Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District

Professional Learning Plan
2025-2026

The most fundamental responsibility of schools is teaching students to read.

~ Dr. Louisa Moats

Updated June 8, 2025

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

In support of the district's mission and vision, as well as the district's foundational principles and strategic points of focus, instructional staff, support staff, and administrators must engage in ongoing, high-quality professional learning to sustain, enhance, and consistently improve their practice to improve learning outcomes for all students (See Appendix A).

The district offers a variety of in-house opportunities for professional learning as well as opportunities for participation in events, activities, workshops, and classes offered by BOCES and other outside learning organizations. Teachers and staff are also encouraged to collaborate, learn from one another, and develop their professional learning opportunities, including those within their respective professional organizations.

This plan has been developed in accordance with requirements set forth by the State of New York in Part 100 of the Commissioner's Regulations. It is based on New York State Standards for High-Quality Professional Learning, approved by the Board of Regents in February 2009, Subpart 80-6, adopted in March 2016, as well as subcomponents effective April 2019. The standards were developed to align with the New York State Learning Standards and were based on an analysis and adaptation of Learning Forward's *Standards for Professional Learning*. All professional learning will be provided by District staff or NYSED-approved Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) approved sponsors. This plan describes how the district's professional learning aligns with state standards and assessments, student needs, and teacher capacities. It includes a needs analysis, goals and objectives of the professional learning plan, examples of activities and strategies, evaluation standards, and the way the impact of professional learning on student achievement and teaching practice is measured. Lastly, this plan describes the district's mentoring program for first-year teachers in accordance with 8 NYCRR § 80.3.4 [b][2] and 8 NYCRR § 102.2 [dd].

The professional learning plan must be reviewed annually and adopted by the board of education. The plan must be developed through collaboration with a professional learning committee, composed of the superintendent of schools, school administrators, teachers, curriculum specialists, and others.

FOUNDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

The purpose of this Professional Learning Plan is to support and intentionally improve upon the excellent teaching and learning that takes place in the district. With a commitment to cultivating strong skills in reading, writing, mathematics, critical thinking, and lifelong learning through the lens of culturally responsive and sustaining educational practices, our professional staff will prepare our students to meet and exceed the expectations outlined in the New York State Learning Standards and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Framework. To accomplish this, our staff must commit to being lifelong learners as this will enable them to be creative thinkers, problem solvers, and versatile communicators who work collaboratively to help each student fulfill their potential.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District is committed to investing in the continuous growth of its personnel by providing high-quality, ongoing professional learning that is based on adult learning theory to all employees. The district-level Professional Learning Committee has developed this plan with input from teachers, administrators, teaching assistants, and support staff, and it is representative of all stakeholders throughout the organization.

2024-25 Committee Membership:

- Superintendent or designee
- Teacher leaders (3-6 in total)
- Elementary teachers (3 in total)
- Middle/high school teachers (5 in total)
- Teaching assistants (2 in total)
- Building and district-level administrators (2 in total)
- School counselors and/or clinical staff (1-2 in total)
- Parent member (1-2)
- **TOTAL (max)**   **25**

STANDARDS FOR HIGH-QUALITY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING[1]

The District's high-quality professional learning is based on the following standards:

1. *Designing Professional Learning*: Professional learning design is based on adult learning theory; is informed by data and the experience, expertise, and needs of the recipients; evidence-based practices; and *sustained job-embedded learning*. It provides opportunities for continuous improvement over time and incorporates structured reflection.
2. *Content Knowledge and Quality Teaching*: Professional learning expands educators' knowledge of the NYS Learning Standards, assessments, content, and skills necessary to provide evidence-based instructional strategies and evaluate student progress. This includes opportunities for reflection that allow educators to connect new learning to their practice.
3. *Evidence-based Professional Learning*: Professional learning is evidence-based and provides educators with opportunities to analyze, apply, reflect upon, and engage in research.
4. *Collaboration*: Professional learning provides educators with the knowledge, skills, and opportunity to collaborate in a respectful and trusting environment.
5. *Diverse Learning*: Professional learning offers educators the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.
6. *Student Learning Environments*: Professional learning ensures that educators are able to create learning environments that are welcoming, affirming, safe, secure, supportive, and equitable for all students.
7. *Parent, Family, and Community Engagement*: Professional learning provides educators with the knowledge, skills, and opportunity to actively engage and collaborate with families and community members as partners in our students' learning.
8. *Data-driven Professional Practice*: Professional learning uses disaggregated student data and other evidence of learning to determine professional learning needs, set priorities, monitor student progress, and help sustain continuous professional growth. Reflection is incorporated to allow educators to analyze and evaluate data and to adjust practices to better meet student needs.
9. *Technology*: Professional learning promotes technological literacy, effective use of all appropriate technology, and evidence-based integration of technology into instruction.
10. *Evaluation*: Professional learning is evaluated using multiple sources of information to assess its effectiveness in improving professional practice and student learning. Reflection is an integral part of the evaluation process.

