

Instructional Staff Extended Leave of Absence

The Board shall grant no more than two teachers on continuing contracts an unpaid leave of absence for professional growth or personal reasons (including but not limited to: personal health related and pressing family responsibilities) for a period of one or two semesters. When feasible, an alternate teacher shall be named in the event that one of the first selected declines the leave.

General guidelines for professional and personal extended leaves of absence:

1. A teacher must submit a written application for extended leave to the superintendent and/or designee in March prior to the year in which a full year or first semester leave is to be taken. Applications for a second semester leave must be submitted to the superintendent and/or designee by the first meeting in October. Applications shall state clearly the purpose of the personal or professional leave and include specific information to help in the evaluation.
2. The superintendent and/or designee shall consider the request on individual merit and make a recommendation to the Board accordingly. The Board shall consider the recommendation of the superintendent and/or designee along with other pertinent factors such as availability of a qualified substitute.
3. The teacher shall not receive an experience increment for the year on leave. Sick leave shall not continue to accrue during the year of leave. Unused accumulated sick leave shall be restored to the teacher upon return to the district. The teacher shall waive any claim to unemployment compensation for the period, and may participate in group insurance plans at his or her own expense.
4. Teachers receiving leaves must file a PERA certification of leave form with PERA within 60 days of the start of the leave.
5. Leaves of absence granted by the Board shall designate specifically the purpose for which leave is granted. In the event the teacher fails to utilize the leave for the purposes designated, the leave shall be considered void and the teacher shall be deemed to have voluntarily canceled his or her contract with the district. Such cancellation shall be effective from the commencement of the contract year following the voided leave of absence. A teacher may not take a position in another district. To do so shall be treated as a resignation from the district.

6. The teacher retained to replace the person on leave of absence shall be issued a contract containing the stipulations that its duration is limited to the length of the leave only and is for the singular purpose of leave of absence replacement. Upon return from leave of absence, a teacher shall be granted either the position he or she would have had had the teacher remained in the district or, at the district's option, another position for which the teacher is qualified.
7. Teachers on leave for a full year or for the second semester shall notify the superintendent in writing by April 15 of their intention to return to work for the next academic year. Teachers on leave for the first semester shall give written notification by November 1 of their intention to return to work for the second semester. Failure to notify the superintendent shall be deemed an election to cancel the teacher's contract with the district.

Guidelines for extended leave for professional growth:

1. Valid criteria for evaluating applications for professional growth leaves include:
 - a. Programmed courses taken at an accredited institution relating to the professional growth of the applicant.
 - b. Independent study and research relating to the professional service of the applicant that promises, in value, the equivalent of formal courses.
 - c. Other reasons which appear to be valid in benefiting the teacher professionally or the district.
2. Teachers granted extended leave for professional growth shall make a written report to the Board at the completion of the leave detailing the work completed. Transcripts of classes taken are to be included.

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Garfield School District No. Re-2, Rifle, Colorado