



Teaching Service Commission of Sierra Leone

Framework for School-based Continuing Professional Development in secondary schools in Sierra Leone

2025

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1. The purpose of the Framework for School-based Continuing Professional Development

The framework builds on requirements in the School Leadership Policy for Sierra Leone 2026 (draft pending Cabinet approval) which states that one of the responsibilities of school leaders is to ensure that all teachers in their school have regular opportunities for continuing professional development (CPD).

The following excerpt is from Section 8 of the Policy:

“School leaders are not only required to ensure they themselves are trained, but they also have responsibility for providing CPD for their colleagues. Either they conduct the training themselves, or they procure relevant CPD providers to come into school. The focus for the training and coaching will be ensuring i. safety of all and ii. high quality teaching and learning for all. Anything that contributes to these priorities is important. N.b. special attention must be given to appropriate, professional responses to particular issues of the day such as the high prevalence of drugs in many communities and how to support children and young people to make good choices away from drugs and to get them appropriate support if they are found to be involved.”

“CPD opportunities must be relevant and accessible to all – identifying and eradicating barriers for women and those with disabilities or others likely to find themselves excluded.”

“Good CPD may include training but will always include coaching and supportive follow-up. The school leaders must provide coaching and support to CPD implementation to ensure effectiveness.”

This framework is intended to support and guide school leaders and other individuals, agencies and institutions involved in the design, delivery and management of **school-based continuing professional development (CPD)** in Junior and Senior Secondary schools (JSS and SSS) in Sierra Leone.

School leaders in this framework include Principals, Vice Principals, Heads of Curriculum, Heads of Department and Senior Teachers.

2. Definition of school-based CPD

School-based CPD refers to systems established in a school to provide opportunities for professional development to staff at that school. It is a form of ‘workplace learning’ because it is situated in the context of the school.

School-based CPD typically includes one or more of the following: structured meetings and discussion, peer mentoring and coaching, classroom observation and feedback. Creating opportunities for collaboration, professional exchanges and interaction are especially important in school-based CPD.

School-based CPD is not intended to replace training workshops held at district or national level. It is intended to complement them.

3. The potential benefits of school-based CPD

Some of the potential benefits of school-based CPD are described in Figure 3 below.

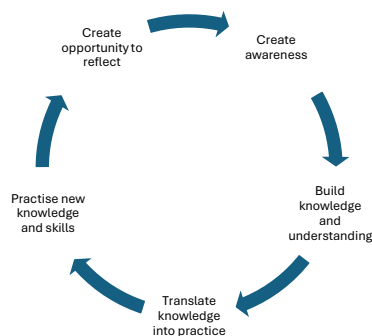
Figure 1: Potential benefits of school-based CPD



4. Effective school-based CPD

All CPD, including school-based CPD, is more effective when it is delivered as a process rather than a one-off event. The process will allow teachers to be exposed to new information and knowledge, and importantly it will help them translate this new knowledge and skills into practice in the classroom. Change won't happen instantly. Good CPD opportunities allow teachers to practice what they have learned, make mistakes, reflect on what is working, and what needs to be adapted. They may receive support from a coach or senior teacher during this phase. With time, support, and practice, they will master new skills and incorporate them into their teaching. The diagram below shows the CPD Learning Cycle.¹

Figure 2: The school-based CPD learning cycle



¹ The Learning Cycle, Timperley et al 2007, cited in UR-CE (2023) Continuous Professional Development Diploma in Effective School Leadership (CPD-DESL), Student Manual, Module 4: Leading teaching and working with parents & the wider community, 5th edition, July 2023

5. Minimum requirements for school-based CPD in JSS and SSS

At a minimum, school leaders must organise regular Teacher Learning Circles (TLCs) *and* coaching for all teachers.

TLCs

- School leaders must organise *two TLCs per term* for all teaching staff. The sessions are called Teacher Learning Circles (TLCs).
- All academic staff in the school are expected to attend TLCs.
- School leaders should decide who is best placed to lead the TLC, depending on the topic. This might be a senior teacher or a Head of Department, for example. School leaders may also invite outside service providers to lead the TLCs. For example, school leaders might decide to invite a recognised expert on mathematics education from a nearby school to lead a session, or a health worker from a nearby health centre.
- The duration of each TLC should be between two and three hours. This provides sufficient time for participants to settle into the session and to conclude the session, and allows time for collaboration, practice and learning.
- Schools can choose when exactly to hold their TLCs but one should be very soon after the start of term and one should be towards the end of the term.

Coaching

School leaders are also expected to provide regular coaching to help teachers improve their teaching. Coaching typically involves a school leader observing the teacher in action in the classroom followed by a one-to-one discussion with the teacher to encourage reflection, identification of strengths and areas that need improvement, and goal setting.

School leaders should aim to conduct *at least one coaching session per month for every teacher*.