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[1] From NYSED's *New York State Professional Learning Standards*.

ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING GUIDELINES

The district expects that instructional staff, support staff, and administrators will participate regularly in professional learning. Professional learning will encompass NYS and IB requirements, including NYS Learning Standards, district, building, and department goals and priorities, and will target individual needs identified through the evaluation process. Staff members are encouraged to design their own learning and share their expertise with colleagues.

Professional Learning Commitment

The district will provide resources, to the greatest extent possible, to support professional learning for both required Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) hours and non-CTLE required professional learning that is directly connected to educational research, the NYS Learning Standards, IB Framework, and district priorities and strategic points of focus.

The collaboratively developed *Professional Learning Plan* and all associated professional learning opportunities will be aligned with the requirements of Part 100 of the Commissioner's Regulations, the NYS Standards for High Quality professional learning approved by the Board of Regents in February 2009, Subpart 80-6 of the NYS Commissioner's Regulations adopted March of 2016, as well as subcomponents effective April 2019.

Professional Growth (PG): Online Professional Learning Portfolio

The Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District maintains an online professional learning management resource - Frontline's Professional Growth (PG) - for registering for activities, accountability, and reporting purposes. Professional learning activities are submitted to PG, allowing for all professional learning hours that are accrued to be maintained in the employee's online portfolio. Approval for all activities is obtained in advance through the online course request feature, in accordance with district procedures.

District procedures for submitting professional learning requests - including in-service or graduate credits to be used for salary advancement - are detailed in the district's Professional Learning Guide. This includes how to register for activities:

- During the school day
- Outside the school day - District pays
- Outside the school day - No cost to the district
- Outside the school day - In-district Professional Learning

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

A. **Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE)**

Per Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2015, educators who hold one or more of the following certificates are subject to the continuing teacher and leader education (CTLE) requirement:
- Professional certificate in the classroom teaching service
- Professional certificate in the educational leadership service (i.e., School Building Leader, School District Leader, and School District Business Leader)
- Teaching Assistant Level III certificate

Examples of educators who do not need to complete the CTLE requirement include, but are not limited to, educators who:

- Hold only Permanent certificate(s)
- Hold a Statement of Continued Eligibility (SOCE) and Permanent certificate, and does not hold a Professional or TA Level III certificate; and
- Have "Registered - Inactive" status (e.g., not practicing in an applicable school).

The registration and CTLE requirements do not apply to educators who hold a certificate in the pupil personnel service (e.g., School Counselor, School Psychologist, School Social Worker) or hold a Teaching Assistant Level I or Level II certificate.

Educators who are subject to CTLE and practice in an applicable school throughout their five-year registration period must complete 100 clock hours of acceptable CTLE, regardless of the number of certificates held that are subject to CTLE.

Examples of appropriate CTLE are listed in the next section, Requirements for Professional Learning Activities.

- CTLE certificate holders who hold a professional certificate in the certificate title of English to speakers of other languages or a holder of a bilingual extension are required to complete a minimum of 50% of the required CTLE clock hours in language acquisition aligned with the core content area of instruction taught, including a focus on best practices for co-teaching strategies and integrating language and content instruction for such English language learners.
- In any year the District does not have an approved exemption (because English Language learners make up less than five percent of the total student population) all other CTLE certificate holders and Level III Teaching Assistants will need to accrue a minimum of 15% of the required CTLE clock hours in language acquisition addressing the needs of English language learners and content instruction for such English language learners.

Detailed information on certification registration and CTLE record keeping, and documentation requirements can be found on the Office of Teaching Initiatives (OTI) website:
https://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/resteachers/ctle.html

B. **The Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)**

Consistent with the requirements of Chapter 102 of the Laws of 2012, the Dobbs Ferry School District will provide training to all school employees to promote a positive school environment that is free from harassment, bullying (including cyberbullying), and discrimination.

C. **School Safety and Security**

It is expected that all staff participate in annual school safety and security training as well as review and understand district and building safety plans and procedures.

D. **Principles of Learning**

All educators will be introduced to a sequence of learning opportunities that focus on the principles of learning (i.e., *the Science of Learning*) based on research and evidence. Because these principles are the foundation for effective teaching and learning, they will be a focal point for both district and building goals as well as new teacher orientation programs, the K-12 Literacy Plan, The K-12 Special Education Plan, the Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling Plan, the Health and Wellness Plan, the Comprehensive ELL Education Plan (CEEP), and our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan.

E. **Literacy as a Critical Foundation for Success**

Effective literacy instruction is a critical skill for both instructional staff and leaders across all levels of our schools. Understanding how children learn to read, the instructional methods that have evidence of being most effective for the greatest number of students, and utilizing student performance data to improve our instruction in reading, writing, and spelling is a high priority for the district. All educators will have access to professional learning opportunities in this area.

