

2025 Secondary Principals' Sabbatical

Applications close Wednesday 8 May 2024

Application
Guide

About the Secondary Principals' Sabbatical

Background

The Secondary Principals' Sabbatical was negotiated as one of the professional learning provisions for principals as part of the Secondary Principals' Collective Agreement (SPCA).

What is this award?

The purpose of this sabbatical is to provide a sustained period during a principal's career to engage in a balance of professional learning, reflection and rejuvenation.

The school receives relief funding in accordance with the relevant collective agreement, while the principal is on sabbatical.

What does the sabbatical provide?

The Secondary Principals' Sabbatical provides either ten, five or three school weeks' paid leave at the principal's normal salary. A ten-week sabbatical may be taken, with the school board/employer's approval, in one or two blocks. The blocks must be whole weeks in duration, with the minimum block being three weeks. Three-week and five-week sabbaticals cannot be split except by a term break, and must be taken as whole weeks.

The leave counts as service for most purposes.

Any salary increases or increments due during the sabbatical still apply, according to the provisions of the SPCA.

You can also apply for a reimbursement of costs clearly associated with your sabbatical to a maximum of \$5,000. See page 2 of the application guide for more details.

The purpose of the Secondary Principals' Sabbatical is to:

- aid retention and possibly recruitment of principals
- encourage and enable professional growth, by providing time for reflection and dedicated professional development
- promote collaboration within the profession.

How many sabbaticals are available each year?

Each year there are 40 paid full-time equivalent sabbaticals, each of 10 school weeks' duration, available to principals in state or state-integrated secondary schools covered by the SPCA.

Principals are able to apply for a ten-week sabbatical (which may be taken in two blocks), a five-week sabbatical or a three-week sabbatical. Note that this may result in sabbaticals being awarded to more than 40 secondary principals during one school year.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for the Secondary Principals' Sabbatical, you must:

- be employed under the Secondary Principals' Collective Agreement or applicable Individual Employment Agreement (IEA)
- have at least five years' service as a secondary or area principal in a state or state-integrated school at the time of taking a sabbatical
- have the support of the school board/limited statutory manager or commissioner, including of any agreed reimbursement costs
- intend to continue a role in the education workforce.

How is my application assessed?

First, we will check that your application meets all of the eligibility criteria. A selection panel, made up of representatives from the Ministry of Education, Te Whakarōputanga Kaitiaki Kura o Aotearoa – New Zealand School Boards Association (Te Whakarōputanga), the Post Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) and the Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand (SPANZ), will then assess your application on the following:

- Your proposal shows that the professional learning you're planning to complete during the sabbatical is in one or more of the approved professional learning activities' below.
- Your proposal is clear and shows:
 - clarity about the purpose and programme of work within the allocated timeframe
 - the benefits of such work for your students, yourself and your school
- Also taken into consideration:
 - any previous leave taken
 - for the three-week and five-week sabbaticals, consideration will also be given to the reason a principal is applying for a shorter sabbatical, the circumstances of the school, and professional activities relating to priority learner groups.

The selection panel will award the ten-week sabbaticals first and then the five and three-week sabbaticals will receive equal consideration. The selection panel may not award more than a total of 400 school weeks for sabbaticals in any school year.

The selection panel's role is to ensure that the selection process is open, fair, consistent and impartial, and that it provides for equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

Approved professional learning activities

The professional learning you're planning to complete during your sabbatical should be in one or more of the following approved fields:

- study
- research
- visiting schools
- visiting other institutions
- attending a course
- attending a conference.

Approval of sabbatical

Written confirmation from your employing school board/limited statutory manager is required confirming that, should an offer of a sabbatical be made, leave will be approved.

If you have not yet received support, you may still apply but will need to provide this information by two weeks after the closing date. This must be sent to TeachNZ no later than this date or your application cannot be assessed. In the meantime you will need to explain why you have not included written confirmation with your application.

Application for provisional reimbursement of costs

The panel established to consider sabbatical applications will also consider any associated application for reimbursement of costs incurred by principals who are awarded a sabbatical.

Costs covered in an application for reimbursement (to a maximum of \$5,000 per individual) must clearly be associated with the proposal of work for a sabbatical.

Example of costings

Ref	Description of cost item	Approx cost \$NZ
1	Return flights to Sydney	\$650.00
2	Costs to attend 'Spiral' conference	\$360.00
3	Basic accommodation in Sydney for three nights for conference (no mini-bar)	\$420.00
4	Airport transfers	\$75.00
5	Meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks - no alcohol) if not included in room rate	\$275.00
6	Petrol for visiting schools and establishments in NZ	\$600.00
Total		\$2,380.00

The panel will reach a provisional decision - in accordance with agreed criteria developed by the parties and NZSTA - on the maximum amount that may be reimbursed to the applicant.

