



# HR News

## Special Leave

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Employee leaves that are not due to school business or paid health leave are considered leaves for personal reasons and are reported and tracked through the District Absence Reporting System, AESOP. Advance approval by a supervisor is required for the following types of leave:

1. Jury duty and witness leave
2. Reserve duty leave
3. Appointive and elective office leave
4. Leave without pay
5. Bereavement
6. Vacation leave; and
7. Special leave

Employees may be approved to take special leave with pay for three duty days per school year.

- a. Non-licensed staff may request special leave for accidents, court appearances, graduations, situations over which the employee has no control, and other similar cases. Except in the case of emergencies, advance approval is required. Non-licensed staff shall be granted paid special leave of not more than three duty days per school year if the staff member has accrued paid leave at the time such special leave is to be used. Employees who take special leave without determining if the leave will be approved, do so at the risk of having to take the day as leave without pay and possible discipline.
- b. Licensed staff: Upon request, teachers shall be granted paid special leave of not more than three duty days per school year if the teacher has accrued paid leave at the time such special leave is to be used. Special leave is intended to provide an opportunity for teachers to attend to personal matters and may not be used for recreational purposes. Article 34 of the Master Agreement outlines special leave rules, including:

Special leave requires prior approval from the teacher's supervisor.

- a. For prior approval, teachers must submit a special leave request through the District leave reporting system. The request will be reviewed by the principal and either approved or declined based on the guidelines outlined in this Article.

*(Continued on page 2)*



## Special Leave, cont.

- b. **No special leave shall be granted on the day before or the day after a holiday or vacation period unless the teacher has actually been at work between the holiday or vacation period and the day requested as a special leave day.** A teacher who takes special leave on an ineligible day without requesting and receiving an exception as allowed below will not be paid for that day.
- c. A teacher wishing to attend the high school or college graduation ceremony of an immediate family member, which is scheduled on a day before or after any holiday or vacation period, may use special leave to do so.
- d. Teachers may not submit special leave requests more than 60 calendar days in advance.
- e. Prior approval requirements may be waived for emergencies and/or matters beyond the teacher's control at the discretion of the Chief Personnel Officer.
- f. Exceptions for requests of special leave prior to or following a holiday or vacation period may be made by the Chief Personnel Officer for special circumstances beyond the teacher's control. The request for an exception must be made in advance of the desired special leave date and with proof for the exception.

If you would like more information about special leave, please refer to Article 34 of the Master Agreement, or APS policy GCC-1-R

## Business Leave

School business leave requires pre-approval from your supervisor. Business leave is granted on a first come, first serve basis, as there are a limited number of business leave absence slots available district-wide.

### Master Agreement Article 21 - Conference Release Time

Employees shall apply to the Director, Professional Learning, for approval of conference attendance as soon as possible after they become aware of meaningful conference opportunities; except that no such request shall be presented until the second week of each school year and requests may be only for the school year in progress. Additional information can be found on the Licensed Professional Development Website at:

<http://equityinlearning.aurorak12.org/professional-learning/article-21-information/>





## **Military Leave**

### **Board Policy - GCCAD & Master Agreement Article 31**

Below are the steps for properly completing the leave process should you be called to active duty.

1. Notify your supervisor that you have been called to active duty as soon as possible.
2. Contact the HR Leave Office to schedule an appointment to discuss and complete the leave packet.
3. Once completed, you or your principal/supervisor should return the leave form to the leave office in the Educational Service Center - 4 Building.
4. Classified Employees: Before going on leave, report all leave time in the absence reporting system. Specify if a substitute is needed.
5. Licensed & Administrative and Professional/Technical Staff: Before going on leave, report leave in the absence reporting system and specify if a substitute is needed.

Your position is held for you for varying lengths of time depending on discharge status, and other circumstances.

For information on benefits coverage while on military leave, contact the HR Leave Office at ext. 28072.

## **Jury Duty & Witness Leave**

### **Board Regulation - GCC-1-R, Policy GCCAB & Master Agreement Article 29**

In advance of the absence, employees must provide the supervisor/principal with a copy of the summons or subpoena at the time the request for approval is submitted.

