

## **Achievement Unit Handbook Dallas School District**

One of the goals of the Dallas School District is to encourage professional learning that leads to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results. Research indicates that, among school-related factors, teachers are the most important ingredient to improving student learning (Stronge & Hindman, 2003). Dallas School District prides itself on its staff and their strong investment in student success.

The Achievement Unit model promotes improving the ongoing practice of teaching and learning over the course of a teacher's career. Research shows that in order to impact student learning, professional development must first enhance teacher knowledge and skills, then create improved classroom teaching, which raises student achievement (Standards for Professional Learning, 2015). Besides improving student learning, professional development can potentially serve a variety of purposes such as remediating weaknesses in the skills and knowledge of incoming teachers, keeping teachers up to date on emerging developments in the field, or addressing the needs of such specific student populations as English-language-learners or special education students (Hightower et al., 2011).

\*\*This Handbook will be subject to revision.

### **Achievement Unit(s)**

An Achievement Unit (AU) is equal to approximately 30 hours of professional learning (beyond typical standard professional responsibilities) connected to a specific plan with the goal of enhancing teaching and learning. These hours may include but are not limited to instruction, presentation, teacher leadership, or study.

There are two ways to earn Achievement Units, Teacher as a Learner or Teacher as a Leader. Your Professional Learning Proposal should be selected based on the type of project you are going to pursue.

## **Use of Achievement Units to Move Columns on the Salary Schedule**

Achievement Units can be used to move across the salary schedule. They can be used alone or in combination with quarter hour college credit.

## **Proposal for Achievement Units & Professional Development Cycle**

The Proposal for Achievement Units identifies a specific course of action and desired outcomes that a teacher will pursue in their cycle of professional development. [Teacher as Learner Application](#) or [Teacher as Leader Application](#) is submitted to the AU Peer Review Team for pre-approval prior to the start of any professional learning. The AU Peer Review Team will screen Proposal for Achievement Units for rigor and will assign a range of Achievement Unit(s) to be awarded upon successful completion of the Plan. The AU Review Team will analyze the Proposal for Achievement Units based upon [Teacher as Learner Achievement Unit Proposal Scoring Guide](#) or [Teacher as Leader Achievement Unit Scoring Guide](#). Please review the appropriate scoring guide before submitting your proposal. While you are working on your project, document your hours on the [Achievement Unit Hours Log](#). Once your project is complete, complete the [Teacher as Learner Reflection Form](#) or [Teacher as Leader Reflection form](#) and contact the AU Peer Review Chair for a presentation date.

### Using [NEA Micro-Credentials](#)

Generally each micro-credential takes 15 hours to complete. Use the information in the description to complete the Teacher as Learner application. AUs will be awarded after successful completion of the course and award of the microcredential from NEA.

Proposals for Achievement Units are intended to provide employees with the flexibility and ownership to design individualized professional learning to maximize improvement in their professional practice. The table below provides a beginning framework for the kinds of activities that may be appropriate to include in a Proposal for Achievement Units and the potential Achievement Unit(s) to be earned. The list below is NOT exhaustive.

<b>Professional Learning Activities</b> <b>*See Rubric for Details*</b>	<b>Possible Achievement Units</b>
Book Study (independent and separate from building initiatives) – aligned with Professional Development Cycle	1 – 2 AU
Individual or Group Action Research	2 - 5 AU
National Board Certification	12 - 24 AU
Workshop or other Professional Learning opportunity <b>*Be sure to reference Rubric*</b>	2 – 5 AU
AU Review Team	2 - 6 AU
Leading In-District Courses	2-4 AU
Leading In-District Professional Development Sessions	.25 - 4 AU
Learning Walk Facilitator	2 - 6 AU
Mentor Next Door	1 - 3 AU
Other Projects that Align with Rubric	TBD
NEA Micro-Credential	Stated in description (30 hours=1 AU)

**Scoring Proposal for Achievement Units Applications**

The AU Review Team will pre-approve Proposal for Achievement Units based on a three-point rubric.

[Teacher as Learner Application](#)

[Teacher as Learner Rubric- please review before submitting application](#)

[Teacher as Learner Reflection Form](#)

[Teacher as Leader Application](#)

[Teacher as Leader Rubric- please review before submitting application](#)

[Teacher as Leader Reflection Form](#)

[Achievement Unit Hours Log](#) (Used for both Teacher Learner and Teacher Leader and please remember to **make a copy**)

**Process & Timeline for Proposal for Achievement Units**

The AU Review Team will screen Proposal for Achievement Units the third Monday of each month.

<b>Peer-Approval</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employee submits Proposal for Achievement Units</li><li>• AU Review Team scores Application for Achievement Units on three-point rubric</li><li>• AU Review Team approves plan or returns plan to employee for revisions</li><li>• AU Review Team assigns range of Achievement Unit (s)</li></ul>

<b>Action</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employee completes Professional Development Cycle</li><li>• Employee self-reflects and assesses impact on student learning</li><li>• Employee shares learning with peers</li></ul>

<b>Final Approval</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employee submits evidence of professional learning to AU Review Team</li><li>• AU Review Team approves or returns submission to employee for revisions</li><li>• AU Review Team awards Achievement Units</li></ul>

## **Achievement Unit (AU) Approval Process**

### **AU Peer Review Team Membership**

The Dallas School District AU Review Team will consist of 5 members.

