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You will use the [Montana Professional Development Portal](#) website to:

- Enroll in and drop courses;
- Review your transcript for hours earned;
- Evaluate courses you've taken; and
- Print and save your certificates.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **What Is PIR?**

PIR stands for Pupil-Instruction-Related. The Administrative Rules of Montana specify that a school that is in session for at least 180 pupil-instruction days may count for the year a maximum of seven (7) PIR days with a minimum of three of the days for instructional and professional development meetings or other appropriate in-service training. These seven PIR days, in addition to the 180 pupil-instructed days, may be counted, provided that such additional days do not include any time counted for pupil instruction and are used for one or more of the following purposes:

(a) Staff orientation held prior to the beginning of pupil instruction for the purpose of organization of the school year.

(b) Staff professional development programs scheduled during the year for the purpose of improving instruction which shall include annual instructional and professional development meetings.

(c) Parent-teacher conferences for the purpose of acquainting parents with the school and the progress of their children.

(d) Post-school record and report completion at the end of the pupil-instruction year.

- **What constitutes Professional Development?**

Administrative Rules 10.55.714 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (1) Professional development:

(a) shall be aligned with district educational goals and objectives;

(b) focuses on teachers as central to student learning and includes all other members of the school community;

(c) focuses on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement;

(d) respects and nurtures the intellectual and leadership capacity of teachers, principals, and others in the school community;

- (e) reflects proven research and practice in teaching, learning, and leadership;
- (f) enables teachers to develop further experience in subject content, teaching strategies, uses of technologies, and other essential elements in teaching to high standards;
- (g) promotes continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools;
- (h) is ongoing and sustained;
- (i) is planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate that development;
- (j) requires substantial time and other resources;
- (k) is driven by a coherent long-term plan; and
- (l) is evaluated on the impact of professional development on teacher effectiveness and student learning, and the results of this assessment guides subsequent professional development.

- **What is the MCPS District schedule for the seven required PIR days?**

MCPS's PIR schedule includes five (5) district directed PIR days and two (2) flexible days as follows:

- **Kindergarten -8th grades**
 - 1 District directed day in September;
 - *2 days for the state MEA conference in October;
 - 3 days for District directed Parent-Teacher conferences (1.5 days in November and 1.5 days in March); and
 - 1 District directed day in April.
- **High School**
 - 1 District directed day in September;
 - *2 days for the state MEA conference in October;
 - 2 days for District directed Parent-Teacher conferences (1 day in November and 1 day in March);
 - 1 District directed day in January; and
 - 1 District directed day in April.
- * The MEA conference is not mandatory. If teachers do not attend the MEA conference, they are required to attend an additional 12 hours of flexible PIR credit. Flexible PIR offerings to fulfill the 12 hours can be found on the professional development website.

- **When does the PIR year start and end?**

The PIR year begins on June 1st and runs through the fourth Friday of May (for the 2016-17 school year, that is 6/1/16 – 5/26/17). Pay will be docked, including benefits and retirement, if hours are not completed on time. Flexible PIR requirements must be completed and approved by the fourth Friday in May.

- **What does and does not count as Flexible PIR credit?**

Flexible PIR hours must meet the definition of professional development (see below)*. In addition, Flexible PIR hours must be taken outside the work day.

- *Professional development Administrative Rules 10.57.215)
 - (3) Renewal activities used to renew all licenses must be:
 - (i) a planned and structured experience;
 - (ii) of benefit to the license holder's professional development as defined in ARM 10.55.714 ;
 - (iii) an exposure to a new idea or skill or an extension of an existing idea or skill; What is the deadline for completion of Flexible PIR requirements?

- **What does NOT meet the requirement of STAFF DEVELOPMENT?**

- Working in your classroom
- Supervising extra-curricular activities
- Committee work
- PIR credit cannot be earned if the course is taken for University Credit, salary advancement, or pay/stipend.

- **How Do I Get PIR credit for Independent Study?**

PIR Credit can be earned for doing an Independent Study project.

- **Criteria for Independent Study:**
 - Coursework/ activities must meet definition of Staff Development: *Activities designed to supplement, enhance, and/or upgrade professional skills or knowledge base. Any professional development activity must be 1) a planned and structured experience 2) of benefit to the certificate holder's professional development. and 3) an exposure to a new idea or skill or an extension of an existing idea or skill.*
- **Requirements:**
 - Activity must be 1) Time spent outside the contract day/year, 2) completed by the last Friday in May, and 3) be approved by a district administrator/supervisor.

Steps to obtain Independent Study credit

- 1) Print and complete the [Independent Study Form](#)
- 2) Obtain prior approval from your supervisor before starting the process.
- 3) Complete the independent study project and submit documentation to supervisor
- 4) Submit a request for Non-District PIR on the [MT Professional Development Portal](#)

5) Supervisor documents approval of Non District PIR on the professional development website [Click here for instructions](#)

- [How do I get FLEXIBLE PIR credit for workshops or conferences not sponsored by MCPS? \(click to link\)](#)

- **How do I check my Non- District PIR Record (MCPS)?**

Go to MY RECORDS--> REPORTS--> Select Report- USE OF PIR HOURS

- **How do I see a record of the PIR that I have completed so far?**

Go to MY RECORDS--> REPORTS--> Select Report: USE OF PIR HOURS; Select PDF and PREVIEW

- **How do I see a record of the PIR that I have completed so far?**

Go to MY RECORDS--> REPORTS--> Select Report: USE OF PIR HOURS;
Enter Start date: June 1 of the school year; Enter End date: today's date; Select PDF and PREVIEW

- **Can I just drop in at a workshop/class?**

Please sign up through professional development website. Many of the workshops/classes have limited enrollment. Registrations are recorded by the date received in the professional development website. A workshop may be canceled if not enough teachers are enrolled. The professional development website does keep a waiting list; and as cancellations occur, the system will contact the next name on the list.

