



Title: **Compensated Professional Leaves**

Code: 438.1

Book: Policy Manual

Section: 400 Professional Employees

Purpose

This policy shall establish the district's parameters for granting professional development and classroom occupational exchange leaves for eligible professional employees.

Definitions

Professional development leave shall be defined as a leave of absence granted 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 competency.

Classroom occupational exchange leave shall be defined as a leave of absence granted for the purpose of acquiring practical work experience in business, industry or government.

Authority

The Board shall have sole authority to adopt and enforce policy establishing the conditions for approval of a professional development leave. All requests for such leave shall be subject to review by the Board. The Board may approve or reject a proposed plan for professional development leave. [\[4\]](#)[\[10\]](#)

The Board may grant a leave to eligible employees for classroom occupational exchange leave for the specified purpose.[\[2\]](#)

Guidelines

1. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE

Eligibility

To be eligible for professional development leave, an employee shall have completed ten (10) years of satisfactory service in the public schools of the Commonwealth; at least five (5) consecutive years of such service shall be in this school district.[\[3\]](#)

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.[\[3\]](#)

Application

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/her area(s) of certification, additional certification, attaining other appropriate and identifiable educational positions within the school district, or as the Board may require, and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.[\[4\]](#)

Requests for professional development leave shall be submitted on the approved district form and forwarded with a detailed plan to the Superintendent.

All required application materials shall be submitted by April 1 for the following school year and by October 1 for the following semester.

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.

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 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.[\[4\]](#)

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. Upon return from professional development leave, the employee shall submit to the Superintendent 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 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.

Commitment of Employee

Acceptance of professional development leave incurs a commitment by the employee to return to active duty in this district immediately following the leave for one (1) full school year, unless prevented by illness or physical disability. Employees shall submit required reports on time or forfeit all compensation and benefits.[\[4\]](#)[\[6\]](#)

The Board reserves the right to require at its own expense additional examinations and reports by physicians of its own choice to determine the employee's ability to return to work.

Compensable employment may not be engaged in while the employee is on professional development leave.

Commitment of Employer

At the expiration of the professional development leave, the employee shall, unless agreed otherwise, be reinstated in the same position held at the time of the granting of the leave.[\[6\]](#)

Time on professional development leave shall be counted as time on the job for purposes of seniority, where applicable in the district, and for retirement fund purposes but for no other purpose.[\[9\]](#)[\[11\]](#)

Compensation

During the period of professional development leave, an employee shall be compensated at one-half the salary to which s/he would have been entitled had the employee not taken leave.[\[8\]](#)

While on leave, the employee shall be entitled to insurance benefits provided other professional employees of a similar class if s/he pays the premiums and the insurance carrier approves.

2. CLASSROOM OCCUPATIONAL EXCHANGE LEAVE

Application

Requests for classroom occupational exchange leave shall be submitted on the approved district form and forwarded with appropriate documentation to the Superintendent.

All required application materials shall be submitted by April 1 for the following school year.

Documentation

Applicants for classroom occupational exchange leave shall submit with the application form a statement from the employer agreeing to the terms and conditions of the leave, as specified in Board policy.

Upon return from such leave, the employee shall submit to the Board a final report detailing the work experience and its benefits.

Commitment of Employee

Acceptance of classroom occupational exchange leave incurs a commitment by the employee to return to active duty in this district immediately following the leave for one (1) full

school year, unless prevented by illness or physical disability.[\[6\]](#)

The Board reserves the right to require at its own expense additional examinations and reports by physicians of its own choice to determine the employee's ability to return to work.

Commitment of Employer

At the expiration of the classroom occupational exchange leave, the employee shall, unless agreed otherwise, be reinstated in the same position held at the time of the granting of the leave.[\[6\]](#)

Time on classroom occupational exchange leave shall be counted as time on the job for purposes of seniority, where applicable in the district, and for retirement fund purposes but for no other purpose.[\[9\]](#)

Compensation

The business, industry or government to whom the employee is assigned during the leave shall fully compensate the school district for all salary, wages, pension and retirement contributions, and other benefits as if the employee were in full-time active service.[\[9\]](#)

Adopted: **December 10, 1996**

Legal References:

- [2. 24 P.S. 522.2](#)
 - [3. 24 P.S. 1166](#)
 - [4. 24 P.S. 1166.1](#)
 - [6. 24 P.S. 1168](#)
 - [8. 24 P.S. 1169](#)
 - [9. 24 P.S. 522.1](#)
 - [10. 24 P.S. 1171](#)
 - [11. 24 P.S. 1170](#)
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