

- **Does the professional growth stipend apply to the counselors and psychologists?**

At this point the stipend for professional learning applies to employees eligible for PAEA membership. Counselors may earn the stipend but psychologists, who are not eligible for PAEA membership, are not eligible.