F. **Culturally Responsive Instructional Practices**

Commissioner's Regulation 100.2(dd) requires that all educators have access to professional learning opportunities designed to ensure they can implement culturally responsive-sustaining education practices and pedagogy aligned with the four principles of the New York State *Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education (CRSE) Framework* (https://www.nysed.gov/crs/framework). The four principles of the CRSE Framework (welcoming and affirming environment, high expectations and rigorous instruction, inclusive curriculum and assessment, and ongoing professional learning) are the basis of the district's foundational principles and strategic points of focus

detailed in Appendix A.[2] To further support this work, through district policy 4000, *Student Learning Standards and Instructional Guidelines[3]*, the board of education has directed that "The district will utilize culturally responsive instructional practices, curriculum, and assessments" in the design of our instructional program. our instruction, assessments, and professional learning."

G. **Exceptional Learners**

Professional learning activities will be provided to all professional and related services personnel who work with students with exceptional learning needs. This may include students with disabilities, English language learners, students who are gifted and talented, and students performing below grade level in literacy and math.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPTIONS

A. **Professional Reading**

When such reading occurs in conjunction with an in-service offering, up to 20% of the session hours may be accrued through professional reading that is discussed in the offering. (For example, for a 10-hour book study, 8 hours of class time and session, and 2 hours for professional reading).

B. **Independent Study**

Independent professional learning (listening to audio, video or webinar viewing, professional reading, etc.) will be eligible for professional learning hours with prior approval from the staff member's supervisor(s) and verification of completion. It is not eligible for in-service credit.

C. **Field Trips/School Visits**

A trip taken to an educational site by a staff member in order to prepare for or enhance their instruction may be eligible for professional learning hours with prior approval from a supervisor. Field trips taken by staff members and students are not eligible for professional learning or in-service credit.

D. **Curriculum Development and Planning**

Educators participating in curriculum development and planning during the summer are eligible to receive professional learning hours. Hours may be entered into PG once the work is completed. Educators eligible to receive compensation for summer professional learning work may also be eligible to waive compensation in exchange for 15 in-service hours, or 1 credit, to be applied toward a salary lane change.

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[2] Please see https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/625brca3.pdf
[3] See https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=dobbs_ferry&s=51132

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

As required by 8 CRR-NY 80-6.9,[4] acceptable CTLE shall be in the content area of any certificate title held by the individual or in pedagogy, and include any required study in language acquisition addressing the needs of English language learners as described in 8 CRR-NY 80-6.3[5]. Acceptable CTLE must be conducted through activities designed to improve the teacher or leader's pedagogical and/or leadership skills, targeted at improving student performance, including but not limited to formal CTLE activities. Such activities also shall promote the professionalization of teaching and educational leadership, as applicable, and be closely aligned with district goals for student performance. The district expects that all staff engage in a variety of professional learning activities towards these ends that include, but are not limited to, the following:

Instructional Staff[6] and Administrators

- Analyzing student attendance, behavioral and academic data, student work, and progress to inform instruction.
- Reviewing class performance data over time to make decisions about one's professional learning based on student outcomes.
- Collaborating with other professionals to examine case studies of student work and development.
- Participating in courses, study groups, and other learning opportunities delivered from many providers, such as institutions of higher education, NYS Teacher Centers, BOCES, school districts, professional organizations, and independent professional learning service providers.
- Coursework linked to education-related professional skills.
- Participating in group scoring and analysis of formal assessments such as student portfolios and standardized, benchmark, mid-year, and year-end assessments.
- Serving on district or other school leadership committees.
- Creating and assessing professional portfolios.
- Engaging in research projects.
- Planning and developing curriculum that is aligned to the New York State Education Department's Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education framework.
- Developing or collaborating on the development of new programs and/or instructional methods.
- Serving as a mentor or peer coach (within a five-year cycle, up to 30 CTLE hours).

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[4] See
https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/I0e225e610ac411e69decf8bace0b1424?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default)
[5] See
https://govt.westlaw.com/nycrr/Document/I0e22375e0ac411e69decf8bace0b1424?viewType=FullText&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=CategoryPageItem&contextData=(sc.Default)
[6] This includes permanent and long-term substitute teachers.

- Serving as a cooperating teacher for student teachers or field internships (within a five-year cycle, up to 25 CTLE hours).
- Participating in professional learning communities focused on student learning and achievement.
- Participating in formal programs of peer coaching or peer review.
- Delivering professional learning (e.g., conducting workshops, job-embedded modeling, and/or coaching).
- Pursuing National Board certification or recertification.
- Serving/Earning Designation as Master Teacher or Teacher of the Year activities.
- Serving as NYSTCE "assessor" or test development committee member.
- Serving as an elected officer in professional organizations.
- Serving as NYS Teacher Center director.
- Serving on the State Professional Standards and Practices Board.
- Developing and presenting a major paper and publishing in educational journals.
- Conducting peer or program observations and/or visitations.
- Documenting professional reading such that it reflects how instruction can be improved based on the reading
- Participating in job-specific training/skill development.

