PROFESSIONAL STAFF ACADEMIC LEAVE

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for academic leave for professional staff.

The Richland School District Two Board of Trustees, board is committed to the principle of providing opportunities for the professional improvement of the district’s employees. As a part of a comprehensive program of staff development, the board will grant academic leaves of absence under the conditions outlined in this policy.

Eligibility

Personnel who have been employed for three consecutive years in the district will be eligible for academic leave.

Procedure

A written request for academic leave must be submitted to the chief human resources officer by March 1 preceding the year in which academic leave is desired. The request should contain a statement of purpose and goals of the study. It should also state how the employee’s study would be beneficial to the district.

Academic leave will be for two consecutive semesters within the same fiscal year.

A minimum of eighteen (18) college credit hours, or the equivalent, will be earned during the academic leave year. The study should be undertaken to improve skills in the employee’s current area of certification or to meet requirements for initial certification or an additional area of certification.

An academic leave request will be granted to an employee upon recommendation by the chief human resources officer and approval by the superintendent. Each request will be considered on an individual basis. Approval will be based on the job placement and career goals of the employee and the study’s possible benefit to the district.

Compensation

Academic leave will be granted without pay.

Employees on academic leave will retain all rights and privileges of employment granted by the State of South Carolina and Richland County School District Two with the following exceptions:

Richland County School District Two
Employees on academic leave will not accrue sick or annual leave; however, accrued sick leave will be carried over should the employee return to work.

Employees on academic leave are not covered by worker compensation.

An employee going on academic leave will do the following:

- Choose whether or not to maintain his/her group health insurance. An employee who chooses to maintain the group health insurance must pay the entire premium (both the employee’s portion and the state’s portion) and make arrangements with the benefits supervisor for the timely payment of the premium.

- Choose whether or not to continue making his/her normal contributions to the South Carolina Retirement System. An employee who chooses to continue making contributions must make arrangements with the agency or the retirement system for the timely payment of the contributions. (Unless normal contributions are made, the employee will not earn service credits toward retirement while in a non-pay status.)

- Choose whether or not to request the state department of education South Carolina Department of Education to recognize the time spent during the academic leave year as being eligible for teaching experience credit. The Division of Teacher Certification regulates the provisions for granting teaching experience credit to certificated employees who return to full-time study.

Return from Academic Leave

A written request to return to active employment must be submitted to the chief human resources officer by March 15 of the academic leave year.

Official statements of course completion or copies of transcripts showing fulfillment of the eighteen-hour college credit requirement will be submitted to the chief human resources officer at the completion of the course of study and prior to reassignment in Richland School District Two.

Whenever appropriate, an employee returning to the district from academic leave will be reassigned to the school to which previously assigned; however, the right is reserved to by the district to assign the employee in the best interests of the district.

Adopted 7/22/75; Revised 10/13/87, 9/10/02

Richland County School District Two