

# Professional Learning Units (PLUs) Guidance

## *For Educators with Certificates Expiring in 2022*

On Jan 1, 2022, we will begin the third year of certification renewal using Professional Learning Units (PLUs). This document contains guidance on the components of PLU-based renewal.

## Approvable Professional Learning Units

In order to support their educators in meeting PLU requirements, regulations ask districts to create a professional learning plan in collaboration with their educators that will articulate the district's role in providing quality professional learning for their educators. These professional development opportunities may include traditional professional development modules and sessions as well as the following kinds of site-based professional learning structures within the contracted school day which may count toward PLUs provided that they improve, enhance, or increase educators' knowledge, skills, or effectiveness. Examples might include Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), lesson study, student work analysis/data team analysis, and coaching involving observation and feedback cycles. Other types of professional learning that fit within the guiding parameters of the regulations may also be approved for educators prior to the completion of a district professional learning plan.

To illustrate, detailed notes from a Common Planning Time (CPT) focused on collaborative lesson preparation could be used as the specific learning activity where the notes capture the work of the team, identify the participants in attendance, and include a start and end time for the meeting. This example should count toward PLUs because it aims to enhance educator effectiveness through lesson design.

On the contrary, a CPT that deals with the logistics of scheduling a field trip, for example, should not count. While certainly an important and worthy activity, working out the details of a field trip would not meet the PLU requirement of an allowable professional learning activity as outlined in the regulations.

While there may be exceptions, one hour of professional learning is equivalent to one PLU. Therefore, we suggest that districts first determine which professional learning structures already exist within or beyond the school day to count toward their educators' PLUs. Next, we urge districts to think about additional activities that aim to improve, enhance, or increase any of the following:

- Subject matter/content knowledge and skills
- Pedagogical knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge and skills
- Curriculum implementation knowledge and skills
- Educator effectiveness

Additionally, educators may pursue other types of sustained professional learning such as university coursework, National Board Certification, and other third party facilitated workshops. *Ultimately, it is the districts' purview to determine which types of professional learning activities shall count toward their educators' PLUs as long as decisions are consistent with the types of activities outlined in the regulations.* Therefore, we urge educators to first seek approval from their districts before participating in professional learning activities for which they wish to receive PLUs. Beginning in the 2018-19 school year, any district-approved professional learning activity may count towards the PLU requirements for certificates expiring in 2020 and beyond.

## Tracking PLUs

Knowing that these professional learning plans will include both a mechanism for approving PLUs and a method by which educators will maintain them, RIDE suggests a process that allows for quick and easy "housekeeping." Educators should keep track of documentation that notes the specific professional learning activity, their participation, and the number of PLUs earned.

## PLU Submission Process

RIDE will not collect individual PLU evidence, but educators should maintain their own records because RIDE will audit a percentage of educators as part of a PLU audit system. However, educators progressing to the advanced (7-year) certificate will be required to upload evidence of meeting aspirational benchmarks.

## Support from RIDE

The Educator Course Network (ECN), launched in 2020, contains a listing of providers that have been vetted to meet the professional learning requirements as outlined in the regulations. The ECN identifies professional learning opportunities in which districts and schools may participate.