It is possible the amount of costs provisionally approved by the panel may be a portion only of the amount claimed by an applicant, depending on the merits of the sabbatical proposal and costs application.

Claim for reimbursement of costs

Any reimbursement will be subject to the panel's subsequent assessment of the documentation evidencing the costs incurred and the panel determining that the costs are both "actual" and "reasonable". In no case will a reimbursement exceed the amount that which was provisionally approved.

Any reimbursement finally approved by the panel will be paid out 4-6 weeks upon receiving relevant documentation evidencing the costs directly associated with the proposal of work for the sabbatical taken, incurred by the principal.

Please ensure that receipts clearly show the items, prices and dates paid. Scanned copies of original receipts will be accepted (in most cases).

The maximum available for reimbursement of costs associated with the sabbatical leave scheme for all successful applicants, in any one school year, is \$50,000. The full \$50,000 may not be allocated in any one year.

Expectations if awarded a sabbatical

If you are selected for a sabbatical, you must:

- Notify TeachNZ of any changes to information included on the application form, (e.g. your employment status, contact details, your proposal, or if you take up a new position).
- Undertake professional learning activities as stated in your proposal.
- Share the findings of your sabbatical with your employing Board

If you are awarded a sabbatical and decline the offer you can re-apply without prejudice in a subsequent year.

A sabbatical cannot be postponed to the next year. However, under exceptional circumstances the principal and school board/employer may postpone the leave to the first or second term of the following year, subject to notification and agreement from TeachNZ.

Timetable

The following is a timetable for the application process:

WEDNESDAY 8 MAY 2024

Application closing date

WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 2024

Closing date for submitting additional information

JULY 2024

Selection process

WEDNESDAY 17 JULY 2024

Principals notified of results

2024 Secondary School Principals' Sabbatical

Frequently asked questions

Frequently
asked
questions

General

When will I find out the outcome of my application?

You will be notified by Wednesday 8 May 2024

What does a Secondary Principals' Sabbatical provide?

A Secondary Principals' Sabbatical provides you with paid leave for ten, five or three school weeks. TeachNZ covers the relief costs to replace you while you are on sabbatical, including any holiday pay owing for the relief.

You can also apply for a reimbursement of costs clearly associated with your sabbatical to a maximum of \$5,000. See the application form for more details.

How long is a sabbatical?

You can apply for a sabbatical for either ten, five or three weeks.

If you are applying for ten weeks' leave and choose to take your sabbatical in a term that is nine weeks in duration, you can choose to take the tenth week of your sabbatical either in the last week of the term before or the first week of the term after, in agreement with your school.

Can I take my sabbatical in two blocks?

Yes, your ten-week sabbatical can be taken in one or two blocks, with the school board/employer' approval. The blocks must be whole weeks in duration with the minimum block being three weeks. The five and three-week sabbaticals cannot be split except by term breaks.

When can I take my sabbatical?

You can choose which term to take your sabbatical as long as your school board/employer agrees. Please make sure you notify TeachNZ of the dates you plan to take your sabbatical.

What do I need to do to confirm dates for my sabbatical? Can my sabbatical dates change?

Please indicate on the application form the term that you plan to take your sabbatical. If you are successful you will be asked to confirm the dates.

Please note that these must be agreed to with your school. Please notify TeachNZ if these dates change.

What will happen if I have applied for the wrong award?

Your application will only be assessed for the award you have applied for. It's important that you check the application information to ensure you are applying for the correct award.

Do I need to return to the same school after completing my sabbatical?

There is an expectation that you will return either to your previous role or a role within the education workforce.

What if I am offered a position at a different school?

If you are offered a position at a different school you will need approval from the new school board/ employer confirming that they will support you with your sabbatical. You would need to provide us with confirmation of support from the school board/ employer so we can advise the correct school on how to charge relief costs to TeachNZ.

Can I postpone my sabbatical until the next year?

You may request to postpone your sabbatical under exceptional circumstances to either Term 1 or 2 of the following year. You must have the approval from your school board/employer to postpone your sabbatical. Please make this request in writing to TeachNZ with a short explanation of the reason for this change.

Can I withdraw from a Secondary Principals' Sabbatical?

If you choose to withdraw, you can apply again in the future with no prejudice. You would need to let us know in writing that you would like to withdraw from the sabbatical. We can accept this by email to teacher.studyawards@education.govt.nz.

Can I work while on a sabbatical?

No, you must not be in paid work while on sabbatical. The purpose of the Secondary Principals' Sabbatical is to provide a sustained period of time in a principal's career to engage in a balance of professional learning activities, reflection and rejuvenation. You cannot work at your school, or another school while on sabbatical.

