PROFESSIONAL LEARNING HANDBOOK

2024-25

Revised March 2024

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

All professional learning should align to the school improvement plan goals which should align to the District Improvement Plan and current Strategic Plan. Since participation in professional learning is

an annual responsibility for each instructional staff, including paraprofessionals, in Morgan County, all instructional staff shall participate in a minimum of 10 contact hours.

The Morgan County School System Professional Learning Handbook describes the process for professional learning. Copies of the handbook shall be distributed electronically and reviewed with all instructional staff, including paraprofessionals, during pre-planning each year. Priorities for professional learning activities are outlined in district and school improvement plans. Requests for professional learning must address one or more of these priorities or address individual professional development plans (PDP) in order to be approved for the use of professional learning funds. The school system and each school provide professional learning opportunities aligned with district and school improvement goals. Instructional staff, including paraprofessionals, may also request funding and credit for participation in professional learning opportunities provided outside of the school system. The process for making such requests is outlined in the Morgan County System Professional Learning Handbook. Requests must be submitted through ETrieve and approved by the Professional Learning Coordinator and the building principal before being submitted to the Central Office for approval.

The FY25 CLIP/DIP Goals are the following:
Goal #1
Increase student growth and achievement for all students and demographic categories in core content areas (Target and Metrics: 1. 5% increase over the next three years of students meeting their personal growth goal on iReady Diagnostic; 2. 10% increase of students on or above grade level as measured by the Georgia Milestones Assessment and I-Ready Assessments; includes demographic categories and total population)

Goal #2
Increase professional capacity and retention in order to improve student learning as indicated by the number of students scoring on or above grade level on state assessments by 5% each year over a three year period.

Goal #3
Increase the percentage of Gifted and advanced students exceeding growth and achievement targets by 3% each year for the next three years as measured by I-Ready, Georgia Milestones (EOG & EOC), and AP scores (scoring 3+).

Action Steps for each goal can be found in the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan, and a summary is linked here.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES
- All professional learning activities and classes must have **PRIOR APPROVAL** of the local school professional learning committee, building principal (or designee) and system coordinator.
- An activity or plan of activities must be submitted for in-house professional development. For professional development activities offered outside the school system, an agenda for the

activity, or some other description of the activity, should be submitted with the professional learning request.
- A Professional Learning request should be submitted through ETrieve prior to the event and approved by everyone in the workflow.

STIPENDS

Before teachers can request a stipend for completed professional learning the following must be completed by the professional learning coordinator:
- Check to be sure that a professional learning request has been completed by the teacher.
- Verify attendance (sign in sheets or Google sign-in form). Sign-in sheets must contain the participant's role (eg: teacher, para, administrator, etc.)
- Verify work completed.
- Submit a list to the district PL Chair for teachers who will receive the stipend, how much they will receive and from what fund source (Form in the back of handbook).

After all the above steps are completed:
- Teacher completes a stipend request (**The cut off date for stipend requests is the 15th of the month. Any requests approved after that date, will be paid the next month).**
- Approve the stipend in ETrieve

Your approval indicates that all documentation is on file which will be maintained at the school level. Allowable stipend pay is up to $30.00 an hour.

If a teacher attends a conference off campus during off-contract time, and there is a registration fee, the district will pay the registration fee, travel and per diem for food. If a teacher attends a conference off campus during off-contract time which does not have a registration fee, the district will pay travel and per diem for food. A stipend, for teachers to attend a conference during off-contract days that has no registration fee, will be paid ONLY if the conference is REQUIRED as a part of the school improvement plan. That amount will be 150.00 per day. Anytime a stipend is paid there must be a sign-in sheet, a finished product and/or a redelivery plan.

PROCEDURES and RECOMMENDED LIST OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The following partial list contains activities that may be approved for professional learning; this list is not all inclusive:
1. School or system-initiated courses/job embedded
2. RESA-sponsored courses
3. College/University-sponsored courses
4. Professional organization-sponsored courses
5. Professional conferences
6. School visits (for a specific purpose)
7. Independent Study Courses

8. College coursework
9. Research and Development Projects for School Improvement

Please login to ETrieve and submit the stipend request form. **Please do not submit this form until the Professional Learning is completed.** No stipends may be awarded for activities that occur on contract time or have not had prior approval.

