



WESTWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Honoring Tradition, Inspiring Excellence, Shaping the Future

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WPS Professional Development Plan

2025-2026

Westwood Public Schools provides extensive professional learning opportunities to ensure that district educators and staff are highly effective in their roles, and well-prepared to implement district curriculum and instructional goals. It is our steadfast belief that if we, as educators and leaders, actively engage in professional learning and growth, demonstrating what it means to be a lifelong, continuous learner, our schools, systems, and ultimately our students will benefit from that learning and we will see improved outcomes for all.

The district professional development programming includes multiple components, and offers a mix of voluntary and required training and growth opportunities for all staff. The development of this plan is done in collaboration with Central Office leadership, principals and instructional leaders, the Professional Development Council, and with feedback from staff around the prior year's offerings and requests for future professional learning opportunities.

Early Release Professional Development Afternoons

Approximately twice a month, Westwood schools dismiss students early, and the teacher day is slightly extended, to allow time for professional development, collaborative work, or other priorities for schools and the district. The WTA contract outlines the use of several of these early release times (about 8-10 early release dates, depending on the grade span) to ensure adequate time for report card writing, conducting conferences, and collaborating with colleagues. The remaining early release afternoons are used for professional development for staff.

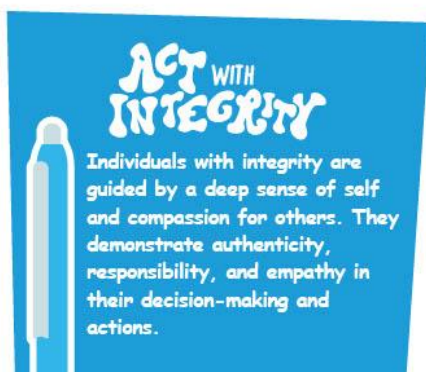
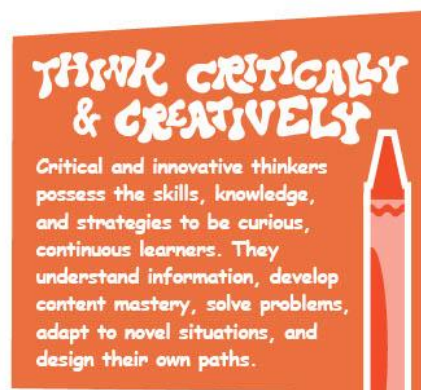
- Some afternoons are designated as **Building-Based days**, where principals and teams at each school determine the agenda and facilitate professional development for the staff at the school. These afternoons advance the school's progress on their School Improvement Plan goals and towards district goals.
- Some afternoons are **Department Days**, where educators gather by department rather than by school (eg, K-12 Performing Arts Department, 6-8 Science Department, 9-12 Math Department, etc.). Elementary classroom teachers are usually pulled together by grades across the district, to focus on a content area (eg, Grade 4 teachers districtwide meet for PD in Social Studies, Grades 1-2 teachers meet for PD in Math, etc.). Departments may be looking at student work, collaborating on planning and assessments, implementing new curriculum programs, and more.

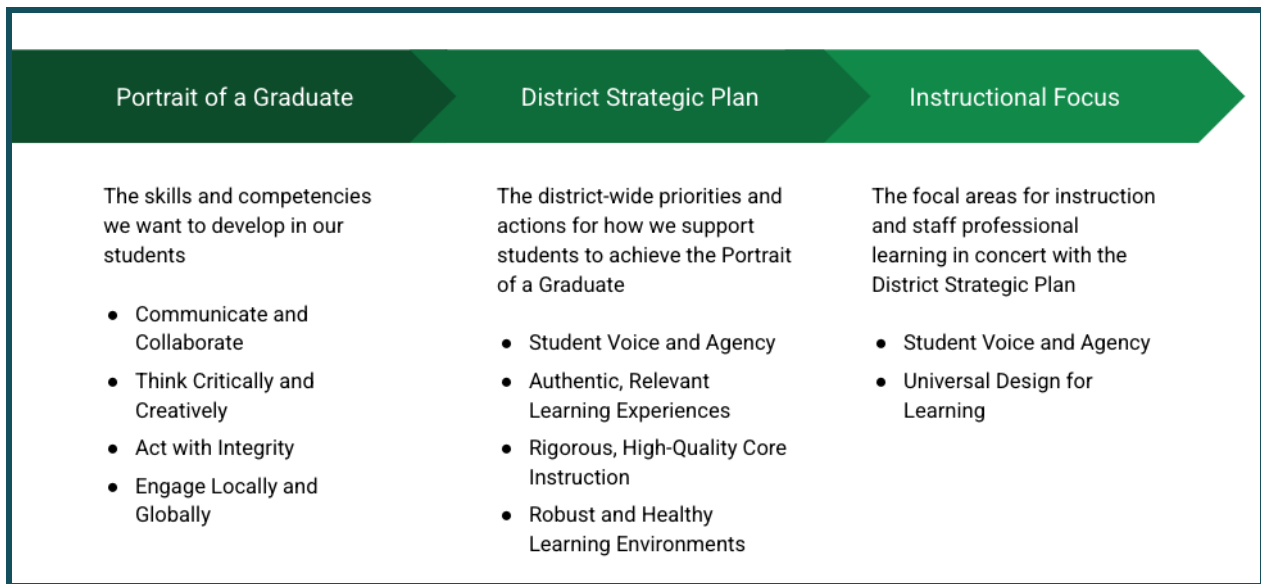
- For 2025-2026, one early release day, and the full-day professional development, are designated as **District Days**, with the focus and agenda determined by the district. This year's plans are described below.

