

Emergency and Discretionary Leaves

Emergency leave may be granted and taken as defined in the following:

An emergency arises out of unforeseen and unexpected circumstances which create an air of crisis or extreme need. The circumstances must present a grave and clear danger that imminently threatens physical or mental health or would result in irremediable harm or in immediate disaster to life or property unless some action is taken.

A written application for emergency leave must be returned to the district office on the day of return to school.

Family Emergency Leaves

The board recognizes that the demands of the workplace and of families need to be balanced to promote family stability and economic security for school district employees. Conditions for the authorized use of accumulated leave for family leaves are to be fairly construed in a manner consistent with this policy, and other relevant district policies.

Unless otherwise stated, any leave used under terms of this policy will be deducted from the staff member's accumulated sick leave. In the event the staff member's sick leave has been exhausted, the leave will be granted without pay.

Unless a situation is governed by an applicable collective bargaining agreement, the following apply:

A. Domestic Violence Leave

The district will allow victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking and family members of victims to take reasonable leave from work, intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule. The leave may be sick leave, other accrued leave or leave without pay. Family member includes a child, spouse, parent, parent in-law, grandparent or an individual with whom the victim has a dating relationship. The employee will provide advance notice of their intent to take leave. If advance notice is not possible, due to an emergency, notice should be provided no later than the end of the first day that the employee takes the leave.

B. Family Illness

District staff members may use accrued sick leave or other accrued leave, at the employee's choice, to care for a child of the employee with a health condition that requires treatment or supervision. Staff members may use accrued sick leave or other accrued leave, at the employee's choice, to care for a spouse, parent, parent-in-law or grandparent of the employee who has a serious health condition or an emergency condition. The district may require a signed statement from a licensed medical practitioner to verify the need for treatment, care or supervision for any absence that exceeds five (5) consecutive days.

C. Death in the Family

The district will allow each full-time staff member leave upon the death of an employee's spouse, mother, father, son, daughter, sister, brother, mother-in-law, or father-in-law. Leave also will be allowed upon the death of a son-in-law, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, granddaughter or grandson. The deaths of more than one family member resulting from a common occurrence will be treated as a single death with respect to the length of leave granted.

An extended unpaid leave of absence for a period up to the beginning of the next school term or school year may be approved at the discretion of the superintendent based upon consideration of educational program needs and the desires of the staff member, together with any recommendation of professionals such as medical practitioners or counselors regarding the leave request.

Nothing in this section will preclude the use of accumulated sick leave to care for a child with a health condition that requires treatment or supervision, as provided in the 'Family Illness' section of this policy.

Sabbatical Leaves

Certificated staff will be eligible for sabbatical leave for study or research. The district may grant sabbatical leaves of absence for study and/or research upon application by certificated staff, the recommendation of the superintendent, and approval by the board, provided such a leave will serve the best interest of the district and is within the fiscal parameters of the district. The district will declare its intention by February 1. Certificated staff will be eligible for sabbatical leave for study or research. Sabbatical leave will be granted according to the following stipulations:

- A. Years to Qualify: Staff will have served 5 or more continuous years in the district.
- B. Limit on Number: Sabbatical leaves may be granted up to one full year to not more than 5 percent of the total certificated staff of the district in any one year, the number granted to be subject to determination by the board upon the recommendation of the superintendent.
- C. Application Deadline: Applications for sabbatical leave will be filed with the superintendent not later than 90 days prior to the school year for which it is requested. The board may, at its discretion, extend this deadline.
- D. Proposed Plan to Accompany Application: A proposed plan of study or research to which the time spent on leave will be devoted must accompany the application.
- E. Criteria for Evaluation of Applications: Applications will be evaluated on the following three criteria:
 - 1. The merit of the proposed plan of study or research and its relationship of service to the district in terms of the individual's professional background.
 - 2. Proportionate representation of the different levels of district schools, such as elementary, middle school, senior high school, and administration.
 - 3. Seniority will be considered.
- F. Final Approval by Board: Applications approved by the superintendent will be presented to the board for final approval. Once approved by the board, any change of sabbatical plan will be presented in writing and approved by the superintendent in advance of the leave.
- G. Two-Year Studies: An applicant who is taking part in a two-year study may, upon evaluation of his/her program, request one year of sabbatical leave and a preliminary commitment, subject to district staffing needs, for an additional one-year leave of absence.
- H. Scholarship for Study or Research: Should the staff member who is granted a sabbatical leave receive a scholarship during the same year as the sabbatical, the total compensation from the two sources will not exceed the salary he/she would receive if under regular contract with the district for full-time service.
- I. Stipend for Study or Research: A staff member on sabbatical leave for study or research will receive a percent of his/her regularly contracted salary unless this sum is reduced as a result of section H above. The stipend will be paid in ten or twelve payments at the option of the applicant. All regular salary deductions will be made.
- J. Stipend Considered a Loan: The stipend received is a loan. Should a staff member on sabbatical leave fail to return to the district, he/she will then repay the loan within 2 years at the interest rate of 5 percent or at that rate provided in RCW 19.52.010, whichever is greater.

