

Policy 445 Staff Development**I. Purpose**

It is the policy of Achieve Language Academy to encourage continuous professional development among staff and Board members. This policy affects all members of staff. It offers guidance to individual members of staff and to those responsible for managing them. Attendance at professional conferences is viewed as one effective way to remain current in one's area of responsibility. Although school employees may attend professional conferences for a variety of purposes beneficial to the school, those conferences which address the improvement of teaching/learning skills or which result in the direct improvement of services to students are considered to be of the highest priority.

This policy explains, in broad terms, the support the school provides for the development of its staff. This policy covers the full range of staff development provision across the school. Implementation of the Staff Development Policy is linked to the implementation of the school's strategic objectives and School Improvement Plan. Implementation will have implications for individuals and groups at all levels within the School.

The School Board authorizes the administrator or designee to approve or deny requests for travel, meetings and conferences that are held within the United States. The administrator shall provide access to staff development funds to all staff members. Once a year the administrator will present to the Board, a report which indicates the percent of the prior year's conference attendance budget that was spent by staff and Board.

II. Introduction - the purpose of staff development

1. The school is committed to creating an equitable, developmental and motivating working environment, which values and empowers people at all levels. Staff development is seen as one of the main routes to achieving this commitment.
2. The purpose of staff development is to enable staff to achieve their potential as employees of the school and to effectively contribute to the achievement of the school's objectives. Staff development is an important activity for all staff to engage in.

III. Objectives & Planning for Staff Development

1. School goals are reviewed annually as part of the school improvement process. School goals are communicated to staff.
2. Individual learning goals for staff members can then be negotiated at meetings of staff and through reviews, appraisal and other professional development planning. Some goals will be determined by the personal preferences or aspirations of the individual member of staff. Most will be determined by the requirements of the individual's work.
3. The school recognizes that individuals will be committed and motivated to achieving its goals, when
4. individual aspirations are aligned with school aspirations,
5. there is appropriate support and development for people (as groups or individuals) learning to improve their performance, and to respond to demands and pressures on them.
6. There will be staff development implications in many school goals. Discussion of these will lead to the identification of staff development needs and specific staff development goals. These needs and goals may be met at the individual, group or organizational level.
7. All licensed staff are expected to undertake staff development (at work) as part of their of their teaching licensure renewal process.

8. Staff development goals and identified staff development needs become part of both the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and an individual's Personal Professional Development Plan (PDP).
9. Staff development needs and opportunities may identify themselves at different times during the year. The planning processes retain flexibility for staff and administrator to agree additions and changes as they become necessary.
10. The planning process described above will identify a number of possible staff development actions. The extent to which any staff development action can be implemented will depend on a) the importance the school attaches to that action, b) the resources (e.g. time and money) required to implement that action.
11. The extent to which a staff development action can be supported will depend on how it fits into one of the following three categories:
 - **Statutory/Essential** (i.e. staff development/training that is required by legislation, or is a condition of employment, or is compulsory for a specific role)
 - **Encouraged** (i.e. explicitly linked to the achievement of agreed objectives, for which resources will be prioritized)
 - **Personal preference** (Staff development activities chosen by individuals that may take place in work time or outside, and may be fully or only partly funded by the school)

IV. Responsibility for staff development

1. The primary responsibility for ensuring that staff development needs are identified and met lies with those responsible for managing staff.
2. There is also a responsibility on individual members of staff to ensure that they take an active part in the process of planning their own staff development, and undertaking agreed staff development activities.
3. The school as a staff development unit shall:
 - advise and assist individual members of staff in developing staff development plans
 - provide in-house staff development programs
4. Staff development opportunities must be provided for all school staff. The administrator has a responsibility for ensuring that staff are kept informed about the staff development opportunities open to them.
5. The school board is responsible for staff development policy and strategy. One role of the board is to determine the priorities for staff development activities provided by the school through the ongoing planning process.

