FOR ACTION: Sabbatical Leave Request for 2009-2010

It is recommended that the Board approve the sabbatical leave request for the 2009-2010 school year for Francesca Sobrer with all terms of the current collective bargaining agreement applying in granting the leave.

Background Information

Article 4.10 of the collective bargaining agreement with the MCEA establishes the procedures for the awarding of sabbatical leaves for the MCCSC instructional personnel. Section I specifies the eligibility requirement of this leave which is the completion of seven consecutive years of service. In accord with the Agreement, applications were reviewed by the Sabbatical Leave Committee consisting of:

   Lily Albright, Grandview Elementary School
   Gretchen Morgan, Summit Elementary School
   Terry Daugherty, Batchelor Middle School

It was determined that the application of Francesca Sobrer met the guidelines outlining specific plans for travel or study, providing goals in terms of what achievement was expected, describing the product which would be an outcome, and how the sabbatical would contribute to the professional growth of the applicant.

A copy of the proposal from Ms. Sobrer and Article 4.10 are included with this report.
SABBATICAL LEAVE REQUEST  
MCCSC

NAME: Francesca Sobrer  
SCHOOL: BHSN  
POSITION: English/Speech and Theatre Teacher – Director of Theatre Program  
Date of Initial Employment with MCCSC: August 1996  
Requesting Sabbatical Leave: 2009–2010 Academic year  
Current Address: 1002 S. Washington St. Bloomington, IN 47401 812-360-4171  
Sabbatical Address: SAME

1. List your specific plans for study and/or travel by describing:  
   A) What activities will be included in your leave agenda?
   My primary goal will be to pursue a Master’s degree in secondary education. I would like to focus my studies not only on curriculum and instruction, but also learn how to implement theatre-based exercises into core classes (English, Social Studies) as a means of instruction. I have applied to the Master’s program in Secondary Education at Ball State University. The Ball State program will offer me, besides their required graduate curriculum, the flexibility to take workshops and pursue private study in theatre. There are numerous workshops in voice, acting, movement, anywhere from two to six weeks long available in Chicago, Cincinnati, Indianapolis and Stratford, Ontario, Canada, that will complement my curriculum studies. My general plan would be to take those courses required by BSU online and then attend theatre workshops. My Master’s thesis will focus on how theater exercises can enrich the core curriculum. The curriculum I develop as part of my Master’s program will also help me create new courses for North.

   B) If the activities include graduate level course work, list program of students:
   I will be completing graduate courses in pedagogy, curriculum as it applies to secondary education, technology and education, multi-cultural education, and education foundations. I can make the program requirements available to you upon request; they can also be viewed online at: www.bsu.edu/departmentofeducationalstudies/graduateschool.

   C) When will these activities occur?
   I plan to begin my graduate studies in May of 2009, and will continue those studies over the 2009-2010 academic year. I am presently looking into the possibilities for theatre workshops that I might participate in. My participation in these workshops will largely depend on cost and availability. Possible activities are: a playwriting workshop scheduled for August of 2009 (Cincinnati), a theatre improvisation workshop for the fall 2009 (Chicago), a body-movement workshop for the winter of 2009 (Bloomington). I also hope to enroll in an “Acting Shakespeare” workshop at Stratford in Canada in the summer of 2010.

2. What goals or objectives do you expect to achieve by this leave?  
   A) State goals in terms of measurable outcomes.
   My foremost objective is to earn a Master’s degree. With it I will become more proficient at developing curriculum and thereby improving instruction. The program will also make me more skilled at using the “on-the-feet, out-of-the-box” creative energy that is theatre and show me how to incorporate this into standard curriculum. As North increases its cross-over curriculum, I will be better skilled at bringing that cross-over to core subjects and the elective courses I teach.

   North High School is in the process of adapting curriculum to better meet the various needs and interest of our students, and to provide our students with 21st Century skills. By my developing curriculum that will address those needs, students will gain the ability to demonstrate their knowledge in a multitude of ways. Students will also develop stronger oral communication skills and practice collaboration.
While my primary goal will be to complete my Master’s degree, I hope to also create more elective courses in Theatre, Speech, and English for North. Depending on scheduling, course possibilities include: Dramatic Literature, Script writing (English), Oral interpretation (Speech and/or Theatre), Improvisation in Theatre (Theatre).

B) How do these goals and objectives relate to your current assignment?

I have taught English, (Primarily Freshman and Sophomore English, and Film Literature), Speech, and Theatre and have been the director of the Theatre Program at North since 1999. All coursework and workshop experience are directly related. Any further experience I gain as a performer or as a student is experience that I can avail myself of and bring to my classroom.

3. What contribution will this sabbatical leave make toward your professional growth?

A colleague once defined a highly qualified teacher as someone who has a Master’s Degree. While one could argue that this is a rather narrow viewpoint, still, because I do not have my Master’s, I may not be considered highly qualified in spite of my experience. A sabbatical will allow me the opportunity to continue my studies as a teacher and thereby strengthen what I do in the classroom. I will be able to explore new ideas and then apply them in the classroom. I have been teaching for over 10 years, and while I have always prided myself on being creative and innovative, I feel that this is the right moment for an innovating push. I need to go out into the world and refresh my creative energies and rejuvenate my scholarly persona! The more excited I am about what I am doing, the more likely my students will be engaged in their learning.

