



## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DAYS Requirements for 2020-2021

August 5, 2021

This document is to alert or remind you, as a client of Porter Foster Rorick, about the specific requirements that have been enacted by the state legislature for use of one of the three days of professional learning time, effective beginning with the 2021-22 school year.

The Washington State Legislature began phasing in funding for professional learning time for certified instructional staff in 2018. See RCW 28A.150.415. The state will fund the equivalent of three professional learning days (PLDs) at the state allocation rate for certificated staff provided by the prototypical school model for the upcoming 2021-22 school year.

### PLD Requirements

Since it began funding PLDs in 2018, the legislature has gradually placed specific content requirements on the use of the funds. Starting in the 2020-21 school year and each even numbered school year thereafter, funding for one PLD must be devoted to issues related to social emotional learning. RCW 28A.415.445(1). As a result of Senate Bill 5044 from the 2021 legislative session, funding for one PLD this school year (2021-22) and each odd numbered school year thereafter must be used to provide training on cultural competency, diversity, equity or inclusion. Senate Bill 5044 also modified the social emotional learning training in even numbered years as addressed below. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has recently published a [bulletin](#) regarding PLDs with a helpful table showing which sets of topics need to be addressed in a given school year.

#### 1. Cultural Competency, Diversity, Equity, or Inclusion—Required PLD

In the 2021-22 school year, school districts must use “one of the professional learning days funded” by the legislature to “train school district staff” on one or more of the following topics: cultural competency, diversity, equity, or inclusion. RCW 28A.415.445(2)(a). The legislature has defined “school district staff” to “include[] classified staff, certificated instructional staff, certificated administrative staff, and superintendents.”

Beginning in the 2023-24 school year and every other school year thereafter, school districts must use at least one PLD funded by the legislature to “provide to school district staff a variety of opportunities for training, professional development, and professional learning” that is aligned with Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) standards of practices on cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion. PESB is currently directed to develop or update

these standards of practice. The training must be evaluated to determine whether it is aligned with the standards of practice using “rubrics” to be developed by PESB. The training opportunities must include training on multicultural education and English language acquisition.

After a district fulfills the requirements during the 2023-24 school year, its next obligation is to use the equivalent of one state-funded PLD for training on these topics during the 2025-26 school year.

## **2. Social-Emotional Learning and Related Topics—Required PLD**

In the 2022-23 school year and every other year thereafter, school districts must use the equivalent of one state-funded PLD to train “school district staff” on one or more of the following topics:

- Social-emotional learning;
- Trauma-informed practices;
- Recognition and response to emotional or behavioral distress using the model plan developed under RCW 28A.320.1271;
- Consideration of adverse childhood experiences;
- Mental health literacy;
- Antibullying strategies; or
- Culturally sustaining practices.

RCW 28A.415.445(1). A district may choose to train on more than one of the listed topics. This training requirement began last school year (2020-21) but was then limited to certificated staff. Similar to the cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings, the required training beginning in the 2022-23 contains the same specific definition of “school district staff” to include classified, certificated, and administrative staff.

After a district fulfills these requirements during the 2022-23 school year, its next obligation to use the equivalent of one state-funded PLD for training on such topics will be during the 2024-25 school year.

## **3. Important Takeaways**

Districts may choose how to spread this training out, with either continuous hours or shorter increments over multiple days. Districts should ensure they retain documentation showing they offered the required training to school district staff on the appropriate topics during the school year and the amount expended for that training.

Of particular note is the new requirement that both the social-emotional and the cultural competency trainings be broadened to specifically include classified and administrative staff. However, PLDs are funded solely for certificated staff. Districts should consider whether it can offer these trainings within administrative and classified employees’ normal working hours to minimize additional expenditures.

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The above analysis is based on our interpretation of the legislation on the date of this email. It is possible that subsequent legislation or regulatory guidance could provide more flexibility or add more requirements regarding the use of state-funded PLDs.

School districts with questions about PLD requirements during the 2021-22 school year may contact any of the Porter Foster Rorick attorneys listed below.