

**PROFESSIONAL/SUPPORT STAFF LEAVES AND ABSENCES****SHORT-TERM LEAVES**

## Accrual

Short-term leave (STL) for certificated and support staff personnel working one-half full-time equivalent (.5 FTE) or more is a designated amount of compensated leave that is to be granted to a staff member at the rate of one (1) day per month for each month actually employed, and prorated at its full-time equivalency. Accrued short-term leave may be accumulated up to one hundred eighty (180) days.

Short-term leave may not be taken until actually accrued by non-exempt support staff employees. Certificated employees may use unaccrued short-term leave up to the maximum accruable during the remainder of the year as long as they are expected to earn the leave taken. Any leave not expected to be earned, will not be granted. Used short-term leave will be deducted in minimum two (2) hour increments.

Certified Employees DO NOT earn vacation, only Short Term Leave (STL)

**Purpose of Short-Term Leave**

Accumulated short-term leave may be used for the following reasons:

**Employee Illness**

Employee illness is time off from work, on account of an employee's temporary inability to perform duties because of sickness or disability. The Superintendent may require a physician's or other appropriate verification of an employee's claimed reason for absence. The District may, at District expense, require the employee to submit to medical or psychiatric examination by a physician or psychiatrist selected by the District to determine 1) whether or not the continued use of sick leave is appropriate or 2) whether return to duty is appropriate.

**Family Illness**

An employee may use all or any part of accumulated short-term leave or twelve (12) weeks in any twelve (12)-month period, whichever is less, to care for, or to make arrangements for the care of, any member of the employee's immediate family who resides with such employee and who is ill.

Immediate family is defined as spouse, natural or adopted child, spouse's natural or adopted child, parent(s), spouse's parent(s), sibling(s), spouse's sibling(s), aunt, uncle, spouse's aunt or uncle, niece(s) or nephew(s), spouse's niece(s) or nephew(s), grandparent(s), spouse's grandparent(s), great-grandparent(s), spouse's great-grandparent(s), the natural or adopted child of a natural or adopted child (grandchild), the natural or adopted child of a spouse's natural or adopted child (grandchild), registered domestic partner, natural or adopted child of registered domestic partner.

Per Policy GCCC, an eligible employee is entitled to up to twelve (12) weeks of Family Medical Leave in any twelve (12)-month period for parental leave. Leave granted under this policy shall be unpaid, except to the extent the employee has accrued paid leave, which as a requirement of this policy must be used first as part of the leave.

**Parental Leave**

An employee may use all or any part of accumulated short-term leave of twelve (12) weeks in any twelve (12)-month period, whichever is less, to care for the employee's newly born or newly adopted child.

Per Policy GCCC, an eligible employee is entitled to up to twelve (12) weeks of Family Medical Leave in any twelve (12)-month period for parental leave. Leave granted under this policy shall be unpaid, except to the extent the employee has accrued paid leave, which as a requirement of this policy must be used first as part of the leave.

**Bereavement Leave**

An employee may be absent from assigned job duties for up to five (5) days, which will not be deducted from short-term leave, in the event of the death of the employee's spouse, child (natural or adopted), spouse's child (natural or adopted), parent, spouse's parent, sibling, or spouse's sibling, registered domestic partner, natural or adopted child of registered domestic partner.

An employee may use up to five (5) days of accumulated short-term leave in the event of the death of an aunt, uncle, spouse's aunt or uncle, niece(s) or nephew(s), spouse's niece(s) or nephew(s), grandparent(s), spouse's grandparent(s),

great-grandparent(s), spouse's great-grandparent(s), the natural or adopted child of a natural or adopted child (grandchild), and the natural or adopted child of a spouse's natural or adopted child (grandchild).

An employee who needs more than five (5) days of bereavement leave may extend the bereavement leave by using business leave, upon approval by the site administrator.

### **Business Leave**

An employee eligible for short-term leave who does not otherwise receive paid vacation may use no more than two (2) days of short-term leave per year as business leave.

Business leave shall be used only for personal business that cannot be accommodated outside of regular work hours.

In granting business leave, the District is committed to preserving time between students and staff and ensuring the continuity of the education program. Therefore, business leave will not normally be granted during the first or last week of school or immediately preceding or following a regularly scheduled holiday or recess. The District recognizes that some flexibility in the policy is required to accommodate those unique, rare or unforeseen circumstances where the need for leave is undisputed and compelling. In these circumstances, a reason for the absence must be given.

Business leave must be approved in advance by the employee's site administrator. Business leave will not be approved if, substitute coverage, if necessary, is not secured, and/or in the opinion of the supervisor, the request would unduly disrupt the District's operation. The District reserves the right to request the reason for the absence.

**\*\*Unused personal business leave will accrue as *short-term leave*.**

### **Weather-Related Leave**

An employee who is unable to arrive at school because of abnormally severe weather, impassable roads, canceled mass transportation, or other similar condition may use annual short-term leave days for this absence without prior approval.

### **Religious Observance Leave**

All or part of an employee's annual short-term leave days may be used for the observance of religious holidays that require the absence of the employee, or religious services that require the absence of the employee.

### **Jury Duty**

It is recognized by the Board that no employee is exempt from jury duty and that leaves of absence for such duty must be granted:

- If paid leave is unavailable, the employee must request an unpaid leave of absence in accord with policy.
- Before an employee may leave work for this purpose, the employee shall provide the employer with a copy of the jury summons.
- The District may request to postpone jury service if the employee's absence creates a serious interruption or undue hardship.