- **Do I need to cancel if I can't make the workshop/class?**

Yes. Please make the adjustment in the professional development website.

- **How many hours equal one day of PIR?**

Six (6) hours.

- **What are approved PIR activities?**

The five (5) District directed days outlined above do not count towards the required twelve (12) flexible PIR credits. Attendance at MEA days will count towards your flexible PIR requirement. If you are unable to attend MEA days, activities that count towards your flexible PIR requirement include the following:

- Any approved PIR offering on the professional development website; or
- Special requests for non-MCPS sponsored events which have been pre-approved by the District.

- **What if I attend a professional conference or convention and the district pays part of my expenses? Does this qualify for PIR?**

Yes, if the time spent is outside the contract day/year, i.e. the teacher is not on salary status and is approved for PIR credit on the professional development website or through the special request process.

- **Will there be other opportunities for PIR available throughout the year other than those listed in the catalog?**

Most likely yes. Additional offerings are frequently added throughout the school year.

- **What if I am sick or have a conflict on a day that I have registered for a PIR workshop?**

Teachers should drop the class through the professional development website and then select an alternative workshop to fulfill their requirement. Illness, personal leave or extracurricular responsibilities do not release teachers from their PIR obligation.

- **What if I don't fulfill my PIR obligations?**

Teachers will not be paid for the days they fail to complete. Their June paycheck will be docked accordingly. We can only dock pay by half- or whole-day increments, not by the hourly basis. Thus it is essential teachers complete their PIR requirements.

- **If I am taking a college class for credit, can it also count for PIR credit if it is outside the contract day/year?**

No, university credit has the potential to advance teachers on the salary schedule. Teachers cannot use District-paid PIR days for financial gain. This applies even if they are at the top of the salary schedule. The only exception would be if a teacher were to audit a university course.

- **How do I get OPI credit?**

Classes taken through the professional development website have an electronic certificate. Teachers should print it out as soon as the class is complete, fill out the top section and store in a safe place. Certificates are not given for conferences or special requests where a certificate is given at the session. No replacement will be given if certificates are lost or not printed by the end of the year.

- **What if I have completed more than my required 12 hours of flexible PIR hours? Do I have to attend District-directed days or other district PIR days?**

Yes. You can sign-up for and attend more than the required 12 hours of Flexible PIR listed on the professional development website. However, these additional hours do not replace the requirement to attend District-directed events, nor the time allotted for parent/teacher conferences.

- **I am a part time teacher. What is my PIR obligation?**

Part-time teachers, those hired after the start of the school year, and those retiring or resigning early must check with HR for their PIR obligation.

- **If I attend MEA or another pre-approved professional conference or convention and want PIR credit, do I need to provide documentation?**

Verification of attendance at MEA days, in the form of session cards, must be provided to the MEA president in order to receive PIR credit. Other trainings sponsored by the District will verify attendance via sign-in sheets. You must sign the sign-in sheet to ensure that you receive credit. For any special request that involves a conference not listed on the professional development website, documentation must be provided as proof of attendance before credits are awarded.

- **What if I am unable or do not want to attend the MEA conference?**

The district has developed a variety of workshops listed in the professional development website that can be used to meet the 12 hours of Flexible PIR requirement.

- **What if I have signed up for MEA and have to coach a game that day or have to leave early to coach when I have a workshop?**

Coaches are expected to complete the required PIR during each school year. If their coaching duties take them away from professional development opportunities during the October MEA days or any other workshop or conference, then they must participate in other flexible PIR workshops offered during the school year to meet their entire obligation.

- **Can I use sick or personal leave days for PIR?**

No, according to Montana Code, a teacher cannot use contractual leave to avoid the obligation to attend either MEA or other in-service training during the year as approved by the trustees.

- **If I would like to teach a professional development workshop, what do I need to do?**

Teachers may submit course proposals through the professional development website. Their courses will be added to the catalog if approved. In order for a course to be considered, all fields must be complete, including location and time. Courses submitted with fields marked TBD, TBA will not be approved.

- **If I would like to facilitate a discussion/book group. What do I need to do?**

Submit a course proposal through the professional development website. If approved, the course will be added to the catalog offerings.

- **Can PIR for the upcoming year be earned for professional development activities in June?**

PIR credit for the upcoming school year may be earned in June for professional development activities related to key MCPS priorities and identified school based needs. The teacher cannot be reimbursed for his/her time. Pre-approval of activities must be obtained from the supervisor.

Process to receive credit: Supervisor should fill out a course request for the activity to be posted to the professional development website and then go in assign credit for those persons who participate.