

**Policy Name: Licensed Personnel  
Personal/Professional Leave****Policy Code: 3.11****Date Adopted: R/V 4/18/16**

For the district to function efficiently and have the necessary personnel present to effect a high achieving learning environment, employee absences need to be kept to a minimum. The district acknowledges there are times during the school year when employees have personal business that needs to be addressed during the school day. Employees shall take personal leave or leave without pay for those absences which are not due to attendance at school functions and do not qualify for other types of leave (for sick leave see Policy 3.09, for professional leave, see below).

School functions, for the purpose of this policy, means: Athletic or academic events related to the school district; and meetings and conferences related to education. For employees other than the superintendent, the determination of what activities meet the definition of a school function shall be made by the employee's immediate supervisor or designee. For the superintendent, the school board of directors shall determine what activities meet the definition of a school function. In no instance shall paid leave in excess of allotted vacation days and/or personal days be granted to an employee who is absent from work while receiving remuneration from another source as compensation for the reason for their absence.

1. Every licensed employee shall be credited with two (2) personal leave days at the beginning of each school year. These two (2) days may be taken at the cost of a substitute whether a substitute is employed or not.
2. Years of teaching experience brought forward may allow a teacher to take more than the above two (2) personal days each year.
  - a. One (1) additional day may be taken if the teacher has at least five (5) years of teaching experience. This day is at no cost.
  - b. An additional day at no cost may be taken if the teacher has at least ten (10) years of teaching experience.
  - c. A final additional day at no cost may be taken if the teacher has at least fifteen (15) years of teaching experience.
3. The maximum number of personal days allowed under the policy each year is five (5) days, with three (3) of these free and two (2) deductible. If free personal days are not taken during the school year, those free days will be automatically converted to sick leave. However, no more than 90 sick leave days may be accumulated.
4. Personal leave should not be allowed to be used the day preceding nor the day following a school recognized holiday, nor on the first or last day of school. Taking personal leave preceding or following school calendar vacation periods is discouraged, but under extenuating circumstances may be done by requesting in writing and receiving written permission from the building principal or immediate supervisor. The availability of substitutes will weigh heavily on the principal's decision.
5. The principal of the school must be notified of the intent of the teacher to be absent far enough in advance so that a substitute can be engaged. The deadline for such notification is a minimum of two (2) full work days prior to the date to be absent. If a teacher is absent without giving adequate notification, the salary deducted for the day missed will be at the rate of the teacher's full pay for each day of absence.
6. If there is found to be excessive number of teachers who desire to be out on any given day, then the principal of the individual school will decide how many, if any, may be absent on that day. In case two or more schools are involved, the superintendent will determine the number. The number of available substitute teachers will be the determining factor.

7. Employees who fail to report to work when their request for a personal day has been denied or who have exhausted their allotted personal days, shall lose their daily rate of pay for the day(s) missed (leave without pay). Failure to report work without having received permission to be absent is grounds for discipline, up to and including termination. Absence for reasons not covered under the sick leave policy or the personal leave policy will be deducted at the following rate for each day missed:

- A. 190 Days Contract - 1/190
- B. 200 Days Contract - 1/200
- C. 205 Days Contract - 1/205
- D. 220 Days Contract - 1/220
- E. Twelve Months Contract - 1/240

#### **Professional Leave**

"Professional Leave" is leave granted for the purpose of enabling an employee to participate in professional activities (e.g., teacher workshops or serving on professional committees) which can serve to improve the school district's instructional program or enhances the employee's ability to perform his duties. Professional leave will also be granted when a school district employee is subpoenaed for a matter arising out of the employee's employment with the school district. Any employee seeking professional leave must make a written request to his immediate supervisor, setting forth the information necessary for the supervisor to make an informed decision. The supervisor's decision is subject to review and overruling by the superintendent. Budgeting concerns and the potential benefit for the district's students will be taken into consideration in reviewing a request for professional leave.

Applications for professional leave should be made as soon as possible following the employee's discerning a need for such leave, but, in any case, no less than one (1) week before the requested leave is to begin, if possible.

If the employee does not receive or does not accept remuneration for their participation in the professional leave activity and a substitute is needed for the employee, the district shall pay the full cost of the substitute. If the employee receives and accepts remuneration for their participation in the professional leave activity (e.g. scholastic audits or praxis assessments), the employee shall forfeit his/her daily rate of pay from the district for the time the employee misses. The cost of a substitute, if one is needed, shall be paid by the employee/district.

Professional leave may be granted only by the superintendent based upon the probable value of the meeting to the educational program and upon the availability of resources required for such leave. Persons desiring professional leave are to make their request known to their principal one week prior to the proposed leave. The principal will in turn convey to the superintendent the request along with his/her own recommendation on the matter.

Approved professional leave may be designated by the superintendent to be in one of three categorical priorities, the conditions of each being as follows:

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| <b>Priority I</b>   | - The school will pay for necessary substitute teacher cost as well as travel expenses based on current district approved rates.   |
| <b>Priority II</b>  | - The school district will pay necessary teacher costs only. No personal leave will be charged to the requesting party.  |
| <b>Priority III</b> | - The school district will permit professional leave for out of state, regional, or national conventions, and pay for necessary substitutes costs. This will not be considered |

personal leave. The teacher must pay all other expenses.

**Priority IV** - The school district will pay no cost or expense and time off will be counted as personal leave.

School will not be dismissed for any teacher organization conventions. A suggested total of ten (10) teachers plus organization officers will be permitted to attend these meetings according to the following ratio:

Primary School	-	2
Intermediate School	-	2
Jr. High School	-	3
Sr. High School	-	3

If one school does not fill its quota, that number may be used by another school having more teachers desiring to attend.

The administration reserves the right to limit the number of teachers taking professional leave on any given date.

**Legal Reference:** A.C.A. 6-17-211