

ARTICLE TWELVE

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

12.1 Purpose

The purpose of the professional growth plan is to encourage employees to become lifelong learners; informed and active citizens who are positive role models; and who are knowledgeable, self-directed members of the workplace.

12.2 Definition

Professional growth means pursuing units to attain a career goal or pursuing course work, workshops or seminars to improve job skills or to advance technological literacy.

12.3 Eligibility

Permanent employees with a high school diploma or equivalency and whose most recent evaluation is satisfactory shall be eligible to participate in the professional growth program.

Ineligible permanent employees are strongly encouraged to meet this eligibility requirement by obtaining a high school diploma or equivalency.

12.4 Professional Growth Options

There are three professional growth options: the professional growth stipend option, the partial tuition reimbursement option, and the partial release time option.

12.4.1 Professional Growth Stipend Options

12.4.1.1 Clock hours shall be used to measure professional growth. One professional growth unit is earned upon completion of fifteen (15) clock hours of pre-approved course work or training.

12.4.1.2 Completion of nine professional growth units shall entitle the employee to one professional growth stipend of \$175. Employees shall have the right to earn and receive up to three professional growth stipends.

12.4.1.3 An employee may carryover excess units of approved professional growth credit from the previous stipend period to the next stipend period.

12.4.1.4 Employees electing to apply course work toward a professional growth stipend are not eligible for partial tuition reimbursement or partial release time for that course work.

12.4.2 Partial Tuition Reimbursement Option

An eligible employee may request prior approval of an entire program of course work leading to a degree, a certificate, a credential or a license. This option is limited to employees pursuing a specific career path. Once the career path has been approved, the employee must continue to supply verification of successful completion of course work by submission of transcripts. An employee on a career path, which has been approved for partial tuition reimbursement option, shall be reimbursed following successful completion of course work in the amount of \$40 per unit not to exceed \$420 per school year. Submission of a paid receipt and transcript of grades is required for the reimbursement. Employees electing the partial tuition reimbursement option are not eligible for professional growth stipends or partial release time for that course work.

12.4.3 Partial Release time Option

An eligible employee shall request prior approval from the immediate supervisor to take an ongoing qualified course during release time. The employee who is granted approval to take course work during working hours shall make up one-half of the work time. For example, if an employee is released for two hours a week to attend a twelve-week course, the employee shall make up one hour each week during that period. The make-up time is compensated by the release time and shall not be considered overtime or be subject to overtime

pay. Employees electing the partial release time option are not eligible for professional growth stipends or partial tuition reimbursement for that course work. Employees are not required to makeup any time for district-required training.

14.2.4 Qualifying Course Work

The following criteria apply to courses taken by employees at an accredited college, community college, trade school, adult education school, or any other accredited school:

14.2.4.1 The subject matter of the course relates directly to the position currently occupied by the employee; or

14.2.4.2 The subject matter of the course meets the requirements of a position for which the employee is training; or

14.2.4.3 The subject matter of the course supports District goals and objectives.

14.2.4.4 Credit shall not be given for classes, seminars, workshops and conferences attended on District time or when the District pays any portion of the expenses.

12.5 Budget Limitations

12.5.1 There shall be a designated annual allocation of \$5,000 to fund professional growth options.

12.5.2 The designated allocation of \$5,000 is subject to review during the budget development period. If budget reductions are being considered, a committee consisting of two representatives appointed by the District and two representatives appointed by CSEA will meet to develop recommendations for the allocation, if any, for that year. The District shall meet its obligations to pay for professional growth options, which have already been approved and earned prior to the decision to reduce the budget.

3.3.3 A maximum of \$2500 may be used to award mentor grants to bargaining unit members each school year.

Ratified: 11/6/04