The Purpose of Professional Development

The purpose of professional development is to improve knowledge and skills in order to facilitate individual, school-wide, and district-wide improvements for the purpose of increasing student achievement.

Educators face continuously increasing requirements from federal and state mandates. The federal No Child Left Behind legislation significantly changed the requirements and expectations for all public schools in the country. One of the many changes is that all professional development must be targeted to improve student achievement. Therefore, professional development usually involves educators deepening their knowledge of academic content or broadening their understanding of instructional techniques.

Cabot’s professional development plan is based upon the requirements outlined by federal and state laws as specified in the Rules Governing Professional Development that have been approved by the Arkansas State Board of Education. There are thirteen areas of professional development activities approved by the Arkansas State Board of Education:

I. Arkansas Content Standards and Frameworks
II. Instructional Practices
III. Advocacy/Leadership
IV. Supervision/Classroom Management
V. Instructional/Educational Technology
VI. Cognitive Research
VII. Assessment
VIII. Systemic Change Process
IX. Curriculum Alignment
X. Mentoring/Coaching
XI. Principles of Learning/Development Stages
XII. Building Collaborative Learning Communities
XIII. Parental Involvement

What constitutes quality professional development?

- Skillful school and school district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement
- Personal goals aligned with building goals which are aligned with district goals
- Resources to support educator learning and collaboration
- Disaggregated student data to determine educator learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvements
- Research of best instructional practices to guide decision making
- Knowledge about human learning and change
- An understanding and appreciation of all students and their individual learning needs and styles
- A safe, orderly, and supportive learning environment
- High expectations for the students’ academic achievement
- Deep knowledge of academic content
- Research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards
- Knowledge and application of a variety of appropriate classroom assessment
- Knowledge and skills to involve families and other stakeholders in education