Teaching Assistants and Teacher Aides

- Training in job-specific skill development.
- Participating in courses, study groups, and other learning opportunities delivered from many providers, such as institutions of higher education, NYS Teacher Centers, BOCES, school districts, professional organizations, and independent professional learning service providers.
- Serving on district or other school leadership activities or committees.
- Delivering professional learning (e.g., conducting workshops, job-embedded modeling, and/or coaching).
- Documenting professional reading.
- Serving as an elected officer in professional organizations.
- Developing or collaborating on the development of new programs.

INSERVICE/GRADUATE CREDIT COURSE ELIGIBILITY AND SALARY ADVANCEMENT

In accordance with the DFUT collective bargaining agreement, for coursework (both graduate and inservice) to be eligible to be applied toward salary advancement, it must

be submitted for approval through Professional Growth (formerly My Learning Plan) at least three weeks before the start of the course and adhere to the guidelines outlined below.

Philosophically, the salary credit process is not a "race" or something to be accomplished to get to the final lane. As the objective is to address identified district goals and student needs that change over time, the awarding of salary credit should take place over a career. The approval of graduate/in-service credit for salary advancement is limited to 6 credits per semester. There is no limit to the number of credits earned during the summer, from July 1 to August 31, 2025. The fall semester (the first semester) begins September 1 through January 31st. The spring semester the second semester) (begins February 1 through June 30. No more than 15 credits will be approved in a calendar (12 month) year.

A. **Course Eligibility**

High-quality professional learning courses that earn graduate or in-service credit to be applied toward salary advancement have the following characteristics:

- Are rigorous and relevant in terms of content and instructional strategies.
- Are consistent with the district's strategic points of focus.
- Are directly tied to specific content areas or areas of instruction.
- Support changes in instruction that have evidence of improving student learning
- Have high expectations of the learner.
- Have activities, projects, and/or work products that demonstrate the practical application of learning. Assignments should go beyond reading an article, answering questions, or writing a short paper. (Teachers may be asked to provide evidence of classroom application of learning before salary advancement.)
- Require interaction with the instructor and other learners (e.g., in a user group, discussion board, etc.)
- Include measurable objectives.
- Require the development of a product (e.g., lesson plans, curriculum units, or assessments) applicable to teaching assignments. (The district may require a copy of the product to be submitted before the awarding of credit.)·

A course **may not** be approved if:

- It is similar to courses you have already taken unless the proposed course represents new developments in the field.
- It focuses on expected basic core competencies given a teacher's current role.
- It is a conference or workshop that is not equivalent to an in-service credit or a graduate course.
- It duplicates training and learning experiences offered in the district (i.e., Google Apps).

- **It is not submitted for approval in Professional Growth at least three weeks before the start of the course (do not register or pay for a course before receiving approval)**

- **It is submitted in Professional Growth with errors and/or omissions.**

B. **Determining Which Courses to Take**

When deciding which courses to take, the district looks upon some more favorably than others. The district encourages courses that allow a teacher to obtain additional certification that the administration approves (e.g., a foreign language teacher obtaining a certification in another language, a chemistry teacher obtaining certification in biology, a special ed teacher obtaining content area certification, or a teacher seeking a grade-level extension or certification in literacy.)

For courses to be considered for salary advancement, they must be offered through an accredited institution of higher learning, a NYSED-supported Teacher Center, or other providers with an ongoing established relationship with an accredited college or university. Course providers should not differentiate between online and on-site courses in terms of level of work, assessments, course credit, or fees.

When registering for courses offered by the Professional Development Institute (PDI) or other providers that offer flexible start and end dates for coursework, start and end dates must conform to the semester limits set forth above. These dates should be entered in Frontline Professional Growth when submitting for approval.

Courses must offer a learning experience filled with academic rigor and a great deal of interaction. A course resulting in one (1) in-service credit being awarded should represent a minimum of 15 hours of work and be equivalent to a 1-credit graduate class. A course resulting in three (3) inservice credits should represent a minimum of 45 hours of work and be equivalent to a 3-credit graduate class. (Teachers should be prepared to present evidence and documentation of all work completed if requested.) Except for district-sponsored in-service opportunities, credits may only be earned in "whole" increments. Fractional parts will not be allowed. For example, a course resulting in 3.3 credits in the eyes of the provider may only be used as 3 credits for salary advancement.

The district will periodically review the work/time requirements related to courses offered by specific providers and may decide to no longer approve courses.

C. **Salary Lane Changes**

Salary lane changes are contingent upon ALL of the following procedures being completed for each course:

1. A Request for Course Approval must have been completed through Professional Growth at least three weeks before the start of the course to

determine the relevance of the course based on the teacher's current assignment and professional learning goals.

2. Approval by the building principal, assistant superintendent for instruction, and the superintendent of schools must have been received.