FUNDING

A.   Funding for school professional learning will come from state professional   learning funds, and federal fund sources such as Title I-A, Title II-A, Title III-A, Title IV-A, and ESSER.
B.   Funds will be allocated equitably to each school based on district and school improvement needs.
C.   ALL school staff should have access to professional learning funds
D.   School nutrition, maintenance and custodial staff activities will be funded through departmental allocations.
E.   It is the responsibility of the school PLC and the building principal to maintain accurate records of funds spent on school professional learning through ETrieve to ensure the following:
*all staff have the opportunity to participate in professional learning activities
*stipends and travel reimbursement allocations are made equitably
*all professional learning funds are spent during the year
*that professional learning request are charged to the appropriate fund

Procedure for registration payments in ETrieve:
Read your registration instructions to begin your process. Usually, vendors will have a method of payment listed with options. Discuss the preferred method of payment with your supervisor before registering. If supervisors have questions, please contact the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.
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Below are the options for different payment methods for conference registrations:
        Purchase Order – if you chose purchase order as the method of payment, remember you have to submit a PO request in Softdocs. This is a critical step in getting your PL request completed. A PO# cannot be assigned unless the proper steps are taken in ETrieve and Softdocs. This is the only payment method that will require you to do anything in Softdocs.

        Invoice – Sometimes vendors will email or mail an invoice to the Board office or to the School. If you choose invoice as your payment method, please make sure that you upload your registration form in ETrieve. I will send this with a check to ensure payment is applied correctly.

Pre-pay – If you choose prepayment as your payment, you will pay for your registration with a personal method of payment and request reimbursement when you send your travel reimbursement forms to the Administrative Assistant for the Office of Teaching and Learning, Tammy Ashurst. She will forward your reimbursement forms to the finance department. A reimbursing check will be issued for registration and travel expenses. Travel reimbursement forms can be found on the [MCCS Finance Department webpage](#).

Other: this is an option for the vendors that prefer checks before the conference actually takes place. Please make sure ALL supporting documents (registration forms) are uploaded for auditing purposes. Copies will also be sent with a check.

Please remember that all employees must register themselves for conferences. But, all documentation will be sent with the payment method chosen to ensure registration is applied properly.

Professional Learning Fund Source
NOTE: All professional learning activities, regardless of fund source, must be tied to either the field(s) of certificate held, school/district improvement plan, the system strategic plan, annual performance evaluation, or state/federal requirements.
Professional learning supported by federal funds must be related to the current year's CLIP/DIP goals and action steps.

TITLE 1-A   ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
Target Areas:
1. Academic achievement of economically disadvantaged and minority students
Allowable Expenditures:
1. Stipends, including FICA benefits for stipends
2. Travel expenses
3. Registrations, dues and fees
4. Supplies for professional learning
5. Substitute teachers for teachers who participate in professional learning
6. Contracted services for professional learning

TITLE II-A   IMPROVING TEACHER QUALITY
Target Areas
1. Improving Teacher and Administrator Quality
2. Recruiting and Retaining Highly Qualified Teachers and Principals
Allowable Expenditures:
1. Stipends, including FICA benefits for stipends
2. Travel expenses
3. Registrations, dues and fees
4. Supplies for professional learning

5. Substitute teachers for teachers who participate in professional learning

6. Contracted services for professional learning

TITLE III-A ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND MIGRANT STUDENTS

Target Areas:
1. Supporting the unique needs of English language learners

Allowable Expenditures:
1. Stipends, including FICA benefits for stipends
2. Travel expenses
3. Registrations, dues and fees
4. Supplies for professional learning
5. Substitute teachers for teachers who participate in professional learning
6. Contracted services for professional learning

TITLE IV-A STUDENT SUPPORT AND ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Target Areas:
1. Safe and Healthy Schools - Climate, PBIS,
2. Well-rounded - social/emotional learning, enrichment courses
3. Effective Use of Technology

Allowable Expenditures:
1. Stipends, including FICA benefits for stipends
2. Travel expenses
3. Registrations, dues and fees
4. Supplies for professional learning
5. Substitute teachers for teachers who participate in professional learning
6. Contracted services for professional learning

STATE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Target Areas: Assessed school needs, as determined by the school improvement plan or the annual personnel evaluation process.
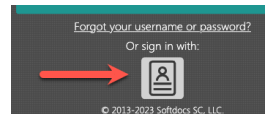
Allowable Expenditures:
1. Stipends including FICA Benefits for stipends
2. Travel expenses
3. Registrations, dues and fees
4. Supplies for professional learning
5. Substitute teachers for teachers who participate in professional learning

