

ARTICLE XVI: PROFESSIONAL GROWTH, STAFF DEVELOPMENT & DEPENDENT WAIVERS

16.1 Professional Growth

As a part of the efforts to encourage unit members to seek to improve their personal knowledge and skills, an amount not to exceed \$10,500 shall be set aside each fiscal year for payments to qualified unit members for reimbursement under the provisions of this Article.

A. Clarification of Purpose: The Classified Professional Growth Program is designed to provide an incentive for unit members to further their education, skills and training as it relates to their current work assignment. This educational program will enhance job performances as well as services for the student, the District and the community by doing the following:

1. Improve the standard of service;
2. Improve on-the-job performance;
3. Promote technological advancements;
4. Provide opportunities for personal growth;
5. Provide opportunities for advancement.

16.2 A maximum of \$1,200 per fiscal year may be granted to eligible, qualified employees to be used for reimbursement for verified costs of tuition, fees, books and supplies for approved credit classes of study or non-credit, GED and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses at College of the Desert or any other accredited college or university.

16.3 To qualify for reimbursement of educational expenses, a unit member must be employed in a regular classification for at least twenty (20) hours per week, and:

16.3.1 Receive approval of the Professional Growth Committee for a planned course of study leading to improving skills related to the unit member's present position or which prepares the unit member for advancement to a position with the District, or prepares the unit member for a new career;

16.3.2 Receive advanced Committee approval and enroll in a class which is a part of the approved plan;

16.3.3 Submit a transcript from the institution attended evidencing completion of the class with a grade of "C" or better, or the equivalent;

16.3.4 Submit documented proof of expenses related to the completed class, with Human Resources Office verification, to the Business Office for reimbursement.

16.4 Unit members who choose to enroll in courses offered at College of the Desert may rearrange their work schedules for not more than three (3) hours per week to attend those classes under the following conditions:

16.4.1 Prior to enrolling in the class, secure written permission from the immediate supervisor to rearrange work hours in order to be released during the time which classes meet, and to make up those hours within the same day(s) in order not to exceed an eight-hour work day;

16.4.2 Make application to the Committee to enroll in the class;

16.4.3 Confirm enrollment and attendance in the class with the immediate supervisor;

16.4.4 Maintain satisfactory progress in the class as verified by the class instructor.

16.4.5 A unit member may, on his/her own initiative, enroll in and attend a course offered during his/her regularly scheduled work hours with the mutual agreement of his/her immediate supervisor. This approval to take a class during regularly scheduled work hours is unrelated to the reimbursement provisions of Articles 16.2 and 16.3. The unit member will be required to make up one-half of the time spent in those classes which meet during the regular workday. Nothing herein is intended to prevent a unit member from taking a class(es) outside of his/her regular workday. Given that pursuant to Article 16.4 that unit members may not take classes for more than three (3) hours per week during their regularly scheduled work day, the maximum amount of time that unit members need to make up on the day(s) in which they attend class is one and one half (1 ½) hours per week. If a unit member is taking class on more than one workday in a workweek, he/she shall arrange in advance with his/her supervisor on which day(s) (that he/she is attending class) that he/she shall make up the work. In no case may a unit member make up time which will result in working more than eight (8) hours in a workday.

16.5 There shall be no limit to the number of units which an employee may take during a given semester or year as long as they fit within the above guidelines. However, no more than the prescribed \$1,200 shall be reimbursed in any fiscal year.

16.6 Upon ratification of the provisions of this Article by CSEA and the District Board of Trustees, and annually thereafter, a Professional Growth Committee shall be appointed consisting of three (3) unit members, two supervisors of classified employees and the Vice President of Human Resources and Employee Relations.

16.6.1 The three-unit members shall be appointed by CSEA using a process which CSEA determines;

16.6.2 The supervisors shall be appointed by the District Superintendent/President.

16.6.3 The initial Committee shall develop a process for application by unit members for consideration under the provisions of the Article.

16.6.4 The Committee shall develop necessary forms, time lines and notification process to insure that all eligible unit members are made aware of the opportunity to apply for consideration each semester or quarter.

16.6.5 The Committee shall be responsible for review of all applications for reimbursement under the Article, and to make recommendations for such reimbursement.

16.6.6 The Committee shall review the process developed under 16.6.4 after its application for each of the first two semesters and recommend revisions in forms or process as necessary.