

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

SECTION: 300 Employees

TITLE: Compensated Professional
Leaves

ADOPTED: August 27, 1981

REVISED: September 14, 2017

338.1 COMPENSATED PROFESSIONAL LEAVES

Purpose

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

Definitions

Professional Development Sabbatical 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 School Reform Commission, and be restricted to activities required by state regulation or law.[\[1\]](#)

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.[\[2\]](#)

Authority

The SRC shall have sole authority to adopt and enforce policy establishing the conditions for approval of a professional development sabbatical leave for eligible employees. All requests for such leave shall be subject to review by the SRC. The SRC may approve or reject a proposed plan for professional development sabbatical leave.[\[1\]](#)

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

Mandated Regulatory Procedures

The following mandatory regulatory procedures are prescribed by government laws and regulations. [\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#) [\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#) [\[6\]](#) [\[7\]](#)[\[8\]](#)[\[9\]](#)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SABBATICAL LEAVE

Eligibility

To qualify for professional development sabbatical 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, unless the SRC allows a shorter time. Thereafter, such leaves are allowed at intervals of seven (7) years from the date of the termination of the previous leave.[\[3\]](#)

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 sabbatical 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 SRC may require, and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.[\[1\]](#)

Applications for professional development leave shall be submitted on the district form to Talent at least one (1) month prior to the close of the term previous to that for which the leave is requested. The Superintendent or designee must sign the application for professional development sabbatical leave.

Documentation

Applicants for professional development sabbatical 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 SRC to adequately evaluate the request.[\[1\]](#)

The SRC may at any time require additional information from the employee in order to assist the SRC 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.
2. Twelve (12) undergraduate credits.
3. One hundred eighty (180) hours of professional development activities.

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.
2. Twenty-four (24) undergraduate credits.
3. Three hundred sixty (360) hours of professional development activities.

Commitment of Employee

Acceptance of professional development sabbatical 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.[\[1\]\[6\]](#)

Upon completion of the leave, the employee must provide satisfactory evidence that the employee's approved plan for professional development was fully complied with during the leave of absence. Official transcripts, written verification of attendance at professional development activities or other items may be required.[\[1\]\[5\]](#)

If the employee fails to provide satisfactory evidence of program compliance or return to the district as required, unless prevented by illness or physical disability, the employee shall forfeit all benefits to which the employee would otherwise have been entitled under the conditions of the leave. Illness or physical disability is subject to verification.

Commitment of Employer

Upon return from professional development sabbatical 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 sabbatical 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 sabbatical leave, an employee shall be compensated at least one-half 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.

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

During the period of professional development sabbatical leave, employees may not engage in a remunerative occupation other than that which could have been performed while in active service and a statement that this requirement has been followed will be required at the conclusion of the leave. However, employees are permitted to accept fellowships or foundation grants without losing their entitlement to salary specified by law.

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.

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 SRC policy.

Upon return from such leave, the employee shall submit to the SRC a final report detailing the work experience and its benefits.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#)[\[5\]](#)

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

Commitment of Employer

At the expiration of the classroom occupational exchange leave, the employee shall 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 and for retirement fund purposes, but for no other purpose.[\[2\]](#)

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.[\[2\]](#)

Legal References:

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
9. 24 P.S. 1169