



**Maryland**

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# Professional Development Points

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Guidelines for Professional Development Providers

Division of Educator Effectiveness

Office of Teaching and Learning

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**MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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## Document Control Information

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### DOCUMENT HISTORY

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1.0	August 2024	Initial Document

## Purpose

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**This guide was produced by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) Division of Educator Effectiveness in partnership with the Office of Teaching and Learning and is intended for stakeholders who are interested in developing professional development for Maryland licensed educators. This guide contains instructions on what MSDE requires for development, submission, approval timelines, and points of contact.**

In April 2024, revised licensure regulations ([COMAR 13A.12, Educator Licensure](#)) went into effect requiring Maryland educators to earn [Professional Development Points \(PDPs\)](#) to renew an educator license. A key aspect of the PDP system is that educators can attend a variety of professional development activities that are tailored to meet the needs of individual teachers and schools. These experiences are logged in the license holder's [Individualized Professional Development Plan \(IPDP\)](#). In many instances, professional development activities can lead to PDPs *without the need for the activities to be pre-approved by MSDE*.

In light of these regulatory changes, this guide clarifies requirements for professional development leading to PDPs for providers including local education agencies (LEAs), state agencies, nonpublic schools, institutions of higher education, and MSDE offices.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ACTIVITIES FOR LICENSE HOLDERS

It is the expectation that Maryland educators continually engage in high-quality, evidence-based professional learning opportunities that address the needs of Maryland's diverse student population and are grounded in scientific research. When developing professional development activities, providers should consider each area of professional development required to renew a professional license.

To renew a professional license using Professional Development Points (PDPs), educators must complete 90 PDPs that include professional learning in each of the following four areas:

- (1) Content or pedagogy related to an area on the educator's license
- (2) English as a Second Language, Sheltered English, or Bilingual Education
- (3) Strategies for teaching students with disabilities, or differentiated instruction for students with diverse learning needs
- (4) Culturally Responsive Teaching or diverse student identities in education

Educators have the option of earning PDPs through a variety of options, including (but not limited to):

- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
- Micro-credentials approved by a Maryland local education agency, State-operated school, approved nonpublic school, or the MSDE
- Any professional development activity that is a minimum of one clock hour and approved by a Maryland local education agency, another Maryland state agency, an approved nonpublic school, or another state department of education for purposes of professional development

The following sections of the guide will provide direction for development and submission of approval based on the type of provider offering the professional development activities leading to PDPs.

# Maryland Local Education Agencies, Maryland-Approved Nonpublic Schools, and Maryland State Agencies (including MSDE)

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## APPROVAL TO ISSUE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POINTS

Maryland local education agencies (LEAs), approved nonpublic schools, and Maryland State Agencies are authorized to issue Professional Development Points (PDPs) to Maryland license holders under [COMAR 13A.12.02.06E](#). These entities are not required to submit professional development activities to the MSDE Division of Educator Effectiveness for approval.

If an authorized entity partners with a vendor to offer a professional development activity to educators resulting in PDPs, that activity does not require MSDE approval as long as it is approved by the entity itself (e.g., LEA).

## TRACKING APPROVED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Educators must log the completion of PDPs in an [Individualized Professional Development Plan](#), which is submitted during the licensure renewal process. Entities authorized to issue PDPs must provide the license holder with documentation that demonstrates the following:

1. Description of the professional development activity
2. Date(s) of the activity
3. Number of PDPs earned by completing the activity
4. Authorized entity that approved the activity

Authorized entities may use the MSDE Professional Development Activity Completion for Credit Form at the end of this document for this purpose or may develop their own form that includes the information above.

## GENERIC CPD COURSE FOR APPROVED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Educators who hold a professional certificate that was issued on or before March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, have one full validity period to renew their certificate under the previous certification regulations. Those regulations allowed an individual to submit six Maryland-approved Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits to renew a credential. To accommodate these personnel, MSDE has created a CPD course that allows the same flexibility as professionally licensed educators earning PDPs.

If an LEA, Maryland-approved nonpublic school, or Maryland State Agency would like to track a professional development activity using a CPD number, the following number may be used: **24-00-05**. A copy of this CPD course is in the Appendix of this document. Professional development activities tracked using this CPD number are authorized to be backdated to include professional development activities an educator completed on or after April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

## Institutions of Higher Education

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Institutions of higher education (IHEs) must obtain approval to issue Maryland-approved Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credit for any professional development activity that doesn't result in the participant earning college credit. Activities offered by IHEs must lead to college credit or CPD credit to renew a Maryland educator license.