The Director of Human Resources or designee will be a permanent member of the team. Similarly, one licensed employee will serve as Chair of the AU Review Team and will be selected through district hiring practices. The additional three members of the team will be licensed classroom teachers with equal representation from K-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Teachers representing specific grade levels or disciplines may be invited to join the AU Review Team on a short-term basis to provide expertise in reviewing content-specific AU proposals and plans.

### **AU Review Team Roles**

AU Review Team members must display professionalism in their role at all times, demonstrating honesty, confidentiality, and integrity in the work. They will be required to fairly evaluate AU proposals and determine the number of AUs that will be awarded for the work. Further, they may be invited to serve as speakers, trainers, and mentors for the AU program.

### **Challenges of AU Review**

Policies, procedures, and practices are clearly spelled out and adhered to in order to avoid inconsistency, inequity, or an unfair evaluation. The peer review process is a strenuous exercise that when used properly has the potential to offer constructive feedback and encourage improvement to those being reviewed.

### **Expectations & Evaluation for AU Review Team Members**

AU reviewers are expected

- To attend Peer Review Team training, as required
- To understand, abide by, and be able to apply the principles, policies, processes, and criteria for Achievement Units and additional guidelines and other relevant materials
- To recognize the time and commitment necessary to serve as a peer reviewer and to accept and follow through on team assignments and visit invitations
- To maintain a generalist rather than a subject-area or specialist role

- To prepare comprehensively so as to be informed and knowledgeable about the Achievement Units Projects assigned
- To communicate with other peer reviewers as appropriate to prepare for, conduct, and provide a record of the evaluation or event
- To participate fully as peer reviewers, carrying out the roles as assigned by the team chair
- To make fair and objective judgments using relevant information when evaluating Achievement Units
- To provide consultation that effectively advances the work of the teacher and contributes to ongoing improvement
- To conduct themselves as professionals throughout the process, demonstrating respect for the committee, the teacher, the administrative staff, and the people associated with it
- To protect confidentiality
- Members of the AU Review Team must be licensed, contracted employees who are Proficient or Above in their Summative Evaluation Scores. They must have at least four years of experience in the district.

### **Application and Selection of AU Review Team Members**

To apply to be a member of the AU Review Team staff must complete the AU Review Team Application and submit it to the HR Director. The team will be selected by a committee of their peers.

### **Terms of Service**

AU Review Team membership is typically a 3 year term with the possibility for renewal depending on the committee's needs.

Committee configuration is determined annually to ensure committee membership that is broadly representative of the district. If no applications are received during a particular year, a member's term may be extended for an additional year.

At the expiration of a term, any member may re-apply for reappointment for a successive term.

The Chair of the AU Review Team shall serve a three year term. The AU Review Team Chair will work to coordinate training for the team, application reviews, interviews,

follow-ups, follow up with documentation for completed projects, and cumulative sharing of learning. Individuals may apply to become the AU Review Chair.

### **Application Process for the AU Review Team**

Application to the AU Review Team is open annually in the spring. In addition, applications may be open from August 1 to August 25 in order to account for any changes that may occur over the summer vacation.

Prospective members may apply by submitting the [Application for Achievement Unit Peer Review Team](#)

### **AU Review Team Work Assignments**

The AU Review Team is assigned to participate in three review cycles over the course of the year. A two to three-week period is allotted for document submission from employees. Occasionally, the AU Review Team may be asked to review individual applications between review cycles. Every effort will be made to keep off-cycle reviews to a minimum and to ensure that reviews do not occur at the traditionally busiest times of the academic year. The Chair of the AU Review Team will be responsible for scheduling meetings.

The AU Chair will oversee the submission process for proposals, and may be asked to assist individuals with their applications. The group will have seasons of busyness; it is anticipated that the time between Spring Break and the end of the school year as well as the early weeks of the fall would be the busiest time with the actual screening and decision making process taking place.

Members of the AU Review Team will assist the employee once the Proposal for Achievement Units proposal has been approved and assigned the anticipated numbers of Achievement Units for completion of the project. Members of the AU Review Team will be assigned employees that they will follow up with during their course of study. At the completion of a project, the AU Review Team may recruit local experts in their field/content, etc. to participate in the final review.

This Handbook was adopted from the Silver Falls School District PEER Handbook

## **Links**

[Teacher as Learner Application](#)

[Teacher as Learner Rubric- please review before submitting application](#)

[Teacher as Learner Reflection Form](#)

[Teacher as Leader Application](#)

[Teacher as Leader Rubric- please review before submitting application](#)

[Teacher as Leader Reflection Form](#)

[Achievement Unit/ Peer Review Team Journal](#)



