

Wissahickon School
District
Ambler, Pennsylvania 19002

SECTION: PROFESSIONAL
EMPLOYEES

TITLE: **SABBATICAL/
PROFESSIONAL LEAVE
POLICY**

FIRST READING: February 13, 2012
SECOND READING: February 27, 2012
ADOPTED: February 27, 2012
REVISED:

The Sabbatical/Professional Leave Policy applies to all professional employees of the Wissahickon School District who are not administrative employees. In addition to complying with the provisions of the School Code of 1949, as amended, with respect to sabbatical/professional development leaves of absence, an employee of the Wissahickon School District shall meet the following requirements:

1. A leave of absence for professional development shall be directly related to the applicant’s professional responsibilities as determined by the Board of School Directors and shall be restricted to activities required by regulations of the Pennsylvania Department of Education and by the laws of this Commonwealth for a professional certificate or commission or to improve professional competency. All requests for a leave of absence for professional development shall be subject to review and authorization by the Board of School Directors, which shall have sole authority to adopt and enforce policy establishing the conditions for approval of such leave.
2. The employee requesting a leave of absence for professional development shall submit to the Board of School Directors, through the Superintendent, a detailed plan describing the professional development activities to be undertaken. The Superintendent shall submit both the request and the Superintendent’s recommendation on the request to the Board. The Board shall be authorized to approve or reject the plan, consistent with its written policy.
3. Applications for sabbatical/professional development leaves shall be submitted in writing to the Superintendent’s office on or before March 1 for any leave to take place during the following school year. Exceptions to this deadline for reasons of health or other urgent reasons will be considered upon formal request to the Superintendent.
4. Any sabbatical/professional development leave of less than a half year shall be charged as the equivalent of one-half (1/2) year. Any sabbatical/professional development leave of more than one-half (1/2) year and less than a year shall be charged as the equivalent of one (1) full year leave. However, the District will not grant any leave where the majority of the purpose of the leave is for travel.
5. Documentation of the purpose of the sabbatical/professional development leave shall be in accordance with the following:
 - a. Restoration of health: The employee shall provide a letter from his/her physician describing the health condition necessitating the sabbatical leave. The District may request an examination by a school physician; in this event, the District will provide a list of three (3) physicians from which the employee will select one (1), and the District will pay the cost of the examination.

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- b. Professional Development: The employee shall provide a description of the purpose and general plan of study. In the case of formal college or university study, for a person taking a full year sabbatical/professional development leave, a minimum of eighteen (18) credits must be completed prior to the return to service and, of the eighteen (18) credits, a minimum of six (6) credits must be taken during each semester of the school year. For a person taking a one (1) semester sabbatical/professional development leave, a minimum of nine (9) credits must be completed prior to the return to service and, of the nine (9) credits, a minimum of six (6) credits must be taken during the semester for which the leave was granted.

In the case of a less formal plan of study, not within a college or university setting, a description of the purpose and plan or project shall be submitted for review.

- c. Combination Reasons: In the case of leaves combining any of the purposes listed above, approval will be based upon an assessment of the particular need and/or purpose and a related balance of the requirements described above.
- d. In cases of disputes concerning approval of the sabbatical/professional development leave plan with Wissahickon Education Alliance members who are subject to this policy (for b and c above), the dispute resolution process will proceed as described in the WEA contract in the section titled "Sabbatical/Professional Development Leave of Absence".

6. Following completion of the sabbatical/professional leave, documentation or a summary shall be provided demonstrating that the purpose for which the leave was granted were met.

7. In the event that the conditions for study, for which the sabbatical/professional development leave was granted, have not been met, the employee shall forfeit the right to all salary/benefits to which he/she would have been entitled, and the District will require the return to the District of any monies expended for salary and benefits for the period of the sabbatical/professional development leave.

8. In the event of a request for cancellation of a sabbatical/professional development leave, the following shall apply:

- a. The request must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent by June 1 for a leave scheduled to begin September 1 and by November 1 for a leave scheduled for the second semester.
- b. The letter must contain an explanation of the reason for cancellation.
- c. If the Board grants the request for cancellation, the date of return to service shall coincide with the opening of school in September or with the mid-point of the academic year.
- d. An employee who in two (2) consecutive years, applies for, receives, and then cancels a sabbatical/professional development leave of absence shall, upon approval of a third sabbatical/ professional development leave request, be required to take that leave.

