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| Book          | Policy Manual                   |
| Section       | 300 Employees                   |
| Title         | Compensated Professional Leaves |
| Code          | 338.1                           |
| Status        | First Reading                   |
| Last Reviewed | May 15, 2025                    |

### **Purpose**

This policy shall establish the district's parameters for granting professional development for certificated administrative and 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.[1]

### **Authority**

The Board shall have sole authority to adopt and enforce policy establishing the conditions for approval of a professional development leave for eligible employees. 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.[1]

### **Guidelines**

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE

#### Eligibility

To qualify for professional development leave, an eligible 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 employee's option.[3] The total number of administrative employees on such leaves of absence shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the number of eligible employees.

The total number of professional employees on such leaves of absence shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the number of eligible employees.[4]

### 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 an 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.[1]

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

All required application materials shall be submitted by July 5 for the following school year (for example: By July 5, 2025, for the 2026-27 school year) or for a semester professional development leave, 120 days prior to the start of the 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. [1]

The Board may at any time require additional information from the employee in order to assist the Board in determining whether the leave is being used for the purpose for which it was granted.[5]

The minimum requirements for leave for a half school term shall consist of any one or a combination of the following:[1]

1. Nine (9) graduate credits.

The minimum requirements for leave for a full school term shall consist of any one or a combination of the following:[1]

1. Eighteen (18) graduate credits – nine (9) credits each semester.

Applicants who propose to take graduate 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 (B or better). 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 the forfeiture of monies paid by the district.[1][5]

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.[1][5]

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 term, unless prevented by illness or physical disability.[1][6]

Employees shall submit required reports on time or forfeit all compensation and benefits.

#### Commitment of Employer

At the expiration of the professional development leave, the employee shall 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 and for retirement fund purposes, but for no other purpose. [7][8]

#### Compensation

During the period of professional development leave, an employee shall be compensated at one-half (1/2) the salary to which s/he would have been entitled had the employee not taken leave.[9] While on leave, the employee shall be entitled to insurance benefits provided other employees of a similar classification if s/he pay the premium and the insurance carrier approves.

A leave of absence granted for professional development shall also serve as a leave of absence without pay from all other school activities.[3]

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

Legal 1. 24 P.S. 1166.1 2. 24 P.S. 522.2 3. 24 P.S. 1166 4. 24 P.S. 1167 5. 24 P.S. 1171 6. 24 P.S. 1168 7. 24 P.S. 522.1 8. 24 P.S. 1170