Employees who are called for jury duty shall receive full pay during their absence but shall assign their jury duty pay, mileage expense excepted, to the District.

Licensed employees:

1. Employees must provide their jury summons or subpoena for a court appearance as notification of jury duty or witness leave to their principal at least two days in advance of the court date. After providing notification to the principal, the employee shall use the District leave reporting system to report the jury duty or witness leave.
2. Employees who are summoned for jury duty shall receive their full pay during their absence but shall assign their jury duty pay, mileage expense excepted, to the District.
3. Employees who are subpoenaed to appear in court, except where the employee is a plaintiff or where the employee is subpoenaed by the plaintiff in a suit against the District, the Board, a fellow employee, or a District administrator, shall receive full pay during their absence, up to a maximum of two days for any one case, but shall assign any witness fee paid, mileage expense excepted, to the District.
4. Teachers shall report for work before jury duty or court appearance if there are two or more hours of the normal duty day before reasonably having to leave for jury duty or court appearance and shall return to work after being released from jury duty or court appearance if they can reasonably return with two or more hours of the normal duty day remaining after arrival.





## Extended Personal Leave

Please be reminded that staff who are not on a 12-month contract and as a result do not accrue vacation, that most requests for extended personal time off will be denied. Board regulation GCC-1-R and Board policy GCCAG both reference potential discipline for unapproved leave and leave without pay, and this article shall serve as a written warning.

The number one priority of all staff members is to support student learning and being present at work is required to do so. Generous time off is provided to staff members during the various school breaks in the fall, winter and spring. As a result, requests for extended absences to pursue personal interests (such as foreign travel, going on a cruise or taking temporary employment, etc.) are not acceptable and may result in discipline. No substitute can replicate what a classroom teacher or trained school employee is able to offer our students.

## Extended Medical Leave Including Family Medical Leave (FMLA)

Information on taking a leave of absence due to pregnancy, illness or other appropriate reasons is covered in APS policies beginning with GCC and specifically GDCCF. Teachers should also review the Master Agreement, beginning with Article 23.

Please Note: If the leave is for maternity, you must notify your supervisor (in writing) in your third month of pregnancy and notify the HR Leave Office at extension 28072 to schedule a meeting prior to your leave.

The steps for taking FMLA leave are:

1. Discuss and obtain prior approval for the leave from your principal/supervisor.
2. Contact the leave office and schedule an appointment to discuss and complete the leave of absence packet. You must submit a signed medical certification form (in the packet) or a signed note from your primary care physician or specialist indicating the start date for leave, the anticipated length of your absence and the expected return to work date.
3. Once completed, return the form and the physician's note to the leave office in the Educational Service Center - 4 Building. The Request for Extended Leave and physician's form may be emailed, faxed, mailed, or hand-carried to the leave office.
4. While on leave, you must report all leave time through the District Absence Reporting System and specify if a substitute is needed.
5. Before returning to work, you must send a medical release form from your doctor to the leave office indicating that you may return to work with or without restrictions.

### Please Note:

- Any time taken in excess of 10 days will require leave approval
- Compensation while on medical leave is based on the amount of paid health leave you have available

Please contact the HR Leave Office at ext. 28072 for further information.

## Reporting Child Abuse & Blood-borne Pathogens

All newly contracted employees must complete the child abuse reporting and standard precautions against blood-borne pathogens training online within 60 days of employment.

As a matter of good practice, we are also asking schools and departments to review these online training opportunities with all staff members at least once every three years. Each online course can be reviewed in approximately one-half hour at a regularly scheduled staff meeting. Projecting the content slide shows and working through the assessments as a group will ensure that staff members understand their responsibilities as mandated reporters of suspected abuse and how to protect themselves and others against blood-borne pathogens. Staff may review both of these trainings in the same school year or in separate school years as long as they are covered at least once every three years.

The training web sites may be accessed from <http://hr.aurorak12.org/benefits/new-employee-orientation/online-orientations/>. You may wish to incorporate these reviews into an upcoming in-service day.