- K. Cancellation of Loan: The stipend will be canceled in the following manner upon the return of the staff member to the district:
 - 1. One-half of the total loan will be canceled after the first year of service in the district;
 - 2. The remaining one-half of the loan will be canceled after the second year of service in the district.
- L. Maintenance of Tenure and Salary Standing: A staff member granted sabbatical leave will maintain standing in tenure and salary.
- M. Limit on Other Employment: A staff member on sabbatical leave for study or research will not seek employment for compensation during the period of sabbatical other than to supplement sabbatical leave income in carrying out the approved program. Such employment must be approved by the superintendent and the board and, when combined with the sabbatical stipend, will not exceed the salary he/she would receive if under regular contract with the district for full-time service.
- N. Report Required Upon Return: Within 30 days of a staff member's return from sabbatical leave, the staff member will file with the superintendent a report giving the substance of the program of study or research in which he/she is engaged, and indicating the value which he/she believes grew out of the experience. If the staff member was employed for compensation during the program, full details of the employment and income should be included in this report.
- O. Leaves to Accept Scholarships: Staff may at any time request leave to accept scholarships of up to one full year which would not involve the district in any financial obligations, in which case all other provisions of the sabbatical leave policy except the percentage limitation would apply.
- P. Return to Original Position: An effort will be made to replace a certificated staff member returning from sabbatical leave in his/her original position or in an appropriate comparable position.

Leaves of Absence

The district may grant leaves of absence for specific periods of time for up to one school year upon application by a staff member, the recommendation of the superintendent and the approval of the board. Such leaves will be without pay or fringe benefits and, with the approval of the board, and may be extended for one additional school year. During the leave the staff member may pay the district's share of any insurance benefits program in order to maintain those benefits. The needs of students and the district program warrant primary consideration. Leaves of absence will be granted only when they will not have an undesirable impact upon the educational program or business operations.

A staff member will be entitled to return to a position in the district at the end of the leave of absence subject to the availability of a position for which the staff member is qualified. The staff member granted a leave of absence will inform the board by April 1 as to his/her intentions to assume a position in the district for the ensuing school year. If said notification is not received, the individual's employment rights with the district will be terminated.

Staff on leave of absence will not earn any salary schedule experience credit or any sick leave credit or benefits during the leave of absence.

Leaves to Attend Meetings/Conferences

The district may grant leaves, subject to the recommendation of the superintendent and approval by the board, to staff for the purpose of attending meetings or conferences that are likely to be of value to the staff member's performance. Meetings and conferences wherein bargaining unit activities are conducted are excluded. Such leaves may be granted without pay and with or without travel expense reimbursement.

Cross References: 5021 - Conflicts Between Policy and Bargaining Agreements

Legal References:

RCW 28A.400.300 Hiring and discharging employees —
Written leave policies — Seniority and leave benefits of
employees transferring between school districts and other
educational employers

RCW 49.12.270 Sick leave, time off — Care of family
members

Chapter 49.76 RCW Domestic violence leave

Management Resources:

2011 - October Issue

2009 - April Issue

Zillah School District

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