

## KENTUCKY SCHOOL UPDATES

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## THE BASICS OF THE LAW

- A minimum of four days each year of **professional development** is required for teachers and other certified employees. Time is set aside in the school calendar for that purpose. School districts may plan one of those days. School councils determine how to use the remaining three days, which must be consistent with the school's comprehensive improvement plan and be based on disaggregated student performance data and teachers' individual growth plans.
- The law requires that 65 percent of a district's **professional development funds** be allocated to school councils. Teachers, parents, and the principal at the school determine what additional training is needed for them to improve student performance, based on an analysis of the achievement data for their students.
- The **Effective Instructional Leadership Act (EILA)** creates a statewide program to improve and maintain the quality of instructional leadership in Kentucky. All staff in leadership positions that require certification, such as principals and other administrators, are required to have 21 hours of leadership training annually in a program focused on becoming better instructional leaders. There is a penalty for non-compliance. Those who evaluate certified staff must have six hours each year in the effective evaluation of teachers.
- **Superintendents** are required to complete 21 hours of leadership training annually under provisions of the Effective Instructional Leadership Act in order to be employed as a superintendent in Kentucky. There are penalties for non-compliance.
- The **Center for Middle School Academic Achievement** was established to improve content knowledge and instructional practices of middle school teachers through professional development, technical assistance, and research. It is housed jointly at Eastern Kentucky University and Murray State University.
- **Teacher academies**, funded with \$1.6 million in 2006-07 and 2007-08, provide training sessions focused on core disciplines. They were offered by the Kentucky Department of Education in cooperation with colleges and universities.
- Teachers who apply for **National Board Certification (NBC)** are eligible for support as they work on their application. Those who are successful receive additional pay as long as they remain in the classroom or if they serve as a mentor teacher. In 2006 there were ?? NBC teachers in Kentucky compared to 145 in 2002.
- Teachers may continue to use **flexible in-service programs** to meet their four-day requirement for professional development but they must use this time for programs that

relate to their individual growth plan, content area, or school improvement plans. Use of the flexible option requires local board approval.

- **Teacher evaluation and growth plans** are required of each school district and are based on standards established by the Department of Education. In 2001-02, the department began conducting on-site visits to review these plans in no less than 15 school districts. Districts found deficient receive technical assistance.
- The Department of Education is required to maintain an **electronic bulletin board** with information about professional development opportunities.

## WHAT'S NEW?

- ➔ The 2006 legislature budgeted \$3 million in 2006-07 and \$6.9 million in 2007-08 for mathematics achievement and the Center for Mathematics, which will be housed at Northern Kentucky University. This will provide resources for professional development and a focus on math education.
- ➔ The 2006 legislature provided a significant increase in funding for reading programs, which includes professional development opportunities for teachers. Funding in 2005-06 was \$11.1 million and will increase to \$20.5 million in 2006-07 and \$23.5 million in 2007-08.

## RESULTS

- **The state has provided districts with \$23 per pupil** per year for professional development but in 2003 the legislature included professional development funds in a “flexible focus” category, allowing districts to use some of these funds for other purposes. Additional funds have been allocated for more specific purposes. (See above.)
- Every district and every school has a **professional development plan** as part of their comprehensive improvement plan.
- The **Kentucky Leadership Academy**, a two-year training program, was created to provide additional professional development for principals, other administrators, and teachers. The Kentucky Association of School Administrators operates the program.
- There is an increased **integration of technology** in professional development through academic villages, teacher electronic networks, and the annual Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference, held in March each year.
- The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has a grant to participate in the State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP) to assess school leadership needs and find ways to attract, prepare and support high quality principals, superintendents and other school leaders. State participants have included representatives from KDE staff,

university college faculty, school district leaders, legislators, Governor's office, Education Cabinet, Education Professional Standards Board, Council on Postsecondary Education and other interest groups. Beginning in the fall of 2006, seven Kentucky schools will participate in a three-year pilot project designed to help school principals focus their attention on curriculum, instruction and assessment. School Administrative Managers (SAMS), will focus on daily management issues.

- New superintendents complete a **training program and assessment center** process established by the state Department of Education. They have one year to complete the process. Finance and school law are two primary topics of this training.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

- ✍ Expect professional development offerings to improve and to focus on content, instruction, and its link to assessment with a focus on closing achievement gaps. Teachers have no time to waste on poor in-service programs. They need to be selective in choosing high quality professional development that improves knowledge and teaching skills.
- ✍ Watch for professional development to begin changing from “in-service days” to new and different activities such as study groups, classroom research, observing other teachers teaching, networking with other teachers, and being observed and critiqued by other teachers.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- ★ **Ask** teachers and principals the following questions: Does professional development:
  - ✓ Connect to improving student learning?
  - ✓ Meet the needs of teachers and administrators?
  - ✓ Address learning needs identified by data on student achievement?
  - ✓ Provide time and follow-up support?
  - ✓ Model effective teaching for all students?
  - ✓ Use principles of adult learning? Increase teachers' knowledge of subject matter?
  - ✓ Emphasize ongoing improvement in teaching?
  - ✓ Improve skills, leadership, and teamwork?
  - ✓ Involve teachers in decisions?
- ★ **Ask** if you can sit in on professional development sessions that interest you.
- ★ **Understand** that teachers need time without students to plan, study, discuss, and learn improved teaching methods.
- ★ **Call** the Partnership for Successful Schools. **Ask** for a copy of *Building and Sustaining Learning Communities: A Professional Development Resource Guide*, which outlines characteristics and models of effective professional development. **Request** copies of their

research reports and **share** them with your school council and educators in your school. See below for contact information.

- ★ **Request** the series *Quality Teaching* prepared by the Partnership for Successful Schools for the *Lexington Herald-Leader*. Share them with your local newspaper.
- ★ **Attend** local school board meetings. Ask school board members what they plan to do to support improved professional development in your district.
- ★ **Ask** your school council if it has a professional development committee and how it plans to use its professional development funds. Volunteer to serve on the committee that makes those recommendations to the council.
- ★ **Write** to your elected officials with specific examples of successes or problems. See chapter on Parent Involvement for information on contacting state legislators.
- ★ **Participate** in the scholastic audit process. For more information visit the department's Web site at <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Default.htm> under scholastic audit.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT**

- **Kentucky Department of Education, Office of Leadership and School Improvement** at (502) 564-2116 or visit the Web site at <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Default.htm>.
- **Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence**, P.O. Box 1658, Lexington, KY 40588-1658; (859) 233-9849 or (800) 928-2111; e-mail: [admin@prichardcommittee.org](mailto:admin@prichardcommittee.org) or visit the Web site at <http://www.prichardcommittee.org/>.

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