ARTICLE 18
EARLY RETIREMENT

A. Overview–

Employees of the school district who have been under uninterrupted contract beginning prior to July 1, 1998, and who may find it necessary or desirable to retire from employment with the district prior to normal retirement age may elect to take early retirement under the terms and conditions set forth in the policy*. The school district offers this benefit to assist early retirees in bridging the gap between their retirement and receipt of normal Social Security benefits. Early retirement is entirely voluntary and at the discretion of an eligible employee. Early retirement benefits, under this agreement, last for a maximum of five (5) years.

B. Eligibility–

An employee is eligible for early retirement if such employee:

1. Is currently an employee of the school district.
2. Was employed by contract prior to July 1, 1998, and has uninterrupted service.
3. Is not less than 60 years of age &/or meets the “window” for benefits under the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS) (85) and, in accordance with the school district’s intent that this arrangement is a Social Security bridge, not more than 65 years of age.
4. Participants must have fifteen (15) years of service in USD. #382. The last five (5) years, including the year during which application is made for early retirement, must be continuous.
5. Has 20 years or more of service credit recognized by (KPERS).

C. Application–

An employee may apply for early retirement by giving written notice to the Clerk of the Board. Such written notice shall be submitted on or before the first (1st) day of April preceding the anticipated retirement date and include the following information:

1. A statement of the applicant’s desire to take early retirement.
2. The anticipated date of retirement.
3. The applicant’s birth date and age on the date of retirement.
4. The current mailing address and telephone number of the applicant.
5. The number of years the applicant has been employed by the school district.
6. The total number of years of service credit recognized by KPERS.
7. Applicant’s current annual salary.
8. The annual payment shall then be divided by twelve (12) to determine the amount to be paid monthly until such time that the participant reaches 65, has received benefits for five (5) years, or is deceased. Monthly payments will be made on normal payroll dates.
9. Whether the applicant desires health insurance coverage through the school district’s health insurance program by deduction of annual premiums from the early retirement benefit or by personal payment.

An employee desiring early retirement must also provide the school district such information as it may reasonably require to ensure the early retirement incentive program operates as a Social Security supplement. Following final action on any application for early retirement, the Clerk of the Board shall notify the applicant, in writing, of the final disposition and the date and amount of monthly early retirement benefits to be paid.

An employee may make an application for early retirement 1 to 2 years prior to the actual date. In this case, early retirement benefits will be calculated using the highest salary step attained by the employee. This would allow for the potential of continued part time employment without jeopardy to potential early retirement benefits.

D. Early Retirement Benefits -

The amount paid to the participant shall be determined by subtracting the base of the salary schedule from the employee's base salary (projected to full time base if employee is less than full time) for the year in which application for early retirement is made. The difference in these two figures shall be multiplied by sixty (60%) percent to determine the amount that would be paid annually to the participant. If a certified employee's base salary exceeds Step 14 MS + 45 column, then the multiplying factor shall be 30%. The benefit shall not be less than the salary schedule base and the top of salary schedule. The annual payment shall then be divided by twelve (12) to determine the amount, to be paid monthly until such time that the participant reaches 65, has received benefits for five (5) years or is deceased. If less than full time, the benefit will be calculated based on the percentage of the employees FTE. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in no event will the monthly benefit of any participant exceed the monthly amount which the participant would be entitled on account of normal retirement under the Social Security Act. Monthly payments will be made on normal payroll dates.

E. Terms and Conditions -

The following terms and conditions shall apply to the school district's early retirement plan:

1. Any application for early retirement shall be granted by the board of education.
2. The annual early retirement benefit shall be payable by the school district in twelve (12) equal installments.
3. An employee taking early retirement shall have the option to maintain health insurance coverage through the school district's health insurance program by agreeing to a deduction of health insurance premiums from the early retirement benefits or by premium payment with a personal check.
4. All early retirement benefits shall automatically terminate at the time an employee reaches age 65,
   has received benefits for five (5) years, or is deceased, whichever occurs first.
5. Health insurance may be maintained under the district's plan until the employee reaches age 65 or is deceased. (See #3 above for payment options)
6. An employee who takes early retirement shall have the responsibility to keep the school district informed of his or her current mailing address and telephone number.
7. If the Pratt USD 382 Employees Early Retirement plan should be rescinded, those employees that currently have applied and qualified will be "grandfathered" until their qualification expires.
8. All employees who have applied and qualified for early retirement benefits prior to April 1, 1995, shall receive benefits until they are sixty-five (65) or until they are deceased.
9. All employees who have applied and qualified for early retirement benefits prior to April 1, 1996, shall receive benefits for six (6) years or until they are sixty-five (65) or until they are deceased.

Amended 2008-2009 Negotiations. Deleted condition regarding the eligibility of retired staff for contractual employment by the school district.