

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS
LEAVES AND ABSENCES

DEC
(LOCAL)

Definitions

The term “immediate family” is defined as:

Family

1. Spouse.
2. Son or daughter, including a biological, adopted, or foster child, a son- or daughter-in-law, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stands *in loco parentis*.
3. Parent, stepparent, parent-in-law, or other individual who stands *in loco parentis* to the employee.
4. Sibling, stepsibling, and sibling-in-law.
5. Grandparent and grandchild.
6. Any person residing in the employee’s household at the time of illness or death.

For purposes of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the definitions of spouse, parent, son or daughter, and next of kin are found in DECA(LEGAL).

Family Emergency

The term “family emergency” shall be limited to disasters and life-threatening situations involving the employee or a member of the employee’s immediate family.

Leave Day

A “leave day” for purposes of earning, use, or recording of leave shall mean the number of hours per day equivalent to the employee’s usual assignment, whether full-time or part-time.

Catastrophic Illness or Injury

A catastrophic illness or injury is a severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee or a member of the employee’s immediate family that requires the services of a licensed practitioner for a prolonged period of time and that forces the employee to exhaust all leave time earned by that employee and to lose compensation from the District. Such conditions typically require prolonged hospitalization or recovery or are expected to result in disability or death. Conditions relating to pregnancy or childbirth shall be considered catastrophic if they meet the requirements of this paragraph.

Availability

The District shall make state personal leave and local leave for the current year available for use at the beginning of the school year.

Earning Local Leave

An employee shall not earn any local leave when he or she is in unpaid status. An employee using full or proportionate paid leave shall be considered to be in paid status.

Only those days/hours that are part of the base employment year/regular workday shall be included in the calculation of local leave. Extra workdays for supplemental duties/overtime hours shall not entitle personnel to additional leave.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS
LEAVES AND ABSENCES

DEC
(LOCAL)

Deductions

Leave Without Pay

The District shall not approve paid leave for more leave days than have been accumulated in prior years plus leave currently available. Any unapproved absences or absences beyond accumulated and available paid leave shall result in deductions from the employee's pay.

Leave Proration

*Employed for
Less Than Full
Year*

If an employee separates from employment with the District before his or her last duty day of the year, or begins employment after the first duty day, state personal leave and local leave shall be prorated based on the actual time employed.

If an employee separates from employment before the last duty day of the school year, the employee's final paycheck shall be reduced for:

1. State personal leave the employee used beyond his or her pro rata entitlement for the school year; and
2. Local leave the employee used but had not earned as of the date of separation.

*Employed for Full
Year*

If an employee uses more local leave than he or she earned and remains employed with the District through his or her last duty day, the District shall deduct the cost of the excess leave days from the employee's pay in accordance with administrative regulations.

Recording

Leave shall be recorded as follows:

1. Leave shall be recorded in half-day increments for all employees.
2. If the employee is taking intermittent FMLA leave, leave shall be recorded in one-hour increments.

Order of Use

Earned compensatory time shall be used before any available paid state and local leave. [See DEAB]

Unless an employee requests a different order in writing, available paid state and local leave shall be used in the following order, as applicable:

1. Local leave.
2. State sick leave accumulated before the 1995–96 school year.
3. State personal leave.

**Concurrent Use of
Leave**

When an absent employee is eligible for FMLA leave, the District shall designate the absence as FMLA leave.

The District shall require the employee to use temporary disability leave and paid leave, including compensatory time, concurrently with FMLA leave.

An employee receiving workers' compensation income benefits may be eligible for paid or unpaid leave. An absence due to a work-related injury or illness shall be designated as FMLA leave, temporary disability leave, and/or assault leave, as applicable.

Medical Certification

An employee shall submit medical certification of the need for leave if:

1. The employee is absent more than three consecutive work-days because of personal illness or illness in the immediate family;
2. The District requires medical certification due to a questionable pattern of absences or when deemed necessary by the supervisor or Superintendent;
3. The employee requests FMLA leave for the employee's serious health condition or that of a spouse, parent, or child; or
4. The employee requests FMLA leave for military caregiver purposes.

