

Leaves of Absence for Professional Development

Application

Requests for Leaves of Absence for Professional Development shall be submitted on the approved District form attached to this Regulation as Exhibit A.

Application forms shall be available in the Personnel Office.

Approval

All Requests for Leaves of Absence for Professional Development must be approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Eligibility

To be eligible for Leaves of Absence for Professional Development, 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 the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District. Subsequent to the first compensated leave under either Policy 4610 or under Policy 4600 (Sabbatical Leave for Restoration of Health), one compensated leave shall be allowed after each seven full years of service. The Board of School Directors reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to waive the eligibility requirements to the extent permissible by law.

Application

All requests for Leaves of Absence for Professional Development are subject to the review and authorization of the Board. All requests must be in writing and shall be forwarded to the Superintendent, or designee, with a detailed plan of study or work experience describing the professional activities to be undertaken. This plan may be approved or rejected by the Board consistent with this Policy. Requests for Leaves of Absence for Professional Development shall be submitted on the approved District form attached to the regulation accompanying this Policy.

A Leave of Absence for Professional Development must be directly related to the professional responsibilities of the employee as determined by the Board and shall be restricted to activities required by regulations of the State Board of Education and by the laws of this Commonwealth, for a professional certificate or commission to improve professional competency. The primary objective of a compensated leave program is to enable qualified individuals to engage in professional activities that will contribute significantly to the background and skill of the staff members and result in substantial benefits to the District.

Limitations and Preferences

Except as otherwise permitted by applicable law, Leaves of Absence for Professional Development shall only be granted for one (1) school semester, a full school year, two (2) consecutive semesters, or two (2) non-consecutive semesters within two (2) calendar years.

The number of compensated leaves granted in any school year under Policy 4610 and Policy 4600 (Sabbatical Leave for Restoration of Health) shall be limited to ten percent (10%) of the number of persons eligible and regularly employed by the District. In the event the number of applicants exceeds ten percent (10%) of the persons eligible, in order to determine which leaves shall be granted, preference shall be given according to the years of service since any previous compensated leave and according to the order of submission of the applications.

At a minimum for a half school term, a Leave of Absence for Professional Development shall consist of any of the following or a combination thereof: nine (9) graduate credits, twelve (12) undergraduate credits, or one hundred eighty (180) hours of professional development activities. At a minimum for a full school term, a Leave of Absence for Professional Development shall consist 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. The college or university credits must be earned in a District-approved and properly accredited program, and must be of benefit to the District.

Proposed Plan

The employee requesting a Leave of Absence for Professional Development shall submit to the Superintendent a detailed plan describing the program of studies or the professional development activities to be undertaken as follows:

1. A statement that includes an overview of the general goal of the proposal and its benefits to the District.
2. A list of the specific objectives to be accomplished in order to reach this general goal.
3. A timeframe within which these activities will occur.
4. A description of the proposed program of study that includes the following:
 - a. The courses that will be undertaken to achieve the objectives as stated. This should be a list of the specific courses to be undertaken, including the institution, course numbers and course names, official course descriptions, and a syllabus for each course.

- b. A list of the locations, dates, and hours of activities for the entire period of the leave. The courses must require rigorous work that spans the duration of each semester of the leave.
 - c. “Request for Course Pre-Approval” forms for each course
5. A specific description of the anticipated benefits of this experience for:
 - a. The Employee, and
 - b. The Employee’s professional assignment.
6. A list of the criteria and an outline of the process for evaluation of the achievement of the general goals and specific objectives for the proposed leave.

Deadlines

All applications for Leaves of Absence for Professional Development for the fall semester of the following school year or the full year shall be received in the Superintendent’s office by April 15. Similarly, all applications for Leaves of Absence for Professional Development for the spring semester of the current school year shall be received in the Superintendent’s office by September 15.

Information Required at End of Leave

Upon completion of the leave, the employee shall provide to the Superintendent satisfactory evidence that the employee’s approved Professional Development Plan was fully complied with during the leave of absence. Such evidence shall consist of documentation of the completion of proposed course work including applicable grade reports and a written summary and evaluation of the work completed during the leave consistent with the applicant’s proposed criteria. If the employee fails to provide such evidence unless prevented by illness or physical disability, the employee shall forfeit all benefits to which the employee would have been entitled to under the provisions of the School Code for the period of the Leave of Absence for Professional Development