

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE (REGULATIONS)**

The policy of the Stillwater Board of Education is to grant extended leave without pay to employees, not otherwise covered by the negotiated agreement, who meet certain conditions. The decision to grant or not to grant such leave shall be an administrative decision of the board of education. Requests must be made to the board of education **on or before October 1<sup>st</sup> (for the following semester) and or April 1<sup>st</sup> (for the following semester)** ~~by April 25 for leave during the following school year.~~

Leave may be granted to qualified persons as follows:

1. An employee employed for at least three years with the Stillwater Public Schools may be granted extended leave without pay for up to one year, for pregnancy or educational reasons, with no loss of status.
2. An employee with at least five years with the Stillwater Public Schools district may be granted extended leave without pay for up to one year, for personal reasons, with no loss of career teacher status.

Such leave may be granted by the board of education only after consultation with the employee requesting such leave, and only after a Leave of Absence Contract is signed by both the employee and the board of education.

Upon return from a leave of absence, the employee shall be placed in the same position or a similar position for which the employee is qualified. The employee on leave shall not advance on the salary schedule and is subject to the current reduction-in-force policy.

An employee on approved leave of absence will be reinstated at a salary level no lower than that attained at the time the leave was granted.

Sick leave that was accrued prior to the approved leave of absence will be reinstated. Additional sick leave or personal business leave will not be granted for the period of one year's leave of absence. An employee taking a leave of absence for one semester will receive five days of sick leave, one and one-half days of personal business leave, and one day of emergency leave. A leave of absence for a semester will not change the amount of days for bereavement leave.

Stillwater Public Schools will provide leaves of absence on a short-term or long-term basis.

### **Short-Term Leave of Absence**

Employees may apply to the superintendent of schools for short-term leave of absence without pay not exceeding five (5) working days per year. Short-term leave must be requested prior to absence through the building principal or supervisor and submitted to the superintendent for action. Requests for absence during times that place undue burden on others or which work against the purposes and objectives of the school will be denied.

Nothing stated above shall prevent the board of education from authorizing or extending a leave of absence for any other purpose not expressly identified above.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE (Cont.)****Long-Term Leave of Absence**

Employees who have successfully completed three (3) consecutive years of service, may apply for long-term leave of absence, without pay, not exceeding one (1) year for the following reasons:

1. Graduate or undergraduate study
2. Work experience required for certification
3. To hold elected office in state or national professional educational organizations
4. Maternity or adoption
5. Illness
6. Military
7. Convalescence of employees or members of the immediate family (a physician's statement may be required concerning the convalescence)

An employee's request for long-term leave without pay must be made in writing directly to the board of education and sent by certified mail postmarked on or before **October 1<sup>st</sup> (for the following semester) and or April 1<sup>st</sup> (for the following semester)** ~~April 25~~. The board of education may recommend approval of the leave to the board at the next regular meeting following receipt of the request when it is deemed in the best interest of the school district to do so. A letter stating the board of education's decision and condition(s) of the leave will be given to the employee.

The board shall provide leave to qualified employees who are members of any component of the Armed Forces of the United States (Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard), including members of the Army and Air National Guard and the Reserve Forces and the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service, when the employee meets the requirements set forth below and the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA). A leave of absence for the period of active service shall be without loss of status or efficiency rating and without loss of pay during the first thirty (30) days of such leave. Leave will be granted in accordance with federal law.

On granting long-term leave, the board of education will, during the period from the date of application (no later than **April 1 25**) through June 1, attempt to identify an acceptable replacement employee who will accept a temporary, one-year only contract. If an acceptable replacement is secured who is willing to accept a temporary, one-year only contract, the leave employee will be allowed to return to the same position after completing the leave of absence. If an acceptable replacement employee who is willing to accept a temporary, one-year only contract is not identified by June 1, the leave employee will not be guaranteed the opportunity to return to the same position after completing the leave of absence.

If, following the leave of absence period, the leave employee rejects an offer of employment for which he/she is qualified, the district shall have fulfilled its obligation to the leave employee.

All employees granted a leave of absence for any of the above purposes shall retain all accumulated benefits following completion of the leave. No employee may accrue additional benefits while on any leave of absence.

To be eligible for reemployment following the leave period, the employee shall notify the school district by certified mail postmarked on or before **October 1<sup>st</sup> (for the following semester) and or April 1<sup>st</sup> (for the following semester)** ~~April 25~~ of the school year in which the leave was granted. An employee failing to make written request to return by **on or before October 1<sup>st</sup> (for the following semester) and or April 1<sup>st</sup> (for the following semester)** ~~April 25~~ of the school year in which the leave was granted shall be deemed to have resigned as of the leave commencement date.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE (Cont.)**

Employees granted leaves of absence for graduate or undergraduate study [twelve (12) hours per semester at an accredited school]; work experience required for certification; and professional education organization officership shall, upon request, furnish satisfactory evidence of completion of the program or term of office for which leave was requested. Failure to present such evidence shall result in the termination of the employee except under extraordinary circumstances as determined by the superintendent.

Any employee on leave of absence is entitled to continued participation in available health insurance programs provided payment of premiums is made in advance, and the employee makes prior arrangements with the district's business office.

Employees returning from a long-term leave of absence are not exempt from the involuntary reduction-in-force policy or internal employee transfer policy.

Nothing stated above shall prevent the board of education from authorizing or extending a leave of absence not otherwise stated in board policy.

Acceptance of other employment during the time the employee is on leave of absence from Stillwater Public Schools nullifies the conditions of leave and the employee shall be deemed to have resigned as of the leave commencement date.