

Professional Development

Greater Rutland County

Type of Contract

2021-2025

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ARTICLE 12

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

12.1 Professional Development:

A. Teachers shall be allotted funds for professional development, which include coursework, workshops, conferences or other educational experiences, as approved in advance by the Superintendent. Teachers may choose one of the following options:

1. Six (6) credits at the UVM in-state winter graduate rate.
2. Three (3) credits at the UVM in-state winter graduate rate and/or up to \$650 in conferences et al.
3. Conferences et al. up to \$900.

B. These allocated funds do not include administrative directed professional development.

C. When institutions or organizations providing educational benefits to teachers require tuition to be paid, the Board upon notice from the teacher will make direct payment to the institution or organization on the teacher's behalf.

D. If the teacher fails to satisfactorily complete the course, the teacher shall be required to repay the District for all pre-payments. This repayment shall be automatically deducted from the teacher's paycheck(s) divided into equal amounts among all remaining payments for the school year during which the course was presented. For courses taken over the summer months, the repayment shall occur during the following school year.

12.2 Required Official Transcripts: New teachers and teachers who request horizontal moves on the salary schedule must provide official transcripts to the Superintendent which shall be placed in their personnel file.

12.3 If a teacher is required by the Superintendent to attend meetings or conferences, the Board will pre-pay for the actual and reasonable costs of attending said meeting or conference and will reimburse mileage at the current IRS rate.

12.4 Monies under this provision shall be eliminated or reduced by any stipend, grant, or other source applicable to tuition obtained by the school or the teacher.

12.5 To be eligible for payment of Master's Degree tuition expenses the teacher must meet the following criteria:

1. They must receive approval from the Principal and the Superintendent for the selected Master's degree program and,
2. It must be a Master's degree program offered by an accredited institution of higher education, and
3. It must be in an area of the teacher's specialization as determined by courses they are currently teaching, will be teaching in the future, or as approved by the Superintendent in his/her sole discretion.
Master's degree programs for leadership will be considered.

12.6 Notwithstanding the provisions of 12.1, tuition, workshop and conference expenses for all of GRCSU and member district under this Article shall not exceed \$195,000 in aggregate per fiscal year. Once this amount has been reached, no teacher courses, conferences or workshops shall be approved; provided however, the Superintendent in his/her sole discretion may approve additional tuition, workshop and conference expenses in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 based upon extraordinary circumstances and licensing requirements.

12.8 Professional Development:

The Board will make available to each teacher a minimum of three (3) credits at the actual cost of the credits up to the University of Vermont regular rate for a credit for the school year 2022 - 2023.

The Board will make available to each teacher a minimum of six (6) credits at the actual cost of the credits up to the University of Vermont regular rate for a credit for the school years 2023 - 2024 and 2024 - 2025.

This benefit will be governed by the following considerations:

- Any course that is mandated by the District shall be paid for by the Board. Such Board payments shall not count as tuition reimbursement under the terms of this article.
- Two hundred dollars (\$200) of these monies may be applied to relevant and approved educational workshops and conferences, including registration, lodging, transportation and food as outlined below.
- Excluding courses mandated by the District, coursework shall be at the graduate level and shall be related to the teacher’s instructional responsibilities and/or the District’s goals.
- Prior approval of the Superintendent for the coursework is required and the Superintendent’s decision is final. Successful completion of the coursework is defined as a grade of “B” or better, for payment for course credits.
- If money is advanced and the teacher fails to complete a course or fails to receive a “B” or better, the teacher will reimburse the District through payroll deductions for amounts received.



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17.3 To encourage greater participation in professional training, the Board will pay any regularly employed member of the bargaining unit up to a

maximum equal to four (4) University of Vermont (UVM) credits per fiscal year for approved courses, which are not earned as part of a master's program subject to the following conditions:

- A. It must be approved by the Superintendent in advance.
- B. It may not be a course previously taken for credit.
- C. Payment shall be based on credits earned.
- D. Reimbursement shall not be made where actual tuition is not charged.
- E. Teachers who are under contract for the upcoming school year shall be eligible for the reimbursement.

The Board will pay any regularly employed member of the bargaining unit up to a maximum equal to eight (8) University of Vermont (UVM) credits per fiscal year for approved courses, which are earned as part of a master's program. A procedure will be established to determine which teachers are part of an approved master's program.

High content-intensive programs, such as the Vermont Mathematics Initiative (VMI) and the Reading Recovery Program will have tuition fully covered by the District as long as the program has been approved by the building principal and the Director of Learning Design. This is not an exhaustive list of such programs that may fall under this additional tuition funding. Additional programs will be added if mutually agreed upon between the District and the Association. All other provisions of article 17 will apply.

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11.12 The Board will provide tuition assistance for courses offered by a college or university, and or costs related to approved conferences and workshops, such as registration, travel, room, board, and conference fees. To be eligible for tuition assistance, all courses, conferences and

workshops must be approved in advance by the Superintendent and be linked to the District Strategic Action Plan, building Action Plan, or the teacher's Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP). Financial support will be an amount equal to the cost of one three (3) credit course per year, including tuition, lab fees, and registration costs at the then prevailing winter rates of the University of Vermont. This three (3) credit entitlement will be prorated for part-time teachers based upon the teacher's fulltime equivalency. Fiscal year determination will be based on the starting date of the course and/or workshop.