In each case, medical certification shall be made by a health-care provider as defined by the FMLA. [See DECA(LEGAL)]

Note: For District contribution to employee insurance during leave, see CRD(LOCAL).

State Personal Leave

The Board requires employees to differentiate the manner in which state personal leave is used:

Non-Discretionary
Use

1. Non-discretionary use of leave shall be for the same reasons and in the same manner as state sick leave accumulated before May 30, 1995. [See DEC(LEGAL)]

Non-discretionary use includes leave related to the birth or placement of a child and taken within the first year after the child's birth, adoption, or foster placement.

Discretionary Use

2. Discretionary use of leave is at the individual employee's discretion, subject to limitations set out below.

Limitations

Request for
Leave

The employee shall submit a written request for discretionary use of state personal leave to the immediate supervisor or designee. In deciding whether to approve or deny state personal leave, the supervisor or designee shall not seek or con-

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS
LEAVES AND ABSENCES

DEC
(LOCAL)

sider the reasons for which an employee requests to use leave. The supervisor or designee shall, however, consider the effect of the employee's absence on the educational program or District operations, as well as the availability of substitutes. The supervisor or designee shall notify the employee in advance as to whether the request is approved or denied.

Duration of
Leave

Discretionary use of state personal leave shall not exceed three consecutive workdays.

Local Leave

All employees shall earn five paid local leave days per school year in accordance with administrative regulations.

Local leave shall accumulate without limit.

Local leave shall be used according to the terms and conditions of state personal leave. [See State Personal Leave, above]

All local sick leave days earned and carried over at the end of the 1996–97 school year, as well as local leave earned during the 1997–98 school year, shall become local personal leave.

Sick Leave Bank

The District shall establish a sick leave bank that employees may join through contribution of local leave or state personal leave.

Leave contributed to the bank shall be solely for the use of participating employees. An employee who is a member of the bank may request leave from the bank if the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family experiences a catastrophic illness or injury and the employee has exhausted all paid leave.

If the employee is unable to request leave from the sick leave bank, a member of the employee's family or the employee's supervisor may submit the request.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop regulations for the operation of the sick leave bank that address the following:

1. Membership in the sick leave bank, including the number of days an employee must contribute to become a member;
2. Procedures to request leave from the sick leave bank;
3. The maximum number of days per school year a member employee may receive from the sick leave bank;
4. The committee or administrator authorized to consider requests for leave from the sick leave bank and criteria for granting requests; and
5. Other procedures deemed necessary for the operation of the sick leave bank.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS
LEAVES AND ABSENCES

DEC
(LOCAL)

Appeal	Decisions regarding the sick leave bank may not be appealed.
Family and Medical Leave	For purposes of an employee's entitlement to FMLA leave, the 12-month period shall be measured backward from the date an employee uses FMLA leave.
Twelve-Month Period	
Combined Leave for Spouses	If both spouses are employed by the District, the District shall limit FMLA leave for the birth, adoption, or placement of a child, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition, to a combined total of 12 weeks. The District shall limit military caregiver leave to a combined total of 26 weeks. [See DECA(LEGAL)]
Intermittent or Reduced Schedule Leave	The District shall permit use of intermittent or reduced schedule FMLA leave for the care of a newborn child or for the adoption or placement of a child with the employee. [See DECA(LEGAL) for use of intermittent or reduced schedule leave due to a medical necessity.]
Certification of Leave	If an employee requests leave, the employee shall provide certification, as required by FMLA regulations, of the need for leave. [See DECA(LEGAL)]
Fitness-for-Duty Certification	If an employee takes FMLA leave due to the employee's own serious health condition, the employee shall provide, before resuming work, a fitness-for-duty certification. If the District will require certification of the employee's ability to perform essential job functions, the District shall provide a list of essential job functions to the employee with the FMLA designation notice.
End of Semester Leave	If a teacher takes leave near the end of the semester, the District may require the teacher to continue leave until the end of the semester. [See DECA(LEGAL), Leave at the End of a Semester]
Failure to Return	If, at the expiration of FMLA leave, the employee is able to return to work but chooses not to do so, the District may require reimbursement of premiums paid by the District during the leave. [See DECA(LEGAL), Recovery of Benefit Cost]
Temporary Disability Leave	Any full-time employee whose position requires educator certification by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) or by the District shall be eligible for temporary disability leave. The maximum length of temporary disability leave shall be 180 calendar days. [See DBB(LOCAL) for temporary disability leave placement and DEC(LEGAL) for return to active duty.]
Educators	
Other Employees	Unpaid temporary disability leave may also be granted to other eligible employees for a maximum of 180 calendar days, upon approval by the Superintendent or designee. In order to qualify for such leave of absence, an employee must have worked 1,250