Per the DFUT Contract: When teachers are eligible for a lane change, they must notify the Personnel Office (upon verification of course completion with a passing grade and submission of the district form **Request for Payroll Change** by August 25 for the change to take effect the first semester of the school year and by January 25 for the change to take effect in the second semester of the school year. Teachers submitting requests after August 25 will receive the payroll change on February 1st and retroactive to the beginning of the first semester. Teachers submitting requests after January 25 will have their final paycheck in June adjusted to reflect the payroll change retroactive to the first day of the second semester. **Hard copies of all paperwork should be submitted at once, including the lane change request form and supporting documents. The Personnel Office will no longer print out certificates, course completion forms, and supporting materials.**

REVIEW PROCESS/NEEDS ANALYSIS

The Dobbs Ferry School District Professional Learning Plan provides the opportunity for our educators to grow in a variety of ways and to articulate that growth. The plan will ensure that the educational process addresses the needs of all students as well as teachers in delivering the instruction needed to increase student growth and achievement. As we continue to develop goals and strategies, we are also cognizant of the importance of effectively using data to promote and maintain student achievement.

The District Professional Learning Committee (PLC) will continually review and evaluate the effectiveness of professional learning. As part of the ongoing review, assessment and planning of professional learning activities, the PDC will review information from multiple sources, including, but not limited to the following: Staff feedback, Staff evaluation data, the District Data Team, Special Education Department, Mental Health Team, Building-level MTSS teams and Tri-State Consortium reviews and reports.

THE MENTOR PROGRAM

Effective induction of new educators and administrators significantly contributes to their professional growth and readiness, forming a crucial element in their continuous development and providing a smooth transition into our school community. This program builds upon initial preparation by offering ongoing professional learning experiences tailored to each educator's needs. In addition to supporting novice educators and administrators, the Mentor Program also guides experienced educators who are new to our district and any educators requiring additional assistance. During their first year, all new teachers and staff are paired with mentors to facilitate successful integration and ongoing professional learning. Please see Appendix E for additional information.

NEW TEACHER/STAFF ORIENTATION & THE NEW TEACHER/MENTOR INSTITUTE

The New Teacher/Staff Orientation provides a comprehensive introduction to our district through two dedicated days in August. New staff members meet district and building administrators, engage with their mentors, and become familiar with district goals, departments, and key frameworks, including the CRSE Framework. Orientation sessions focus on instructional best practices, inclusive assessments, technology training, classroom culture, and the teacher evaluation system.

Throughout the year, The New Teacher/Staff & Mentor Institute continues this support through four collaborative after-school sessions addressing essential topics such as principles of instruction, specially designed instruction and student supports, the Science of Learning, support for English Language Learners, and International Baccalaureate Approaches to Teaching and Learning. Thoughtfully designed to offer educators dedicated time and space to grow, learn, and collaborate, the Institute brings our teaching and learning theory of action to life through critical readings, reflective discussions, and meaningful collaboration. This institute serves as a pillar of meaningful engagement within our school community, providing a supportive environment for educators to reflect on their practice, deepen their thinking, and build essential connections with mentors and stakeholders across the district.

APPENDIX A

Mission, Vision, Theory of Action, and Strategic Points of Focus

Our Mission: The Dobbs Ferry School District strives to develop independent, curious, and open-minded learners who think critically, work collaboratively, act ethically, and are knowledgeable about the world around them.

Our Vision: Independent Thinkers Prepared to Change the World. Critical, *interdependent* elements of our vision include our Core Values:

- Providing a high-quality and challenging curriculum with the depth, breadth, and relevance appropriate to each learner.
- Respecting the unique abilities of each student.
- Utilizing the most effective and evidence-based instructional approaches and technological advances.
- Encouraging students to meet their challenges – whether academic, athletic, or artistic – with openness, enthusiasm, and a willingness to take risks.
- Recruiting, retaining, and developing high-quality teachers and staff.
- Celebrating and learning from the diversity of our students and the greater Dobbs Ferry community.

Our Theory of Action

1. *IF* the primary purpose of schooling is to teach children how to learn across a variety of targeted domains, *THEN* we must make this purpose an explicit area of focus in the recruitment and training of our faculty and staff.
2. *IF* the process of learning is based on consistent principles from cognitive science related to attention and memory - sensory, short-term, working, and long-term - *THEN* we must ensure, through explicit expectations and targeted training, that students, faculty, staff, and families have a deep understanding of these principles.
3. *IF* the effectiveness and longevity of learning relies heavily upon evidence-based and evidence-informed practices in instructional design, delivery, and assessment, including the analysis and application of assessment data that have been shown to consistently cause learning, *THEN* we must know, understand, and systematically apply these practices and provide specific training for faculty and staff on current and new evidence.
4. *IF* the time that we have to provide instruction that will cause students to learn so as to meet and exceed grade-level standards is limited, *THEN* as educators and

educational leaders, we must act with urgency to find those methods and assessments that work better in less time based on consistent evidence.

