



338.1- AR-1. APPLICATION FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE

MARPLE NEWTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

No. 338.1-AR-1

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

APPROVED: June 2017

REVISED: December 2025

LEAVES OF ABSENCE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The following information is to provide eligible employees with guidance and direction regarding the procedures, terms, and conditions for leaves of absence for professional development as set forth in Sections, 24 PS 11-1166 and 1166.1 through 24 PS 11-1171, of the PA School Code and Marple Newtown School District Policy Nos. 338.1 and 438.1 and procedures. This document is not meant to be inclusive of all regulations and requirements as specified in existing laws, policies and procedures for sabbatical and compensated professional leaves, and is subject to change. In addition, the Board reserves the right to specify conditions under which compensated leaves for professional development may be taken, consistent with the law. If you want more details or have any questions regarding this provision, contact the Human Resources Office at 610-359-4380.

Authority:

- The Board shall have sole authority to adopt and enforce policy establishing the conditions for approval of a professional development leave, consistent with law. All requests for such leave shall be subject to review by the Board. In addition, the Board may approve or reject a proposed plan for professional development leave.

Purpose:

- Professional development leaves shall be granted only to employees participating in an academic program for the purpose of retaining a professional certificate or commission, further preparation and improvement in his or her area(s) of certification, additional certification, attaining other appropriate and identifiable educational positions within the Marple Newtown School District, or as the Board may require, and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

Definitions:

- Professional development leave shall be defined as a leave of absence for the purpose of improving professional competency or obtaining a professional certificate or commission. Such leave shall be directly related to an employee's professional responsibilities, as determined by the Board, and be restricted to activities required by State regulation or law or to improve professional competencies.

Eligibility:

- Any person employed in the public school system of the Commonwealth who has completed ten (10) years of satisfactory service as a professional employee or member of the supervisory, instructional or administrative staff, or as a commissioned officer in the public schools of the Commonwealth, shall be entitled to a sabbatical leave of absence for professional development; and
- Has at least five (5) consecutive years of such satisfactory service in the Marple Newtown School District; and
- Thereafter, an additional leave of absence for professional development and/or sabbatical leave for restoration of health shall be allowed after each seven (7) years of service.

Length of Leave:

- A leave for professional development may be taken for a half or full school term or for two (2) half school terms during a period of two (2) years, at the option of the employee.
- The minimum requirements for leave for a half school term shall consist of any of the following or a combination thereof:
 - Nine (9) graduate credits, twelve (12) undergraduate credits, one hundred eighty (180) hours of professional development activities.
- The minimum requirements for leave for a full school term shall be of any of the following or a combination thereof:
 - Eighteen (18) graduate credits, twenty-four (24) undergraduate credits, three hundred sixty (360) hours of professional development activities.

Application for Professional Development Leave:

- Request for professional development leave shall be submitted in writing, on the approved form, and forwarded with a detailed plan to the Superintendent.
- Applications for professional development leave for the following school year shall be received in the Superintendent's office (Human Resources) not later than December 15th of each school year. Notification of those applications approved for the following school year shall be issued by February 15th of each school year.

- The Board may approve or reject a proposed plan for professional development leave.

Preferences and Limitations for Leaves:

- Applications for professional development leave shall be given preference, according to years of service since the previous leave of the applicant, and in accordance with board policy. In the event that two (2) or more applicants have the same years of service since their previous leave, the value of the purpose of leave, as determined by the Superintendent, shall control preference.
- The total number of employees on professional development leave at any one time shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the number of eligible employees in the Marple Newtown School District who are eligible for leave.

Documentation:

- Applicants for professional development leave shall submit with the application form a detailed plan describing the professional development activities to be undertaken and a statement specifying the benefits of the leave to the employee and the school district. The plan shall provide sufficient information to permit the Board to adequately evaluate the request.
- The Board may at any time require additional information from the employee in order to assist the Board in evaluating the request and the leave's benefits to and impact on the employee and the school district.
- 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. The employee shall successfully complete the approved courses and receive passing grades. Failure to receive passing grades 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.
- The Board reserves the right to require at its own expense additional examinations and reports by physicians of their choice to determine the employee's ability or fitness to return to work.

Return to Employment:

- An acceptance of professional development leave requires the employee to return to active duty in the Marple Newtown School District immediately following the leave for a period of not less than one (1) full school year, unless prevented by illness or physical disability.

- Within the first month upon the return from a professional development leave involving graduate or undergraduate credits, an official transcript of all courses completed shall be submitted to Human Resources. Failure to submit reports on time shall result in forfeiture of all compensation and benefits.
- Within the first month upon the return from the professional development leave involving educational activities, the employee shall submit to the Superintendent (Human Resources) a formal report describing the educational activities pursued and their benefits and relevancy. Failure to submit reports on time shall result in forfeiture of all compensation and benefits.
- At the expiration of the professional development leave, the employee shall, unless agreed upon otherwise, be reinstated in the same position held at the time of the granting of the leave.
- An employee that fails to return to work, unless prevented by illness or physical disability, shall forfeit all benefits provided during the leave and is obligated to repay to the school district all benefits received while on the leave including, but not limited to, salary, benefits costs and retirement contributions.
- The Board reserves the right to require at its own expense additional examinations and reports by physicians of their choice to determine the employee's ability or fitness to return to work.