INSTRUCTIONS ON SUBMITTING A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FORM IN ETrieve:

 Professional Learning Request/Travel Reimbursement

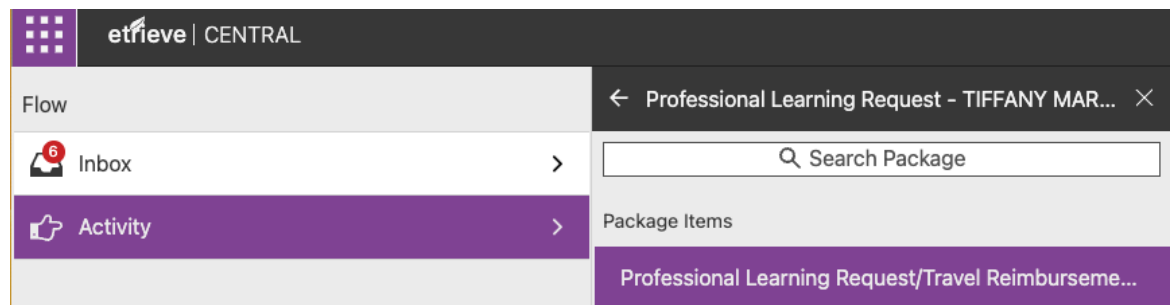1. Go to https://morgancentral.etrieve.cloud/ and click on the bottom single sign on option to login with your Morgan County Gmail Account.
2. Once logged in, click on Forms then under Professional Learning, click on Professional Learning Request/Travel Reimbursement.
3. A new form will load with your pre-populated information.
4. Fill out all information down to the Click Submit Below Button. If this is a PL Request for a stipend, please enter your stipend amount under "Estimated Expenses." To attach supporting documents click on the attachments button in the gray bar below the PL Form.
5. Once you click on the submit button, your PL request will go through the work flow process.
6. You can track the progress under the Activity tab.
7. Click the name of the form and in the bottom gray bar click on History.

If you have Expenses to turn in for Reimbursement:
8. AFTER you have completed your professional learning activity you will come back to the Activity tab, locate your PL Request and click on it.
9. This will load your PL Request in the window to the right.
10. Scroll down to the Expenses section and click the drop down to choose what kind of expenses you have. (Note: You will not be able to continue with choosing an expense if your PL form has not completed the work flow process.)
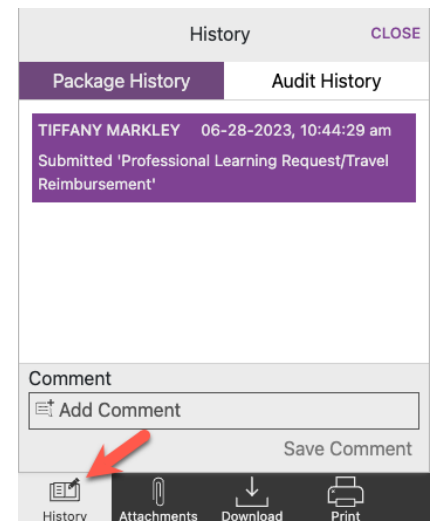
11. Choose your expense type from the drop down.
12. Fill in any expenses that you have under the Expenses Report.
13. Attach any receipts/documents that you have by clicking on the attachments tab in the gray bar below.
14. Click Approve.
15. Your request goes back through the workflow to complete the process.

Expenses

Do you Have Expenses?

Travel/Mileage ⇕

TRAVEL REGULATIONS

The State Accounting Office, the Office of Planning and Budget and the Morgan County Board of Education have authorized reimbursement for the following expenses associated with employee travel:

Meals associated with overnight lodging;

Lodging expenses;

Mileage for use of a personal vehicle;

Transportation expenses, including parking and toll fees; and

Certain miscellaneous expenses associated with travel.

The specific policies regarding the reimbursement of travel expenses, as well as expense limits and required documentation are outlined below:

Travel Forms Must Be Completed in Their Entirety Following These Instructions. Incomplete/Incorrect forms will be returned to the Employee.

Fill in Name, Social Security Number and Month (the month during which the expense was incurred). Fill in Date of Reimbursement Request, Name of School, Name of Conference and Location of Conference. As of July 1, 2012, employees will no longer be paid for travel done within the county with the exception of employees providing pre approved hospital homebound instructional services.