Tuition assistance may be paid in advance, upon request of the employee. However, if the employee does not complete the course with a grade of B or better, or if the employee does not attend the complete conference or workshop as per the approved request, then the employee must reimburse the district for any funds paid in advance.

The tuition assistance will be \$150,000. Notification of the total amount remaining in the tuition pool will be available to the MESA executive board upon request to the Superintendent or designee. Funds will be distributed consistent with established procedures on a first come, first served basis as determined by receipt of application of intent to the Superintendent.

Financial support will not be provided if the employee receives financial support from another source. As of May 1, of the (school) year contingent upon pool utilization level and Superintendent approval, a second course, workshop or conference may be selected on a first come first served basis.

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c) In-District Professional Development

The Administration will provide in-District professional development offerings that are eligible for movement on the salary schedule. These

offerings are also accepted for certification credits in Vermont. These offerings will be based on current research, best practices and the priorities of the District, as determined by the Administration. These offerings are designed to benefit both the District and the staff by contributing to the overall capacity of the staff to enhance student learning. These offerings are in addition to the regular professional development that is provided and will continue to be provided in the District.

In-District credit towards a column change may be earned by successful completion of certain graduate level type courses, workshop series, or other activity including, but not limited to: curriculum development/revision; curriculum review programs; special projects related to curriculum, instruction or assessment; technology training, and approved in advance, in writing, by the administration. The formula for awarding District credit and recertification hours will be based on the following:

- Fifteen (15) hours of participation equals one (1) district credits.
- Thirty (30) hours of participation equals two (2) district credits.
- Forty-five (45) hours of participation equals three (3) district credits.

Participation is defined as the number of hours of required attendance. Work outside of the actual class sessions will be expected, including an end of course observable demonstration learning that could include a written product or other documentable product/outcome.

Staff members who wish to offer a professional development opportunity under this in-district program must submit a proposal to the Administration. The proposal will include a statement of purpose, syllabus, and schedule of dates/days/times of the offering, participation requirements, and anticipated products/outcomes. Prior to submitting the proposal to the Administration, the staff member(s) will discuss the proposal with the Building Principal.

The Administration will approve or not approve the proposal within a reasonable period of time. A staff member who submits a proposal that is not approved may meet with the Superintendent to discuss the reason(s) for the non-approval and have the opportunity to re-submit the proposal

with any agreed to modifications. Any proposal submitted for approval must be for a minimum of fifteen (15) hours (1 credit) of participation.

Staff members who wish to enroll in an in-district professional development activity will be required to submit a District Credit Request approval form to the Superintendent no later than one week prior to the first session. This approval form will include the employee's rationale and goals for participation in the offering. The Superintendent will approve/not approve the request prior to the start of the offering. The decision to approve the request will include the relevancy of the offering to the participant's role as an educator in WCUUSD/WCSU. For example, a content specific course in the social sciences department at the high school would likely be approved for a social sciences employee but not a mathematics employee.

The cost, if any, to participants for these offerings will be determined by the Administration. The cost will not exceed \$120 per credit. There may be a separate fee for materials. The Administration may require a minimum enrollment. Staff members may utilize the tuition reimbursement benefit (Article 8.8 Paragraph d) for the per credit cost of any offering. Materials are not considered reimbursable expenses.

A course instructor will receive compensation of \$900 per credit for District-sponsored courses.

d) An additional \$60,000 will be identified for internal professional development for our WCUUSD/WCSU Teachers. These funds will provide in-district credit as defined in Paragraph h. The courses will also be designed to provide credit for teacher recertification.

e) These course(s) shall be in the area of teaching specialty or teaching assignment which the teacher is either presently in, or is to be assigned to in the following year, or part of a graduate degree program related to the teacher's responsibilities. Teachers may also request reimbursement from

the Superintendent for other courses. The Superintendent's decision whether to approve reimbursement shall be final.

f) Such course(s) shall be approved in advance for financial reimbursement by the Superintendent, or is being taken at the specific direction of the Superintendent.

g) Such course(s) shall be taken for graduate credit, and satisfactory completion, for purposes of this section, shall be in conformity with the institution at which such course(s) is completed. Courses must be completed with a grade of "B" or better or the tuition prepayment will be deducted in equal installments from the teacher's checks over a period of one year, or should the teacher not be under contract for the following year, in equal installments from any remaining checks.

h) Tuition fees shall be paid/reimbursed by the Board at the time of registration with the understanding that the teacher must submit proof of satisfactory course completion within ten (10) days of the issuance of course grades. If proof is not submitted, the Administration has the right to withhold the amount of money advanced for registration from the teacher's paycheck. In the event a teacher does not satisfactorily complete a course the Board shall be entitled to utilize any available lawful remedies to recover any sums paid/reimbursed by the Board.

i) It is understood and agreed that any teacher who receives reimbursement under the provisions of this section will return the following year or reimburse the Board unless the Board terminates the teacher for other reasons.

j) At the Superintendent's discretion, teachers may be reimbursed for the cost of non-graduate course work or for the cost of programs other than for graduate credit, if such course or program is intended to contribute to teacher development as a graduate course would.
