

Lower Merion School District

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

No.: 311-2
Section: EMPLOYEES
Title: SABBATICAL LEAVE – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES)
Date Adopted: 10/7/14
Date Revised: 5/7/21

R311-2 SABBATICAL LEAVE – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES)

I. General Provisions

Requests for sabbatical leave for professional development, as defined in the accompanying Policy, must be forwarded to the Office of Human Resources on or before February 15 of the school year prior to the one for which the leave is requested. A simple letter indicating the desire to take sabbatical leave will suffice. In the event that more applications are received than may be approved, the provisions of Section 1167 of the Public School Code, as amended by Act 66 of 1996, will be applied.

Individuals requesting leave will be asked to complete the Plans for Sabbatical Leave form which will be sent from the Office of Human Resources, together with other appropriate forms and information. See Attachment 1. All forms must be completed and received by the Office of Human Resources prior to March 1 to permit recommendation to the Board at a March Board meeting. Failure to comply will delay Board approval.

II. Professional Development Sabbatical

A. Requests for leave subject to review and authorization of Board

All requests for leave of absence for professional development are subject to the review and authorization by the Board. The Board has the sole authority to enforce the policy establishing the conditions for approval of such leaves. The employee requesting a leave of absence for professional development shall submit to the Board a detailed plan describing the professional development activities undertaken. This plan may be approved or rejected by the Board.

B. Criteria for acceptable professional development leaves - Academic credits and/or hours for professional development

A request for professional development shall be directly related to the professional responsibilities as determined by the Board and shall be restricted to activities

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required by regulations of the State Board of Education and by the laws of this Commonwealth for a professional certificate or commission or to improve professional competency.

The minimum requirements for leave for a half school term shall consist of any one or a combination of the following:

- (a) Nine (9) graduate credits;
- (b) Twelve (12) undergraduate credits;
- (c) One hundred eighty (180) hours of professional development activities.

The minimum requirements for leave for a full school year term shall consist of any one or a combination of the following:

- (a) Eighteen (18) graduate credits;
- (b) Twenty-four (24) undergraduate credits;
- (c) Three hundred sixty (360) hours of professional development activities.

These minimum requirements for leave for professional development must be undertaken during the school term for which the employee has been granted such a leave. In other words, these minimum requirements shall not be undertaken during the breaks between terms.

Applicants who propose to take graduate or undergraduate credits shall submit notification of acceptance and enrollment from an accredited institution of higher learning for study in courses approved by the Superintendent or designee. The employee shall successfully complete the approved courses and receive passing grades. Upon return from professional development leave, the employee shall submit to the Superintendent or designee within the first month an official transcript of all courses completed. Failure to receive passing grades or to submit required transcripts on time shall result in forfeiture of monies paid by the District.

Applicants who propose to undertake professional development activities shall submit to the Board a detailed plan listing the specific activities. Upon return from professional development leave, the employee shall submit to the Superintendent

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or designee within the first month a formal report describing the educational activities pursued and their benefits and relevancy. Failure to submit required reports on time shall result in forfeiture of monies paid by the District.

Under no circumstance shall credit received in connection with a course or class sponsored by any Intermediate Unit count toward the minimum requirements set forth above.

III. Information Required at End of Leave

Upon completion of the sabbatical, the employee shall provide to the Office of the Superintendent satisfactory evidence that the employee's approved plan for professional development was fully complied with during the leave of absence, no later than one month after return. If the employee fails to do so, unless prevented by illness or physical disability, during a leave for professional development, the employee shall forfeit all benefits to which the employee would have been entitled to under the provisions of the sabbatical leave law for the period of the absence.

IV. Return from Leave

No leave of absence shall be granted unless such person shall agree to return to his or her employment with the school district for a period of not less than one school term immediately following such leave of absence. No such leave of absence shall be considered a termination or breach of the contract of employment, and the person on leave of absence shall be returned to the same position in the same school or schools he or she occupied prior thereto.

If the employee fails to return to employment unless prevented by illness or physical disability, the employee shall forfeit all benefits to which said employee would have been entitled under the provisions of this act for the period of the leave. If such employee resigns or fails to return to his employment, the amount contributed by the school district under section 1170 of this act to the Public School Employees Retirement Fund shall be deducted from the refund payable to such employee under existing law and the amount so deducted shall be refunded to the school district by which it was paid.

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