

MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

POLICY #450: TEACHING EXCELLENCE

1.0 PHILOSOPHY

1.1 The provisions of the Policy and Procedures Manual and the District Vision on teachers shall govern the actions of teaching personnel. This Vision provides that:

1.1.1 The interaction between teachers and their students is central to the educational endeavor. We must pursue excellence in teaching if we are to deliver a school district that is truly world-class. Therefore, all Minnetonka teachers will have a thorough and complete command of the subjects they teach. They will employ a wide range of educational and scientific research in developing effective ways of teaching their students. Minnetonka teachers will be recognized for their commitment, enthusiasm, and professionalism. They will earn the public's trust by maintaining personal and professional integrity and advocating for the best interest of students. Every Minnetonka teacher will work to ensure that each student has mastered to their fullest potential the skills and knowledge taught. Their efforts will be supported by a well-planned and adequately funded professional development program.

1.1.2 In addition to mastery of subject area, Minnetonka teachers will know that simply covering curriculum does not equal excellence in teaching. They must address emotional and developmental issues during the learning experience in order for effective learning to take place. Because the learning environment is so critical to student success, our teachers will use their empathy, enthusiasm, patience, communication skills, and effective classroom management to create a positive, supportive, respectful, and disciplined atmosphere in which academic and personal achievement can flourish.

1.1.3 All Minnetonka teachers will exhibit a genuine love of children and a professional commitment to children's learning. They will recognize that they have enormous influence over the minds and character of the children in their charge and act accordingly. Minnetonka teachers will connect with kids and know how to pull the best out of each student. They will engender respect from their students because they are respectful of them. Minnetonka students will give their best because their teachers inspire and believe in them.

2.0 SUBJECT TO MEET AND CONFER

- 2.1 The Board agrees that no policies affecting the conditions of professional service of any teacher or group of teachers employed by the Board shall be adopted or altered without affording a reasonable opportunity for the Association to meet and confer on said policies or alterations as provided by the Public Employment Labor Relations Act of 1971.

3.0 PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES

3.1 Policies Definitions

- 3.1.1 The term "professional conferences" includes short-term workshops, institutes, short courses, conferences, and conventions.
- 3.1.2 Staff members may be granted released time without loss of pay to participate in professional conferences that have prior administrative approval in accord with applicable district policy.
- 3.1.3 Reserve teachers shall be provided by the District when required.
- 3.1.4 Part or all of the expenses of attending such conferences (travel, room and board, tuition, etc.) may be paid by the School District upon administrative approval. In cases where the District requires that an employee attend a professional conference, expenses shall be reimbursed to the employee in accord with Policy 412, Expense Reimbursement. In cases where the employee requests financial support to voluntarily attend a conference, the District may provide, at its sole discretion, partial or full reimbursement to the employee in accord with Policy 412, up to the amount for which the employee has prior administrative approval.

3.2 Applications

The Administration shall develop forms and procedures by which a teacher may request approval to attend a professional conference and receive monetary support.

3.3 Responsibilities of staff members attending professional conferences:

- 3.3.1 To be effective participants.
- 3.3.2 To share the results and proceedings with other staff members.

4.0 LOCAL IN-SERVICE TRAINING ACTIVITIES

4.1 Workshops

- 4.1.1 A program of workshops shall be annually planned by the teaching staff and the Administration.
- 4.1.2 The purpose of the workshops shall be primarily to improve competencies of staff members and to improve teaching and learning.
- 4.1.3 All staff members shall participate in required District workshops.
- 4.1.4 Workshops may take the form of locally developed courses aimed at specific District needs.
 - 4.1.4.1 When local staff members teach in-service courses which meet outside of school time they shall be compensated.
 - 4.1.4.2 Costs of local courses may be provided from District funds.

4.2 In-Service Activities which do not carry college or university credits:

- 4.2.1 A program of local accredited courses may be planned to meet District needs.
- 4.2.2 When these courses are designed to meet a specific need, part or all of the cost may be provided by the District.

5.0 OBSERVATION AND CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Professional staff members may be granted released time from regular duties without loss of pay to observe professional techniques and methods, or for consultation on techniques, methods or content.
- 5.2 Application for released time for this purpose shall originate with the staff member and must have advance approval of the building principal.
- 5.3 When necessary, the District shall provide a reserve teacher.
- 5.4 Observation or consultation may be in the local District, another school district, business, industry or institution related to the staff members' area of responsibility.

6.0 PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION ACTIVITY

Staff members will be encouraged to accept and fulfill responsibilities in local, state, or national organizations related to their District responsibilities. Cost of reserve teachers to

fulfill these responsibilities may be provided by the individual, by the organization, or by the District, as recommended by the Superintendent.

7.0 TEACHER LICENSE

7.1 All teachers must conform to the licensure requirements prescribed by the Minnesota Department of Education, and as provided by applicable law and District Policy #424, License Status.

7.2 The Continuing Education Committee established and operated in accordance with state licensure requirements acts on applications for relicensure.

7.2.1 The Employer shall facilitate the work of this committee by publishing annually a list of committee officers and members, and by distributing copies of committee guidelines and forms to buildings and teachers, upon request. Representatives of the School Board and Administration shall also serve on the local Continuing Education Committee in accordance with state law.

8.0 TEACHER EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION

8.1 Termination of teacher employment will be in accordance with state law.

8.2 A teacher wishing to resign his/her position is encouraged to give written notice to the Superintendent prior to March 1. Other dates for written notice are sometimes applicable as stated in the Master Agreement or as included within state law. Such dates have precedence over the March 1 deadline. If no notice is given by the appropriate date, the District assumes the teacher intends to remain under contract for the ensuing year.

8.3 To secure a release from a teacher contract after April 1 (or other date as stated in law or Master Agreement) in any year, the teacher shall submit in writing to the Superintendent a request to be released from his/her contract including the reason for making the request. The School Board may, at its discretion, grant the request.

9.0 PROBATIONARY EMPLOYMENT

9.1 Definition: During the period of probation as defined by state law, the current contract may or may not be renewed by the School Board in accord with the provisions of state law.

9.2 The Administration shall develop procedures to assure that district performance appraisals of probationary employees are in accord with state law.

10.0 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

The District shall provide a high quality performance appraisal system for all teachers. This system shall affirm excellent teaching and help teachers continue to improve. In addition, it will coach teachers with specificity when they are meeting performance challenges. Minnesota Statutes sections 122A.40 and 122A.41 define requirements for teacher evaluation. School districts and teacher representatives develop the evaluation and peer review process through joint agreement. The Minnetonka Teacher Evaluation Growth Model meets these statutory requirements.

11.0 TEACHER REPORT FOR ABSENCE

11.1 Unanticipated Absence

It is the responsibility of the teacher to complete a time off request through the District online reporting system in accordance with the usual and customary building procedure if an illness or disability occurs suddenly so that advance notice of absence to the supervisor is not possible. Teachers requiring a reserve teacher also need to create an absence via the online service or via phone.

11.2 Anticipated Absence

Refer to Article VI, Section A, Subd. 2a of Master Agreement.

Cross Reference:

- #404: Employment Background Checks
- #406: Records of employees
- #410: Equal Employment Opportunities
- #412: Expense Reimbursement
- #424: License Status

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