

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE REGULATION

Consistent with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) as amended, the Board of Education shall provide up to twelve (12) workweeks of unpaid, job protected leave in a twelve (12) month period for its eligible employees. In addition, FMLA provides eligible employees with 26 workweeks of leave in a single 12 month period to care for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury incurred in the line of duty.

An eligible employee must have been employed for at least twelve months, have worked at least 1,250 hours during the prior twelve months, and be employed at a worksite where at least 50 employees are employed by that employer within a 75 mile radius of that worksite.

Right to Benefits During Leave

An eligible employee is entitled to a total of twelve workweeks of unpaid, job protected family and medical leave. Any employee who uses the unpaid, job protected leave shall have his/her health benefits continued during the leave, shall not have any previously accrued benefits altered and shall be returned to an equivalent position according to established Board policies and collective bargaining agreements. The employee is not entitled to accrue seniority during the leave.

An employee may elect, or the BOCES may require, an employee to use available paid leave time for purposes of a family or medical leave. However, an employee may only use accrued paid leave in accordance with the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Family and Medical Leave

Family leave is available when a child is born to the employee, adopted by an employee or one is placed with the employee for foster care. Medical leave is available in order for the employee to take care of a spouse, domestic partner, child, parent who has a serious health condition, when the employee has a serious health condition rendering him/her unable to perform the functions of the employee's job. Military caregiver leave is available to employees who are family members of covered service members with a serious illness or injury incurred in the line of duty on active duty. Additionally, this applies to covered veterans who require care and have been other than dishonorably discharged from service within the last five (5) years.

Military caregiver leave is a special entitlement that allows the employee to extend FMLA leave to 26 workweeks. Qualifying exigency leave is available to employees when a family member is notified of impending call or called to active duty.

A child shall include any individual whether biological, adopted, a foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child standing in loco parentis who is under eighteen years of age or, if over eighteen, is incapable of self-care due to a mental or physical disability. A parent shall include the biological parent of the employee or an individual who stood in loco parentis to the employee when he/she was a child. Next of kin shall mean the nearest blood relative other than spouse, domestic partner, parent, son, daughter, as defined in federal regulation.

A serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care or continuing treatment by a health care provider.

Family leave must be taken within one year of the birth or placement of the employee's child. If both spouses are employed by the BOCES, the combined amount of leave for family leave or medical leave may be limited to twelve weeks.

Notice to Take Leave

The employee shall notify the BOCES of his/her request for family or medical leave at least 30 days prior to the date when the leave is to begin, when such leave is foreseeable. If such leave is not foreseeable then notice shall be given as early as is practical. If the employee requests medical leave, reasonable attempts shall be made to schedule treatment so as not to disrupt the BOCES' operations.

Employees, absent unusual circumstance, must comply with the BOCES' usual and customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave.

Intermittent Leave

An employee, who requests family leave, shall not be provided intermittent leave or a reduced leave schedule unless the employee and BOCES mutually agree. Intermittent leave may be provided for medical leave, however, the BOCES may transfer the employee to a comparable position if it will better accommodate such intermittent periods of leave. For instructional employees who request medical leave and it is foreseeable that the medical treatment shall cause the employee to be on leave for more than 20% of the total number of working days in the period of leave, the BOCES may require the employee to take a block of time or to transfer to an equivalent position for which the employee is qualified, but which better accommodates intermittent periods of leave.

Military Leave: Leave Related to Active Duty or a Call to Active Duty

If the necessity for leave because of a qualifying exigency arising from the fact that a family member is on active duty or has been notified of an impending call to active duty is foreseeable, the employee shall give such notice to the BOCES as soon as is reasonable and practicable.

The School Board may require that a request for leave because of a qualified exigency arising from the fact that the employee's spouse, domestic partner, son, daughter, or parent is on active duty or has been notified of an impending call to active duty be supported by a certification issued in accordance with regulations.

Certification

The BOCES may require the employee requesting medical leave to present a certification from the health care provider of the person for whom the employee is taking the leave. Upon request by the BOCES, the employee must provide the certification within 15 days. The certificate shall include:

1. the date on which the serious health condition commenced;
2. the probable duration of the condition;
3. the appropriate medical facts within the knowledge of the health care provider regarding the condition;
4. a statement that the employee is needed to care for the family member and an estimate of the amount of time that such employee shall be needed or a statement that the employee is unable to perform the functions of the employee's position; and
5. the dates and duration of medical treatment if the request for intermittent leave is for a planned medical treatment.

If the BOCES doubts the validity of the certification, then, at the BOCES' expense, a second opinion may be required from a health care provider selected by the BOCES. The school physician cannot give this opinion. If the two opinions conflict, a third health care provider, at the BOCES' expense, may be chosen by the two parties to render a final opinion.

Restoration

An instructional employee, who begins any type of leave at least five (5) weeks before the end of an academic term, may be required not to return until the new term begins if the leave is at least three (3) weeks long and the employee would return during the last three (3) weeks of the term.

An instructional employee who begins leave, for any purpose other than personal illness, less than three (3) weeks prior to the end of the term and the leave is longer than five (5) working days, may be required not to return until the new term begins.

Failure to Return

The BOCES may recover the health care premiums paid during the leave if the employee fails to return from the leave. However, recovery cannot occur if the employee fails to return because of the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition or due to circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

Effect on Existing Laws or Agreements

Family and medical leave, consistent with the Family and Medical Leave Act, shall be provided to all eligible employees. Any collective bargaining agreement which contains greater leave benefits than this policy shall remain in force.

Notice of Policy

The BOCES shall post a notice prepared or approved by the Secretary of Labor stating the pertinent provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act, including information concerning enforcement of the law.

Adoption date: November 21, 2016