



Southwest Open School

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Sabbatical Policy (Draft)

Adopted: 9/13/22

Revised:

Southwest Open School (SWOS) understands the significance of having employees who are leaders in their field and endeavors to encourage innovation and creativity in our employees to ensure that SWOS remains a leader in providing alternative educational opportunities in our community. It is important that SWOS employees who are responsible for facilitating the educational experience are given time to focus their creative endeavors both personally and professionally so that new ideas can continue to be generated.

Purpose

It is the policy of SWOS to allow eligible employees to take unpaid sabbatical leave to focus on self-development for a specified period of time. Employees eligible for sabbatical leave will be held accountable for the activities or materials they choose to conduct or create during this leave. The purpose of sabbatical leave is to enhance the capabilities and performance of the staff member. Some examples of activities during sabbatical include continuing education, writing a book or peer-reviewed publication, conducting focused research in the employee's particular area of expertise, or any activity that increases employee performance.

Eligibility

Exempt-level professional staff working in a full time instructional capacity may apply for a sabbatical leave after five years of continuous full-time service. These employees may apply to take sabbatical leave for a school calendar year.

After the employee has completed sabbatical leave, they are not permitted to reapply for sabbatical leave for a period of five years following completion of the employee's last sabbatical.

Employees on approved sabbatical leave will not receive pay or continued benefits during the period of leave. Employees on sabbatical leave are not eligible for tuition reimbursement or any sabbatical activity reimbursement.

Procedures

Eligible employees who wish to apply for sabbatical leave are required to submit a letter to the Director, by January 1 (or nearest contract day), describing the reason for the sabbatical and anticipated activities during sabbatical.

The submitted proposal will be reviewed by the Director and school board. Sabbatical proposals will be granted based on the school's staffing needs and the anticipated benefit to the school's stakeholders.

After the employee's return from sabbatical leave, the employee will be required to produce evidence of the activities conducted during this time. In some instances, this may include a class syllabus with a reported grade for the class. In other instances, it may mean the submission of a completed book or manuscript or a reporting of findings, if conducting research during this time. Failure to produce evidence of work during this period will result in the employee becoming ineligible to participate in future sabbaticals. SWOS also reserves the right to take disciplinary action against employees who fail to conduct any meaningful work or activities during this period.

Time off taken for approved Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave will not be counted against the employee when determining eligibility or "continuous service."

Employees on sabbatical leave will not be required to use any accrued leave during this period and are permitted to carry over all leave in the instance that the sabbatical leave crosses from one calendar year into the next. Employees will not accrue any additional leave during their sabbatical.

Sabbatical requests must be withdrawn by March 1 (or nearest contract day) so that the position can be posted and filled.

Staff on sabbatical leave must inform the Director of intent to return by February 1 during the year that they plan on returning.