

This policy shall apply to all employees of the Sumter County Board of Education.

Accrual of Sick Leave and Absence for Medical and Related Reasons

In accordance with Georgia law, employees will be entitled to annual sick leave with pay to be accrued at the rate of one and one-quarter days for each completed contract month. All unused sick leave shall be accumulated from one contract year to the next up to a maximum of forty-five (45) days. Employees are entitled to transfer up to forty-five (45) days of accumulated leave from one school system in the state of Georgia to another. If an employee needs to utilize unearned sick leave, advance leave may be granted. The advance leave shall not exceed the number of days the employee would accumulate through the end of the contract year. If an employee fails for any reason to complete a contract year, sick leave used but not yet earned will be deducted from the employee's final check.

The leave provided for under this policy is available only for personal illness, injury or exposure to contagious diseases, or for absences necessitated by illness in the employee's immediate family.

For any absence in which sick leave is used, the Superintendent shall have the right to require a physician's certificate stating that the employee is ill and is unable to perform his or her duties.

Accumulated sick leave may be used during any school year by employees in case of death of a member of the immediate family.

For the purposes of this policy, members of the immediate family are defined as spouse, children, father, mother, brother, sister, grandparents, or in-law equivalents of the above or other relatives living in the household.

Personal and Professional Leave

Three (3) days of any accumulated sick leave may be utilized during each school year for personal or professional reasons provided prior approval of the absence is given by the Superintendent or authorized representative and provided the presence of the employee requesting absence is not essential for effective school operation. Personal and professional leave will not be granted during in-service days or on the day before or day after holidays. Emergency requests for personal and professional leave may be granted at the discretion of the Superintendent or his or her authorized representative.

Employees are not required to disclose the purpose for which such absence is sought but may be required to state whether the absence is for "personal" or "professional" reasons.

Observance of Religious Holidays

Employees may use personal and professional leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays. If an employee desires to take leave for the observance of recognized religious holidays in excess of the days allowed for personal or professional leave, the

employee may take unpaid leave for such purposes provided that such leave is not excessive and does not interfere with fulfilling the obligations of his or her job.

Jury and Witness Leave

Each person employed by the Sumter County School System shall be allowed leave with pay for the purposes of serving as a juror in any court or when subpoenaed to testify in a case arising out of the individual's duties as a teacher. Jury and/or witness leave shall not be deducted from an individual's accumulated personal, professional, or sick leave. No teacher utilizing jury leave shall be required to pay the cost of employing a substitute teacher to serve during his or her absence for jury or witness leave.

Maternity Leave

A leave of absence shall be granted employees for the purpose of childbearing in accordance with the following regulations:

1. Any employee who is pregnant shall be entitled to a leave of absence to begin at a time to be determined by the employee, the physician, and the Superintendent between the commencement of the pregnancy and the anticipated date of delivery. The employee shall notify the Superintendent in writing of her desire to take such leave and, except in case of emergency, shall give such notice at least 60 calendar days prior to the date on which her leave is to begin. This notice shall include a doctor's statement of anticipated date of physical disability. The employee may continue in active employment as late into her pregnancy as she desires provided she is able to perform properly the required job functions of her job. Final determination of ability to perform properly the required job functions shall be made by the Board of Education. An employee wishing to work to the date of physical disability shall be entitled to the use of all accumulated sick leave credited to her, not to exceed the doctor's estimated length of physical disability. An employee wishing to discontinue work prior to the date of physical disability shall be governed by the same sick leave provisions as apply to employees on leave for other reasons;
2. An employee who has been granted leave for the period of physical disability only shall be entitled to return to active employment upon presentation of a doctor's statement of physical ability to perform the required functions of the job and shall be assigned to perform the required functions of the job and shall be assigned to a substantially equivalent position to be approved by the Superintendent. An employee who has been granted leave for a period longer than the period of physical disability, but not to exceed one full school year, shall be entitled to return to active employment upon written request for reassignment and contingent on a vacancy for which the employee is qualified. Such employee shall be given preference equal to any other applicant returning from a period of physical disability for a vacancy for which she is qualified. In any instance, the employee's return to active employment may be delayed until the beginning of a quarter, or semester, in order to maintain continuity of classroom instruction; and

3. If the Board of Education disagrees with any doctor's statement of disability of ability, it may appoint a physician of the same medical specialty as the employee's physician for the purpose of receiving independent medical judgment.

Bereavement Leave

Employees shall be given leave for bereavement subject to these criteria:

1. The death occurs in the employee's immediate family. (A definition of "immediate family" is shown above.)
2. A period of three (3) days leave due to death in the immediate family shall be considered the maximum time which can be charged to sick leave. Extenuating circumstances may require additional leave time and may be granted by the Board of Education on the recommendation of the Superintendent.
3. Leave taken for bereavement shall be subtracted from the accrued sick leave of the employee.

Military Leave

All employees of the Sumter County Board of Education are entitled to paid leave not to exceed eighteen (18) days in any calendar year for the purpose of complying with ordered military leave duty with the armed forces of the United States or State of Georgia, including duty as a voluntary member of the militia or reserve component of the United States or State of Georgia. Employees also are entitled to leave not exceeding thirty days in any one calendar year if ordered to duty as a result of the declaration of any emergency by the governor or the appropriate officials of the United States armed forces. Employees who have military commitments shall inform the director annually and shall cooperate to the extent possible in scheduling such leave so as to minimize the disruption in those employees' duties and the mission of the Board of Education.

Construction with the Family and Medical Leave Act

To the extent that any provision in this policy conflicts with or is superseded by the *Family and Medical Leave Act* ("FMLA"), the regulations promulgated there under, or other federal law, the provision of the FMLA, its regulations or other law, as the case may be, control.

ADOPTED: February 9, 1995