(1) Mileage (As Applicable)
   a. Auto Tag Number must be filled in and date (s) of travel must be listed.
   b. Times departed and arrived must be listed if meals are claimed.
   c.   The name of the conference or training you are attending must be listed.
   d. Beginning and ending odometer readings are required and must be listed.
   e.   Mileage is reimbursed at current per mile rate and must be computed from your workplace, i.e. High School, etc. unless departing from your home when it is closer to your destination. Then actual mileage should be computed based on the closer departure location. Mileage should be totaled and multiplied by current per mile rate (See MCCS Finance Department's webpage).

f. Mileage will be reimbursed for travel to and from lodging to conference sight. Employees are not entitled to mileage reimbursement for personal mileage, i.e. travel to restaurants, sight-seeing, entertainment, etc., while on travel status.

(2) Meals & Lodging (As applicable)

Meals Associated with Overnight Travel:

Employees traveling overnight will be paid a per diem amount designed to cover the cost of meals (including taxes and tips), based on the number of meals per day for which the employee is eligible. Current per diem rates will apply. Contact the MCCS finance department for more information.

How many meals per day?
Employees traveling overnight are generally eligible for **daily** per diem amounts designed to cover the cost of three (3) meals per day for all days on travel status ***other than the day of departure and the day of return.*** *To receive per diem for non-overnight travel the employee must be away for more than 12 hours and travel more than 50 miles from home or office, whichever is closer.*

Day of Departure and Return: Employees may only receive 75% of allowable total per diem for meals occurring on the day of departure and return. For example, on the day of departure and return the employee is eligible to receive 21.00 in per diem.

SAO
State Accounting Office

Brian P. Kemp
Governor

Gerlda B. Hines, CPA
State Accounting Officer

Meal Per Diem During Overnight Travel
1st and Last Day (75%)

Refer to the Statewide Travel Policy, Section 4.4, page 22

| Total Per Diem | 1st & Last Day Meal Per Diem (75%) | | | |
	Breakfast Provided X = $13	Lunch Provided X = $14	Dinner Provided X = $23	Amount Reimbursed ($50*.75) - X
$ 50.00				$ 37.50
$ 50.00	X			$ 24.50
$ 50.00		X		$ 23.50
$ 50.00			X	$ 14.50
$ 50.00	X	X		$ 10.50
$ 50.00		X	X	$ 0.50
$ 50.00	X	X	X	$ -

NOTE: The above reflects in-state rates totaling $50.00. Out-of-state per diem allowances follow the same methodology using the GSA rate schedule as the base X. (Incidentals are not included.)

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There are also instances in which an employee may not receive per diem for the normally eligible number of meals. If any meal is included as a part of the cost of conference registration, etc., such meal(s) should not be considered eligible in the calculation of per diem. For example, if conference registration includes breakfast and lunch, the employee will only receive per diem for the dinner meal.

Per State of Georgia Statewide Travel Regulations, **alcoholic beverages cannot be reimbursed**.

Lodging:
Lodging cost will only be reimbursed if conference/training is more than 75 miles from Madison AND lasts for more than one day. Lodging will NOT be paid for one day seminars/conferences/training held in the metro Atlanta area, Macon, Augusta, Gainesville, etc. The exception to this rule is when an employee is acting as a chaperone for students at a student event that requires the group to stay overnight within the 75 mile area. Preapproval of this reimbursement must be obtained by the employee before the event and such approval should be noted on the travel request form.

Lodging cost must be listed and receipts are required. Employees are responsible for ensuring the most reasonable lodging rates are obtained. The reasonable lodging rate is $150 per day plus taxes. Employees should: (1) make reservations in advance, whenever practical, (2) utilize minimum rate accommodations; (3) avoid "deluxe" hotels and motels, and (4) obtain government rates, whenever possible.

State and local government officials and employees traveling within the state on official business are **exempt** from paying the county or municipal excise tax on lodging ("hotel/motel" or "occupancy" tax). [OCGA 48-13-51 (a)(1)(C)(ii)]. Employees are required to submit a copy of the hotel/motel tax-exemption form when they register at a hotel/motel. A copy of this form is available at your school's administrative office or on the [finance department's webpage](#). This exemption does not apply to an out-of-state hotel/motel.

In any instance where the lodging is paid by a school or system government check, a sales tax exempt form should also be obtained and presented at check-in. The hotel/motel should not collect <u>any</u> taxes associated with the lodging expenses in this instance.