V. Staff Development activities - what to expect

1. All new staff shall undertake an induction program, assisted by the administration and/or a mentor. The administrator has a duty to ensure that induction training takes place.
2. Induction is an example of a staff development action that is **essential**. Health & Safety training is also essential for all staff. The administrator has a duty to ensure that Health & Safety training takes place.
3. Some Equal Opportunities and Health & Safety legislation places a statutory duty on employers to inform and train staff. The School requires its staff to undertake this training, which shall be offered at the beginning of each school year.
4. Staff and administrators will be able to decide when completion of a staff development course is a **statutory** requirement or **essential**, as this will be discernable from other school policy documents, or in a job description or contract.
5. Staff development can be achieved through a variety of means, including:

- a. meetings of staff - to explore ideas, review, plan and evaluate progress, and to disseminate good practice
 - b. individuals/groups taking time out of the school to attend external courses, conferences and workshops
 - c. consultancy (external or internal consultants working with individuals or groups)
 - d. Staff development programs of in-house events provided by the school for its staff.
 - e. Staff enrolling as students on programs leading to college credit/additional certification or degree.
6. Staff development activities need to be monitored. It will be important for staff and administrators to agree what activities count as staff development and keep appropriate records of participation. Agreement can be reached through discussion at review meetings and appraisal.
 7. **Encouraged** and **essential** staff development will usually take place during worktime and agreed costs reimbursed. Cover will be arranged where necessary. On the other hand, some staff development activities, especially college courses, will involve study on the participant's own time, during evenings or at weekends.
 8. The School also funds or provides a lot of staff development that individuals undertake out of **personal preference**. Attendance for most grades of staff needs to be agreed with those responsible for managing them. Agreement will depend on satisfactory arrangements being made to cover work. This kind of staff development may also take place in the evening or at weekends i.e. in the individual's own time.

VI. Access to staff development

1. The school believes that staff should have access to the staff development they need. Where staff development is a **mandatory** requirement or **essential** this will always be made available. Staff development that is **encouraged** will be the result of agreement between individuals and the administrator, preferably in an evaluation setting. The process for making such agreements should also include agreeing arrangements (including funding & cover) to ensure that encouraged staff development actions can actually take place. Parties to such agreements should also monitor progress and evaluate outcomes. However, the boundary between staff development that is **encouraged** and that which is **personal preference** is not always clear, and may vary from individual to individual. The school recognizes that those responsible for managing staff sometimes have difficulty judging:
 - a) the relevance or value of the staff development activities that their staff might wish to undertake,
 - b) the amount of staff development that it is reasonable for any one member of staff to undertake in a given period.
2. Releasing staff from their duties to undertake staff development activities is easier to arrange in some areas of the school than others.
3. Individuals may sometimes also show reluctance to undertake staff development activities required by, or agreed upon with the administrator. Reasons for this should be explored and investigated, and alternative approaches evaluated.
4. A commitment to staff development both on the part of individuals and those responsible for managing them should ensure that most difficulties are overcome.
5. In some circumstances this may involve colleagues covering (with no additional payment) the work of someone undertaking a staff development activity. Those responsible for managing staff will need to ensure that, as far as is possible, arrangements are perceived as equitable by all concerned.

6. Where difficulties do occur, every attempt to solve problems, to mediate, conciliate and negotiate acceptable outcomes for all.
7. If acceptable outcomes cannot be agreed, staff, and their managers, have recourse to the appropriate disciplinary or grievance procedures. This should, however, be seen as a last resort.

VII. Evaluation of staff development activities

1. All staff development activities require evaluation. Those responsible for managing and appraising staff should, together with individuals participating in staff development activities, evaluate the extent to which development activities undertaken achieve the intended objectives, and, where necessary, agree appropriate next steps.
2. The same planning process involving review meetings and appraisals that is used for identifying staff development needs, can be used to evaluate staff development activities.
3. The School is committed to continuous improvement of its staff development provision. Where staff development activities (of any kind) are perceived as unsuccessful, the administrators/staff should discuss possible improvements.

VIII. Recording & Monitoring

1. The school is committed to monitoring uptake of staff development activities to ensure equitable provision. To do this, the school needs to keep records of staff development activities undertaken – those organized by the school, and those organized by individuals for themselves.
2. Individual members of staff are responsible for keeping records of their own staff development activities. This record should be attached to an individual's Personal / Professional Development Plan.
3. The administrator is responsible for providing attendance records, documents and documentation to staff for in-house staff development programs for annual monitoring.

IX. Funding arrangements

1. Funding for staff development activities comes from
 - a) Federal Title funding
 - b) set aside staff development budget managed by administrator
2. Arrangements for all funded staff development activities are dependent on the funding available. Where funding is limited, deadlines and criteria for selection may apply.