## Benefits

As we settle in for the new school year, we would like to remind you of an important aspect of the Aurora Public Schools Healthcare Plans. Since our healthcare plans allow you pay your monthly premiums on a pre-tax basis, Section 125 of the IRS Code regulates when you may enroll and make changes to your elections – an election represents who is covered under your APS healthcare plan. For continuing employees, you can only change your healthcare elections during the Open Enrollment period in the spring. For newly hired employees, you have 30 days from your start date to make your healthcare elections.

Exceptions are “Qualifying Events”, which allow you to make mid-year changes to your healthcare elections. Section 125 Qualifying events include:

- Change in the Employee's legal marital status
- Change in the number of dependents
- Change in employment status that affects benefit eligibility
- Dependent satisfies or ceases to satisfy dependent eligibility requirements
- Change in residence that affects the Employee's eligibility for coverage
- Commencement or termination of adoption proceedings
- HIPAA Special Enrollment Rights
- Judgments, Decrees or Orders (e.g. divorce, etc.)
- COBRA Events
- Entitlement to Medicare or Medicaid
- Significant changes in cost
- Significant curtailment of coverage
- Significant changes in coverage under the plan of the Employer of a spouse or dependent
- Addition or elimination of a benefit package option
- Separation from service
- FMLA Leave

If you believe you have encountered one of these events, you may be eligible to make changes to your healthcare elections. In most cases, you will have 30 days from the event to make the change. Supporting documentation of the qualifying event must be provided in a timely manner to ensure eligibility.



## Benefits, cont.

### Who is covered under the Aurora Public Schools benefits plans?

All licensed employees working 3.75 hours or more a day and all classified employees working 6 – 8 hours a day are eligible. Classified employees working 4 or more hours, but fewer than 6, are eligible to receive coverage at a prorated rate. Spouse and dependent coverage is also available at an additional cost to employees. If you have a change in your contract from last year and now qualify for benefits based on the aforementioned qualifications, please contact the benefits office.

### Once employed, when does coverage begin?

If you start on or before the 15th of the month, your benefits start the 1st of the following month. If you start after the 15th, your benefits will start on the 1st day of the second month. If you elect not to enroll in the medical and dental plans within 30 days of your employment, you must wait until the open enrollment period, which is the month of May, for coverage commencing July 1.

### What is the cost for medical and dental insurance?

Starting with the 2017-18 school year, the APS contribution structure will change so that each employee receives \$473.64 per month (\$5,683.68 per year) for coverage. Employees that enroll in a plan with a monthly premium that is less than the \$473.64 monthly contribution may use the additional dollars to offset the cost of dental insurance or for supplemental benefits (vision, supplemental life, or accident). For those who choose a high deductible plan with a Health Saving Account (HSA), the remaining employer contribution may be applied to the HSA.

### Does APS offer life insurance and/or short/long-term disability benefits?

#### Life Insurance

APS offers several voluntary products through Cigna to help plan and maintain your health, well-being and sense of security.

**Accidental Injury Insurance**– Provides a lump sum payment if you are seriously injured as a result of a covered accident.

**Term Life Insurance**– A financial resource for your loved ones if you should pass away

**Accidental Death and Dismemberment**– Provides additional protection if you die or are seriously injured

**Critical Illness Insurance**– Provides a lump sum benefit to help you and your family if you are diagnosed with a covered critical illness.

**Note:** It is very important to make sure that the benefits office has a current life insurance beneficiary form on file for you. Many employees forget about this benefit and when life events occur (i.e. marriage, divorce, etc.), the beneficiary form is not changed. If a claim were to be submitted, the company that administers the life insurance policy would pay to whomever is named on the beneficiary form. Please inform family members that you have a life insurance benefit with the district.

### VISION PLAN

New this year APS will be offering two United Healthcare Vision plans both to include exam, eyeglasses with standard single vision, lined bifocal, lined trifocal or lenticular lenses, standard scratch-resistant coating and frame or contact lenses in lieu of eyeglasses.

For more information visit the benefits website at <http://hr.aurorak12.org/benefits/2017-18-benefits-information/>



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