

## **FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE**

If the district employs 50 individuals, the district is required to provide eligible employees with leave under the auspices of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

In order for school district employees to qualify for FMLA leave, three conditions must be met:

1. The school district must have 50 or more employees on the payroll for 20 workweeks during the current or preceding calendar year.
2. At least 50 employees must work within 75 miles of the district's worksite for the district to be covered; and
3. The employee must have worked for the school district for at least 12 months and for at least 1,250 hours during the last year.

Eligible employees are those district employees who meet the above requirements and who request leave for one of the following reasons:

1. Birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child by an employee;
2. To care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent who suffers from a severe health condition; or
3. For a serious health condition the employee is experiencing.

Before an employee will be placed on unpaid family leave, the employee must first exhaust any accumulated sick leave, personal leave, and vacation time. Such sick leave, personal leave, and vacation time will be deducted from the 12 workweeks of eligibility. If both spouses are employees of this district, their total leave in any 12-month period will be limited to 12 weeks if the leave is taken (1) for the birth or adoption of a child or (2) to care for a sick parent. The right to take leave for the birth or placement of a son or daughter expires 12 months after the birth or placement with the employee.

If the superintendent deems it necessary or desirable, an employee may be required to provide certification from a physician of the necessity of any leave requested. The superintendent may require certification as to the date the medical condition began, the anticipated duration and prognosis, and medical facts about the medical condition and treatment.

If the superintendent deems it necessary or desirable, the superintendent may require a second opinion by a physician selected and paid for by the district. If the original opinion and the second opinion conflict, the district may require a third opinion at the district's expense. The conclusion of the third opinion will be final and binding upon the employee and the district.

If family leave is granted for a continuing health condition, subsequent recertification may be required at the discretion of the superintendent.

Intermittent leave may be taken in lieu of continuous leave for the birth or adoption of a child only with the concurrence of the district. The employee must provide 30 days of advance notice or as many days of advance notice as are practical. Leave taken for serious health conditions of the employee or an eligible member of the employee's family may be taken intermittently without district concurrence. However, the employee may be transferred to another position that can better accommodate the employee's recurring absences. Such transfer will not reduce the employee's pay and benefits.

Upon completion of family leave, the employee will be entitled to return to the former position of employment with equivalent benefits and pay without loss of seniority or tenure. The employee will be deemed to be at work for the purposes of tenure accrual and retirement vesting and participation. The district will maintain the employee's medical

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insurance coverage. If the employee contributes toward the premiums, the employee will continue to pay the same rate while on leave.

NOTE: During FMLA leave, a board has no obligation to continue to give an employee any benefits other than health insurance, and those benefits thus may be discontinued during the leave. A board may decide whether to extend continuation of coverage to life, dental, and vision insurance, but should know extensions are not required by the FMLA and there can be a substantial cost to the district in doing so. One option that is cost effective and still protects employees while they are on unpaid leave is to permit employees to retain ancillary insurances by reimbursing the district for the full cost of the premiums during the leave period. No benefits or seniority accrues during leave. The district may require documentation from the employee's physician that the employee is able to return to work. FMLA will run concurrently.

**REFERENCE: 29 CFR pt. 825  
P.L. 103-3**