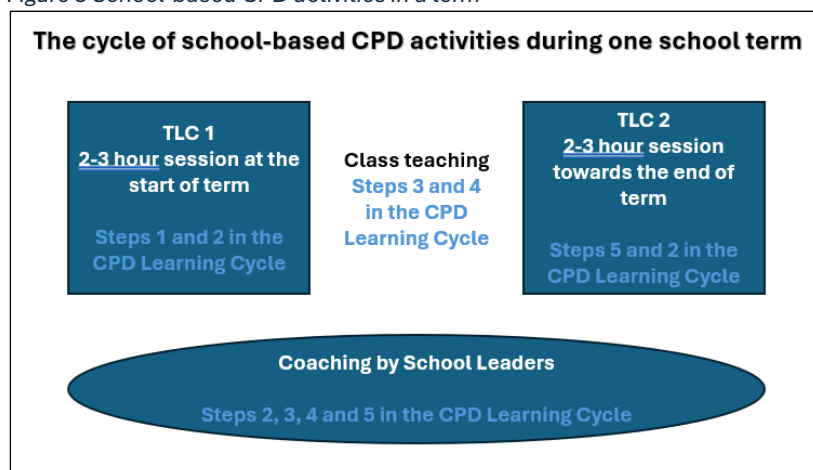
Depending on the number of teachers and school leaders, one session per month might not be possible.

If this is the case, coaching sessions should prioritise teachers identified as needing the most support.

The TSC has developed and tested a tool to help school leaders and other educators observe teaching and coach teachers. You can find the tool on the MBSSE Knowledge Platform. There is also a manual to help you use the tool. Go the platform at <https://mbsseknowledgeplatform.gov.sl/> and search for Classroom Observation.

Figure 3 below summarises the school-based CPD cycle.

Figure 3 School-based CPD activities in a term



6. Other opportunities for school-based CPD

Section 4 (above) describes the minimum requirement for school-based CPD, but it will be more effective if schools do more.

Listed below are some of the other school-based CPD activities that school leaders should organise to help improve teaching and learning:

- School leaders can organise more frequent TLCs e.g., every month instead of twice a term.
- Heads of Department could hold regular meetings to plan teaching in their subject area, design assessments, review progress through the curriculum and so forth.
- Schools may organise subject specific TLCs for groups of teachers within the school, led by Heads of Department or Senior Teachers with expertise in the subject area.
- Heads of Department may organise co-teaching lessons for teachers to plan, deliver and reflect on a lesson together.

7. Deciding on the topic for school-based CPD

School-based CPD works best when it is focused and well-planned. A teaching and learning topic can be selected to be the focus of both TLCs *and* coaching. The topic will need to align with teacher, pupil, school and/or national needs and be rooted in evidence of good pedagogy.

All school-based CPD should be designed towards helping teachers demonstrate standards described in the Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders in Sierra Leone 2017.

Sometimes, topics for school-based CPD will be decided on by the TSC or the MBSSE and communicated to schools.

At other times, school leaders will decide on the topic, in consultation with teachers. For example:

- Coaching sessions might have identified an area for improvement that is common to many teachers in the school
- Conversation with teachers might have identified a common area of interest
- School leaders might have learnt about a new policy or guidelines that they want to share with teachers
- A teacher who attended an external training workshop might be asked to share what they learnt with their colleagues.

8. Ideas and information to help plan school-based CPD

The MBSSE Knowledge Platform is a useful resource for information about coaching and for planning TLCs. You can access the Knowledge Platform here <https://mbsseknowledgeplatform.gov.sl/>

The MBSSE Education Knowledge Platform is a hub of information, resources, guidance or research on basic and secondary education in Sierra Leone. It provides materials for everyone across the education sector with an interest in Sierra Leone's secondary schools – including teachers and school supervisors, policymakers and community members.

The Knowledge Platform offers:

- Tools to support education providers' professional development, including coaching tools
- Resources to inform decision-making in schools
- Policies that outline requirements and standards for education
- Information and guidance for pupils, parents and community members
- Digital versions of learning resources, including the Pupils' Handbook.

Other useful resources include:

Professional Standards for Teachers and School Leaders in Sierra Leone (TSC 2017) available at https://tsc.gov.sl/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Teachers-and-Sch-Leaders-in-SL_Press-ready-A4-10Nov-2017-345pm-Final.pdf

9. Monitoring and record-keeping about school-based CPD

School leaders should keep record about school-based CPD – TLCs and coaching.

At a minimum, school leaders should keep a record of:

- attendance at every TLC
- the topic of each TLC and the names of the facilitators
- classroom observation and coaching activities.

These records are required by the TSC to help assess the performance of school leaders and teachers. The TSC plans to automate record keeping for school-based CPD. More information will be provided to schools about this by the TSC.

Also, as part of the School Quality Assurance process, SQAOs and TSC DDs will be checking whether schools are organising regular opportunities for professional development for their teachers.

10. For more information about school-based CPD in secondary schools in Sierra Leone

For information about school-based CPD, contact: Mr. Ezekiel Nonie, enonie@tsc.gov.sl