Compensation:

- The employee on professional development leave shall receive one-half (50%) of the employee's regular salary during the period of the leave. Supplemental contract salaries and extra duty pay are not defined as part of the regular salary.
- Employees on professional development leave will receive salary payments in the same method as full-time staff members. Exceptions to this method of payment are subject to approval of the Superintendent.

Benefits:

- Benefits, as provided for by law or agreement, shall continue during the leave. To continue benefits, employees shall be required to continue premium payments or co-payments, in the same method as in active status.
- Sick leave extended sick leave, or personal/conditional leave shall not be earned during professional development leave.

Rights Retained on Professional Development Leave:

- Employees on professional development leave shall be in regular full-time or part-time employment status during the period of the leave, for the purpose of determining length of service and to receive service increments, as provided by law, policy, or agreement.

- Employee membership in PSERS shall continue and the employee and employer contributions required by law will be made in the full amount as though the employee were in regular full-time daily attendance in the position from which the leave was taken. The amount required by the employee shall be deducted from any compensation paid to the employee. The employees' retirement rights shall in no way be affected by this leave.
- Employees on professional development leave will continue to accrue seniority, for the purpose of determining length of service and to receive salary increments, as provided by law, policy, or agreement.

Additional Conditions of a Professional Development Leave:

- While on leave, the employee shall not be engaged in any full-time or part-time paid employment without the permission of the School Board.
- Only for part-time paid employment engaged prior to the leave of absence, and except for grants for further study and teaching fellowships from institutions of learning, shall the employee be engaged in while on leave.
- A professional development leave shall also operate as a leave of absence from all other school activities.
- In the event that any of the conditions set forth in district policy and regulations and/or the referenced sections of the PA School Code are violated by the employee, payment to the employee on leave shall cease, and the employee shall be required to repay any salary payments and costs already made.
- The Board reserves the right to specify conditions under which professional development leaves may be taken, consistent with the law.
- The Board reserves the right to make such regulations they deem necessary to make sure that the employee shall utilize the leave properly for the purpose for which it was granted, requiring reports from the employee in such a manner, as they may deem necessary, consistent with the law.

CIVIL RIGHTS NOTICE

The Marple Newtown School District is an equal opportunity education institution and will not discriminate in its educational programs, activities or employment practices on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, ancestry, disability or other legally protected classifications. This policy is in accordance with state and federal laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Educational Discrimination Act of 1975; and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Inquiries may be directed to the Director of Human Resources.

Pg. 6
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LEAVE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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Applications for professional development leave for any school year shall be received in the Superintendent's office (Human Resources) not later than December 15th of the previous school year. Notification of those applications approved for the following school year shall be issued by February 15th of each school year. The Board may at any time require additional information from the employee in order to assist the Board in evaluating the request and the leave's benefits to and impact on the employee and the school district.

Name of Employee (Applicant): _____

Signature of Applicant: _____

Current Assignment/Location: _____

Effective Date (s) of Leave Requested: _____

Length of Leave (choose one):

____ One Semester (half-term): Any or combination of nine (9) graduate credits, twelve (12) undergraduate credits, one hundred eighty (180) hours of professional development activities.

____ Two Semesters (full-term): Any or combination of eighteen (18) graduate credits, twenty-four (24) undergraduate credits, three hundred sixty (360) hours of professional development activities.

Purpose of Leave (choose all that apply):

____ Improving Professional Competency

____ Obtaining or Retaining a Professional Certificate or Commission

____ Attaining other MNSD Educational Position

____ Other (Please explain)

Graduate or Undergraduate Credits

Applicants who propose to take graduate or undergraduate credits shall submit notification of acceptance and enrollment from an accredited college or university of higher learning and must successfully complete the approved courses and receive a passing grade. Failure to receive passing grades shall result in forfeiture of monies paid by the district.

Courses for Approval (Additional pages may be submitted):

Courses/Credits	College/University
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NOTE: Within thirty (30) days upon the return from the professional development leave, an official transcript of all courses completed must be forwarded to the Human Resources Office.

Proof of Acceptance and Enrollment in College/University Submitted: ____ Yes ____ No

Professional Development Activities

Applicants who propose to undertake professional development activities shall submit a detailed plan listing the specific activities for approval.

In writing, please list the professional development activities to be undertaken and explain in detail how the activities will meet the goals and objectives of your requested leave. Specific attention should be devoted to justification of how these activities leave will improve your professional competency, and/or obtain a professional certificate and/or commission, and/or enhance your skills and delivery of instructional/educational service in your professional responsibilities. (Please type your response. Use additional pages if necessary)

Upon return from the leave of absence for Professional Development a Summary Report must be completed (For Professional Development Activities Only). Within 30 days of your return to service following the leave, you will be required to submit a *detailed accounting* of your activities to the Office of the Superintendent. This report should have a cover page and be typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper. Materials collected, etc., should be submitted as a *separate document* and referenced throughout your main report. The focus of the report will be to delineate how your professional development activities related to your goals and objectives and how this experience will be *integrated* into your position responsibilities.