Absences for jury duty will not be deducted from short-term leave if:

- The employee reimburses the District for jury duty pay when such payment is made directly to the employee. Failure to reimburse the District at the completion of the jury duty service will result in a full leave deduction equal to the number of contract days missed.
- An employee excused from jury duty after being summoned reports for regular duty as soon as possible. Failure to report for duty will result in a leave deduction equal to that portion of a contract day missed [A.R.S. 21-236].

Only the regular salary may be received by an employee on jury duty.

### **Victim Leave**

Statute provides that an employer who has fifty (50) or more employees shall permit an employee leave if the employee is the victim of juvenile or adult crime and is exercising a right to be present at a proceeding as defined in A.R.S. 8-420 or 13-4439. Compensation may be provided if the employee has available vacation or to the extent other leave may be available by policy:

- The employee's accrued vacation or business leave shall be used to the extent permitted by policy.
- If paid leave is unavailable, the employee must request an unpaid leave of absence in accord with policy.
- Before an employee may leave work for this purpose, the employee shall provide the employer with a copy of the form provided by law enforcement and if applicable a copy of the information the law enforcement agency provides the employee pursuant to either A.R.S. 8-386 or 13-4405.

Leave for this purpose may be limited if the leave creates an undue hardship to the employer's business.

**Military Leave.** See Exhibit GCCC-ED, Professional/Support Staff Leaves of Absence Without Pay.

**Workers' Compensation.** See Policy GBGC, Employee Assistance.

**Family and Medical Leave.** See Policy GCCC, Professional/Support Staff Leaves of Absence Without Pay.

**Absent Without Leave**

An employee shall be deemed "absent without leave" when absent from work because of:

- A reason that conforms to a policy currently in effect but the maximum days provided for in that policy will be exceeded; or
- A reason that does not conform to any policy currently in effect; or
- Failure to report to work without prior notification to the Superintendent.

In no case shall an employee be compensated for time lost due to being absent without leave.

An employee who is absent from work without prior approval is subject to disciplinary action, as is one who was unable to obtain prior approval due to unusual circumstances and such approval is denied upon the employee's return.

Absence without approval includes, but is not limited to, collective refusals to provide service, unauthorized use of short-term or other leave, or failure to attend required meetings or other school functions.

Any employee who can be shown to have willfully violated or misused the District's short-term leave policy or misrepresented any statement or condition will be subject to discipline, which may include reprimand, suspension, and/or dismissal.

**LONG TERM LEAVES**

**Professional Leave**

Upon recommendation by the Superintendent the Governing Board may grant an unpaid leave of absence to a certificated employee for one (1) or two (2) semesters, for the purpose of exchange teaching or other professional reasons, subject to the following conditions:

- The employee must have completed a minimum of three (3) years of continuous service in the District prior to the time of the requested leave.
- A leave of absence may be granted only for good cause and if not detrimental to the District.
- The Governing Board may not grant leaves of absence in excess of one (1) year at a time. An employee who desires a second or subsequent professional leave of absence may petition the Governing Board for such leave by submitting a request in writing to the Superintendent on or before February 1 of the year during which the employee already is on leave. Such leave may be granted or denied, at the discretion of the Governing Board. If granted, the second or subsequent leave, again, may not exceed one (1) year.

Time Lines. Except as set forth above, requests for professional leave must be submitted to the Superintendent according to the following schedule:

<u>Leave beginning:</u>	<u>Submit request by:</u>
First semester	March 1 of the previous school year
Second semester	October 1 of the previous fall

## **Health and Hardship Leave**

Upon recommendation by the Superintendent the Board may grant an unpaid leave, not to exceed one (1) year in length, for rest, restoration of health, or the alleviation of hardship involving the employee or the employee's immediate family.

A request for leave of absence shall not be denied by the District to the extent the employee is entitled to the leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act. All other applications for leave of absence may be granted or denied by the District, in its sole discretion.

### **General Conditions**

Each request for such a leave of absence shall be in a written application stating the purpose, starting date, and duration of the leave of absence, the reasons for its necessity or desirability, and any other information the applicant deems relevant to the request.

The leave of absences shall be only for the purpose and duration approved and may not be extended without written approval by the District.

All rights of continuing status (certificated teachers only), retirement, salary increments, and other benefits shall be restored at the level earned when the leave was granted. All applicable policies and possible actions related to reductions in force, non-renewal, et cetera, can be applied to an employee on leave in the same manner that such policies can be applied to an employee not on leave. All accrued sick, vacation, personal, and other paid leave shall be applied to the leave period unless otherwise agreed by the District or prohibited by the Family and Medical Leave Act.

On or before February 1 of the year during which the long-term leave is in effect, an employee on leave shall report in writing to the Superintendent the employee's intention to return. Failure to give such notice on or before February 1 will be deemed a resignation. The District shall not be responsible in any way to remind an employee of this requirement.

The District, in its discretion, may grant an extension of time, up to and including April 1, to submit the employee's written notice of intent to return. A request for an extension must be submitted on or before February 1, with an explanation as to why the extension is needed. If the extension is granted, notice of the employee's intention to return must be submitted on or before the approved extension date. Failure to do so will be deemed a resignation. No extension beyond April 1 will be granted.

An employee on unpaid leave may continue participation in the District's cafeteria plan of benefits, including medical, at the employee's sole expense.

Adopted: April 12, 2011

LEGAL REF.: A.R.S. 15-341