

CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

The school district recognizes the significance of professional growth and shall encourage the continued growth and development of certificated personnel subject to the requirements of law and subsequent policies adopted by the board of education.

In accord with Nebraska statute, all permanent certificated employees shall be required, every six (6) years, to give evidence of professional growth. Six (6) semester hours of college credit shall be accepted by the board of education as evidence of professional growth. In the alternative, such other activities as are approved in advance by the board of education shall be accepted as evidence of professional growth. Such alternatives and other activities which may be approved by the board would include, but are not limited to, such items as educational travel, professional publication, or work on educational committees.

Failure to give evidence of professional growth constitutes just cause, as defined in Nebraska statute, relating to the termination of the contracts of certificated employees.

To be accepted as evidence of professional growth, semester hours of college credit must be appropriately documented, such documentation being filed in the superintendent's office. Documentation shall consist of an official transcript of the credit earned from a college or university.

Semester hours of college credit may be accepted for advancement on the salary schedule as well as for evidence of professional growth, if the semester hours are graduate credit and in the area of assignment and endorsement. Undergraduate credit hours may be accepted for advancement on the salary schedule only by special permission of the administration. Filing of appropriate documentation in their superintendent's office is required.

Teachers wishing to include travel, professional publications, a special project, or other activities shall make application for approval of such activities prior to departure of travel, publication of an article, or commencing an activity. Application for such activities shall be made on the form shown in this policy. The application shall be submitted to the Professional Growth Committee described in this policy.

As is the case with all teachers in the State of Nebraska, teachers in the Gibbon Public School must show evidence of professional growth on an ongoing basis. The District requires that all teachers accumulate twenty-four (24) points of professional growth during each six year period to meet minimum requirements.

College credit hours or alternative professional growth points earned prior to the first or any subsequent six-year period or in excess of six college credit hours or twenty-four professional growth points in one, six-year period are not transferable to the following six-year period.

The conditions and limitations under which alternative professional growth activities are performed and accepted may be reviewed and changed by resolution of the board of education from time to time. Unless the board shall, by resolution, give direction to the contrary, credit for engaging in a newly approved activity shall be allowed only for work done after the date of approval of the activity. If activities are stricken from the list or conditions made more stringent, such changes shall not be retroactive with regard to work already begun. Changes in alternative professional growth requirements will be implemented in such a way as to cause no penalty to those staff members who are currently working on any approved project for alternative professional growth requirements of the present period.

Persons contemplating alternative professional growth activities shall consult with the Professional Growth Committee prior to engaging in the activity for the purpose of ascertaining the feasibility of the activity being planned.

Earning professional growth points:

To meet the statutory professional growth requirements for a given six-year period a permanent certificated staff member must have completed approved professional growth activities totaling twenty-four (24) points.

The following activities may be acceptable for professional growth credit:

- I. Formal Class work
 - A. College credit in accredited colleges – four (4) points per semester hour. Documentation required. Applicant must submit a transcript of credits which will be placed in the personnel file after recognition by the superintendent.
 - B. Auditing college courses – Two points per semester hour. Documentation required. Applicant must submit a statement from the institution showing the number of class sessions attended together with the total number held. No professional growth credit shall be allowed for auditing a course unless the number of sessions attended is at least 90% of the total number held.
- II. Professional Meetings and Activities
 - A. Curriculum conferences, clinics, or special activities sponsored by NSEA or NCSA and/or state academic associations which are instructional in nature. (One point per four hours of meeting time. Driving and/or lodging time is excluded.)
 - B. Workshops
 1. School district designed (One point per four hours of meeting time. Driving and/or lodging time is excluded. Maximum of six points per six-year period.)

2. Externally sponsored (One point per four hours of meeting time. Driving and/or lodging time is excluded.)
- C. Workshops and/or clinics related to extra-duty assignments or responsibilities. (One point per four hours of meeting time. Driving and/or lodging time is excluded. Maximum of six points per six-year period.)
- D. Service on Nebraska Department of Education Advisory Committees, school or college accreditation teams. The Nebraska Council on Teacher Education, the Professional Practices Commission or other professionally related commissions or committees. (One point per four hours of meeting time. Driving and/or lodging time is excluded.)
- E. Demonstration teaching and/or presenting in-services programs to colleagues. (One point per session.)
- F. Supervision of Student Teacher – Two points per student teacher. (Limit 12 points per six-year cycle.)
- G. Membership on District Committee – Committee membership on district organized committees, including, but not limited to, SAT, Crisis Team, Calendar Committee, Technology Committee, Safety Committee, and SIP Committee work. (One point per four hours of meeting time.)

III. Other Activities as Approved

These activities must be approved by the building principal. Appeal of the principal's decision may be made to the Professional Growth Committee.

- A. Published Research Projects or Curriculum Related Materials — Number of points awarded to be based on length of time spent and contribution to the professional growth of the applicant.
- B. Tours With Academic Credit or Independent Travel – These must have prior approval by the building principal and shall be evaluated on the basis of educational worth. All independent travel must be appropriately documented upon completion with a written report and/or photographs or other memorabilia useable in the applicant's assigned position, endorsed area, or special previously approved project. Documentation shall be submitted to the building principal for evaluation and recommendation.
- C. Adult Education Course – The course must significantly contribute to the professional growth of the person involved and to the assigned position and endorsement or special previously approved project of that person.
- D. Grant Writing – One point per four hours of work.

- E. Other – Approved activity not listed above which would have significant educational value to the applicant’s assigned position or endorsed area. Special projects with prior approval.

Activities which would not be approved for professional growth points include but are not limited to: Membership in professional organizations; subscribing to professional magazines; serving as an officer in a local educational association; sponsoring student activities with or without remuneration; and community service that requires teaching or leadership. In addition, classroom activities which would be considered master teaching and which all teachers are expected to do and update annually as needed are not eligible for professional growth points.

Approval and verification of professional growth activities other than college hours

At least fourteen days prior to attending or participating in a professional growth activity, the employee shall notify the building principal of the employee’s intent to participate in that activity by completing a “Professional Growth Activity Form” (409.01E1). Prior to the start of the activity, the employee shall receive a written response to the application. Any activity requiring absence from school during a school or contract day shall be governed by the professional and personal leave policies of the District.

Review of professional growth status

Records of professional growth activities shall be maintained in the employee’s personnel file. At the start of each school year, each employee may confirm the status of his/her professional growth status and the remaining points to be earned during that professional growth period.

Professional Growth Evaluation Committee

To assist in the administration of this policy, particularly as it applies to alternative professional growth activities, there shall be a Professional Growth Evaluation Committee consisting of: building principals, board of education member, two tenured staff members, and the GEA president-elect.

The Gibbon Educational Association shall select two staff members. The term of office shall be two years and shall be staggered so that one member is selected at the beginning of each school year. In the event of a vacancy, a replacement shall be selected to serve the balance of the term at the next meeting.

It shall be the duty of the Professional Growth Evaluation Committee to:

1. Advise teachers on requests as to whether proposed activities come within the scope of this policy.

2. Determine whether or not professional growth is to be allowed and determine the number of points to be accredited in all cases where the decision is not specifically stated in the policy.
3. Report to applicants the action taken upon each application and/or appeal.

In case any applicant wishes to appeal any decision rendered by the building principal, he/she should make a written appeal to the Professional Growth Evaluation Committee. Further appeals may be made to the superintendent, then to the board of education if the applicant disagrees with the decisions made with regard to his/her appeal. Action of the board of education will be final.

Legal Reference: NDE Rule 10
Neb. Statute 79-830

Approved 09/13/10

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