5. *IF* our students require an ever-increasing amount of content knowledge to further their learning, *THEN* we must be intentional in choosing the best-known learning opportunities and experiences that systematically build knowledge through our evidence-informed instruction and assessment.

6. *IF* systematically building knowledge is to happen consistently across classrooms and grade levels, *THEN* we must intentionally develop and adhere to knowledge-rich curricula that help to achieve this outcome.

7. *IF* there are known practices, beliefs, and curricula that do not have a supporting body of evidence and serve as distractions from or obstacles to effective teaching and learning, *THEN* we are obligated to discontinue these practices and curricula in favor of those that are shown to consistently have a positive impact on learning.

8. *IF*, through our instructional practices in the delivery of curriculum, we expect to cause each of our students to learn and achieve high-level outcomes in their academic, behavioral, and social lives so that they are more fully prepared to be excellent future citizens, *THEN* our work must increasingly be intentional, explicit, and systematic.

Our Foundational Principles[7] and Strategic Points of Focus

Principle 1: Welcoming and Affirming Environment
- ***Focus Point 1: Positive School Climate and Culture***[8]: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by developing a welcoming school environment that is reflective of the diversity present in the larger community where all students feel included in what they encounter at school, including in their classroom resources, in differing historical perspectives that they learn about, in equitable opportunities for engagement, advancement and achievement, and the adults they interact with each day; by providing explicit instruction and structured interventions in social-emotional learning and executive functions that have a sound basis in educational research; by aligning our work with the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile; and by developing/enhancing our staff's abilities to identify, understand, and improve positive student behavior.

- ***Focus Point 2: Recruitment, Retention, and Development of Personnel***[9]: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by investing in promising culturally relevant practices for employee recruitment; by

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[7] From NYSED's *Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework*.
[8] See, for example, *The Intersection of School Climate and Social and Emotional Development* The Intersection of School Climate and Social and Emotional Development (air.org) and *School Culture and Climate* untitled (msu.edu)
[9] See, for example, *9 Strategies for Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Diverse Teachers* 9 Strategies for Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Diverse Teachers (ed.gov) and *To Attract Great Teachers, School Districts Must Improve Their Human Capital Systems* https://www.americanprogress.org/article/to-attract-great-teachers-school-districts-must-improve-their-human-capital-systems/

intentionally recruiting well-qualified staff that reflect our student demographics; and by providing ongoing, targeted professional learning opportunities and proven methods of evaluation and feedback.

- ***Focus Point 3: Family and Community Communications and Engagement***[10]: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by engaging in proactive, regular, and meaningful two-way communication with parents and families, and by inviting parents, families, and the community to participate in important activities and events.

Principle 2: High Expectations and Rigorous Instruction
- ***Focus Point 1: Instruction***[11]: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by developing/enhancing our instructional staff's teaching abilities through an understanding of how students learn, research-informed instructional techniques and frameworks, including the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model and effective feedback models from peers and supervisors.
- ***Focus Point 2: Technology:*** We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by researching evidence-based technology tools and platforms *(including the use of artificial intelligence [AI])* that have been shown to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our instruction and *support overall student success.*

Principle 3: Inclusive Curriculum and Assessment
- ***Focus Point 1: Curriculum Development and Implementation***[12]: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by creating, adapting, and/or adopting rigorous Tier 1 curriculum that aligns with the NYS and the International Baccalaureate framework; contains diverse perspectives and experiences; reflects the latest research evidence, and develops/enhances students' grade-level abilities in reading, writing, listening and speaking, mathematical understandings, and, as a result, their ability to think critically.
- ***Focus Point 2: Assessments***[13]: We will maintain our focus on continuously improving student outcomes by developing and enhancing clear understandings of the design and purpose(s) of effective assessments and how they can be utilized to improve instruction, by carefully selecting those assessments that we

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[10] See, for example, *Understanding the Connection Between Family-School Engagement and Education System Transformation: A Review of Concepts and Evidence* Understanding_The_Connection_FINAL.pdf (brookings.edu)

[11] See, for example, *Principles of Instruction: Research-Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know*, by Barak Rosenshine; American Educator Vol. 36, No. 1, Spring 2012, AFT, *But That's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (econedlink.org)*, and *Liberatory Education Integrating the Science of Learning and Culturally Responsive Practice* EJ1305167.pdf (ed.gov)

[12] See, for example, *High Quality Curriculum and System Improvement* Quality-curriculum-and-system-improvement.pdf (learningfirst.com)

[13] See, for example, *Criteria for High Quality Assessments* criteria-higher-quality-assessment_2.pdf (stanford.edu) and *What Every Teacher Needs to Know About Assessments* Bing Videos.

will use to measure student learning, and by supporting the data literacy of faculty and administration.