4. How does the MCCSC benefit from this proposed plan?

I bring a unique mix to the MCCSC. I am a theatre professional as well as a teacher. These activities and interests complement each other. Having the opportunity to become a student again so that I may strengthen what I already know as a teacher and as an artist can only make me a stronger teacher. As North and the MCCSC move towards creating curriculum in our secondary schools that is diverse and challenging, and that addresses the needs of the 21st Century student, my newly gained expertise will aid towards those developments.

5. If the sabbatical will result in a specific product, please specify what the product will be and whether MCCSC will have usage and duplicating rights?

Yes: any work I complete will be made available to the MCCSC. Course proposals will be made available to the appropriate departments. I will be happy to present my thesis in a staff development workshop.
ARTICLE 4.10 - Sabbatical Leave

Section 1 - Eligibility

Bargaining unit members who have completed seven (7) consecutive years of service in the school district shall be eligible. No more than one (1) percent, to the nearest whole number of certificated employees may be granted sabbatical leave in any one school year. This leave may not be used to extend any other leave and may not be granted more than once every seven (7) years for any respective teacher.

Section 2 - Activities

Sabbatical leave may be granted for the purpose of study in an institution of higher learning, for independent study on a project or problem of value to the school district or for educational travel or any combination of the above, as approved by the Board. Study at an institution of higher learning shall be limited to programs which will improve the instructional skills of the teacher in his assigned area of responsibility at the time of the application.

Section 3 - Stipend

Sabbatical leave computations will be made on the basis of locating the individual on the teachers' salary schedule according to his training and experience and will not reflect added indices for additional duties or extra weeks. Stipends will be determined as follows:

(a) Certificated employees with sixteen (16) or more years of service in the system will qualify for sixty percent (60%) of their annual pay, and a like percentage of Board contributions to insurance fringe benefits.

(b) Certificated employees with seven (7) through fifteen (15) years of service in the system will qualify for fifty-five percent (55%) of their annual pay, and a like percentage of Board contributions to insurance fringe benefits.

The above stipend will be paid to the teacher during the year of the leave.

Section 4 - Application

The application must be submitted to the Personnel Office on a form provided, not later than the first teaching day in February, preceding the year in which the sabbatical is to be taken. (A waiver on considering applications received after the deadline may be granted by the Review Committee.) The application must include a carefully developed plan for study and/or travel.

Section 5 - Selection and Approval

Application for sabbatical leave will be reviewed by a committee of teachers and administrators. The committee will include two (2) administrators appointed by the Superintendent and one (1) teacher appointed by the Association. The recommendation of the committee on each application will be forwarded to the Superintendent and Board for consideration. The applicant will be notified of the recommendation of the committee and the final action of the Board by March 15. Criteria for selection will be:

(a) The value of the proposed plan to the district; and

(b) Improvement of the professional service of the applicant.
Section 6 - Terms of Sabbatical Leave Agreement

(a) The applicant agrees to return to the service of the district for a period of two (2) years. In the event of failure to return to the school district, the applicant shall repay the full stipend in twelve (12) equal monthly installments from the date the applicant should have returned to the school district. If the second year is not completed, the applicant must refund fifty percent (50%) of the sabbatical stipend received in twelve (12) equal monthly installments from the date the applicant should have returned to service for the second year.

(b) The applicant may accept scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, and the like where the purpose of the grant or appointment is in harmony with the stated purpose for the leave.

(c) Remunerative employment while on leave may be accepted only if the tasks demanded are of clear educational advantage to the applicant, if approved by the Superintendent.

(d) Any deviation from the approved sabbatical leave plan must be submitted in advance of the deviation to the Superintendent and Board for approval.

(e) The applicant agrees to submit a written, and if requested, oral presentation to the Superintendent and Board upon return to duty. Such written presentation shall be submitted to the Superintendent and the Board no later than one hundred twenty (120) calendar days following the applicant’s return to the service of the School Corporation. Additional time within which to submit said report may be granted by the Superintendent for good cause provided that a request for such extension of time is submitted in writing to the Superintendent not less than thirty (30) calendar days before said report is due to be submitted. The report shall consist of the following points:

1. A statement of the goals and objectives for which the sabbatical leave was granted.

2. A description of the activities followed which were intended to achieve the goals; i.e., travel experiences, courses studied, publications or printed material developed.

3. Evaluative statements of supervisors or instructors who were involved in coordinating or supervising the project.

4. A statement of the applicant regarding his assessment of the worth of the sabbatical leave experience as it specifically relates to the applicant’s project.

(f) The applicant retains seniority, retirement and tenure rights as if he were in regular employment. The applicant also will be entitled to regular increments on the salary schedule earned during this period as if he were in regular employment.

(g) Upon return, the applicant will be restored to his former position in accordance with the provisions of Policy 3130, if appropriate notice is given. The applicant shall notify the school corporation in writing of their intent to return forty-five (45) days prior to the end of the last semester of their leave.