Only IHE courses that do not already offer college credit will be evaluated for CPD credits by the State. This includes courses offered by an IHE in partnership with a vendor. If the course already offers college credit, MSDE will not process the course to award CPD credits, as teachers can use the college credits earned from the course towards licensure renewal.

To offer CPD credits, an IHE must apply to the MSDE Division of Educator Effectiveness by following the instructions on our [website](#).

License holders should log the completion of an IHE-offered CPD in their [Individualized Professional Development Plan](#) to be submitted at the time of licensure renewal. For their records, license holders should obtain proof of completion by utilizing the MSDE Professional Development Activity Completion for Credit form (located at the end of this document) or similar as supplied by the course provider.

It is not necessary for IHEs to apply for CPD credit if the activity is a professional conference (defined as a workshop, institute, or seminar of 4 or more hours that contributes to ongoing, sustained, and high-quality professional development). Regulations allow license holders to earn PDPs for professional conferences; therefore, no additional approval is required.

## Other Providers

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Other professional development providers not already addressed in this document must obtain approval to issue Maryland-approved Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credit for any professional development activity intended for educators to renew their Maryland license. Other providers may include vendors, non-profit or for-profit organizations, and professional organizations.

To offer CPD credits, a provider must apply to the MSDE Division of Educator Effectiveness by following the instructions on our [website](#).

License holders should log the completion of CPDs offered by other providers in their [Individualized Professional Development Plan](#) to be submitted at the time of licensure renewal. For their records, license holders should obtain proof of completion by utilizing the MSDE Professional Development Activity Completion for Credit Form (located at the end or similar as supplied by the course provider).

It is not necessary to apply for CPD credit if the activity is a professional conference (defined as a workshop, institute, or seminar of 4 or more hours that contributes to ongoing, sustained, and high-quality professional development), or leads to Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from an accredited International Association for Continuing Education and Training provider. Regulations allow license holders to earn PDPs for these experiences; therefore, no additional approval is required.

# Designing Professional Development Activities

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## Defining Professional Development

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) defines professional development (PD) as activities that:

- are an integral part of the school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators (including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and, as applicable, early childhood educators) with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging State academic standards; and
- are sustained (not stand-alone, 1-day, or short-term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused.

**Please note:** even though the ESSA defines PD activities in these ways, educators can earn PDPs for short-term conferences and workshops as noted on the PDP [webpage](#).

## Shifting to High-Quality Professional Learning

In the article [Professional learning vs PD: The distinction matters](#), Learning Forward distinguishes between PD and professional learning (PL). PD activities are often considered to be intermittent events that are disconnected from the broader vision. They aim to provide a quick solution or disseminate information but seldom lead to changes in thinking or practices. On the contrary, high-quality professional learning (PL):

- is intentionally designed,
- has structures for collaboration
- provides models
- includes coaching
- accelerates personal and collective learning
- is grounded in evidence, and
- is responsive to educator and student needs.

## Standards for Professional Learning

In the spring of 2024, MSDE formally adopted the [Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning](#). These standards establish a vision for high-quality PL. Working within a framework, the 11 standards outline the conditions, content, and processes that drive decisions regarding PL and are used to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of all educators, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes.

MSDE's PL initiatives and practices are guided by these standards. Therefore, those designing PD or PL activities should align their practices with these standards to ensure that the opportunities are consistently high-quality, relevant, and effective in supporting educators' growth and student success.



## Contact Information

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If you have questions about Professional Development Points (PDPs) or Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses, please contact Pamela Darien, Administrative Specialist, at [pamela.darien@maryland.gov](mailto:pamela.darien@maryland.gov)

If you have questions about Professional Learning or the Learning Forward Standards please contact Jennifer Wojcik, Coordinator of Professional Learning, at [Jennifer.Wojcik@maryland.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Wojcik@maryland.gov)

## Appendix

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### MSDE/CPD# 24-00-05

**Coordinator:** Approved LEA or MSDE Office CPD Liaison

#### Background

In April 2024, revised licensure regulations (COMAR 13A.12, *Educator Licensure*) went into effect which utilize Professional Development Points (PDPs), a system used by Maryland educators to renew their licenses. PDPs are earned through the completion of professional development activities within an educator's Individualized Professional Development Plan. The goal of professional development activities is to improve educator efficacy and support the goals and initiatives of a Local Educational Agency (LEA).