Principle 4: Ongoing Professional Learning

- ***Focus Point 1: Targeted Professional Learning that Supports Evidence-based/Informed strategies across all areas of operation:*** We will maintain a focus on professional learning opportunities that are grounded in effectiveness research, supportive of the district's initiatives, and that continue to build the knowledge-base of educators so that they can provide sound instruction to and support of our students.

APPENDIX B

2025-26 Professional Learning Goals and Objectives

FOCUS AREA	TARGET	OUTCOME
CURRICULUM		
Review of district-adopted curriculum materials	All instructional and instructional support staff, including Level III teaching assistants, long-term, and permanent substitute teachers.	● Increase familiarity with the contents and methods for effective instructional delivery. ● Participate in non-evaluative administrator and peer observation. ● Determine if adjustments/ additional supports are needed. ● Identify gaps in the curriculum.
INSTRUCTION		
Lesson planning and preparation	All instructional and instructional support staff, including Level III teaching assistants, long-term, and permanent substitute teachers.	● Learn to develop a lesson that is based on the principles of learning to maximize the likelihood of learning. ● Practice the delivery of a lesson to maximize teaching time. ● Learn to anticipate questions from students and prepare thoughtful answers. ● Develop habits of effective planning and preparation for learning.
Understand and apply lessons from the Science of Learning	All instructional and instructional support staff, including Level III teaching assistants, long-term, and permanent substitute teachers.	● Understand how cognitive processes should guide instruction. ● Understand evidence-based practices that support improved student learning. ● Learn the difference between learning and performance. ● Adjust instructional practices where necessary to reflect understanding.

Effective literacy instruction	All instructional and instructional support staff, including Level III teaching assistants, long-term, and permanent substitute teachers.	● Apply lessons from the Science of Learning to reading instruction and assessment. ● Understand evidence-based practices that support improved student outcomes. ● Identify literacy weaknesses in learners and collaborate with service providers for targeted support. ● Understand and apply data from assessments to improve instruction.
Effective mathematics instruction	All instructional and instructional support staff, including Level III teaching assistants, long-term, and permanent substitute teachers.	● Apply lessons from the Science of Learning to mathematics instruction and assessment. ● Understand evidence-based practices that support improved student outcomes. ● Identify literacy weaknesses in learners and collaborate with service providers for targeted support. ● Understand and apply data from assessments to improve instruction.
Instruction in an IB DP and MYP Context	Middle and high school instructional and instructional support staff, including Level III teaching assistants, long-term, and permanent substitute teachers.	● Understand the IB frameworks, learner profiles, and philosophy. ● Develop lessons and units that align with IB framework and NYS Standards ● Create assessments aligned with the IB framework and NYS Standards ● Embed Approaches to Teaching and Learning in lesson and unit design. ● Develop interdisciplinary lessons and units.
Using Technology to Improve Teaching and Learning	All instructional and instructional support staff, including Level III teaching assistants, long-term, and permanent substitute teachers.	● Understand evidence-based tools and practices that improve teaching and learning. ● Demonstrate intentional use of technology to improve teaching and learning.

ASSESSMENTS AND DATA ANALYSIS		
Data Literacy (with assessments)	All instructional and instructional support staff, including Level III teaching assistants, long-term, and permanent substitute teachers.	● Use evidence-based assessments that align with our curriculum. ● Establish data review cycles and application of results to instruction. ● Use data to target student services through the MTSS processes. ● Use data to improve instruction and student subgroup performance. ● Improve use of LinkIt! for data inquiry. ● Understand and use student growth measures to target improved instruction.
CLASSROOM/ STUDENT MANAGEMENT		
Classroom Management (time on task)	All instructional and instructional support staff, including Level III teaching assistants, long-term, and permanent substitute teachers.	● Understand evidence-based practices for improving student time-on-task. ● Establish common classroom rules and accountability structures. ● Understand principles of student motivation and apply them to instruction. ● Collaborate with administrators and the mental health team on addressing specific student behaviors that disrupt teaching and learning.
Executive functioning/SEL	All instructional and instructional support staff, including Level III teaching assistants, long-term, and permanent substitute teachers.	● Understand evidence-based practices that improve students' ability to manage behavior, time, and resources. ● Understand the core competencies of social-emotional learning and how they can enhance teaching and learning. ● Collaborate with related services staff and special education team to develop targeted support for students in need of improvement.

