Sabbaticals

Many schools fund sabbaticals for faculty and administrators, believing that the model of periodically offering faculty and administrators a time away from school refreshes and revitalizes and therefore benefits not only the individual staff member but also benefits the school. Typical plans include the following dimensions:

- Full year sabbaticals after 7 - 10 years of service to the school, at full pay and benefits (variations include full-year at half-pay or half-year at full pay). (Examples: Culver Academies, IN and Cranbrook Schools, MI).

- Trimester mini-sabbaticals (School hires a jack of all trades to sub for three teachers who each take a single season off, and the replacement subs for one in the fall, the next in the winter, and the third in the spring.) (Example: Woodberry Forest School, VA).

- Administrator 6-month sabbaticals (three months of summer plus either the contiguous spring or fall 3-month periods): Full-pay, with in-school staffers subbing for the administrator in his or her absence. (Example: Pomfret School, CT).

- *Sabbaticals funded by endowment (raised and restricted for this purpose or general endowment) or by operational budget (professional development line item).

- *"Cost to school" figured not in terms of veteran faculty member's salary (e.g., $40,000) but rather at rookie replacement teacher's salary (e.g., $20,000).

Expectation: teacher to propose sabbatical plan for growth and development (e.g., enrolling in graduate school, travel, teaching overseas, etc.) and to provide presentation to board and faculty upon return to school. Also, teachers are typically contracted to return to the school for one to three years following the sabbatical.

For schools for whom funded sabbaticals are not financially feasible, ISACS suggests consideration of other creative options, such as

"The Canadian 5 Over 4 Plan": Innovative thinking for sabbatical programs is emerging in the public schools of Rochester, NY and Muskegon County, MI, based on the Canadian
model of allowing teachers to defer part of their salaries for several years in order to self-finance a planned leave of absence, with the guarantee of a job upon return. The typical model is "five over four," in which 20 percent of a teacher's pay is deferred over four years, and then the teacher is paid 80% of salary over the fifth year for the sabbatical leave of absence. Obviously, variations on the theme are possible, such as partial pay reduction/deferment or freeze over several years paying for a part-year sabbatical: e.g., 10% salary deferral over five years, with a 1/2 year sabbatical in the fifth year at "full pay" (90% of normal pay) or full year sabbatical at 1/2 pay (half of the 90% = 45% of normal pay).

Whatever the formula, schools should see sabbatical plans as an investment in a natural resource, their faculty and administrators, one that has historically paid large dividends in terms of renewal and loyalty to the institution.

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