

Section: PERSONNEL

Policy Title: Discretionary Leaves

### Sabbatical Leaves

The district may grant sabbatical leaves of absence for study and/or research upon application by certificated staff, the recommendation of the superintendent, and approval by the board, provided such a leave shall serve the best interest of the district and is within the fiscal parameters of the district. The district shall declare its intention by February 1. Certificated staff shall be eligible for sabbatical leave for study or research. Sabbatical leave shall be granted according to the following stipulations:

- A. **Years to Qualify:** Staff shall have served seven (7) or more continuous years in the district.
- B. **Limit on Number:** Sabbatical leaves may be granted up to one full year to not more than two percent of the total certificated staff of the district in any one year, the number granted to be subject to determination by the board upon the recommendation of the superintendent.
- C. **Application Deadline:** Applications for sabbatical leave shall be filed with the superintendent not later than March 1. The board may, at its discretion, extend this deadline.
- D. **Proposed Plan to Accompany Application:** A proposed plan of study or research to which the time spent on leave shall be devoted must be submitted by April 1.
- E. **Criteria for Evaluation of Applications:** Applications shall be evaluated on the following three criteria:
  - 1. The merit of the proposed plan of study or research and its relationship of service to the district in terms of the individual's professional background.
  - 2. Proportionate representation of the different levels of district schools, such as elementary, middle school, senior high school, and administration.
  - 3. Seniority shall be considered.
- F. **Final Approval by Board:** Applications approved by a joint committee appointed by the superintendent shall be presented to the board for final approval. Once approved by the board, any change of sabbatical plan shall be presented in writing and approved by the superintendent in advance of the leave.
- G. **Scholarship for Study or Research:** Should the staff member who is granted a sabbatical leave receive a scholarship during the same year as the sabbatical, the total compensation from the two sources shall not exceed the salary he/she would receive if under regular contract with the district for full-time service.
- H. **Stipend for Study or Research:** A staff member on sabbatical leave for study or research shall receive a stipend of 50 percent of his/her regularly contracted salary unless this sum

is reduced as a result of section 8 above. The stipend shall be paid in twelve payments. All regular salary deductions shall be made.

- I. **Stipend Considered a Loan:** The stipend received is a loan. Should a staff member on sabbatical leave fail to return to the district, he/she shall then repay the loan at the interest rate provided in RCW 19.52.010.
- J. **Return to Original Position:** An effort shall be made to replace a certificated staff member returning from sabbatical leave in his/her original position or in an appropriate comparable position.

**Leaves of Absence**

The district may grant leaves of absence for specific periods of time for up to one school year upon application by a staff member, the recommendation of the superintendent/designee and the approval of the board. Such leaves may be with or without pay or fringe benefits and, with the approval of the board, may be extended for one additional school year. During the leave the staff member may pay the district's share of any insurance benefits program in order to maintain those benefits. The needs of students and the district program warrant primary consideration. Leaves of absence shall be granted only when they shall not have an undesirable impact upon the educational program or business operations.

A staff member shall be entitled to return to a position in the district at the end of the leave of absence. The staff member granted a leave of absence shall inform the board by April 1 as to his/her intentions to assume a position in the district for the ensuing school year. If said notification is not received, the individual's employment rights with the district shall be terminated.

Staff on leave of absence shall not accrue any salary schedule experience credit or any sick leave credit or benefits during the leave of absence.

**Leaves to Attend Meetings/Conferences**

The district may grant leaves, subject to the recommendation of the superintendent/designee and approval by the board, to staff for the purpose of attending meetings or conferences that are likely to be of value to the staff member's performance. (Meetings and conferences wherein bargaining unit activities are conducted are excluded.) Such leaves may be granted without pay and with or without travel expense reimbursement.

Cross Reference: Policy 5021

Applicability of Personnel Policies

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