APPENDIX C

Professional Learning/CTLE Categories and Calculations

1	College/University courses linked to the improvement of instructional practices or content knowledge (which may or may not be in pursuit of an advanced degree), National Board Certification in additional areas.	*One (1) college credit equals 15 hours.*
2	Classes or workshops sponsored by BOCES, or Teacher Centers that have prior district approval.	*As per hours attended.*
3	Online courses that have received previous approval from the district.	*As per hours attended.*
4	Teaching University or College courses linked to the improvement of instructional techniques or content knowledge.	*As per hours attended.*
5	Participation in the Mentor Program as a mentor or a mentee *(July 1 following the effective date of the Professional certificate)*, including training, meetings, and observations.	*Maximum 35/hours a year*
6	Service as a cooperating teacher for a student teacher or field internship, including attending meetings and related processes.	*Three (3) hours per week.*
7	Attendance at approved conferences.	*Actual hours in conference sessions as per a conference official.*
8	Faculty, department, or grade-level meetings that may include professional learning.	*Actual professional learning times as recorded on the agenda.*
9	Leadership of a study group/peer review group/team/department.	*Twenty (20) hours*
10	Delivering professional learning (e.g., conducting workshops or planning/running professional conferences).	*Course hours +50%.*
11	Planning professional learning materials for a conference, but not presenting (i.e., helping plan a superintendent's conference day).	*50% of conference hours*
12	Service on district committees that may include professional learning	*Actual hours for service*
13	Presenting at local, regional, or national conferences.	*Presentation hours + preparation time*
14	Training for scoring state exams.	*Actual hours of training as per the facilitator*
15	Service to NYSED through, for example, serving as a test development committee member for the NYS Teacher Certificate exam, Professional Standards and Practices Board, Regents Review Live, etc., that have the approval of the district.	*Actual hours served as per the committee chair*
17	Participation in and/or presentation of portions of such days identified as professional learning by the superintendent or designee.	*Actual professional learning hours in attendance as recorded on the agenda*
18	Department meetings.	*Not to exceed 10 hours a year*
19	Back to School Night (Teaching Assistants only)	*Two (2) hours a year*
20	Substitute teaching assignments (Teaching Assistants only)	*Not to exceed five (5) hours a year*
Created 10/21/07: Updated 11/19/07, 11/29/07; Updated 6/3/2025		

APPENDIX D

Approved CTLE Providers for Professional Learning

In addition to the district, Southern Westchester and Putnam Northern Westchester BOCES, and the Edith Winthrop Teacher Center, an updated list of NYSED-approved CTLE providers is listed at https://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/resteachers/ctlesponsors.html

Appendix E

The District Mentoring Program

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

APPENDIX F
Funding to Support Professional Learning

Fund	Type	Allowable Expenditures
IDEA 611: *School-Aged Children with Disabilities*	Federal	Allowable expenditures in general are posted at https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/special-education/memo/2024-25-idea-grant-instructions-memo.pdf. ● "Professional development" is addressed on page 40 ● "Staff development" is addressed on page 42
Title IIA: *Supporting Effective Instruction*	Federal	Allowable expenditures in general are posted at https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/title-ii-part-a-allowable-expenditures.pdf
Title IV: *Student Support and Academic Enrichment*	Federal	Allowable expenditures in general are posted at https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/title-iv-part-a-allowable-expenditures-updates-2025.pdf
Staff Development: *BOCES*	Local ● PNW (see *2025-26 School Services Guide*, pages 25+ under Resources tab) ● SWB (see 2025-26 Services guide, pages 25+) ● LHRIC (see 2025-26 Services guide, pages 23+)	● Based on program descriptions in Cooperative Service (CoSer) Agreements (e.g., Science 21) for SW and PNW BOCES and the LHRIC.
Staff Development: *Contractual*	Local	● Conference attendance is aligned with our mission, vision, and goals. ● Includes funding from the NYS Teachers' Center (Edith Winthrop). ● Generally, for outside contractors/consultants.
Staff Development: *Mission, Vision, Goal, and PDP aligned*	Local	● General conference/workshop attendance that is aligned with our mission, vision, and goals. ● Generally is for salaries for professional learning outside of the regular workday or work year.
International Baccalaureate Training	Local	● For new teachers and/or new courses in the MYP and DP programs.
Periodic state and federal grants	External	● Current = NYS RECOVS grant for SEL (restorative justice, SEL, mental health)
Partner Grants: *Innovations in Teaching and Learning*	External	● Generally supports innovative ideas for the schools/classrooms for items that were not included in the general fund budget.

APPENDIX G
Resources to Support Professional Learning

1. NYSED *Professional Learning and Growth*
   https://www.nysed.gov/educator-quality/professional-learning-and-growth

2. Educational Endowment Foundation *Effective Professional Development*
   https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/guidance-reports/effective-professional-development

3. Learning Forward: The Professional Learning Association
   https://learningforward.org/

4. Research Partnership for Professional Learning
   https://rpplpartnership.org/
   a. *Building Better PL: How to Strengthen Teacher Learning*
      https://annenberg.brown.edu/sites/default/files/rppl-building-better-pl.pdf
   b. *Dispelling the Myths: What the research says about teacher Professional Learning*
      https://annenberg.brown.edu/sites/default/files/rppl-dispelling-myths.pdf

5. *How Do Teachers Spend Professional Learning Time, and Does It Connect to Classroom Practice?*
   https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA134-18.html

6. *Learning Together: Insights from the Professional Learning with Impact Program*
   https://www.air.org/learning-together

7. Teaching One-Pagers https://www.jamieleeclark.com/graphics