

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

It is the policy of the Edmond Public School Board of Education that teachers and other employees shall continue their professional growth through seminar and workshop attendance and membership in professional organizations. The board believes that it has a responsibility to provide opportunities for the continual growth of its professional staff. Such opportunities may include, within budgetary limitation, special in-service training courses and workshops as recommended by a professional development committee and/or the board. Staff members are encouraged to seek additional and higher degrees, to obtain further certification, and to become more proficient not only in their subject area, but also in their ability to handle discipline, to motivate students, and to cope with both personal and job-related stress.

A focused and individualized program of professional development shall be created for each teacher and administrator that is consistent with the qualitative component of the TLE. Annual professional growth goals shall be developed for each certified employee in collaboration with the certified employee's evaluator. The goals shall be tailored to address a specific area or criteria identified through the qualitative component of the TLE. The certified employee will actively engage with learning practices that are evidence-based, researched practices that are correlated with increased student achievement, and the professional development will be supported by resources that are easily available and supplied by the school district and the State Department of Education. The superintendent or designee shall monitor compliance with each individualized program of professional development.

When classes are dismissed for the purpose of professional development, teachers are expected to attend professional meetings or take appropriate leave upon informing the necessary supervisor.

The superintendent or designee may authorize the attendance of teachers at educational conferences and may reimburse travel and lodging expenses in the case of out-of-town events. Authorization to attend shall be obtained from the board prior to the activity date. Written requests shall be submitted to the superintendent who will forward the request to the board.

I. YEARLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Oklahoma State Department of Education releases requirements and timelines for professional development each year. This list of requirements is what helps determine which trainings are included for all staff in the yearly GCN, as well as other professional development opportunities provided throughout the school year.

II. ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Additional professional development for teachers is required by state law. These requirements include, but are not limited to, Digital Teaching and Learning, Recognizing and Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Students, Workplace Safety Training, and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Awareness. The frequency and format of such trainings are either stated in the state statute or left to the discretion of the School Board.

III. SUICIDE AWARENESS AND TRAINING PREVENTION

The board recognizes that self-destructive behavior and suicide occurs among children and adolescents in our country and district. Students identified as self-destructive are in need of appropriate help as quickly as possible. Depending on the symptoms and signs a depressed or suicidal student may be exhibiting, school personnel are obligated to support students by reaching out to provide access to community resources, including any of the following: a 911 emergency phone call, local law enforcement, Department of Human Services, or referral to mental health providers of the family's choice. Contacting the student's parent or guardian at the first sign of self-destructive behavior or suicidal ideation is imperative. Notification must be made immediately upon determining that a risk of harm exists. To that end, student confidentiality may be waived in life-threatening situations.

The district shall provide district-wide training to all staff on at least a biennial basis addressing suicide awareness and prevention. The district shall:

1. Provide a suicide prevention training program which includes as a core element evidence-based approaches;
2. Provide the curriculum made available by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services; **or**
3. Provide a suicide prevention training program that is selected by the school district from a list maintained by the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to school district staff that addresses suicide awareness and prevention. The training may be combined with any other training program provided by the school district.

With the intent of contributing to the prevention of suicide among students where possible, the board directs that an adolescent suicide awareness program include the following:

1. In-service education to increase the awareness of all building staff about the seriousness of the problem and possible suicide "warning signs,"
2. Establishment of referral/response procedures in each school to facilitate assisting students identified as possibly suicidal,
3. Infusion into the curriculum of appropriate understandings and information to help students deal appropriately with feelings, to recognize possible suicide "warning signs" in themselves and others, and to increase awareness of alternatives and resources available for assistance,
4. Parental awareness to increase understandings of parents about the problem and resources available, and
5. Procedures in each school for dealing appropriately with tragedies to ease the impact on students, staff, and community in the event of a student suicide.

District personnel cannot be expected to treat the suicidal adolescent. Rather, they need to recognize that they are in a position to aid in the identification of young people who may be prone to suicide, and to intervene in order to link these young people and their families to treatment programs in the community. In addition, school personnel need to be prepared to relate to suicidal young people following a suicide attempt, and to deal with the intense emotions/reactions of the school community following an actual suicide.

Training will be provided to students in grades seven (7), nine (9), and twelve (12), at a minimum, to address suicide awareness and prevention.