A key aspect of the PDP system is that educators can attend professional development activities that are tailored to meet the needs of individual educators and schools, and these activities can count for credit toward licensure renewal *without the need for the activities to be pre-approved by MSDE* – a marked difference from the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) system previously used in the State.

MSDE personnel, Maryland LEAs, Maryland State Agencies, Maryland-approved nonpublic schools, and State Departments of Education outside of Maryland will no longer need to submit approved professional development activities to MSDE to be approved as CPD courses. Instead, providers will offer professional development activities as they deem appropriate, and if they would like to track those activities using the CPD model, they will utilize this CPD course number.

#### Description and Credit Requirements:

Providers will offer professional development activities to educators to meet licensure renewal requirements outlined in COMAR 13A.12, *Educator Licensure*. Participants will earn 1-5 CPD credits depending upon the duration and/or type of professional development activity. A participant must earn at least 15 PDPs for one CPD credit. There are no half-credit increments for CPDs.

PDP calculations are as follows:

- One clock hour within a professional development activity is equivalent to one PDP
- One semester hour of college credit is equivalent to 15 PDPs
- One Continuing Education Unit is equivalent to 10 PDPs

Professional development activities may include:

- Professional development activities approved by MSDE, the LEA, other state agencies, Maryland-approved nonpublic schools, or a Department of Education from another state
- College credit earned or taught at an institute of higher education
- Continuing Education Units
- Professional conferences, workshops, or seminars
- Curriculum development
  - For each curriculum developed, an educator can earn up to 30 PDPs
- Publication of a book or article
  - For each book published, an educator can earn up to 75 PDPs
  - For each article published, an educator can earn up to 10 PDPs

- Mentorship
- Micro-credentials
  - For each micro-credential earned – can earn up to 10 PDPs

Educators cannot “double dip” experiences for PDPs. Example: an educator who completes a 3-credit college course can earn 45 PDPs, but they cannot earn additional PDPs for the hours spent taking the course.

License holders should maintain documentation for each approved professional development activity they complete under this CPD.

This CPD can be retroactively applied to activities beginning on or after April 1, 2024.

### Outcomes

Participants will:

- Complete requirements within their Individualized Professional Development Plan to meet license renewal criteria outlined in COMAR 13A.12, *Educator Licensure*
- Demonstrate competency in a given area based on a set of criteria determined by the particular approved professional development activity pursued
- Gain a stronger sense of their own skills and professional development goals
- Engage in a broad range of professional learning activities and pathways to achieve professional goals
- Apply newly acquired knowledge to support LEA goals and further enhance student learning

**Timeline:** Varies according to the professional development activity.

**Evaluation:** Varies based on the professional development activity pursued by the license holder. The evaluation method will be established by the entity offering the activity to the participant.

Approved by Keith Krempel,  
Educator Preparation Coordinator  
Maryland State Department of Education  
CPD#: 24-00-05

- **Name of Participant:**
- **Participant’s Organization (school or LEA):**
- **Participant SSN (last 4):**
- **Professional Development Provider:**
- **Title or Nature of Activity:**
- **Date and Location of Activity:**
- **Length of Professional Development (hours):**
- **MSDE CPD Number (if applicable):**
- **Number of CPD credits awarded (if applicable):**

Professional Development area(s) of emphasis (check all that apply):

- Pedagogy
- Specific content area(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- English as a Second Language, Sheltered English, or Bilingual Education
- Strategies for teaching students with disabilities, or differentiated instruction for students with diverse learning needs
- Culturally Responsive Teaching or diverse student identities in education
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

This is to verify that the above-named participant has successfully completed this professional development activity in its entirety.

_____	_____
<b>Signature of Provider</b>	<b>Date</b>

_____	_____
<b>Signature of PD Liaison or Non-Public School Official</b>	<b>Date</b>

- 1) If employed by a local educational agency (LEA), TWO signed copies of this form with the provider’s original signature are submitted to the teacher’s LEA to be signed by the appropriate representative. One copy to be retained by the LEA and one copy to be given to the participant. Each LEA has a method for processing. Please do not send to MSDE. **PARTICIPANTS SHOULD RETAIN A COPY.**
- 2) If the participant is not employed by a local school system but holds a Maryland license, participant should retain the credit form and submit it to MSDE Licensure Office when requesting renewal of his/her license.