

Sylvan Heights Science Charter School

Policy Number: 333

Policy Title: Professional Development

Approved: December 21, 2020

Revised:

Purpose

Continuing professional study and in-service training are prerequisites for professional development, enhanced ability to complete responsibilities, and maintaining certification.

Professional development is considered an integral part of work for all employees. It will be developed to help the Sylvan Heights Science Charter School (School) implement its mission, achieve its vision, and move the School's strategic plan forward.

The Board encourages all employees to further their professional and personal advancement through graduate study, in-service training, and professional development activities. In order to continue employment at the School, certificated administrative and professional employees are required to meet all obligations necessary to maintain active certification.

Guidelines

All employees are expected to attend professional development opportunities as assigned by the Principal/Chief Academic Officer or designee. Any fees associated with such assignments will be paid by the School.

Employees may request to attend other relevant training offered by organizations. Such requests must be submitted in writing to the Principal/CAO or designee no less than sixty (60) days prior to the date that the leave is requested. The Principal/CAO or designee shall grant such leave if the program is approved by the School and such leave will not interfere with the daily operation of the School.

The availability of employee time and financial assistance shall be determined by program needs and budget availability and must be approved by the Principal/CAO or designee.

All employees will be expected to participate in the required number of professional development hours identified in Chapter 49 of Title 22 of the Pa Code and Act 48 of 1999.

All employees must attend regularly scheduled employee or staff meetings.

Tuition Reimbursement for Professional Employees

The School will reimburse each full-time teacher for graduate or approved undergraduate courses for up to twelve (12) credits per year as provided below:

1. The professional employee must complete a College Credit Approval Form and give it to the Principal/CAO or designee before college classes begin.
2. The Principal/CAO or designee may deny or approve the Course(s) based on the quality or relevance of the course to the professional employee's current job duties or a foreseeable future position with the School.
3. The professional employee must receive written approval from the Principal/CAO or designee prior to commencing work on the course.
4. The credit must be earned at a fully accredited institution, the credits of which are acceptable for Pennsylvania teaching certification.
5. The professional employee must complete a Request for College Reimbursement Form and give it to the Principal/CAO or designee after completion of the previously approved college classes.
6. Evidence of completing the course with a grade of at least a "B" or "Pass" shall be submitted within one (1) month of the date of receiving the grade.
7. Tuition will be reimbursement at the lesser of actual tuition cost paid or the prevailing Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus rate per graduate or undergraduate credit.
8. The School will not provide reimbursement for courses which are funded by a fellowship, grant, or other non-reimbursable financial assistance program.
9. In order to be eligible for tuition reimbursement, the professional employee shall agree to teach one (1) school year immediately following the tuition reimbursement at the School.
10. Availability of tuition reimbursement is contingent on the School's receipt of professional development grants or other funding for tuition reimbursement. If grants are not received, reimbursement will not be provided. Professional employees will be notified by the Principal/CAO or designee if such grants are available.
11. In the event an employee voluntarily terminates employment prior to the expiration of one full school year following the successful completion of approved credits for which reimbursement has been paid, the employee shall be required to repay the full amount of such reimbursement to the School.
12. To maintain eligibility, employees must remain on the active payroll and be performing their job satisfactorily through completion of each course or educational activity. The

School is not obligated to provide reimbursement should an employee resign or terminate before receipt of the grade for the course.

Tuition Reimbursement for Paraprofessionals

The School will reimburse each paraprofessional employee who provides instructional support for courses or workshops toward an associate's, bachelor's, or other advanced degree for not more than fifteen (15) credits per school year, via the process as provided below.

1. The employee must complete a College Credit Approval Form and give it to the Principal/CAO or designee before classes begin.
2. The Principal/CAO or designee may deny or approve the Course(s) based on the quality or relevance of the course to the employee's assignment. The course must be related to the employee's current job duties or a foreseeable future position with the School.
3. The professional employee must receive written approval from the Principal/CAO or designee prior to commencing work on the course.
4. The employee must complete a College Credit Approval Form and give it to the Principal/CAO or designee after completion of the previously approved college classes.
5. The credit shall be earned at a fully accredited institution of higher education.
6. Unless otherwise agreed to in writing between the employee and the Principal/CAO or designee, the credit to be reimbursed shall apply toward an associate degree, or toward a bachelor or advanced degree in the field of education. Determination of what constitutes the field of education shall be at the discretion of the Principal/CAO or designee.
7. The School will not reimburse employees for additional associate degrees after the employee has earned one.
8. Employees may only continue to be reimbursed for college credits after receiving an associate's degree if they pursue a degree in an education related field.
9. While pursuing an associate degree, the employee must submit evidence of completing the course with a grade of at least "C" or "Pass," within one (1) month of the date of receipt of the grade. Reimbursement will only be made after receipt of grade.
10. Tuition will be reimbursed at the lesser of actual tuition cost paid or the prevailing Harrisburg Area Community College rate per undergraduate credit toward an associate degree or at the Pennsylvania State University- Main Campus rate for a bachelor or advanced degree.

