
Subject: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. The Board believes ongoing education and development are important to the success of individual employees, teams, and the BOCES. The BOCES is committed to providing adequate access to and resources for all employees to participate in appropriate education and development activities.

2. All educational and development activities are governed by the following criteria:

2.1 They must enhance job related skills and learning, support long-term career or educational objectives, and/or deepen the knowledge of and involvement in communities of the region.

2.2 They must be reasonable and approved in advance by the Executive Director or the Board, as appropriate.

2.3 They must encourage ongoing learning, reassessment of practices and policies, and opportunities for reflection.

3. The Board may ask an employee to participate in an education or development opportunity at any time. However, employee-initiated education and development opportunities may be requested after six months of employment. Employees are encouraged to participate in at least 12 hours of education and development each year (additional activities are subject to budget constraints).

4. Eligible education and development opportunities fall under the following categories:

4.1 Training and education related directly to the employee's work or career with the BOCES; this includes job specific and broader learning opportunities, including seminars, conferences, workshops, and related opportunities. These might be employee-initiated (after six months of employment), or BOCES-initiated training. These courses may be taken during work hours if approved by the Executive Director or the Board, as appropriate.

4.2 Reimbursement of tuition at an accredited degree-granting institution is allowable. Regular full-time employees are eligible after six months of employment. Classes approved by the employee's supervisor and included in the fiscal year's budget, will be fully reimbursed by the BOCES, with 50% reimbursement made at the beginning of the course, and 50% reimbursement upon successful completion of the course.

4.3 Reimbursement for books, labs, and course related fees will be 50% at the beginning of the course, and 50% upon successful completion of the course.

5. Coursework must be taken outside of work time and employee must provide documentation of a grade that applies toward a degree.

6. Peer education: Employees are encouraged to solicit, organize, and host learning opportunities for themselves and other staff. These learning opportunities are voluntary to staff. Opportunities may include presentations or discussions of relevant issues with organizations or individuals in or out of the region, staff brown bags on work-related issues or other issues of interest, and similar activities.