If an employee fails to obtain and/or present tax exempt forms to the hotel at check-in, the tax costs will not be reimbursed. Should a hotel refuse to accept the form, in order to be reimbursed for the tax, the employee must provide central office with the following information: employee name, date(s) of lodging; name, address, telephone number of hotel, and documentation from the hotel of their refusal to omit the excise tax for forwarding to the State Accounting Office and the Georgia Department of Revenue.

(3) Miscellaneous Expenses (As applicable)
List other transportation and/or lodging costs as applicable, i.e. airline tickets, taxi, car rentals, parking etc. <u>Receipts for these must be attached.</u> Parking, etc. will NOT be reimbursed unless receipts

are attached. **Fees for valet parking will not be reimbursed if public/self-parking is available.**

Registration fees required for participation in workshops, seminars or conferences that an employee is directed and/or authorized to attend will be allowed when supported by a paid receipt or a copy of the check showing payment. This expense will be reported by Central office accounting as a "fee" and not charged to travel.

(4) Total Request

Multiply total miles by **current rate per mile** and fill in total mileage (1); total meals(receipts not needed) and lodging (2); total all misc expenditures for which you have receipts (3); and **enter total taxon line (4).**

(5) Forms must be signed and dated

It is the responsibility of the employee to be familiar with all travel expenses regulations and limitations as contained in The Fiscal Management for Georgia Local Units of Administration. All Expenses exceeding limitations must be explained in writing. For further information contact the Administrative Office.

(6) Give to Supervisor or Staff Development Committee for approval:
Grant Supervisor(s) and/or the School's Staff Development Committee should show what grant or account is to be charged for the travel expense; sign and date the form and turn into the Administrative Assistant for Teaching and Learning who will forward to the Finance Department.

(7) Reimbursement
Travel reimbursement is done by vendor check and distributed twice per month - the 15th of each month and the last working day of the month. Reimbursements done on the last business day will be attached to that month's payroll check. Reimbursement requests must be received by Central Office by the 10th and 25th, respectively, to be processed for the next check run.

All travel expense statements must be turned into the Central Office within 30 days of the incurred expense.

Any reimbursement requests received after the grant or fiscal year has closed will not be processed.

Any incomplete, incorrect and/or unsigned requests will be returned to the employee before processing.

Link to TRAVEL AND MILEAGE FORM

Sample - Professional Learning Sign In

Title/Purpose of Professional
Learning_____
Date_____Time_____Location_____
_____

Printed Name	Position	Signature

Professional Learning Stipend Roster

Name of PL_____   Facilitator_____

Has a Professional Learning Request been completed by each teacher requesting a stipend?
Yes_____(No stipend will be paid until this is done).
Please list the name of each individual who will be requesting a stipend and the amount of stipend to be paid. The amount should match the hours worked reflected on the sign-in sheet.
Before any stipend will be paid, time sheets and PL stipend roster must be submitted with signatures of the facilitator and an administrator.

Name	Amount of Stipend	Fund Source

Professional Learning
Coordinator_____Administrator_____

When these documentations have been submitted, all teachers should submit a stipend request.
Before teachers can request a stipend for completed professional learning the following must be completed by the professional learning coordinator:
a. Check to be sure that a professional learning request has been completed by the teacher. We will not approve a stipend unless there is an approved PL request.
b. Verify attendance (sign in sheets)/hours worked
c. Verify work completed
d. Submit a list to the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning of teachers who will receive the stipend, how much they will receive and from what fund source. This should be submitted AFTER the above tasks have been completed.
After all the above steps are completed:
e. Teacher completes a stipend request.
d. PL chair approve the stipend in ETrieve
Your approval indicates that all documentation is on file which will be maintained at the school level.
Please let the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning know if you have questions.

Things to remember before approval:
Make sure the PL request has all the required information - research, fund amount, correct name of school, etc. The Professional Learning Chair needs to review the request carefully to ensure everything is completed correctly.

Make sure the stipend request is submitted AFTER the work is complete.

Make sure there is a PL Request BEFORE you approve a stipend request.

Make sure you approve the correct fund source. CTAE, PE, Counselors cannot be paid with Title I or Title II money.

The fund source has been added to the Stipend Contract for the principal to add and it must match the approved fund source on the PL request approval page.

The name of the professional learning on the PL request should match the name on the stipend request.

No invoices will be paid without prior approval - PL Request.

The PLU request section has been taken out. No longer applies.