11. Reimbursement for textbooks shall be paid up to the established limit upon presentation of a course number and the textbooks required for the course. Employees will not receive reimbursement for textbooks, registration fees, activity fees, laboratory fees, and materials fees after earning an associate degree, or 48 credits, while pursuing a bachelor or advanced degree.
12. The School will not provide reimbursement for courses which are funded by fellowship, scholarship, grant, or other non-reimbursable financial assistance program.
13. In order to be eligible for tuition reimbursement, the employee shall agree to be employed one (1) school year immediately following the tuition reimbursement at the School.
14. In the event an employee voluntarily terminates employment prior to the expiration of one full school year following the successful completion of approved credits for which reimbursement has been paid, the employee shall be required to repay the full amount of such reimbursement to the School.
15. Availability of tuition reimbursement is contingent on the School's receipt of professional development grants or other funding for tuition reimbursement. If grants are not received, reimbursement will not be provided. Paraprofessional employees shall be notified by the Principal/CAO or designee if such grants are available.

Induction Program for School System Leaders

School system leaders shall complete an induction program which is consistent with the Pennsylvania School Leadership Standards within five (5) years of serving as a school system leader in Pennsylvania for the first time.

School systems leaders include principals, vice-principals, and individuals who are converting an administrative certificate from a Level I certificate to a Level II certificate.

Professional Education Plan

The Board shall solicit and appoint to the professional education committee parents/guardians and representatives of the community and local businesses. Representatives of administrators, teachers, and educational specialists on the professional education committee shall be selected by their respective peers.

The Board shall approve a professional education plan that is designed to meet the educational needs of the School and its employees; programs, activities and learning experiences; and identifies approved providers. The Board shall approve the plan prior to submission for approval by the Department of Education.

The Board shall ensure an annual review of the School's professional education plan by the professional education committee to determine if the plan continues to meet the needs of the School, the Strategic Plan, and the employees, students, and community. The professional education committee may recommend amendments to the plan, subject to the approval by the Board and the Department of Education.

The Board may approve, on a case-by-case basis, specific professional education activities not stated within the School's professional education plan. Board approval is not required for credits or hours required for administrator certification, earned through activities conducted by providers approved by the Department of Education or the Department itself, or related to the area of assignment or certification.

If the School assumes all costs of credits or hours, the Board may disapprove any course, program, activity, or learning experience that is inconsistent with the goals of the professional education plan.

Professional education plans associated with the federal requirements of Title I and Title II funding shall be developed by the professional education committee and forwarded to the Board for approval prior to the submission for approval by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Trauma-Informed Approach Education

The professional education plan shall include a minimum of one (1) hour of required training in trauma-informed approaches, in accordance with law.

The School shall provide certified administrative employees with training on trauma-informed approaches, in accordance with law and the professional education plan. Training shall address, but shall not be limited to:

1. Recognition of the signs of trauma in students.
2. Best practices for the School regarding trauma-informed approaches, including utilizing multi-tiered systems of support.
3. Recognition of the signs of impact of secondary trauma on school employees and appropriate resources for employees experiencing secondary trauma.
4. The School's policies regarding trauma-informed approaches.
5. The School's policies regarding connecting students with appropriate services.

Training shall be based on evidence-based or evidence-informed programs that meet the needs of the School's local community and reflect current best practices related to trauma-informed approaches.

References:

20 U.S.C. 7801

24 P.S. § 102

24 P.S. § 517

24 P.S. § 1144

24 P.S. § 1151

24 P.S. § 1205.1

24 P.S. § 1205.2

24 P.S. § 1205.5

24 P.S. § 1205.6

24 P.S. § 1205.7

24 P.S. § 1217

22 PA Code § 4.13

22 PA Code § 49.16

22 PA Code § 49.17

Policy 806