Can I submit more than one application for a sabbatical?

No, you can only submit one application for each sabbatical you apply for.

Eligibility

I am on a fixed-term contract. Can I apply for a Secondary Principals' Sabbatical?

Yes, as long as you meet the eligibility criteria. You will need to be employed by a school during the sabbatical as TeachNZ provides relief funding to your school while you are on sabbatical.

The eligibility criteria state that I need to have at least five years' service as a secondary or area principal in a New Zealand state or state-integrated school. I am currently in my fifth year as a principal. Can I apply?

Yes, if you will have completed at least five years of service by the time of taking a sabbatical.

Do my years as an acting principal count towards the five years' service?

Yes, if they were in a secondary or area school and consecutive to being appointed permanently as a principal.

I have already had a sabbatical. Can I apply again?

Yes, there is no requirement that you have to wait another five years to apply again; however, leave that a principal has taken is a selection factor.

Can I apply if I'm not a member of a union?

Yes, the awards are open to all principals in New Zealand state or state-integrated secondary schools who are employed under the terms and conditions of the Secondary Principals' Collective Agreement, and who meet the eligibility criteria.

I am appointed to the Community of Schools leadership role, am I able to take sabbatical leave for Principals?

Yes, a principal in receipt of the allowance for the Community of Schools leadership role may apply for principals sabbatical leave to be taken while they hold that role provided that any application has the support of their employing board which shall consider the needs of the wider Community of Schools.

If I am appointed to the Community of Schools leadership role, am I able to take Principals' Sabbatical leave?

Yes, apply as usual.

Approved professional learning activities

Where can I find information on the professional learning activities completed by previous sabbatical recipients?

Reports by successful applicants from previous years can be found on the Educational Leaders website, www.educationallleaders.govt.nz.

What professional learning activities are not approved for a sabbatical?

- Activity for the financial or commercial gain of the principal or school.
- Paid work.

- Overseas trips with the purpose of 'marketing' the school to potential foreign fee-paying students.
- Your regular day-to-day work.

Can I change my sabbatical project after submitting an application?

Yes, but not substantially as this will need to be approved by TeachNZ. Please notify TeachNZ of this change in writing and provide details of your new sabbatical project and a short explanation of the reason for this change.

Sabbatical proposal requirements

How should I present my proposal?

Please see section 5 of the application form and complete your sabbatical proposal in the requested format. This makes it easier for the selection panel to assess applications consistently.

Can I put in a joint sabbatical proposal with another principal?

You can put in a joint application for a sabbatical, but each application will be assessed separately by the selection panel, so they may be ranked differently.

Can I submit more than one sabbatical proposal with my application?

You can only submit one sabbatical proposal with your application.

School board support

What can I provide as evidence that my school board supports my application? We can accept one of the following as support:

- A copy of relevant school board motion confirming support for your application. Please do not provide the full Board minutes, just the signed Board motion.
- A signed letter of support from the school boards presiding member
- An email sent directly from the school boards presiding member to TeachNZ

Support for your application must be submitted in one of the formats outlined above by two weeks after the closing date.

Please note that school board support for your application is a eligibility factor.

Who has the authority to support my application on behalf of the school boards presiding member? The deputy presiding member or another trustee who has delegated authority in the absence of the boards presiding member or their deputy.

Who can support my application if the school board has been disestablished?

Please ask the commissioner acting in place of the school board to confirm support for your application. Please ensure it's clear the signature is that of the commissioner.

Who can support my application if my school has a limited statutory manager employed?

If the limited statutory manager is acting in place of the school board for employment matters, ask the limited statutory manager to confirm support for your application, otherwise the boards presiding member should. Please ensure it's clear that the signature is that of the limited statutory manager.

What if I can't provide confirmation of support when I submit my application?

If you have not received support from the school board you may still apply, but please send this in by two weeks after the closing date. Please provide an explanation in the box provided on the application form as to why the support is not included with your application.

Submitting my application

Can I email you my application?

No, we can only accept applications submitted online. You can apply online at:
www.teachnz.govt.nz/studyawards

What happens if my application is late?

Late applications will not be considered

Can I send in additional information after submitting my application?

You may submit additional information for your application up to two weeks after the closing date, otherwise this cannot be considered with your application.

How will I know you have received my application?

You will receive an email to confirm that your application has arrived. Please contact us if you have not heard from us by the closing date.

What happens if my application is incomplete?

It's important to ensure you've submitted all the required information. If your application is incomplete, or it is not in the correct format, the selection panel may not be able to assess it fully.

Reporting on your sabbatical

You must declare that you will share the findings of your sabbatical with your employing board.