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS
LEAVES AND ABSENCES

DEC
(LOCAL)

hours during the previous 12-month period from the date of the request of temporary disability leave. Application for this leave shall be submitted in accordance with the established administrative procedures.

*Reinstatement or
Resignation*

An employee reaching the end of the temporary disability leave period shall provide a 30 calendar day timely written notice of his or her intent to resume active duty or to request an extension of leave pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Failure to comply with the time notification provisions shall constitute good cause for termination of contract employment, in accordance with law and District policies. [See DF policy series]

*Reassignment
Following Leave*

Employees who are not certified by SBEC and who are returning from unpaid personal illness leave of 60 or fewer calendar days shall be returned to the same position. Unless otherwise prescribed by law, employees returning from unpaid personal illness leave in excess of 60 calendar days shall be given priority for assignment to a comparable position as determined by the Superintendent or designee based on the needs of the District.

**Workers'
Compensation**

Note: Workers' compensation is not a form of leave. The workers' compensation law does not require the continuation of the District's contribution to health insurance. [See CRD(LOCAL) regarding payment of insurance contribution during employee absences.]

An absence due to a work-related injury or illness shall be designated as FMLA leave, temporary disability leave, and/or assault leave, as applicable.

Assault Leave

Assault leave, during which the employee's workers' compensation wage benefits shall be supplemented by the District up to the pre-assault weekly salary, with no deduction from the employee's accumulated paid leave benefits, shall run concurrently with family and medical leave.

Court Appearances

Absences due to compliance with a valid subpoena or for jury duty shall be fully compensated by the District and shall not be deducted from the employee's pay or leave balance.

**Reimbursement for
Leave Upon
Retirement**

The following leave provisions shall apply to state leave earned beginning on the original effective date of this program.

An employee who retires from the District under the Texas Teacher Retirement System (TRS) shall be eligible for reimbursement for state leave under the following conditions:

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS
LEAVES AND ABSENCES

DEC
(LOCAL)

1. The employee's retirement is voluntary and the employee is not being discharged or nonrenewed.
2. The employee provides advance written notice of intent to retire at least 30 days before the last day of employment.
3. The employee has at least five years of service with the District.

The employee shall be reimbursed for each day of state leave, to a maximum of 80 days, at a rate of \$30 per day. If the employee is reemployed with the District, days for which the employee received payment shall not be available to that employee.

The rate established by the Board shall be in effect until the Board adopts a new rate. Any changes to the rate shall apply beginning with the school year following the adoption of the rate change.

Neutral Absence Control

If an employee does not return to work after exhausting all available paid and unpaid leave, the District shall provide the employee written notice that he or she no longer has leave available for use. The District shall automatically pursue termination of an employee who has exhausted all available leave, regardless of the reason for the absence [see DF series]. The employee's eligibility for reasonable accommodations, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act [see DAA(LEGAL)], shall be considered before termination. If terminated, the employee may apply for reemployment with the District.

Frequent or Prolonged Absence

All absences in excess of ten workdays during a semester shall be investigated by the immediate supervisor, who shall take appropriate action as required by District guidelines.

Supervisors shall report absences for individuals in excess of 20 workdays in a school year to the Superintendent or designee, who shall take whatever action is deemed appropriate. Such action may result in disciplinary action including termination of employment.