District Professional Development Days

In accordance with the WTA contract, Westwood educators have a full day for professional learning during the school year, which is often done on the Monday after the Thanksgiving break, or on election day in presidential election years. For 2025-2026, this full day on December 1, along with an early release afternoon on October 1, are opportunities for the entire district to focus on moving forward our Strategic Plan goals.

During Opening Day 2025, Superintendent Piwowar formally introduced the WPS Portrait of a Graduate, Strategic Plan, and the areas of instructional focus for the year:





For our district PD days, we will be diving deeper into these areas of focus, ensuring that all staff have a common foundation of the “what” and “why” of our instructional focus on Student Voice and Agency, and Universal Design for Learning. While the exact agendas for these PD times are still in development, we are excited to share the general overview:

October 1, 2025

- Elementary educators will participate in training to learn how to use our new universal screening platform, mCLASS. In service of Focal Area #3, Rigorous, High-Quality Core Instruction, educators will use the platform to analyze classroom and grade-level literacy data, and plan instructional next steps for the students in their care.
- Educators in grades 6-12, and for educators at the elementary level who are not participating in the mCLASS training, will select a PD workshop to attend. The workshops are facilitated by educational leaders from Novak Consulting, experts in the understanding and implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Each workshop has a slightly different focus, and this approach allows for educators to choose the learning session most relevant for them.

December 1, 2025

- This day will begin with a keynote address by [Dr. Katie Novak](#), invoking our district instructional focus and providing educators with a common framework for thinking about Universal Design for Learning
- Educators will select from a menu of workshops facilitated by WPS educators, sharing strategies, tools, and best practices for amplifying student voice and implementing UDL in our myriad educational spaces and roles
- Finally, educators will gather by school to reflect, debrief, and connect the day’s learning to their school context

District Professional Learning Courses

The Westwood Professional Learning Courses are after-school and summer courses facilitated by educators, for their colleagues. Each spring, the district PD Council - a committee including educators and administrators from across the district - puts out a request for proposals for PD courses. Course proposals are vetted by the PDC, and the Committee makes recommendations to the district leadership on the slate of courses to be offered the following year. The PDC endeavors to recommend a slate of courses that are aligned with district goals and initiatives, and appeal to many stakeholder groups and interests in the district. PD Coordinator Angela Wilson manages the process of collecting course syllabi, scheduling courses, creating the course catalog and registration, and working with course facilitators and educators to ensure courses run smoothly. This year, the courses being offered to Westwood educators are:

SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING
Deepen Your Science Understanding The Well-Oiled Wolverine: Plan Ahead to Save Time Building a Math Community Building Classroom Culture: Success Through Strategies	Peer Coaching The Psychology of Effective Teamwork Westwood Poetry Workshop: Who I Am and Where I'm From Reimagining Teaching Practice Empowering Students: Strategies for Executive Function Development K-12	Revisiting Multivariable Calculus with Desmos 3D Current Trends and Strategies in AI Ceramics: Connect, Communicate, and Create	Upstanders: Historical Examples of People Speaking Out for Social Justice Improv & Public Speaking: Building Confidence and Fostering Voice in Your Classroom Community Tai Chi: Perfect Mind-body Exercise

Induction and Mentoring

Educators in their first three years in Westwood Public Schools participate in our Induction and Mentoring program. The program includes:

- a 3-day New Teacher Orientation at the start of the school year
- a trained mentor for the first three years of employment in WPS. Mentors and mentees meet regularly, and the mentor provides support for the new educator in navigating the role and responsibilities.

Professional Development Partnerships

In addition to our in-district PD offerings, Westwood partners with the following organizations to provide additional professional development options at reduced or no cost to educators. These partnerships ensure relevant PD for all job roles, access to timely PD topics that we may not yet have expertise within the district, and provide opportunities for educators to accrue Professional Development Points (PDPs) needed for DESE licensure renewal and advancement.

PD Partner	Key PD Topics/Focus
IDEAS	Culturally Proficient Practices
Massachusetts Partnerships for Youth	Student Health and Safety
Primary Source	Social Studies, Citizenship, Global Awareness
Teachers as Scholars (TAS)	Humanities, Science, Math Content
The Education Cooperative (TEC)	Meeting K-12 educator licensure needs; current topics

Leader Professional Learning

This year, our school and district leaders will engage in professional learning together to help further our district goals. With our instructional focus on UDL and Student Voice and Agency, our work together as a leadership team will be to build our capacity to identify strong practices, facilitate school-based professional learning and coaching in these areas, and leverage our district systems and processes in ways that further support our instructional goals. We will accomplish this through the following structures:

- Joint Council meetings of all district administrators to establish clarity and consistency around the implementation of the Growth and Evaluation system for continuous improvement
- Admin Council classroom visits at each school, calibrating building leaders' understanding of UDL features and strong Tier 1 classroom instruction
- 14 instructional leaders (including department heads and coaches) participating in a 3-credit graduate course, *Empowering Educators with UDL: A Coaching Institute*
- Central Office leaders will participate in a DESE leadership course *Leading with Perseverance*, to learn new strategies for building positive cultures, resolving conflicts, and leading through change.